



# WATERSHED TALK

## NEWSLETTER

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### 2023 WATERSHED TALK NEWSLETTER UPDATE

By: Kristin Hrapchak, FSMC Executive Assistant/Communications Coordinator

*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 Weekly Summary September 1, 2023

#### Test fishing and stock identification information

Given declining sockeye and pink salmon catches in marine areas, the test fisheries in Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Strait were terminated 5-days and 2-days earlier than scheduled, respectively. DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 12 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 1% Early Summer run, 59% Summer run and 40% Late run.

Over the last week, the estimated diversion rate for both sockeye and pink salmon through Johnstone Strait increased to 99%.

#### Assessment results

##### Fraser River Sockeye Salmon

As of August 31, 1,405,100 Fraser River sockeye salmon have passed Mission and the current in-season run size estimate for total Fraser River sockeye based on adopted run size estimates for the individual management groups is 1,606,000 sockeye, which is very similar to the preseason forecast of 1,564,000. Observations of Late run in in-river test fisheries has been increasing and approximately 108,000 Late run sockeye are estimated to be delaying their entry into the Fraser River. In general, delayed upstream migration of Late run stocks increases the probability of successful migration to the spawning grounds given the lower water temperatures later in the season.

##### Fraser River Pink Salmon

Pink salmon catches in in-river test fisheries have increased substantially in the last week and they have also been

observed passing Hells Gate. To date, 1,657,000 pink salmon have been observed migrating past Mission. At Tuesday's Panel meeting, the panel increased the pink salmon run size to 20 million with an associated Area 20 run timing of August 20. While the current in-season run size estimate of 20 million implies a higher productivity than recent years, it is not unprecedented.

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

As of August 31, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 1,817 cms and remains like the historical minimum. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark has been declining given the time of the year but remains high and similar to historical maxima at 18.3oC. Over the next 10 days temperatures are however expected to decrease to 16.9oC, in line with historical averages.

### **Escapement Update**

The counting fence at Scotch Creek has been operational since August 11 but no sockeye have passed through. As there is an evacuation order due to wildfires, the fence was left open August 17 to allow for fish passage until crews can access the site. A limited ground survey or an aerial survey during the anticipated peak spawning period may occur if permissions to enter the area are provided by the appropriate authorities. Visual surveys in the North/South Thompson system began August 17, but access has been limited due to the wildfires in the area. In the Upper Barriere, sockeye is primarily holding. Due to wildfires, access to the lower Adams River, Seymour River and McNomee Creek is closed, and aerial surveys are planned during the anticipated peak spawning period. In the lower Fraser, visual surveys on the Upper Chilliwack River started August 1 and water levels are characterized as very low for this time of year. Sockeye in the upper Chilliwack River are in peak spawning and past peak spawning in the upper reaches. Surveys of the Nahatlatch River and Lake continue to be suspended due to wildfire activity, but a recent aerial survey indicates sockeye are primarily holding. As of August 29 an estimated 68,550 sockeye have migrated past the Nadina hydroacoustic site. Sockeye near the Nadina spawning channel were observed holding and appeared healthy. A visual survey of Gates Creek was conducted August 26 and sockeye were reported to be staging of the creek mouth in Anderson Lake.

At the Chilko River and Quesnel River hydroacoustic sites 46,822 and 16,284 sockeye have migrated past the respective sites as of August 29. Visual surveys in the Quesnel system began August 23 and observed sockeye are primarily holding. At the Stellako River hydroacoustic site, an estimated 85,716 sockeye have migrated past the site as of August 29. Sockeye in the Stellako River are primarily holding or migrating and most fish are healthy looking. Sockeye observed in the Raft River during visual surveys of the North Thompson system are primarily holding with some early stages of spawning occurring.

The Birkenhead hydroacoustic site has been operational as of August 16 and 533 sockeye have passed to date. No sockeye were observed on visual surveys in the Harrison-Lillooet area. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) has been fish tight since July 25 and night video recording started July 27, and one sockeye has been counted through the fence. The water temperature is 21.0oC.

### **Regulatory Announcements & Resources**

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

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

Areas 29-4, and 29-6: Open for Area H troll ITQ fishery not earlier than 00:01 Saturday, September 2, 2023. Non-retention of sockeye. (Please refer to DFO Fishery Notice for further details)

Areas 29-4, 29-6, 29-7, 29-8 and 29-10: Limited entry Area B seine ITQ fishery not earlier than 06:00 Sunday, September 3, 2023. Non-retention of sockeye. (Please refer to DFO Fishery Notice for further details)

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

**TREATY TRIBAL FISHERY:**

Areas 4B, 5, and 6C: Extend for drift gillnet fishing from 12 p.m. (noon), Friday, September 1, 2023 through 12 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Sockeye must be released.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Extend for net fishing from 9 a.m., Saturday, September 2, 2023 through 9 a.m., Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Sockeye must be released.

**ALL CITIZEN FISHERY:**

Areas 7 and 7A: Open for purse seine fishing 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Saturday, September 2, 2023; 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Sunday, September 3, 2023; 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Monday, September 4, 2023; and 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Sockeye must be released.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open for drift gillnet fishing from 8 a.m. through 11:59 p.m., Saturday, September 2, 2023; 8 a.m. through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, September 3, 2023; 8 a.m. through 11:59 p.m., Monday, September 4, 2023; and 8 a.m. through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Sockeye must be released.

Area 7: Open for reef net fishing 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Saturday, September 2, 2023; 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Sunday, September 3, 2023; 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Monday, September 4, 2023; and 5 a.m. through 9 p.m., Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Sockeye must be released.

**Salmon Joke of The Week:**

**What did the smoked salmon say after it realized it was no longer ill?  
“I’m cured” 😊**

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The narrative noted below for this week's WST is intended to provide general knowledge from the [Sumas](#) & [C'stelneć](#) First Nations, which are two of the 76 Fraser River and Marine Approach Nations that joined the FSMC.

## Community Profile



### **Sumas and C'stelneć Fishers Keeping Ancestral Barter Systems Active**

Two communal fishers within the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC) Lower and Mid-Fraser regions met in the Sumas traditional territory on August 23, 2023, to barter a trade of Chinook salmon for wild BC elk. Both men are strong advocates for keeping ancestral Indigenous trade values intact. This is the second year in a row that Murray Ned and Greg Witzky met up to make a deal.

Murray is from Sumas and the Executive Director for the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA). Greg is from C'stelneć (Adams Lake) and the Executive Director for the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC). Both are fisheries leaders in and away from their home communities. Together they have decades of experience fishing and working within the world of fisheries management and conservation. Traditional knowledge of Indigenous values



that do not require an exchange of cash for natural materials needed to sustain our way of life are the ancestral ways and must persist for the sake of those generation's yet to come.

Greg was instrumental in revitalizing the C'stelnec communal fisheries program over 20 years ago but due to unprecedented wildfires in the area this summer there were no efforts to harvest salmon, currently. Luckily, Murray had a Chinook opening and was able to catch some extra salmon to exchange with Greg. The barter is an IOU as the elk hunting season has not begun yet, so when the time comes the debt will be settled and the tradition of trade will continue.

All My Relations!  
Greg Witzky



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Sign up for all the FSMC distributions here: <https://frasersalmon.us3.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=52b75e17647b0b4460687b60d&id=d5bde22f9a>

Subscribe to the FSMC calendar by clicking the subscribe to calendar button found at the bottom, right under the calendar by clicking here: <https://frasersalmon.ca/events/>

The next Fraser River Panel meeting is scheduled for 11AM Tuesday September 5<sup>th</sup>

Fraser River Panel Schedule:

**Tuesdays and Fridays 11am.**

You can also access the webinar for observing the Fraser River Panel meetings:

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

<https://psc-org.zoom.us/j/88416242194>

*Mid- Fraser River attendees please text your questions during FRP calls to Greg Witzky at 778-694-9154. Can also email them to [executivedirector@frasersalmon.ca](mailto:executivedirector@frasersalmon.ca)*

### **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>