



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. 11

NEWS RELEASE

September 9, 2005

Information on catches and run size assessments of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon was provided to the Fraser River Panel at the meeting today. The steady migration of Fraser sockeye through the marine approach areas, and in particular, through Johnstone Strait over the past week has resulted in further increases in estimates of their run size and in estimates of the lateness in their marine migratory-timing; the latter of which is unprecedented. To put the degree of their lateness into perspective, the 50% migration timing of Early Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 is now estimated to be almost one month later than their average marine timing and almost one week later than the pre-season forecast of the timing of Late-run sockeye, which are the last run-timing group to enter the Fraser River each year. The late arrival timing of sockeye this season is an extreme deviation from any observations in the historical record and consequently run size estimates for each management group have tended to increase as the season progressed and additional sockeye migrated through the assessment areas.

The diversion rate for Fraser River sockeye migrating through Johnstone Strait is presently estimated at approximately 95%. In-river migration of Fraser sockeye past Mission and Hell's Gate has continued to be strong over the past week. However, it has become increasingly difficult to generate accurate estimates of Fraser sockeye escapements at Mission due to the large, early migration of Fraser River pink salmon that are co-migrating with the sockeye and causing difficulty in estimating species composition for application to the hydro-acoustic estimates of escapement.

Fisheries in the United States have caught approximately 181,000 Fraser sockeye, and an assessment fishery in Canada harvested approximately 1,100 Fraser sockeye. Non-commercial catches of Fraser sockeye in Canada total approximately 861,000 fish in First Nations fisheries and 119,000 fish in test fisheries to-date.

At the meeting on September 6, the run size estimate of Early Summer-run sockeye was increased from 650,000 fish to 750,000 fish (slightly higher than the 50% probability level forecast of 718,000 fish), but was unchanged at the meeting today. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 8 is 657,000 fish.

Recent DNA analyses of sockeye samples collected in marine areas have indicated strength in the Mitchell River (a tributary at the north end of Quesnel Lake) sockeye stock. The run size estimate of 6,500,000 Summer-run sockeye was increased to 7,000,000 fish at the meeting on September 6, and was unchanged at the meeting today. The escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 8 is currently estimated at 5,417,000 fish.

At the meeting on September 6, the Panel approved an increase in the estimate of Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead and Harrison sockeye) from 156,000 to 250,000 fish. At the meeting today the run size estimate of Late-run sockeye was increased to 300,000 fish (approximately double the 50% probability level forecast), assuming a revised 50% arrival timing through Area 20 of August 31, which is 17 days later than their average marine timing. The run size estimate of Late-run sockeye

(excluding Birkenhead) is presently 560,000 fish. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through September 8 is 358,000 fish.

The migration of pink salmon through the marine approach routes continues at moderate abundance levels. The diversion rate of Fraser River pink salmon through Johnstone Strait is presently estimated at approximately 70%. Abundance estimates of Fraser River pink salmon are tracking at approximately the 75% probability level forecast of 11,698,000 fish, although estimates of their run size continue to be highly uncertain due to variability in assumptions regarding their 50% migratory timing through Area 20. If Fraser River pink salmon also exhibit the protracted and late migratory-behavior pattern observed for Fraser sockeye this season, their abundance could be considerably larger than the 75% probability level forecast.

Fisheries in the United States have caught approximately 245,000 Fraser River pink salmon, and an assessment fishery in Canada harvested approximately 400 fish. Non-commercial catches of Fraser River pink salmon in Canada total approximately 247,000 fish in First Nations fisheries, 83,000 fish in test fisheries, and 8,000 fish in recreational fisheries to-date. The escapement of pink salmon past Mission through September 8 is currently estimated at 1,702,000 fish. The unusually large, early migration of pink salmon observed past Hell's Gate has continued over the past week.

Migration conditions for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon in the Fraser River watershed are satisfactory and DFO's Fraser River mainstem sockeye monitoring program reports that there have been no observations of accumulations of dead sockeye in this area over the past month. DFO is continuing spawning ground enumerations of several Early Summer-run, Summer-run, and Late-run sockeye stocks. A reported 4,000 sockeye have been counted past the Scotch Creek fence to-date. Escapement estimation programs involving "mark-recapture" techniques are ongoing in the Chilko, Horsefly, Middle, Tachie, and Upper Pitt River systems. Approximately 12,000 sockeye have been counted through the Stellako fence thus far. The Kuzkwa Creek fence became operational on August 27, and approximately 3,500 Late Stuart sockeye have been counted through it to-date. The counting fence on the Birkenhead River was installed on September 1 and approximately 950 sockeye have passed the fence thus far. Observers at the Cultus Lake enumeration fence have counted 60 sockeye passing the fence to-date and they are reported to be in good condition.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Canada is considering an opening in Area 18-1,4, and 11 for Area H troll, commencing as early as 12:01 a.m., Monday, September 12, 2005. Please refer to the DFO website or to their recorded message at 604-666-2828 for further details.

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: Open to drift gillnets 5:00 a.m., Saturday, September 10, 2005 to 9:00 p.m. Monday, September 12, 2005.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Open to net fishing from 5:00 a.m., Saturday, September 10 to 9:00 p.m. Monday, September 12, 2005.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to gillnets from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, September 13, 2005, and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, September 14, 2005.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to purse seines from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 13, 2005, and from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 14, 2005.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to reef nets from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 13, 2005, and from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 14, 2005.

(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_collections_2005.htm . In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye and pink escapement data, and sockeye and pink salmon 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 September 12 to evaluate the status of the Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon runs and to consider regulatory actions.

2005 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Sep. 4 - Sep. 10, 2005

Date: Sep. 9, 2005

Area	Gear	Fraser Sockeye	
			Cumul.
Commercial Catch			
Canada			
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		1,100
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			1,100
United States			
<u>Alaska</u>	Net&Troll		0
<u>Washington</u>			
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net		5,100
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net		116,200
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net		52,800
Washington Total			174,100
U.S. Total			174,100
Non-commercial Catch			
PSC Test			46,200
Other Test			72,400
Fraser River Aboriginal (FSC)			582,600
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal			278,800
Recreational			1,000
Charter			0
U.S. TI Ceremonial			6,700
Non-comm. Total			987,700
Catch and Escapement			
Catch Accounted-to-date			1,162,900
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)			6,344,700
Total Accounted-to-date			7,507,600

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target *	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	207,600	206,100	1,500	207,600	100%
ESum	Early Summer	753,900	656,700	17,500	674,200	89%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	4,822,300	4,602,800	104,100	5,544,600	115%
	L.Stu./Stel.		813,700	24,000		
Late	Birkenhead	649,800	130,100	3,500	500,800	77%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		45,100	400		
	Weav/L.Misc.		101,400	1,000		
	Sub 1s		211,400	7,900		
	3 sub 1s		150,400		150,400	

2005 Fraser River Panel Pink Salmon Review

Week of: Sep. 4 - Sep. 10, 2005

Date: Sep. 9, 2005

Area	Gear	Fraser Pinks Cumul.
Commercial Catch		
Canada		
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 Areas 11-16	GN	400
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
Canadian Total		400
United States		
Alaska		0
Washington		
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net	4,000
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net	146,300
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net	78,300
Washington Total		228,600
U.S. Total		228,600
Non-commercial Catch		
PSC Test		12,400
Other Test		70,500
Fraser River Aboriginal		49,400
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal		197,700
Canadian Recreational		7,900
Charter		0
U.S. Ceremonial		16,600
U.S. Recreational		0
Non-comm. Total		354,500
Catch and Escapement		
Catch Accounted-to-date		583,500
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less IF & sport catch above Missior		1,701,700
Total Accounted-to-date		2,285,200