

At the meeting today, the Fraser River Panel received an update on the progress of the Fraser River sockeye runs and the extremely adverse temperature conditions that migrating sockeye are encountering in the Fraser River. Over the last few weeks there have been numerous reports of sockeye exhibiting behavior consistent with stress imparted by the record high water temperatures in the Fraser River. Numerous moribund sockeye have been observed holding off the mouths of many Fraser River tributaries. There have also been several observations of dead sockeye in the Fraser River mainstem between Hell's Gate and Lillooet and observers have reported a high incidence of body lesions and gill abnormalities in all live and dead sockeye that have been examined. The mortality rate of Fraser sockeye resulting from these adverse migratory conditions is expected to be severe, as in 1998 when high in-river mortality also occurred as a result of elevated river temperatures. The Panel has increased the gross escapement goal (past Mission) for Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye to help compensate for the anticipated high mortality of these sockeye en route to their spawning grounds.

The abundance of Fraser sockeye in marine areas is declining rapidly, since the peak of the Summer-run migration has entered the Fraser River and Late-run sockeye abundance is forecast to be only a small fraction of the Summer-run return strength. Most of the commercial catch of Fraser sockeye in Panel waters was harvested in fisheries that occurred in late July and early August when true Late-run sockeye (Weaver, Late Shuswap, Cultus, Portage) were expected to be present in only very low proportions. Panel Areas have been closed to commercial fishing since mid-August to conserve true Late-run sockeye as was agreed to by the parties in the pre-season fishing plan. Catches of Fraser River sockeye in all fisheries totals 2,096,000 fish to-date. Canadian and United States commercial catches of Fraser sockeye total 1,326,000 fish and 191,000 fish, respectively, while 579,000 fish have been harvested in non-commercial fisheries.

The estimate of 1,500,000 Early Summer-run sockeye (69% higher than the 50% p level forecast of 885,000 fish) remains unchanged. Recent DNA analyses indicate that Early Summer-run sockeye proportions are declining in marine areas and currently comprise approximately 10% of the Fraser sockeye migration through Johnstone Strait. The estimated migration of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 19 is 932,000 fish.

At a meeting on August 16, the Panel approved a reduction in the run size estimate of Summer-run sockeye from 3,500,000 fish to 3,200,000 fish. The marine migratory abundance of Summer-run sockeye is declining rapidly and it is possible that the run size estimate for these sockeye will decrease next week after additional assessment data are available. The estimated migration of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 19 is 1,204,000 fish.

True Late-run sockeye and Birkenhead sockeye currently comprise a low proportion of the Fraser sockeye presently migrating through the marine and Fraser River assessment areas. Studies conducted on Late-run sockeye in recent years indicate that a high proportion of Late-run sockeye entering the Fraser River prior to September will likely die prior to successfully spawning. No abundance updates were

provided to the forecasts for Birkenhead sockeye (218,000 fish at the 50% p level) and true Late-run sockeye (100,000 fish at the 50% p level). The estimated migration of Birkenhead sockeye past Mission through August 19 is 51,000 fish.

The water temperature of the Fraser River (measured at Qualark Creek) is currently 21.3 °C and it is forecast to exceed 20 °C for the next two days before declining towards temperatures more satisfactory (< 18 °C) for successful sockeye migration. Fraser River water temperatures over the last five days are the highest on these dates for the period of record (since 1942). The low river flow (due to a low snow-pack and little precipitation this summer) coupled with hot weather conditions throughout the Fraser watershed since early July has contributed to these persistent, very high water temperatures. The discharge of the Fraser River at Hope is currently 2,600 cms (22% lower than average for this date). Environmental conditions for migrating sockeye in the Fraser watershed will be monitored closely over the coming weeks.

The escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past the enumeration fences on Forfar, Gluske, Kynock, and Dust creeks is virtually complete and it is only a small fraction of the Early Stuart escapement that was estimated at the Mission hydroacoustic site and it is less than 15% of the brood year (2000) escapements to these four creeks. Early indications from other spawning ground locations are also not encouraging to-date. The Nadina River Channel operator has reported that sockeye have arrived at the spawning channels, however none have been permitted to pass through the counting fence and into the channels thus far. The Kuzkwa enumeration fence that is used to help assess Late Stuart sockeye escapements, has not had any sockeye pass through it to-date, although sockeye have been observed downstream of the fence. The first Chilko sockeye were observed at Henry's Bridge on August 15, which is later than when they are typically first spotted at this observation point. On a more positive note, observers estimated that there were 20,675 sockeye in the Upper Chilliwack River during a helicopter survey on August 18, which exceeds the brood year escapement.

There have been no Cultus Lake sockeye enumerated at the Sweltzer Creek fence to-date, unlike 2002 and 2003 when several sockeye had already been counted through the fence. At this time, it is not possible to determine whether the absence of sockeye at Sweltzer Creek fence thus far is due to: (1) the forecasted very low run size (< 500 fish); (2) the adverse water temperature conditions (23 °C to 26 °C) at the Sweltzer Creek fence; (3) they have reverted to more average "first-arrival" timing at the Sweltzer Creek fence (i.e., mid-to-late September); or (4) a combination of the above factors.

Further commercial fishing in Panel Area waters is not expected this season. The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Remain closed to fishing.

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Remains closed to fishing.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Remains closed to fishing.

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) 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/TestFish/>. The PSC has provided information on Late-run Fraser River sockeye migration behavior, en route mortality, and research results on the Internet at: <http://www.psc.org/Pubs/LateRun/Index.htm/>. In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye escapement data and stock status reports are available on the Internet at: www.psc.org. 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, on the Internet at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/> and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations in addition to those adopted by the Panel for the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on August 27. 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.

2004 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 15 - Aug. 21, 2004

Date: August 20, 2004

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				500,100
D Areas 11-16	GN				155,600
H Areas 12-16	Troll				133,000
H Areas 18-29	Troll				0
B Area 20	PS				10,500
E Area 29	GN				246,200
Canadian Selective					13,100
FRA Economic Opportunity					267,800
Canadian Total					1,326,300
<u>United States</u>					
<u>Alaska</u>		Net&Troll			0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				15,100
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				95,400
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				80,400
Washington Total					190,900
U.S. Total					190,900
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					23,900
Other Test					49,400
Fraser River Aboriginal (FSC)					251,700
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					254,100
Recreational					0
Charter					0
U.S. TI Ceremonial					100
Non-comm. Total					579,200
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					2,096,400
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					2,065,800
Total Accounted-to-date					4,162,200

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target *	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	197,500	187,000	4,000	191,000	97%
ESum	Early Summer	1,080,700	932,000	71,000	1,003,000	93%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	2,498,500	424,000	36,000	1,317,000	53%
	L.Stu./Stel.		780,000	77,000		
Late	Birkenhead	192,800	51,000	6,000	75,000	39%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		0	0		
	Weav/L.Misc.		17,000	1,000		