



# WATERSHED TALK

## NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser Salmon Management Council

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### 2022 WATERSHED TALK NEWSLETTER UPDATE

By: Greg Witzky, FSMC Interim Executive Director

*Today's issue of the WST contains the Fraser River Panel deliberations summary data below with important information to assist readers with better understanding the current fisheries management decisions made by the Fraser River Panel.*

### Fraser Panel Summary August 12, 2022

- To date 1,595,000 Fraser sockeye have been accounted for in catch and escapement. Total Fraser sockeye is tracking the p25 (5 million total), projected marine abundance indicates a potential for total returns above p25, but abundances of Summer and Late run sockeye will be the drivers of total abundance this season.
- The current projection is for approximately 1 million fish en route between the marine test fisheries and the river that will show up in river next week.
- Current catch estimates are a total of 116,895. 83,100 in Canada, 13,108 in US fisheries, and 20,687 in Fraser Panel test fisheries.
  - Canadian catch: 78,212 in FSC fisheries and 4,879 in other catch.
  - US catch: 4,641 in Treaty Tribes commercial, and 8,467 in Treaty Ceremonial and Subsistence.
- Mission passage has increased substantially since last week. Daily passage has exceeded 100,000 sockeye past Mission per day for a few days, and is trending upwards.
  - The Mission hydroacoustic estimates have also been recalculated (increased slightly) for the past two weeks. This is because the high-water levels were affecting their daily estimates of sockeye passage, the recalculation has been accounted for in today's distribution.
- Early Summers are dropping out of the marine approach test fisheries fairly quickly (3 - 5% currently projected) and trending downwards. As Summer run and Late run sockeye of abundance start to show up in larger proportions, the few Early Summers that are left make up smaller proportions of the run.
  - Early Summers are still present in river in moderate stock proportions this weekend (10 – 15%).

- Early Summers are the primary constraint to fishing currently. Once Early Summers are mostly clear from fishing areas, fisheries are expected to ramp up.
- Summer run sockeye are taking over the majority of abundance in all areas of the marine approach and in-river. We should get a good indication of the in-season run size sometime next week. Currently Summer run is tracking between p25 and p50 (2 million and 4 million).
- Late run sockeye are starting to show up in marine test fisheries in some proportion (19 – 33%). No Late runs have entered the river in notable abundance. They are delaying migration off the mouth of the Fraser as expected.
- Panel adopted a very slight increase of the Early Summers run size to 792,000 from 764,000. No decision has been made on changes or adoption of an in-season run size for Summer run sockeye.
- The US proposed some larger fisheries in the marine approach and indicated an interest in continuing to increase fisheries next week. Canada voiced concerns around the potential impact on Early Summers (indeed on the early Thompson stocks of concern) , and the uncertainty around the projected estimate of seaward Early Summers, but agreed to the fisheries as proposed. All the US fisheries proposed and implemented to date are consistent with a fishing plan for a total return around the p25 (5 million total).
- Treaty language states that if either party supports the PSC recommendation to increase run sizes, then the rules say that it is passed.
- No Canadian commercial fisheries were proposed.
- The Panel again deferred the decision to retain payfish in test fisheries until next week.

*The narrative noted below for this week's WST is intended to provide a general, cut and paste from the PSC website, overview of the Fraser River Panel basic roles and responsibilities within the Pacific Salmon Commission.*

## **PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION**

Management of Pacific salmon has long been a matter of common concern to the United States and Canada. In 1985, after many years of negotiation, the Pacific Salmon Treaty was signed, setting long-term goals for the benefit of the salmon and the two countries. The Pacific Salmon Commission is the body formed by the governments of Canada and the United States to implement the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

The Pacific Salmon Commission is a sixteen-person body with four Commissioners and four alternates each from the United States and Canada, representing the interests of commercial and recreational fisheries as well as federal, state and tribal governments.

In June of 1999, the United States and Canada reached a comprehensive new agreement (the "1999 Agreement") under the 1985 Pacific Salmon Treaty. Among other provisions, the 1999 Agreement established two bilateral Restoration and Enhancement funds.

The PSC is an international decision-making organization, composed of four Commissioners (and four alternates) from the United States and Canada. This body handles ongoing administration of the Pacific Salmon Treaty through advice from four regional Panels of fisheries experts.

The Pacific Salmon Commission is a treaty-based international organization, one of many regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) around the world. It is a decision-making body for cooperative management of Pacific salmon.

## **FRASER RIVER PANEL**

The Fraser River Panel was created in 1985 and uniquely has special responsibility for in-season regulation of Fraser River-origin sockeye and pink salmon fisheries within the area designated as the Fraser River Panel Area in southern British Columbia and northern Puget Sound. The Panel assumed Fraser sockeye and pink management responsibilities from the PSC's predecessor organization, the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission. While many issues are of concern to the Fraser River Panel, the early upstream migration of late-run sockeye and the resulting high mortality rate are significant. In addition, the Panel remains concerned about the en route losses experienced by Fraser River sockeye due to high water levels and high temperatures in recent years.

The Fraser River Panel is supported by the Fraser River Technical Committee and PSC Secretariat scientific staff who provide technical information and advice concerning Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon harvest and are actively involved in the day-to-day regulation of sockeye and pink fisheries throughout the Fraser River Panel area of jurisdiction.

## **HOW IT WORKS**

Prior to the fishing season, the Fraser River Panel recommends a fishery regime and a management plan for Panel area fisheries to the Parties. The plan is based on:

- abundance and timing forecasts and escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon stocks provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO);
- international catch allocation goals set by the agreements between the Parties;
- domestic catch allocation goals of each country;
- management concerns for other stocks and species also identified by each country; and
- historic patterns of migration and fisheries dynamics.

The objectives that guide the Panel's decision-making are:

- to achieve the spawning escapement targets,
- to meet international catch allocation goals, and
- to meet domestic catch allocation objectives.

Any conservation concerns of the Parties for other salmon species and stocks are addressed throughout the process.

## **CANADIAN CAUCUS FRASER RIVER PANEL MEMBERS**

Mr. Les Jantz (Vice-Chair)

Mr. Chris Ashton

Mr. Michael Frost

Mr. Mike Griswold

Grand Chief Ken Malloway

Mr. John Murray

Mr. Shaun Hollingsworth  
Mr. Darrel McEachern  
Mr. Matt Mortimer  
Mr. Tony Roberts Jr.  
Mr. Marcel Shepert  
Mr. Greg Witzky

The next Fraser River Panel meeting is scheduled for 11AM Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup>.

Fraser River Panel Schedule:

**Tuesday and Friday 11am.**

**Please click the link below to join the webinar:**

<https://psc-org.zoom.us/j/81888592927>

Or One tap mobile :

US: 8887880099,,81888592927# (Toll Free)

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: 888 788 0099 (Toll Free)

Canada: 855 703 8985 (Toll Free)

Webinar ID: 818 8859 2927

International numbers available: <https://psc-org.zoom.us/u/kbBFcSplS>

## Links

With Chinook and sockeye approaching and in the Fraser, these links may be of interest:

BC River Forecast Centre Website: <http://bcrfc.env.gov.bc.ca>

Environment Canada's Water Office Website: [http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index\\_e.html](http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html)

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: [www.psc.org](http://www.psc.org)

Pacific Salmon Commission Test Fisheries: [http://www.psc.org/info\\_testfishing.htm](http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm)

Pacific Salmon Commission News and Regulatory announcements: <http://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/fraser-river-panel-regulatory-announcements/>

Fraser River Mission Escapement Reports: <http://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/fish-passage-past-the-psc-hydroacoustic-counting-station-near-mission-bc/>

Fraser River Environmental Watch Reports: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html>

The Albion Test Fishery information can be found at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/docs/commercial/albionchinook-quinnat-eng.html>