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No. 3

## WEEKLY REPORT

August 4, 2023

The Fraser River Panel (Panel) met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon.

### **Test fishing and stock identification information**

Recent increases in sockeye catches, especially in Johnstone Strait, indicate a shift in migration route from Juan de Fuca Strait to Johnstone Strait – currently 53% northern diversion rate. DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 12 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 12% Early Summer, 77% Summer and 11% Late run. Pink salmon test fishing catches in marine areas continue to be dominated by non-Fraser pinks (e.g., only 12% Fraser pink salmon from a recent Area 12 sample).

### **Assessment results**

#### Fraser River Sockeye Salmon

As of August 3, 181,700 Early Summer-run sockeye have passed Mission. The Early Summer run continues to be dominated by Chilliwack and Nadina which are earlier stock components of this run. While some Early South Thompson fish have been observed, the abundances to date are still indicating a run size below the median preseason forecast of 61,000 sockeye. The PSC staff recommended an in-season run size estimate for Early Summer run of 240,000, with an Area 20 timing estimate of July 20. This run size is larger than the preseason forecast of 186,000 and the timing is significantly earlier than the preseason forecasted timing of August 6. The PSC staff assessed the performance of multiple models to calculate management adjustments in the context of historically low river discharge levels. Based on this analysis PSC staff recommended an updated proportional Difference Between Estimate (pDBE) of -0.52 from -0.36, given the historically low discharge level and the implication for increased en route mortality in the Fraser River.

Both the Canadian and U.S. section of the Panel agreed to adopt the recommended run size and timing adjustments. However, the U.S. did not support the adoption of the increased management adjustment (MA), at this time, and cited the poor historical performance of the model used to support the recommendation as well as the lack of management implications of the recommended adjustment (no implications for international TAC). In the end, the Canadian section of the Panel accepted the pDBE recommendation made by PSC staff resulting in an adoption of a proportional Management Adjustment of 1.08.

Most components of the Summer-run group are represented in samples from marine test fisheries. Currently, the most abundant stock is Chilko sockeye. The Summer run escapement past Mission, as of August 3, is 34,000 sockeye. Based on the median preseason forecast for Summer run (1,167,000), this group is managed under a Low Abundance Exploitation rate, indicating there is no available harvestable surplus. In-season run size estimates for Summer run are expected to be available near the end of next week.

#### Fraser River Pink Salmon

It is still very early in terms of pink salmon assessments and in-season assessment results are expected to be available in the latter half of August.

### **Migration conditions in the Fraser River**

The extreme low discharge and high temperatures are expected to negatively impact migration conditions for Fraser River sockeye. As of August 3, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 2,234 cms, which is 45% lower than average for this date and below the historical minimum. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark was 19.7°C, which is 1.4°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will increase, and discharge is forecast to decrease to 1,952 cms over the next 10 days.

### **Escapement Update**

Visual surveys for the Early Stuart spawning escapement assessment program began July 23 and sockeye appear to be nearing or in peak spawning in Trembleur Lake and Middle River whereas they are primarily holding in Takla Lake. Low water conditions in the Middle River are making boat passage challenging for the survey crews. Sockeye appear to be vigorous and healthy.

Visual surveys on the Upper Chilliwack River started August 1 and water levels are characterized as being very low for this time of year. The Nadina River hydroacoustic site was operational as of July 27 and as of July 31 an estimated 132 sockeye have migrated past the Nadina hydroacoustic site.

The Chilko River and Quesnel River hydroacoustic sites have been operational since August 2 and in-season migration numbers will be available with the next update. Visual surveys started on the Nechako River tributaries August 1. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 26 and as of July 31 an estimated 1,171 sockeye have been recorded at the site. Note that for the early part of this migration the majority of the sockeye are migrating to the Nadina River. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) has been fish tight since July 25 and night video recording started July 27. No sockeye have passed to date. The water temperature is 25.0°C.

### **Regulatory Announcements & Resources**

The Panel announced the following regulations for commercial salmon fisheries in Panel Area waters:

#### **CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remain closed to commercial salmon fishing.

#### **UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remain closed to commercial salmon fishing.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on August 8. Weekly reports in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission every Friday during the in-season management period to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye salmon run. Weekly reports and regulatory announcements can be obtained via [Fraser Panel In-Season Information - Pacific Salmon Commission \(psc.org\)](https://psc.org) or by subscribing to our eNews [Pacific Salmon Commission \(list-manage.com\)](https://list-manage.com). Resources and contacts for fishing schedules, regulations, test fishing catch and DFO's environmental watch program can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Regulations & Resources

Fishing Schedule Contacts/Resources	Phone Number/ Website Links
United States fishing schedules (Treaty Indian)	1-800-562-6142
United States fishing schedules (Non-Indian)	1-800-662-9825
Canadian commercial fishing regulations (from the lower B.C. mainland)	604-666-2828
Canadian commercial fishing regulations (from outside the lower B.C. mainland)	1-866-431-3474
PSC Daily Test Fishing Catch (recorded message)	604-666-8200 <a href="http://psc.org">Test Fishing Results - Pacific Salmon Commission (psc.org)</a>
DFO's Environmental Watch program	<a href="http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca">Fraser River environmental watch   Pacific Region   Fisheries and Oceans Canada (dfo-mpo.gc.ca)</a>

Note: For species other than sockeye salmon consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

**Contacts**

Canada: Adam Keizer, Chair, Fraser River Panel

United States: Jason Gobin, Vice-Chair, Fraser River Panel

**2023 Run status of Fraser sockeye salmon**

Date: Aug. 4, 2023

Week of: Jul. 30 - Aug. 5, 2023	Sockeye					Total Fraser
	Management Group					
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late		
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) <sup>1</sup>	40,900	181,700	34,000	700		257,300
Catch downstream of Mission	200	2,700	1,800	100		4,800
Accounted run-to-date	41,100	184,400	35,800	800		262,100
<b>Run size adopted in-season <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>		<b>na</b>
Run size forecasted pre-season	23,000	186,000	1,167,000	188,000		1,564,000
<b>Area 20 timing adopted in-season</b>	<b>2/Jul</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>		
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	7/Jul	6/Aug	17/Aug	24/Aug		

<sup>1</sup> Run sizes are usually not adopted until after the peak of the run has passed through marine test fishery areas in Juan de Fuca and Johnstone straits.

2023 Catch-to-date by fishery

Date: Aug. 4, 2023

Week of: Jul. 30 - Aug. 5, 2023		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
<b>Canada</b>		<b>299</b>	<b>299</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	B Purse Seine	0	0
	D Gillnet	0	0
	E Gillnet	0	0
	F Troll	0	0
	G Troll	0	0
	H Troll	0	0
	<b>First Nations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	Economic Opportunity (EO) & Demonstration (Demo)	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	<b>Recreational</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	<b>Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>147</b>
	<b>Other**</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>United States</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Treaty Tribes (TRB)	0	0
	All Citizen (AC)	0	0
	<b>Treaty Tribes Ceremonial &amp; Subsistence (C&amp;S)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Other**</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>All Citizen Recreational</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Alaska *</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>
<b>Panel-approved Test Fisheries</b>		<b>5,319</b>	<b>4,865</b>
	<b>Panel Waters</b>	<b>3,641</b>	<b>3,391</b>
	<b>Non-Panel Waters</b>	<b>1,678</b>	<b>1,474</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,618</b>	<b>5,163</b>

\* Alaska catch is processed post-season and so is unavailable in-season.

\*\* May include unauthorized directed retention or unauthorized bycatch retention in fisheries directed at other species