



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

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

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NEWS RELEASE

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The Fraser River Panel met today to review the status of the sockeye salmon runs and migration conditions in the Fraser River. The marine migration of Fraser sockeye has maintained at a moderate level over the past several days. The diversion rate of Fraser sockeye through Johnstone Strait has been very low this season, averaging just 8% but has increased recently to an estimated 21%. Assessment data indicates that Fraser sockeye are returning much earlier than average this season. DNA analyses indicate that the stock composition of Fraser sockeye in the marine approach areas is presently about 5%-10% Early Summer-run, 60% Summer-run, 5-10% Birkenhead, and 25% True Late-run sockeye.

The much lower than expected abundance of Summer-run sockeye this season has resulted in reduced fishing opportunities and lower catches than anticipated during pre-season planning. Canadian catches of Fraser River sockeye to-date total 16,000 in commercial and 252,000 in First Nations FSC fisheries. U.S. catches of Fraser sockeye total 47,000 in commercial fisheries and 1,400 fish in Ceremonial fisheries. Test and Charter fishing catches of Fraser sockeye total 35,000 fish.

Early Summer-run sockeye have continued to migrate in low numbers through marine assessment areas over the past week. At the meeting today, the run size estimate of 425,000 Early Summer-run sockeye was increased to 440,000 fish (which exceeds their 50% probability level forecast of 349,000 fish). Their 50% marine timing through Area 20 is estimated to have occurred on July 14, which is their earliest marine timing on record. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 7 is 370,000 fish.

At the meeting on August 5, the Panel increased the run size estimate for Summer-run sockeye from 800,000 fish to 875,000 fish. At the meeting today the run size estimate for Summer-run sockeye was increased to 1,000,000 fish (which is below their 75% probability level forecast of 1,182,000 fish). Chilko sockeye are currently dominating the return of Summer-run sockeye through marine areas. The 50% marine timing of Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 is presently estimated to be July 25. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 7 is 645,000 fish.

Preliminary assessments of Birkenhead sockeye abundance to-date indicate that they are returning in much lower than expected numbers. At the meeting on August 5, the Panel reduced the run size estimate of the Birkenhead stock-group from 137,000 fish to 50,000 fish. At the meeting today the run size estimate for the Birkenhead stock-group was decreased to 30,000 fish, which is only a small fraction of their 50% probability level forecast of 331,000 fish. The cause of their very low return to-date is presently unknown. Escapements to the Birkenhead watershed in the 2004 brood year of the adults returning now were lower than average although they should have been sufficient to generate a much stronger return than is currently being observed. The estimated escapement of Birkenhead sockeye past Mission through August 7 is 11,000 fish.

At the meeting on August 5, the Panel reduced the run size estimate of True Late-run sockeye from 232,000 fish to 183,000 fish (the sum of Harrison sockeye at their 50% p level of 47,000 fish and Weaver/Shuswap sockeye at their 90% p level of 136,000 fish). At the meeting today, the run size

estimate of True Late-run sockeye was increased to 232,000 fish (their 75% probability level forecast). Most of the True Late-run sockeye currently migrating through the marine assessment areas are from the Weaver stock. Although the capability to assess delay of True Late-run sockeye is limited this season, preliminary assessments suggest that nearly all Late-run sockeye are entering the Fraser River without delaying in the Gulf of Georgia. The estimated escapement of True Late-run sockeye past Mission through August 7 is 71,000 fish.

Migration conditions for sockeye in the Fraser River have become slightly less favorable over the past few days. On August 7, the Fraser River discharge at Hope was about 3,100 cms, which is approximately 20% lower than average, while the water temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek has increased to 18.5 °C, which is 0.8 °C higher than average for this date. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to decline below 18 °C in about one week. However, given the earlier arrival timing, Early Stuart and most of the Early Summer-run and Summer-run stocks have passed upstream and thus future river conditions should have minimal impact on overall migration success for those stocks. At the meeting on August 1, after reviewing in-season environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel adopted the pre-season management adjustment factor for Summer-run sockeye of 0. At the meeting today there was no change to this management adjustment factor.

DFO estimates that the current escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past the enumeration fences on Forfar and Gluske creeks now totals almost 3,900 fish, which is almost triple the brood year (2004) escapement to these stocks. The Nadina River spawning channel operator has reported that approximately 1,000 sockeye are holding in the Nadina River adjacent to the channel and they appear to be in good condition. Enumeration of Chilko sockeye migrating past Henry's Bridge began on August 1 and thus far no sockeye have been observed. The enumeration of sockeye at the Scotch Creek fence began on August 6 and no sockeye have passed the fence so far. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek has enumerated 12 Cultus sockeye through August 7.

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

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_collections_2008.htm. In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye escapement data, and stock status reports will be available on this website.

United States fishing schedules during the season are available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules are available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-888-858-9319. 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 salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on August 12. Periodic news releases in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye salmon runs.

2008 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 3 - Aug. 9, 2008

Date: Aug. 8, 2008

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
<u>Canada</u>					
A & C Areas 1-10	Net				0
F Areas 1-10	Troll				0
G Areas 123-127,11-12	Troll				0
B Areas 11-16	PS				1,000
D Areas 11-13	GN				3,500
H Areas 12-16	Troll				200
H Areas 18-29	Troll				300
B Area 20	PS				11,200
E Area 29	GN				0
Canadian Selective					0
FRA Economic Opportunity					0
BC Interior FN Demo					0
Canadian Total					16,200
<u>United States</u>					
<u>Alaska</u>					
	Net&Troll				0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				32,100
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				4,900
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				8,700
Washington Total					45,700
U.S. Total					45,700
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					31,300
Other Test					2,800
Fraser River Aboriginal (FSC)					242,100
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					10,200
Recreational					0
Charter					600
U.S. TI Ceremonial					1,400
Non-comm. Total					288,400
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					350,300
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					956,700
Total Accounted-to-date					1,307,000

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target *	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Gross Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	40,000	39,100	100	39,200	98%
ESum	Early Summer	286,200	370,000	14,400	384,400	134%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	1,111,600	266,300	21,200	687,700	62%
	L.Stu./Stel.		378,400	21,800		
Late	Birkenhead	57,200	11,100	1,200	12,300	22%
	Adams/L.Shuswap	214,000	7,000	200	75,300	35%
	Weav/L.Misc.		31,600	1,700		
	Sub 1s		32,200	2,600		