

The Fraser River Panel met on August 8 to review the status of sockeye salmon abundance estimates, catches, migratory behavior and escapements. The Panel is carefully monitoring the results of DNA analyses that have identified increasing proportions of Late-run sockeye in marine and Fraser River assessment areas over the past several days. Fisheries management actions in the coming weeks will be guided in part by estimates of the abundance, upstream migration date, and the expected in-river mortality rate of Late-run sockeye, as agreed by the Fraser River Panel. The total catch of Fraser River sockeye thus far in Canadian commercial fisheries is 810,000 fish, and in fisheries in United States Panel Area waters, 91,000 sockeye have been harvested. The commercial harvest of Late-run sockeye by Canadian fishers is currently projected to be 111,000 fish, which if confirmed by further analyses may have implications with respect to future Canadian commercial fisheries. In the United States, commercial fisheries are projected to have harvested less than half of their allowable catch of Late-run sockeye.

The diversion rate of Fraser sockeye through Johnstone Strait is presently estimated at approximately 70%, which is slightly higher than the estimate last week. Summer-run sockeye constitute the largest portion (60% to 70%) of the catches in Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait, with Early Summer-run and Late-run sockeye each comprising approximately 10% to 20% of the remaining fish in these catches.

The provisional run size estimate of 550,000 Early Summer-run sockeye is unchanged from last week. Assessments of the 50% arrival timing of Early Summer-run sockeye in Area 20 are indicating July 29, which is approximately six days later than normal. The escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission has reached 263,000 fish.

Summer-run sockeye abundance in the assessment areas is tracking a run size consistent with the 50% probability level forecast (3,360,000 fish) when assuming normal timing. An in-season estimate of the run-size of Summer-run sockeye will be made next week, after the 50% arrival timing of Summer-run sockeye is forecast to have occurred in Area 20. DNA analyses of sockeye sampled from recent catches in Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait suggest that Chilko sockeye are comprising a large portion of the Summer-run sockeye migrating through marine areas. The migration of Summer-run sockeye past Mission to-date is estimated at 540,000 fish.

The 50% probability level forecast for Late-run sockeye (Late Shuswap, Cultus, Portage, and Weaver stocks, but excluding Birkenhead) is 1,319,000 fish, while Birkenhead sockeye are expected to return at an abundance level of 322,000 fish (50% probability level). Late-run sockeye returns are forecast to be dominated by the Late Shuswap and Weaver stocks, while Cultus Lake sockeye are forecast to return in low numbers (9,000 fish at the 50% probability level). Assessments of Late-run sockeye timing, abundance, delay in the lower Strait of Georgia and in-river entry behavior will be conducted over the next several weeks.

Fraser River pink salmon are forecast to return at an abundance of 17,273,000 fish (50% probability level forecast). Reasonably large catches of pink salmon occurred in the purse seine fisheries in Johnstone Strait this week, however most of the pink salmon taken in those fisheries were likely en route to Mainland Inlet, B.C. spawning grounds (e.g., Glendale Creek and Kakweiken River) and Vancouver Island watersheds such as the Quinsam River. Catches of Fraser River pink salmon to date are estimated at approximately 160,000 fish. Forecasts of the diversion rate of Fraser River pink salmon through Johnstone Strait and the 50% arrival timing of Fraser pinks in Area 20 will be available in a few weeks. The peak migration timing of Fraser River pink salmon through Area 20 usually occurs between the end of August and early September. The progress of the Fraser River pink salmon run will be monitored over the next several weeks.

Migration conditions for sockeye migrating in the Fraser River continue to be adverse. The water temperature in the Fraser River at Qualark Creek is currently 19.2 °C. Water temperatures in the Fraser River exceeded 19 °C for the past eleven days and were over 20 °C for most of the last week. Substantial en route mortality of sockeye currently migrating to their spawning grounds could occur under these unfavorable temperature conditions. The discharge measured at Hope is approximately 3,175 cms, which is slightly higher than 1998 (3,150 cms) but almost 20% lower than normal (3,900 cms) for this date. The weather is forecast to be slightly cooler with some showers in portions of the Fraser River watershed over the next several days. Environmental conditions for migrating Fraser River sockeye will be monitored closely over the coming weeks.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) have conducted escapement enumeration of several Early Stuart sockeye stocks for the past several weeks. As of August 3, approximately 3,300 Early Stuart sockeye have been enumerated at the fences on Kynock, Forfar, and Gluske creeks. The condition of the fish arriving at these fences is reported to be excellent although water levels in the creeks are low. Approximately, 1,100 Gates Creek (Early Summer-run) sockeye have been counted at the Seton dam to date. In the lower Fraser River watershed, observers at Cultus Lake enumerated the first sockeye on August 5, which is several weeks earlier than normal and suggests that at least some Late-run sockeye may continue to exhibit this atypical, and detrimental behavior.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

United States Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Treaty Indian Fisheries:

Areas 4B, 5, and 6C: Extended for drift gillnets to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Wednesday, August 13.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Open for net fishing from 5:00 a.m., Saturday, August 9 to 7:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 13.

Non-Indian Fisheries:

Areas 7 and 7A: Gillnets will close as scheduled at 11:59 p.m., Friday, August 8.

Areas 7 and 7A: Purse seines will close as scheduled at 9:00 p.m., Friday, August 8.

Areas 7 and 7A: Reef nets open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 12.

Canadian Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Area 18-1,4 and 11; and Area 29-1 to 6: Open for Area H Individual Quota Project Fishery until further notice.

Area 18-1,4 and 11; and Area 29-1 to 6: Open for Area H Troll Full Fleet Fishery until further notice.

Area B seine assessment fishery: Open for 10 seine vessels fishing under the authority of a scientific licence in Area 20 from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday, August 11.

Note: Fishers catching a radio-tagged sockeye (which will have a thin wire antenna protruding from the mouth and an external, blue Floy tag attached to the antenna) are requested to please contact the following phone number, which is toll free in Canada and the U.S. 1-877-666-7575.

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 updated information on Late-run Fraser River sockeye migration behavior, en route mortality, and research results and plans on the Internet at: <http://www.psc.org/Pubs/LateRun/Index.htm/>. In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye and pink 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 and via fishery notices.

The Panel will meet again August 11 to evaluate the Fraser River sockeye migration status and to consider regulatory actions.

2003 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 3 - Aug. 9, 2003

Date: August 8, 2003

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	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				443,000
D Areas 11-16	GN				158,300
H Areas 12-16	Troll				69,000
H Areas 18-29	Troll				0
B Area 20	PS				0
E Area 29	GN				131,100
Canadian Selective					9,000
Canadian Total					810,400
United States					
<u>Alaska</u>		Net&Troll			0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				17,500
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				43,300
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				30,000
Washington Total					90,800
U.S. Total					90,800
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					23,500
Other Test					34,600
Fraser River Aboriginal					113,900
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					19,200
Recreational					0
Charter					0
U.S. TI Ceremonial					200
Non-comm. Total					191,400
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					1,092,600
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					783,700
Total Accounted-to-date					1,876,300

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target *	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	28,500	29,000	0	29,000	102%
ESum	Early Summer	439,500	263,000	8,000	271,000	62%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	1,691,200	366,000	15,000	562,000	33%
	L.Stu./Stel.		174,000	7,000		
Late	Birkenhead	1,239,400	0	0	28,000	2%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		6,000	0		
	Weav/L.Misc.		20,000	2,000		