PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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The Fraser River Panel (Panel) of the Pacific Salmon Commission has developed management plans for 2013 Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon fisheries in Panel Area waters.

Pre-season Expectations

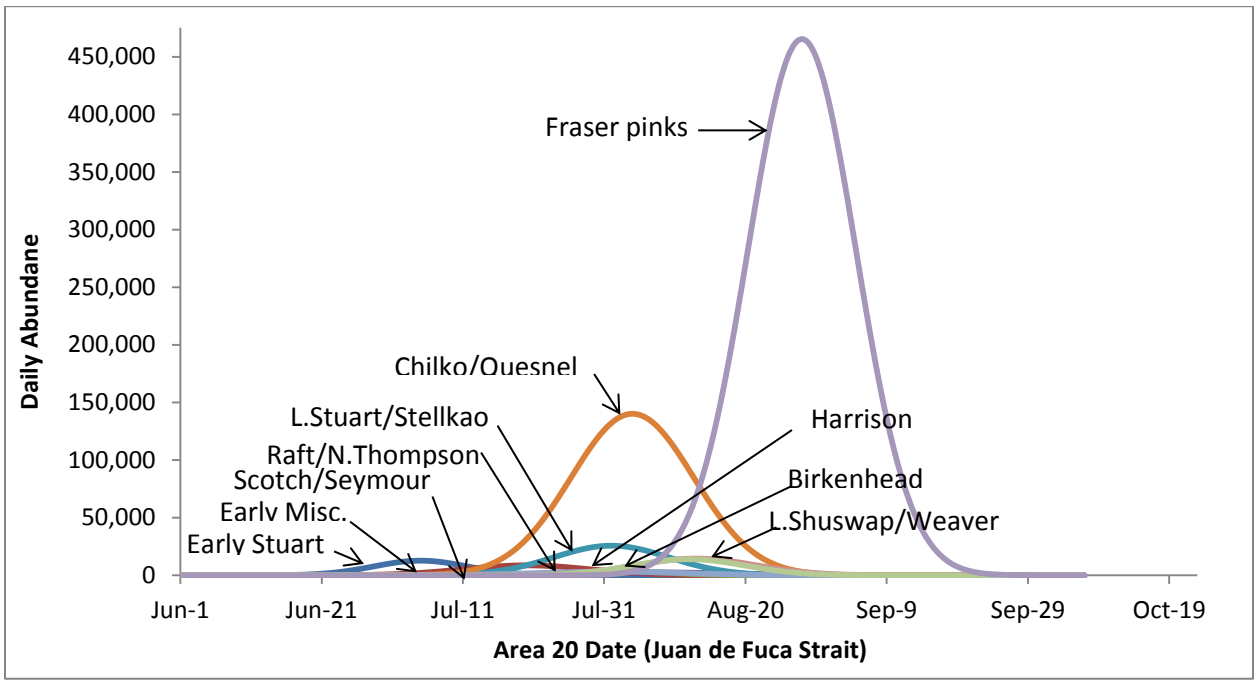
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) provided forecasts of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon abundance to the Panel, as well as a schedule for calculating sockeye spawning escapement targets at different run sizes. The 2013 cycle has the second largest average return of the four cycles of Fraser River sockeye salmon, with an average return (1953-2009) of 8,600,000 fish. The total Fraser sockeye forecast mid-point or 50% probability level forecast is 4,765,000 fish for 2013. The primary reason for the relatively low forecast return of Fraser sockeye in 2013 is that the total return in the 2009 brood year was one of the lowest on record. Despite severely restricted fisheries in 2009, overall escapements were less than half the average on the 2013 cycle. Historical returns on this cycle have been bolstered by large returns of Quesnel sockeye and escapements to these systems were less than 15% of the average on the cycle. DFO has advised that Fraser River sockeye salmon forecasts for 2013 remain highly uncertain due to variability in annual survival rates and uncertainty about changes in their productivity. To put the recent forecast uncertainty into context, there is a one in four chance that the actual number of returning sockeye will be at or below the 25% probability level forecast of 2,655,000 fish and there is a three in four chance that the actual number of returning sockeye will be at or below the 75% probability level forecast of 8,595,000 fish. For pre-season planning purposes, the Panel used the Fraser sockeye 50% probability level forecast abundance of 4,794,000 (equal chance that actual return will be higher or lower).

The Early Stuart sockeye return forecast at the 50% probability level is 211,000 fish (ranges from 137,000 to 331,000 fish at the 25% and 75% probability levels). The forecast for Early Summer-run sockeye at the 50% probability level is 253,000 fish (ranges from 130,000 to 468,000 fish at the 25% and 75% probability levels). The Summer-run sockeye return forecast at the 50% probability level is 3,718,000 fish (ranges from 2,095,000 to 6,663,000 fish at the 25% and 75% probability levels), with Chilko sockeye expected to comprise almost 50% of the total Summer-run sockeye return. The Late-run sockeye return forecast at the 50% probability level is 583,000 fish (ranges from 293,000 to 1,133,000 fish at the 25% and 75% probability levels) with the largest production expected to come from the Birkenhead and Weaver systems.

The pre-season forecast for Fraser River pink salmon is also highly uncertain, primarily due to high inter-annual variability in marine (fry to adult) survival rates. For pre-season planning of Fraser River pink salmon, the Panel used the 50% probability level forecast of 8,926,000 fish. To put the pink run size forecast uncertainty into context, there is a one in four chance that the actual number of returning pink salmon will be at or below the 25% probability level forecast of 6,401,000 fish and there is a three in four chance that the actual number of returning pink salmon will be at or below the 75% probability level forecast of 12,473,000 fish.

Marine conditions were used to forecast the 50% marine timing of Early Stuart sockeye through Area 20 of July 5, which is near average. The forecast marine timing for Chilko sockeye is August 4, which is about four days earlier than average. The expected proportion of Fraser River sockeye salmon diverting their migration through Johnstone Strait is 35%. Forecasts of the migration timing and diversion rate of Fraser River pink salmon will not be available until early August. For pre-season planning, their historical average 50% migration timing through Area 20 of August 28 and a Johnstone Strait diversion rate of 41% were used.

Expected abundance-timing curves for Fraser River sockeye stock-groups and the total Fraser pink salmon run in coastal areas (i.e., all marine migration timed to Juan de Fuca Strait, Area 20), are shown below.



The peak freshet of snow melt in the Fraser River watershed occurred in mid-May this year. This resulted in June snowpack volumes in much of the Fraser River watershed being lower than average. However, Fraser River flows have remained above average until recent days. Consequently, Early Stuart sockeye are encountering higher than normal flows during their migration. Air temperatures are forecast to be higher than average this summer and Fraser River discharge levels are forecast to be below average. If these forecasts materialize, they could result in higher than average river temperatures contributing to difficult migration conditions for Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye en route to their spawning grounds. The Panel has adopted pre-season management adjustments in response to this potential. Management adjustments are additional fish that are allowed to escape upstream to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

Management Constraints and Expectations

The problem of early entry of Late-run sockeye stocks has occurred in most years since 1996 and it continues to adversely impact their survival and productivity, substantially reducing harvest opportunities on these stocks and on co-migrating Summer-run sockeye salmon as well as Fraser River pink salmon. The Panel's management approach for Late-run sockeye assumes that, similar to recent

years, Late-run sockeye will enter the Fraser River earlier than the long-term average, and some proportion will not survive to spawn. Panel management objectives will place a high priority on achieving Fraser sockeye escapement goals, including those for Late-run sockeye. Additional management actions may be taken by Canada to protect Cultus and Sakinaw sockeye. Conservation concerns for other species and stocks identified by Canada and the United States will be taken into account throughout the management season.

If the abundance of Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye is tracking near the 50% probability level forecasts and the runs arrive at or near expected dates, low impact commercial fisheries would be expected to commence during the fourth week in July in Panel waters. Actual fisheries schedules will depend on in-season assessments of abundance, migration timing and river conditions.

In-season Assessments

Gillnet test fishing began on June 24 in Area 29 (Fraser River at Whonnock) and in Area 20 (Juan de Fuca Strait). The Fraser River gillnet test fishery at Qualark began on July 1 and the Fraser River gillnet test fishery at Cottonwood began on July 10. Recent stock identification analyses from samples collected in the Area 20 gillnet test fishery indicate contributions of approximately 65% Early Summer-run, 25% Early Stuart and 10% Summer-run sockeye. Samples collected from the lower Fraser River indicate that Early Stuart comprise most of the sockeye migrating through this area. At the meeting today, the Fraser River Panel approved a run size estimate of 217,000 Early Stuart sockeye with 50% marine timing through Area 20 of July 4. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 11 is approximately 120,000 fish. In-season assessments of Early Summer-run sockeye abundance should be available later in July after their peak migration through marine areas has occurred.

On July 11, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 5,180 cms, which is approximately 12% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek on July 11 was 16.9 °C, which is 1.5 °C higher than average for this date. At the meeting today, after reviewing environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel approved an increase in the management adjustment factor for Early Stuart sockeye from the pre-season estimate of 0.57 to 1.27.

Monitoring Plans and In-season Resources

Several test fisheries are expected to commence as follows in July and August: Area 12 gillnet at Round Island (July 12); Area 4B, 5 gillnet (July 17); Areas 12, 13, and 20 purse seine as well as Area 7 reef net (July 20); and Fraser River gillnet at Mission (August 10). 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 and pink salmon stock status reports will be 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 this summer to guide specific Panel management actions that may be required during the in-river sockeye migratory period to help achieve escapement goals.

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.

All commercial fisheries in Panel Area waters remain closed to fishing.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on July 16. 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 and pink salmon runs.