



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

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

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NEWS RELEASE

September 8, 2006

The Fraser River Panel reviewed stock assessment data on the Fraser sockeye runs and considered harvest opportunities at the meeting today. The abundance of Fraser sockeye migrating through the marine approach areas continues to decline with most of the marine-area abundance now comprised of Late-run sockeye delaying in the lower Strait of Georgia. Estimates of sockeye escapements past Mission have been strong over the past few days.

The run size estimate of 1,700,000 Early Summer-run sockeye was decreased to 1,450,000 fish (slightly higher than 50% probability level forecast of 1,303,000 fish) at the Panel meeting on September 5 and was unchanged at the meeting today. The 50% arrival timing of Early Summer-run sockeye in Area 20 is estimated to have occurred on August 9, which is eight days later than forecast. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 7 is 733,000 fish.

At the meeting on September 5, the Panel reduced the run size estimate for Summer-run sockeye from 2,500,000 fish to 2,000,000 fish, which is roughly one quarter of the forecast of 7,158,000 fish. The Summer-run sockeye run size estimate was unchanged at the meeting today. Although approximately 4,600,000 Quesnel sockeye were forecast to return this season, present estimates suggest that the Quesnel sockeye run will be approximately 600,000 fish. The large shortfall in the abundance of Quesnel sockeye this season has substantially reduced the catch of Summer-run sockeye that was expected and constrained opportunities for harvesting the more abundant Late-run sockeye. As noted in a prior Panel News Release (No. 8), it is believed that the extremely small size of juvenile Quesnel sockeye from the brood year (2002) resulted in a low marine survival rate. The 50% passage timing of Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 is presently estimated to have occurred on August 14, which is five days later than the forecast of August 9. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 7 is 813,000 fish.

The run size estimate of 10,000,000 true Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead sockeye) was decreased to 9,200,000 fish at the Panel meeting on September 5. For fisheries planning purposes, the Panel adopted a run size estimate of 7,500,000 sockeye (slightly below the 50% probability level forecast of 8,250,000 fish) at the meeting today. The 50% arrival timing of true Late-run sockeye through Area 20 is currently estimated to be August 21, which is six days later than forecast. It is projected that approximately 3,500,000 true Late-run sockeye are presently delaying in the lower Strait of Georgia. The estimated escapement of true Late-run sockeye past Mission through September 7 is 1,452,000 fish.

The water temperature of the Fraser River measured at Qualark Creek was 18.2 °C on September 7, which is a record-high temperature for this date. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to average approximately 18 °C over the next several days and then decline below 17 °C by September 15. The discharge of the Fraser River today is about 1,300 cms, and continues to be at record low discharge levels.

On September 5 after considering environmental condition and stock assessment information, the Panel approved a decrease in the management adjustment for Early Summer-run sockeye from 351,000 sockeye to 294,000 sockeye as a result of a decrease in the management adjustment factor from 0.57 to 0.56 and a decrease in the run size estimate to 1,450,000 fish. Also on September 5, the Panel approved a decrease in the management adjustment for Summer-run sockeye from 78,000 sockeye to 36,000 sockeye based on a decrease in the management adjustment factor from 0.04 to 0.02 and a decrease in the run size estimate to 2,000,000 fish. At the meeting today the Panel approved a decrease in the management adjustment for true Late-run sockeye from 1,800,000 sockeye to 1,350,000 sockeye as a result of a decrease in the run size estimate to 7,500,000 fish; however the management adjustment factor was unchanged at 0.45. Although environmental conditions will continue to be monitored, further changes to management adjustment factors for Early Stuart, Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye are unlikely since Early Stuart sockeye spawning is complete and most of the migration of Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye has passed Mission and is either en route or has reached their spawning grounds. The final management adjustment factor for Late-run sockeye will depend on the median date of migration past Mission which will be determined over the next few weeks.

DFO's spawning ground enumeration programs are underway at various locations throughout the Fraser River watershed. Updates on some of these programs are provided below. Approximately 2,860 sockeye have been counted into Gates Creek spawning channel through September 6. Observers at the enumeration fence on Scotch Creek have counted approximately 124,000 sockeye past the fence through September 5, which exceeds the total brood year (2002) escapement. The Nadina River spawning channel operator has counted approximately 3,740 sockeye past the fence through September 7. Approximately 2,560 sockeye have passed the McKinley Creek enumeration fence through September 6. The migration of Chilko sockeye passed Henry's Bridge has been steady over the past three weeks, with sockeye counts thus far at a similar level to the brood year. The enumeration fence on the Stellako River has had about 1,800 sockeye counted past it through September 6. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek has enumerated 1,395 Cultus Lake sockeye through September 6, which is substantially higher than the brood year passage of sockeye to this date.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Remains closed to fishing.

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: As previously announced: Extended for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, September 2, 2006, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, September 9, 2006.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Remains closed to fishing.

(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.

Estimated catches and escapements of Fraser River sockeye salmon thus far this season are provided in the table below. The Panel will meet again on September 12 to evaluate the status of the Fraser River sockeye migration and to consider regulatory actions.

2006 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Sep. 3 - Sep. 9, 2006

Date: Sep. 8, 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				172,400
B Areas 11-16	PS				1,406,000
D Areas 11-13	GN				473,500
H Areas 12-16	Troll				209,600
H Areas 18-29	Troll				200
B Area 20	PS				54,000
E Area 29	GN				762,800
Canadian Selective					159,900
FRA Economic Opportunity					384,700
Canadian Total					3,623,100
<u>United States</u>					
<u>Alaska</u>	Net&Troll				0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				22,800
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				421,200
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				216,500
Washington Total					660,500
U.S. Total					660,500
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					62,300
Other Test					62,300
Fraser River Aboriginal (FSC)					297,900
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					289,700
Recreational					90,000
Charter					500
U.S. TI Ceremonial					500
Non-comm. Total					803,200
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					5,086,800
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					2,677,000
Total Accounted-to-date					7,763,800

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	992,500	732,700	80,300	813,000	82%
Summ	Quesnel/Chiiko	2,120,500	644,500	69,400	897,800	42%
	L.Stu./Stel.		168,800	15,100		
Late	Birkenhead	5,283,400	112,700	5,300	1,670,800	32%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		1,326,300	84,500		
	Weav/L.Misc.		49,700	4,900		
	Sub 1s		76,300	11,100		
			0		0	
			0		0	