



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

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

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No. 7

NEWS RELEASE

August 11, 2006

The Fraser River Panel reviewed Fraser sockeye catch estimates, run-size assessments and discussed harvest plans at the meeting today. Test fishing and commercial catch data collected over the past several days indicates a steady migration of sockeye through Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait. However, the total abundance of Fraser sockeye presently migrating through marine assessment areas is considerably lower than pre-season expectations for this period. This is mainly due to weakness in the return of Quesnel sockeye thus far, which were forecast to be currently contributing a large portion of the sockeye migration through marine approach areas. Fraser sockeye body size has generally been smaller than average this season, which may be contributing to the apparent late marine timing of some stocks. The diversion rate of Fraser River sockeye through Johnstone Strait is presently estimated to be approximately 30%, however, recent catches suggest that it may be increasing.

The later-timed Early Summer-run stocks (Scotch and Seymour) are continuing to show strength in marine area DNA samples, while contributions of early-timed Early Summer-run stocks have been below expectations. The Panel is continuing to use the 50% probability level forecast of 1,303,000 Early Summer-run sockeye for fisheries planning purposes. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 10 is 310,000 fish.

DNA analyses indicate Chilko sockeye stock proportions that are consistent with pre-season expectations, while Quesnel sockeye contributions, which were expected to dominate Summer-run sockeye returns this season, are far lower than expected. The peak marine timing of Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 was forecast to be on August 9, however, current assessments suggest that it will be later than this. An in-season update on the run-size of Summer-run sockeye should be available by late next week; assuming that their peak migration through Area 20 has occurred. In the interim period, the Panel will use the 75% probability level forecast for Summer-run sockeye (4,020,000 fish) for fisheries planning purposes as a precautionary measure, due to the weak return of Quesnel sockeye to-date. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 10 is 251,000 fish.

DNA analyses of sockeye samples from Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Straits indicate that Late Shuswap sockeye are the most abundant Late-run stock in the marine approach areas, which is consistent with pre-season expectations. Late-run sockeye migratory behavior in terminal areas will be assessed over the next several weeks in order to estimate the proportion of the run delaying in the Strait of Georgia prior to entering the Fraser River. It is too early to provide an assessment of the run size of Late-run sockeye, however, if they are at forecast levels of abundance (8,812,000 fish at the 50% p level), their 50% marine timing through Area 20 would have to be several days later than the forecast of August 15. Estimates of Late-run sockeye abundance will be made in the coming weeks as their migration through marine areas is assessed. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through August 10 is 97,000 fish.

The water temperature of the Fraser River (measured at Qualark Creek) was 18 °C on August 10. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to average approximately 18 °C over the coming week, which is satisfactory for successful sockeye migration. Fraser River discharge at Hope is presently about

2,250 cms, which is the lowest discharge in the historic record for this date. Although Fraser River water temperatures have generally been slightly warmer than average to-date this summer, migrating sockeye have generally been reported to be in good condition. Based on the improved environmental conditions that Early Summer-run sockeye will encounter in their upstream migration, the Panel approved a decrease in the management adjustment from 372,000 sockeye to 254,000 sockeye. Environmental conditions will continue to be assessed and management adjustments to escapements past Mission will be changed as required to help ensure spawning targets are achieved.

The total escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past the enumeration fences on Forfar, Gluske, Kynock, and Dust Creeks through August 9 has reached almost 8,800 sockeye, and the fish are reported to be in good condition. The enumeration fence on Scotch Creek was operational on August 6 and although no sockeye have migrated past the fence to-date, they have been observed holding off the creek mouth. Chilko sockeye have not been observed at Henry's Bridge thus far. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek has enumerated 59 Cultus Lake sockeye through August 9.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Area 20 – 1, 3, 4: As previously announced: Open to Area B purse seine in waters deeper than 55 meters or 30 fathoms from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday, August 14, 2006. Fishery may extend subject to by-catch concerns.

Area 29 – 1 to 7 and 29 – 9 to 17: Open to Area E gillnets from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

Area 18-1, 18-4 and 18-11: As previously announced: Open to Area H troll.

Area 29 – 1 to 6: As previously announced: Open to Area H troll from 12:00 p.m. (noon), Thursday, August 10, 2006 until further notice.

Areas 123, 124: Will close to Area G troll at 11:59 p.m., Friday, August 11, 2006.

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: Extended for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon), Saturday, August 12, 2006, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Wednesday, August 16, 2006.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Extended for net fishing from 10:00 p.m., Friday, August 11, 2006 to 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Sunday, August 13, 2006.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to gillnets from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Monday, August 14 and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to reef nets from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 15, 2006 and from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 16, 2006.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to purse seines from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday, August 14, 2006 and from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

(Note: U. S. Non-Treaty 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).

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 escapement data, and stock status reports will be available on this website.

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 1-888-858-9319. 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 and pink salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

The Panel will meet again on August 14 to evaluate the status of the Fraser River sockeye migration and to consider regulatory actions.

2006 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 6 - Aug. 12, 2006

Date: Aug. 11, 2006

| 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 | | | | 125,600 |
| B Areas 11-16 | PS | | | | 55,000 |
| D & E Areas 11-16 | GN | | | | 76,800 |
| H Areas 12-16 | Troll | | | | 85,400 |
| H Areas 18-29 | Troll | | | | 100 |
| B Area 20 | PS | | | | 0 |
| E Area 29 | GN | | | | 2,600 |
| Canadian Selective | | | | | 0 |
| FRA Economic Opportunity | | | | | 0 |
| Canadian Total | | | | | 345,500 |
| <u>United States</u> | | | | | |
| Alaska | Net&Troll | | | | 0 |
| <u>Washington</u> | | | | | |
| T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C | Net | | | | 12,000 |
| T.I. Areas 6/7/7A | Net | | | | 12,600 |
| N.I. Areas 7/7A | Net | | | | 55,600 |
| Washington Total | | | | | 80,200 |
| U.S. Total | | | | | 80,200 |
| Non-commercial Catch | | | | | |
| PSC Test | | | | | 38,600 |
| Other Test | | | | | 7,700 |
| Fraser River Aboriginal (FSC) | | | | | 89,900 |
| Areas 12-124 Aboriginal | | | | | 11,800 |
| Recreational | | | | | 0 |
| Charter | | | | | 100 |
| U.S. TI Ceremonial | | | | | 500 |
| Non-comm. Total | | | | | 148,600 |
| Catch and Escapement | | | | | |
| Catch Accounted-to-date | | | | | 574,300 |
| Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission) | | | | | 669,500 |
| Total Accounted-to-date | | | | | 1,243,800 |

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

| Run | Stock/Group | Adjusted Target * | Mission Esc. | FN Below Mission | Total Esc. | % Complete |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| EStu | Early Stuart | 68,500 | 67,600 | 400 | 68,000 | 99% |
| ESum | Early Summer | 881,600 | 309,500 | 15,300 | 324,800 | 37% |
| Summ | Quesnel/Chilko | 3,532,700 | 179,900 | 9,200 | 264,600 | 7% |
| | L.Stu./Stel. | | 70,900 | 4,600 | | |
| Late | Birkenhead | 5,182,700 | 3,400 | 0 | 102,000 | 2% |
| | Adams/L.Shuswap | | 68,500 | 4,300 | | |
| | Weav/L.Misc. | | 2,500 | 0 | | |
| | Sub 1s | | 22,300 | 1,000 | | |
| | 3 sub 1s | | 0 | | 0 | |