

The Fraser River Panel met August 29 to review assessment information on Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon. The abundance of Summer-run and Late-run Fraser River sockeye salmon in Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait declined over the past week as the peak of the runs has passed and the fish continue en route to their spawning grounds in the Fraser River watershed. The estimate of the diversion rate of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon through Johnstone Strait currently exceeds 80%. Fraser sockeye presently migrating through the marine approach areas are comprised of approximately 10% Summer-run sockeye, 55% Late-run sockeye and 35% Birkenhead sockeye. The estimated total catch of Fraser River sockeye salmon thus far in all Canadian fisheries is 1,750,000 fish, and fisheries in the United States have harvested 243,000 sockeye. Catches of Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead sockeye) in all fisheries in Canada and the United States to date total 276,000 and 32,000 fish, respectively.

The in-season run size estimate for Summer-run sockeye of 3,300,000 fish remains unchanged. The 50% migration timing of Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 was August 7, which is normal timing. The gross escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission now totals 1,905,000 fish. This exceeds the gross escapement goal for these sockeye, however it is expected that they will experience some en route mortality losses related to high water temperatures encountered during their upstream migration.

The Panel provisional in-season run size estimate for Late-run sockeye remains unchanged at 1,319,000 to fish (excluding Birkenhead sockeye). The Panel approved an in-season provisional run-size estimate of 322,000 Birkenhead sockeye (50% probability level forecast). The 50% arrival timing of Late-run sockeye in Area 20 is projected to have occurred on August 15. The gulf troll test fishery has caught few sockeye in areas where Late-run sockeye normally delay. The low proportion of Late-run sockeye that are presently delaying have been congregating in the marine area off the mouth of the Fraser River (sometimes referred to as the "flats"). It is estimated that less than 30% of Late-run sockeye have delayed in the southern Gulf of Georgia thus far this season. The low proportion of Late-run sockeye delaying in the gulf along with the projected early 50% migration timing of Late-run sockeye in the Fraser River (August 31) has resulted in estimates of en route loss of these fish of slightly below 80%. Hydro-acoustic assessments at Mission have enumerated an estimated 451,000 Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead) to date.

The current estimate of the total run of Fraser River sockeye this season is 5,556,000 fish, which is marginally higher than the 50% probability level forecast of 5,502,000 sockeye. The present estimates of the run sizes by timing-group compared to the 50% probability level forecasts are as follows: Early Stuart sockeye, 33% of forecast; Early Summer-run sockeye, 142% of forecast; Summer-run sockeye, 98% of forecast; and Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead sockeye), 100% of forecast.

Catches of pink salmon in the Juan de Fuca Strait purse seine test fishery have declined considerably from peak catches that occurred from August 18 to 21. Although test-fishing catches in Johnstone Strait have fluctuated over the past few weeks, they have indicated a strong pink salmon migration through this approach area. Few Fraser River pink salmon are presently exhibiting their historic behavior of delaying in the southern Gulf of Georgia for several days prior to entering the Fraser River, which is similar to the marine migratory behavior of Late-run sockeye. Stock identification analyses of pink salmon sampled from commercial and test fisheries in the marine approach areas indicate that over 80% of these fish are en route to the Fraser River. Assessments of the run size of Fraser River pink salmon are preliminary

because the 50% arrival timing of Fraser pinks through Area 20 is not forecast to occur until August 31. However, analyses of the passage of Fraser River pink salmon through the marine assessment areas have accounted for over 15,000,000 fish to date. The early migration of pink salmon into the Fraser River has resulted in an estimate of the gross escapement of pink salmon to date of 491,000 fish, which is much higher than normal for this date.

Migratory conditions for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon have improved over the past week. Water temperatures in the Fraser River (measured at Qualark Creek) have declined from 19 °C last week to presently 17 °C. The discharge measured at Hope is presently 3,200 cms, which is slightly higher than normal for this date.

Observers at DFO's spawning ground enumeration fences on four Early Stuart creeks counted a total of approximately 6,000 fish. Approximately 2,000 Early Summer-run sockeye have been observed thus far at the Scotch Creek enumeration fence. Reports from the Nadina River spawning channel confirm that over 300 sockeye have entered the channel to date. Mark-recapture studies on the Upper Pitt, Chilko and Horsefly Rivers are underway and will provide estimates of escapements and assessments of the condition of spawning fish. An enumeration fence was recently installed in the Stellako River and approximately 300 sockeye have been counted to date. Sockeye migrating through the enumeration fence in the Cultus Lake system now total 106 fish.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN PANEL AREA WATERS:

Remain closed to fishing.

UNITED STATES PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY

Areas 4B, 5, and 6C: Open for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon) Tuesday, September 2 to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Friday, September 5.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Open for net fishing from 5:00 a.m., Thursday, September 4 to 9:00 p.m., Friday, September 5, southerly and easterly of a straight line drawn from the low water range marker in Boundary Bay on the International Boundary through the east tip of Point Roberts in the State of Washington to the East Point Light on Saturna Island in the Province of British Columbia. Purse seines may retain only pink and coho salmon.

NON INDIAN FISHERY

Areas 7 and 7A: Purse seines open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 2 and Wednesday, September 3, southerly and easterly of a straight line drawn from the low water range marker in Boundary Bay on the International Boundary through the east tip of Point Roberts in the State of Washington to the East Point Light on Saturna Island in the Province of British Columbia. Only pink salmon may be retained.

Areas 7, 7A: Extended for Reef nets, 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily to Saturday, September 6. Only pink salmon may be retained through August 31; from September 1 to September 6, only pink salmon and marked coho (without an adipose fin) may be retained.

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 September 2 to evaluate the status of the Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon runs and to consider regulatory actions.

2003 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 24 - Aug. 30, 2003

Date: August 29, 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				473,000
D Areas 11-16	GN				167,000
H Areas 12-16	Troll				127,000
H Areas 18-29	Troll				0
B Area 20	PS				6,000
E Area 29	GN				259,000
Canadian Selective					13,000
Canadian Total					1,045,000
United States					
<u>Alaska</u>	Net&Troll				0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				35,000
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				124,000
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				84,000
Washington Total					243,000
U.S. Total					243,000
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					40,000
Other Test					64,000
Fraser River Aboriginal					455,000
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					216,000
Recreational					34,000
Charter					100
U.S. TI Ceremonial					400
Non-comm. Total					810,000
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					2,098,000
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					2,568,000
Total Accounted-to-date					4,666,000

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target *	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	29,000	29,000	0	29,000	100%
ESum	Early Summer	452,000	370,000	14,000	384,000	85%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	1,670,000	1,565,000	105,000	2,027,000	121%
	L.Stu./Stel.		340,000	17,000		
Late	Birkenhead	1,370,000	129,000	8,000	618,000	45%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		281,000	19,000		
	Weav/L.Misc.		170,000	11,000		