



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MARCH 18, 1985

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NEWS RELEASE

August 8, 2014

The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. The migration of sockeye through marine and lower Fraser River assessment areas as well as past the Mission hydroacoustic site has increased over the past week. The observer at Hells Gate has also reported increased sockeye migration over the past several days with fish being in good condition. Marine area test fishing catches continue to indicate that high fractions of Fraser sockeye are migrating via the Johnstone Strait route; an estimate of 80% for the past week.

DNA analysis of a fish sample collected from a recent Area 12 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions by stock group that were very similar to last week, with approximately 16% Early Summer-run, 68% Summer-run sockeye and 16% Late-run. Early Summer-run proportions have been dominated by the Early Thompson stock-group in recent samples. The proportions of both the Late Stuart/Stellako and Chilko/Quesnel stock groups remained strong and Late-run proportions continue to be dominated by the Late Shuswap group.

A few Early Stuart sockeye have migrated through the lower Fraser River this week, with a total escapement of 227,900 fish past Mission as of August 7th.

Assessments of Early Summer-run sockeye abundance are ongoing. Most components of the Early Summer-run group have been represented in samples from marine and in-river test fisheries. The in-season abundance estimates for the earlier-timed components of this run-timing group (e.g. Chilliwack, Pitt, Bowron, Nadina, Gates) are similar to the median (p50) pre-season forecast level of 334,000 fish. Daily abundances of the later-timed components (i.e. Early Thompson) are tracking levels similar to those expected from the p25 forecast abundance level of 1.55M fish, if their timing is as expected (August 8th median timing through Juan de Fuca Strait). Run size updates for this group should be available soon after their peak migration through marine areas. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 7 is 428,400 fish.

Assessments of Summer-run sockeye abundance are beginning. Strong marine area test fishing catches this week have generated daily abundance estimates consistent with the median forecast level of 5.7M sockeye if their timing is as expected (August 15th median timing through Juan de Fuca Strait). Inseason run size updates for the Summer-run group should be available in mid-August after their peak migration through marine areas. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 7 is 514,700 fish.

On August 7, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 3,425 cms, which is 17% below the average for this date of 4,122 cms. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek on August 7 was 20.0°C, which is 2.2 °C above average for this date. The first in-season update to the Early Summer-run management adjustment should be available next week (5 days after their estimated peak migration through marine areas). Management adjustments are additional fish that are allowed to escape upstream to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

Many parties have expressed concerns about the potential impacts on Fraser sockeye populations resulting from the recent failure of a mine tailing containment pond in the Quesnel watershed. The failure

of the earthen dam, led to a substantial release of debris and sediments into Quesnel Lake; there are two potential impacts of primary concern. First, there are general concerns about implications for adult sockeye returning to Quesnel Lake this year as they migrate past the spill area en-route to their spawning streams. Second, juvenile sockeye produced by adult fish that spawned in 2013 are currently rearing in Quesnel Lake, and the spill could impact their survival and food supply. Impacts of the spill are uncertain at this time with investigations underway. This year, Quesnel sockeye are forecast to make-up approximately 25% of the total adult return of Summer-run sockeye, and about 7% of the total return of all Fraser sockeye stocks combined. As of August 7th, 66,900 Quesnel sockeye are estimated to have migrated upstream past Mission. However the peak marine timing for the Quesnel group is not anticipated to occur until August 16th. Given about 6 days travel from the marine areas to the lower river at Mission, and a further 14 days travel from Mission upstream to the entrance to Quesnel Lake, the peak migration of sockeye into Quesnel Lake would not be expected until the first week of September. This lag between the timing of the spill and when the bulk of the adult sockeye migration reaches Quesnel Lake coupled with the encouraging results of initial water quality tests released by the British Columbia Ministry of Environment yesterday (http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/eemp/incidents/2014/pdf/Memo-QuesnelWaterQuality-DW-AL_20140807.pdf) suggest that substantial impacts on adult sockeye returning this year are unlikely. The mechanisms leading to any impacts on juvenile sockeye are more complex and will require longer term evaluation. DFO will continue to update the Panel with information they receive about the spill from Environment Canada and the Ministry of Environment.

Details of DFO's Fraser sockeye spawner enumeration plans have been posted on the DFO website (<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/docs/Escapement/sockeye-rouge-eng.html>). The second in-season escapement report was released yesterday. Early Stuart sockeye continue to be reported in good condition and are nearing the peak of spawning activity. The counting fence on Scotch Creek was fish tight on August 6th and 1 sockeye has been reported to have passed through the fence thus far. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek was fish tight and operational as of July 28th and 5 sockeye are reported to have passed through the fence into Cultus Lake. Water levels in Swelter Creek are reported to be normal, and the current water temperature is 22°C; the next update will be Thursday August 14.

The Pacific Salmon Commission reports daily test fishing catches of sockeye salmon on its recorded message at 604-666-8200 and on the internet at: http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm. In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye catch and escapement data, and sockeye salmon stock status reports are available on this website.

Environmental data collected in the Fraser River watershed through DFO's Environmental Watch program will be included in weekly in-season news releases from the Pacific Salmon Commission (<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html>). Fraser River discharge levels and water temperatures will be monitored closely to guide specific Panel management actions that may be required during the in-river sockeye migratory period to help achieve escapement goals. Peak waterwater temperatures within the Fraser watershed have been observed in the 19-20°C recently and are forecast to decrease over the upcoming days. Recent observations of sockeye in the Fraser River watershed have been reported in good condition.

United States fishing schedules during the season will be available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules will be available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-800-662-9825. Canadian commercial fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at 604-666-2828 (from the lower B.C. mainland), and toll free from outside the lower B.C. mainland at 1-866-431-3474, and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations pertaining to species other than sockeye and pink salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

As previously announced Area 18-1, 18-4, and 18-11 and Area 29-1 to 6: Open to Area H troll ITQ fishery from 12:01 a.m. Wednesday August 6, 2014 until further notice.

Area 29: Portions of 29- 3, 4, 6, 7 , 9, 10 and 11 to 17: Open to Area E gillnets from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday, August 11, 2014. (Please refer to DFO Fishery Notice website for further details at: <http://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm>).

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: As previously announced, open for drift gillnets 12:00 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, August 6, 2014, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, August 9, 2014.

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: Extended for drift gillnets 12:00 p.m. (noon), Saturday, August 9, 2014, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Wednesday, August 13, 2014.

Areas 6, 7 and 7A: As previously announced, open for net fishing from 5:00 a.m. Thursday, August 7, 2014 through 9:00 a.m. Saturday, August 9, 2014.

Areas 6, 7 and 7A: Open for net fishing from 5:00 a.m. Sunday, August 10, 2014 through 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 12, 2014.

ALL CITIZEN FISHERY:

Area 7 and 7A: As previously announced, open to purse seines from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, August 9, 2014.

Area 7 and 7A: Open to purse seines from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 12, 2014.

Area 7 and 7A: As previously announced, open to gillnets from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Saturday, August 9, 2014.

Area 7 and 7A: Open to gillnets from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Tuesday, August 12, 2014.

Area 7 and 7A: As previously announced, open to reefnets from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Sunday, August 10, 2014.

Area 7 and 7A: Open to reefnets from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday, August 11, 2014.

(Note: U. S. All Citizen fishers should check the U.S. hotline and WDFW regulations before fishing as there are additional State of Washington regulations, including time restrictions that may be in effect).

Updates on the run status and catches of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon are included in the attached tables.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday, August 12. News releases in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission every Friday during the in-season management period to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye salmon runs. News releases and regulatory announcements can be obtained via http://www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm or by subscribing to our eNews <http://tinyurl.com/PSCeNews..>

2014 Run status of Fraser sockeye salmon

Date: Aug. 8, 2014

Week of: Aug. 3 - Aug. 9, 2014	Sockeye				
	Management Group				Total Fraser
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam)	227,900	428,400	514,600	44,200	1,215,100
Catch downstream of Mission	5,500	139,200	337,900	88,400	571,000
Accounted run-to-date	233,400	567,600	852,500	132,600	1,786,100
Run size adopted in-season ¹	240,000	na	na	na	240,000
Run size forecasted pre-season	299,000	4,126,000	5,699,000	12,730,000	22,854,000
Area 20 timing adopted in-season	9/Jul	na	na	na	
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	7/Jul	7/Aug	15/Aug	22/Aug	

¹ Run sizes are usually not adopted until after the peak of the run has passed through marine test fishery areas in Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Straits.

2014 Catch-to-date by fishery

Date: Aug. 8, 2014

Week of: Aug. 3 - Aug. 9, 2014		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
Canada		543,700	540,200
Commercial		285,300	283,800
	B Purse Seine	206,500	205,900
	D Gillnet	73,700	72,800
	E Gillnet	0	0
	G Troll	0	0
	H Troll	5,100	5,100
First Nations		257,800	255,800
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	257,800	255,800
	Marine	111,600	110,000
	Fraser R.	146,100	145,800
	Economic Opportunity (EO) & Demonstration (Demo)	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
Recreational		0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)		600	600
United States		7,400	7,300
Commercial		5,300	5,300
	Treaty Indian (TI)	5,300	5,300
	All Citizen (AC)	0	0
Treaty Indian Ceremonial & Subsistence (C&S)		2,100	2,000
All Citizen Recreational		0	0
Alaska *		na	na
Panel-approved Test Fisheries		103,200	100,700
	Panel Waters	18,300	17,100
	Non-Panel Waters	84,800	83,600
Total		654,200	648,200

* Alaska catch is processed post-season and so is unavailable in-season.