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No. 5

WEEKLY REPORT

August 11, 2023

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

Test fishing and stock identification information

Sockeye catches in Johnstone Strait remain substantially higher than in Juan de Fuca Strait resulting currently in a northern diversion rate of 74%. 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, 70% Summer and 18% Late run. Very large increases in pink salmon catches have been observed in marine test fisheries; however, the proportion of Fraser River pink salmon is still relatively low with the most recent sample from Area 20 indicating 18% Fraser pink.

Assessment results

Fraser River Sockeye Salmon

On Friday, the Panel adopted an in-season run size adjustment for Early Stuart down to 41,000 from 43,000. The timing remained the same, July 2.

As of August 10, 239,300 Early Summer-run sockeye have passed Mission. Proportions of Early Summer run have been declining in the marine test fisheries. Despite the larger than forecasted returns, this group remains managed under a Low Abundance Exploitation Rate, given expected en-route losses within the Fraser River due to adverse environmental conditions. On Friday, the Panel adopted an increase in the Early Summer-run run size to 288,000, with an associated Area 20 timing estimate of July 23.

Summer-run sockeye dominate the proportions of observed sockeye in the marine test fisheries with most of these fish from the Chilko/Quesnel stock group. The Summer run escapement past Mission, as of August 10, is 138,400 sockeye. Based on in-season observations, Summer run seems to be either later timed than previously anticipated (assuming a peak migration timing on August 6) or smaller than preseason expectations (median preseason forecast of 1,167,000) or a combination of both. At the median preseason forecast, this group is managed under a Low Abundance Exploitation Rate, indicating there is no available harvestable surplus.

Late-run sockeye, have been observed in the marine test fisheries, but observations in river test fisheries have been limited as some of the Late run may be delaying their entry into the Fraser River. The accounted run to date past Mission as of August 10 is 8,200.

Fraser River Pink Salmon

While substantial pink salmon have been caught in marine test fisheries, it is still very early in terms of the assessment of Fraser River pink salmon given that they currently make up a small portion of the catches. Only 10 pink salmon have been caught in the in-river test fisheries. To date, 9,100 pink salmon have been observed migrating past Mission.

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 10, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 2,057 cms, which is 42% lower than average for this date and below the historical minimum. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark was 20.5°C, which is 1.9°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will remain high, and discharge is forecast to decrease to 1,866 cms over the next 10 days.

Escapement Update

Visual surveys for the Early Stuart spawning escapement assessment program began July 23 and sockeye are primarily in or past peak spawning in the Middle River tributaries. Fresh sockeye arrivals have been observed in the Takla Lake area. Low water conditions continue throughout the system. Multiple creek mouths are almost dry and while water temperatures in creeks have slightly increased, sockeye continue to appear 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 August 5 an estimated 801 sockeye have migrated past the Nadina hydroacoustic site.

The Chilko River and Quesnel River hydroacoustic sites have been operational since August 2. As of August 8, 168 sockeye have migrated past the Chilko hydroacoustic site and 275 sockeye have migrated past the Quesnel hydroacoustic site. Visual surveys started on the Nechako River tributaries August 1, but no surveys were conducted within this reporting period. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 26 and as of August 8, an estimated 15,099 sockeye have migrated past the site, the majority migrating to the Nadina River this early in the migration. 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 24.0°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 15. 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 Test Fishing Results - Pacific Salmon Commission (psc.org)
DFO's Environmental Watch program	Fraser River environmental watch Pacific Region Fisheries and Oceans Canada (dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

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. 11, 2023

Week of: Aug. 6 - Aug. 12, 2023	Sockeye				Total Fraser
	Management Group				
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) ¹	40,900	239,300	138,400	8,200	426,800
Catch downstream of Mission	200	3,100	3,500	500	7,300
Accounted run-to-date	41,100	242,400	141,900	8,700	434,100
Run size adopted in-season ¹	41,000	290,000	na	na	na
Run size forecasted pre-season	23,000	186,000	1,167,000	188,000	1,564,000
Area 20 timing adopted in-season	2/Jul	23/Jul	na	na	
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	7/Jul	6/Aug	17/Aug	24/Aug	

¹ 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. 11, 2023

Week of: Aug. 6 - Aug. 12, 2023		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
Canada		1,524	1,524
Commercial		0	0
	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
First Nations		0	0
	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
Recreational		0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)		205	205
Other**		1,193	1,193
United States		0	0
Commercial		0	0
	Treaty Tribes (TRB)	0	0
	All Citizen (AC)	0	0
Treaty Tribes Ceremonial & Subsistence (C&S)		0	0
Other**		0	0
All Citizen Recreational		0	0
Alaska *		na	na
Panel-approved Test Fisheries		7,973	7,473
Panel Waters		5,475	5,200
Non-Panel Waters		2,498	2,273
Total		9,497	8,996

* 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