



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

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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 summary data below which includes important information to assist readers with better understanding the current fisheries management decisions made by the Fraser River Panel.

Fraser Panel Update, August 19, 2022

- Fraser sockeye are tracking the p25 forecast (5 million) fairly closely, based on hydroacoustic estimates. There is an indication that marine abundance could be above the p25, but there is a very high degree of uncertainty with this data.
 - Early Summers are mostly accounted for, and the current in-season estimate of run size is 627,000. Like last week, Early Summers will be a constraining stock on Lower Fraser fisheries.
 - Summer run sizes are now being estimated due to sufficient information at Mission and the test fisheries. The current estimate is roughly 3.7 million, but this is a highly variable estimate that is reliant on identifying the peak of migration, which is still very uncertain. There are 2.2 million Summer run sockeye accounted for currently.
 - Late run size estimates are being considered. It is early in the Late run to produce an estimate, but current in-season estimates are expecting Late run sockeye to be lower than forecast. There are currently 700,000 Late run sockeye accounted for.
- Test fisheries catch in marine approach indicating large abundances are starting to show up, but there is a high level of uncertainty regarding the literal size of the migration observed.
- Marine test fisheries are predominantly Summer and Late run stocks, with a small proportion of Early Summers remaining in marine waters (1-8%). Most Early Summers have made it in-river and will make up <10% of the stock proportions for the rest of the week. Early Summers are likely to remain present in small proportions in-river for the next few weeks.
- Mission hydroacoustic passage estimates dropped to ~100,000 sockeye per day over the past week. Yesterday it increased again indicating Summer run sockeye are showing up in increasing numbers.
- The Fraser Panel adopted a run size update of 627,000 for Early Summers, the p50 run size of 4.4 million for summers, and 2 million for Lates.

- Canada has voiced major concern about the level of uncertainty for the Summer and Late run sizes, and the number of fisheries being proposed in Fraser Panel managed fisheries, by the US.
 - The US proposed two seine fleet fisheries: one day All Citizens fishery followed by a two-day Treaty Tribal fishery. They also proposed continuation of the Treaty Tribal gillnet fishery.
 - Canada did not approve the proposed fisheries put forward by the US. Specifically, the level of seine fishing proposed by the US. Canada's view is current estimates of Late run abundance is highly uncertain, and this fishery plan is not precautionary and could seriously impact conservation efforts for Fraser sockeye, specifically Late run. However, the US fisheries will proceed based on a clause in the PST Fraser Sockeye Annex language that provides for the staff of the PSC to concur with one of the parties based on their interpretation of the data that was used to assess the fisheries. This clause was added more than a decade ago, but has not been used until now.
 - The US fisheries are planned to take place this weekend, despite strong opposition from Canada.
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The narrative below is intended to provide a brief community profile of the C'stelenc (Adams Lake Indian Band) communal fisheries program.

On August 10th, 2022 the C'stelenc people tested out a new 8 inch Chinook salmon mesh net in preparation for anticipated large salmon returns back to the traditional territory of the C'stelenc. No sockeye was harmed in the making of this article.

This year marks a 4-year cycle dominant Late run Lower Adams River sockeye return, and the C'stelenc will again be using an aluminum gill net boat to harvest salmon for the surrounding Indigenous communities. In the past, a traditional fishing Kukpi7 (Chief) would have coordinated the building of old-style wooden harvest weirs anchored across streams to selectively trap live salmon. However, when the South Thompson River was dredged between Shuswap Lake and Kamloops Lake, Indigenous fishers were forced to no longer carry out this traditional fishing activity because the water became too deep. Not to mention, the introduction of the Navigable Waters Act which legally kept our weirs out of the water to ensure unimpeded paddlewheel boat passage in the river.

For decades this cultural way of life was scarcely practiced anymore, but the fisheries traditional knowledge and spiritual significance were never forgotten. In 2002 the C'stelenc fisheries program purchased a used commercial gill netter and readily learnt how to catch fish in a more modern manner. Now, 20 years later, the community Indigenous youth are keeping the latest fishery technology alive and well while spending their summers providing food fish for many Indigenous people in the region.

Maximus Young (left) and Joaquin Kenoras (right) are pictured below displaying fresh caught Chinook salmon from opening day of the C'stelenc communal fishery. When it's determined that enough of the weaker Early Summer sockeye stocks have made it safely to the spawning grounds, only then will the gillnets be changed to a smaller sockeye mesh intended to target the more abundant Lower Adams River sockeye run. This new to us motorboat driven fishing technology empowers our Indigenous people to continue with real food sustainability while maintaining our cultural ways of life in a contemporary society. Kukstsemc (thank you) Max and Joaquin for your loyalty as strong salmon warriors providing for those most in need.

All My Relations!
Greg Witzky, C'stelenc



Photo credit Brennan Lund

The next Fraser River Panel meeting is scheduled for 11AM Tuesday August 23rd.

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/j/kbBFcSpIsS>

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

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: www.psc.org

Pacific Salmon Commission Test Fisheries: 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>