



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

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

600 – 1155 ROBSON STREET
VANCOUVER, B.C. V6E 1B5
TELEPHONE: (604) 684-8081
FAX: (604) 666-8707

Our File:

Your File:

No. 6

NEWS RELEASE

August 4, 2006

The Fraser River Panel met today to review the catches and biological data associated with the Fraser River sockeye salmon runs. The Area 20 gillnet and purse seine test fisheries continue to indicate a strong migration of sockeye through Juan de Fuca Strait. Sockeye catches in the Area 12 and 13 test fisheries have generally been lower than expected over recent days and the diversion rate of sockeye through Johnstone Strait is currently estimated to be much less than the pre-season forecast of 67%. The Fraser River hydroacoustic program has identified steady escapement of sockeye past Mission over the last several days and observations of sockeye migrating past Hells Gate have increased recently.

The later than forecast marine timing of Fraser River sockeye this season has delayed the start of some fisheries in Panel waters. In United States Panel waters Treaty Indian fisheries in Areas 4B, 5, and 6C have caught 8,000 Fraser sockeye to-date. Canadian assessment fisheries have harvested approximately 6,000 Fraser sockeye thus far. Non-commercial catches of Fraser sockeye include approximately 34,000 in First Nations and 23,000 in test fisheries to-date.

DNA analyses indicate that the contribution of Early Summer-run sockeye in recent samples from Juan de Fuca Strait test fisheries is declining, although they still exceed expected levels for this period. 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 3 is 189,000 fish.

It is too early to provide an in-season update on the run-size of Summer-run sockeye. However, recent DNA samples from both Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Straits indicate Summer-run stock proportions far below those expected. Preliminary analyses of the Summer-run migration indicate that it is currently tracking substantially below the forecast run size, primarily due to the apparent weak return of Quesnel sockeye thus far this season. An assessment of their run-size should be available by late next week after a larger portion of the Summer-run return has migrated through marine assessment areas. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 3 is 120,000 fish.

Abundance and run-timing assessments for Late-run sockeye will be conducted over the next several weeks. Late-run sockeye have comprised a low proportion of Fraser sockeye migrating through marine assessment areas until recently. Current DNA samples from both marine approach areas indicate a rapid increase in Late Shuswap sockeye proportions. Conservation concerns for true Late-run sockeye (Late Shuswap, Weaver, Portage, Harrison, and Cultus stocks) continue due to their pattern since 1995 of entering the Fraser River early and often experiencing high mortality rates. DNA analyses indicate that some Late-run sockeye have already entered the Fraser River rather than delaying in the Strait of Georgia for three to six weeks (as they did prior to 1995) and entering the Fraser River between mid-September and early October. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through August 3 is 37,000 fish.

Fraser River water temperatures (measured at Qualark Creek) have declined over the past week and the water temperature on August 3 was 18.4 °C, which is approximately 1 °C warmer than average for this date. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to increase over the next several days and exceed 19 °C by August 8. Water temperatures of approximately 19 °C cause stress to migrating sockeye and may slow their migration. Fraser River discharge at Hope is currently 2,850 cms (32% lower than normal for this date). Environmental conditions will continue to be assessed and additional management adjustments to escapements past Mission may be required to help ensure spawning targets are achieved.

DFO has conducted escapement enumeration of several Early Stuart sockeye stocks for the past several weeks. As of August 3, approximately 5,800 Early Stuart sockeye have been enumerated at the fences on Kynock, Forfar, Dust, and Gluske creeks and the condition of the fish arriving at these fences is reported to be good. Daily counts of Chilko sockeye at Henry's Bridge began on August 1 but none have been observed to-date. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek was operational on July 31, and two Cultus Lake sockeye have been enumerated thus far.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Area 18-1, 18-4 and 18-11: Open to Area H troll 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, August 8, 2006, until further notice.

Area 124: Open to Area G troll 12:01 a.m., Monday, August 7, 2006, until further notice.

Area 123: Planned opening for Area G troll 12:01 a.m., Monday, August 7, 2006. To be confirmed by DFO on August 5.

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 5, 2006, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Wednesday, August 9, 2006.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Open to net fishing from 4:00 a.m., Sunday, August 6, 2006 to 9:00 p.m. Sunday, August 6, 2006.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to gillnets from 2:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight) Monday, August 7, 2006.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to reef nets from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday, August 7, 2006.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to purse seines from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday, August 7, 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 7 to evaluate the status of the Fraser River sockeye migration and to consider regulatory actions.

2006 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Jul. 30 - Aug. 5, 2006

Date: Aug. 4, 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				0
B Areas 11-16	PS				0
D & E Areas 11-16	GN				0
H Areas 12-16	Troll				0
H Areas 18-29	Troll				0
B Area 20	PS				0
E Area 29	GN				0
Canadian Selective					0
FRA Economic Opportunity					0
Canadian Total					0
<u>United States</u>					
<u>Alaska</u>	Net&Troll				0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				7,500
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				0
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				0
Washington Total					7,500
U.S. Total					7,500
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					19,800
Other Test					2,800
Fraser River Aboriginal (FSC)					31,800
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					2,400
Recreational					0
Charter					100
U.S. TI Ceremonial					500
Non-comm. Total					57,400
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					64,900
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					396,600
Total Accounted-to-date					461,500

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target *	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	68,500	66,700	400	67,100	98%
ESum	Early Summer	999,600	188,900	7,300	196,200	20%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	3,532,700	81,800	4,100	125,900	4%
	L.Stu./Stel.		38,300	1,700		
Late	Birkenhead	5,182,700	700	0	39,200	1%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		22,200	1,500		
	Weav/L.Misc.		0	0		
	Sub 1s		14,300	500		
	3 sub 1s			0		0