



# WATERSHED TALK

## NEWSLETTER

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### 2024 WATERSHED TALK NEWSLETTER UPDATE

**Contributors:** Kristin Hrapchak, FSMC Executive Assistant and Communications Coordinator  
Tina Chestnut, FSMC Stewardship Coordinator  
Secwépemc Fisheries Commission – Environmental Summary & Drought Conditions  
Nak’azdli Natural Resource Department - Notice

This issue of the WST shares information from today’s Fraser River Panel in- season report for week 2. See the full version of the report here - [Fraser Panel in-season information](#)<sup>1</sup>.

We’re also trying something new this week. A key value of the FSMC is recognizing that the collaborative planning and managing of Fraser Salmon is a shared responsibility and as such we want to contribute to increasing awareness of Fraser First Nations efforts to conserve and protect Fraser salmon. This week we’re re-sharing the Secwépemc Fisheries Commission – Environmental Summary, Drought Conditions report and their advice to DFO. We’re also sharing the fisheries notice released by the Nak’azdli Resource Management Department regarding their Stuart Salmon Closure.

And speaking of values, this week’s Fraser Salmon Stewardship and Outreach update includes an introduction to a recent communications creation – scroll down to learn about the FSMC’s new Vision and Values poster.

### Fraser Panel In-season Report for July 19, 2023

#### Test Fisheries and Stock Identification<sup>1</sup>

All marine and in-river test fisheries planned for 2024 are now operational. The majority of sockeye en route to the Fraser River are currently migrating through the Juan de Fuca Strait route rather than through Johnstone Strait with a 25% northern diversion rate. DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 20 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 59% Early Summer and 41% Summer run.

## **Assessment Results<sup>1</sup>**

The 2024 season is the second return year of sockeye affected by the Big Bar landslide. The forecast for Early Stuart sockeye (180 fish), is the lowest forecast on record for this management group. Due to the low return for Early Stuart it will not be possible to derive an in-season run size estimate for this management group. The Early Stuart management group is supplemented by a highly uncertain forecast of Early Stuart hatchery fish, perhaps totaling 1,400 fish. With the extremely low return for this management group, collection of broodstock will be challenging, and the captive broodstock will be heavily relied upon.

Due to the low return for Early Stuart it will not be possible to derive an in-season run size estimate for this management group. In addition, current extremely warm water temperatures are expected to negatively impact Early Stuart migration success to the spawning grounds.

The estimated escapement plus catch of Early Summer-run sockeye through July 18 is 60,900. The Early Summer run is currently dominated by Chilliwack and Nadina which are earlier-timed stock components of this management group. Early Summer-run sockeye run-size estimates should be available in late July after their peak migration through marine areas.

For Summer run sockeye, a limited number of fish have been observed in the marine and in-river test fisheries. The estimated escapement plus catch of Summer-run sockeye through July 18 is 13,100.

## **Migration conditions in the Fraser River<sup>1</sup>**

On July 18, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 3,470 cms, which is below historical mean discharge levels and approximately 33% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Hope on July 18 was 20.1oC, which is 3.1oC higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will increase, while discharge is forecast to decrease to about 3,049 cms over the next 10 days. Observers at Hells Gate continue to see sockeye salmon migrating into the fishways. Current reports from Big Bar similarly indicate no concern with salmon passage. A total of 270 sockeye thus far has made it passed the Churn sonar site.

Given the current in-river temperatures, the Panel adopted the recommended pDBE for the Early Stuart management group. This results in an increase in the pMA to 1.94. This change has no implications for management but highlights the Panel's concern for the extremely low run of Early Stuart sockeye and the extreme in-river environmental conditions.

## **Escapement update<sup>1</sup>**

Visual surveys for Early Stuart will begin on July 20. The upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site became operational on July 10 and a total of 126 sockeye have been estimated into the river through July 16. Water temperature in the upper Chilliwack River is 10oC.

## **Regulatory Announcements & Resources<sup>1</sup>**

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 July 23.

*Collaborative planning and managing of Fraser Salmon is a shared responsibility ...* keep reading to learn what FSMC's member Nations are sharing

### *Secwepémc Fisheries Commission (SFC) – Environmental Summary and advice to DFO<sup>2</sup>:*

#### **PLAN FISHERIES WITH EXTREME CAUTION**

The SFC participates in the Thompson Okanagan Drought Response Team and provides weekly flow and temperature information, advice on drought level status and water conservation measures and shares a comparison of current flows and temperatures against optimal or critical thresholds. This information is used to establish Drought Rating Levels for the region and guide water conservation measures for fish and other ecological functions. The SFC provides a note to DFO fishery managers with a weekly summary of water flow and temperature information relative to critical flow thresholds and mortality risks to salmon for several key chinook streams in the Thompson watershed. You may have seen this [week's summary](#) and [drought conditions](#) prepared by the SFC in your Facebook feed.


A condensed version of the SFC summary for Thompson Chinook streams and their current drought levels is listed below.

- **Salmon River: (Fraser Summer Chinook 5-2 - Endangered):** Elevated to Drought Level 3 from Level 1. Flows are dropping quickly and are below spawning thresholds throughout the system. Water temperatures are outside optimal thresholds for both migrating adults and rearing juveniles and daily maximum temperatures are exceeding lethal limit with chinook expected to start arriving in the system in next few weeks.
- **Bessette Creek: (Fraser Spring Chinook 4-2 - Endangered):** Elevated to Drought Level 3 from drought level 1. Flows are dropping quickly and are below the spawning threshold and approaching the migration threshold. Water temperatures are outside the optimal threshold for both migrating adults and rearing juveniles, and daily maximum temperatures are exceeding lethal limit. Chinook are expected in the system any day - if not already.
- **Deadman River: (Fraser Spring Chinook 4-2 - Endangered):** Elevated to Drought Level 2. Flows are above threshold, however there are no migration concerns to date. Water temperatures are above thresholds for migration and rearing chinook. Daily maximum temperatures are exceeding the lethal limit. Chinook are in the system and approximately 100 passed over the resistivity counter.
- **Louis Creek: (Fraser Spring Chinook 4-2 – Endangered):** Remaining at Drought Level 1 Flows are above migration thresholds; however, flows have dropped below the July environmental flow needs of 2.04 cms. Currently there are no passage concerns at the confluence.

- **Lemieux Creek: (Fraser Summer 5-2 - Endangered):** Remaining at Drought Level 1. Flows are above the migration threshold and there are no passage concerns at the confluence. Water temperatures are within the optimal range<sup>2</sup>.

## **Naka'azdli Whuten – STUART SALMON CLOSURE<sup>3</sup>**

The following notice was shared this week on the [FSMC Facebook page](#) by the Nak'azdli Natural Resource Department:



**Stuart Salmon**  
**Closure**

All Fraser River Nations including Nak'azdli Whut'en is closing all Salmon Fishing for this year 2024.

We expect 200 fish for the Early Stuart Run and expect Less than 5000 in Late Stuart run

We will be trying to bring in other salmon from the Skeena or Nass to help our community (if available).  
Pete Erickson - Nak'azdli Fisheries representative

For Additional Information  
Please Contact Pete Erickson or Rosemarie Sam  
250-996-0088

## **Fraser Salmon Stewardship and Outreach Update – NEW COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS**

The FSMC is working to develop an engagement tool kit to support the First Nations Caucus, Main Table Directors, and Member Delegates in their efforts to increase awareness of the collaborative governance and management of Fraser salmon conservation and fisheries.



We're happy to share that Michelle Buchholz of [Cassyex Consulting](http://Cassyex Consulting) worked with us to visually capture the FSMC's Vision and Values. Her graphic skills and artistic flare helped us create the image shown below. The images and text represent the main objectives and core values of the FSMC as expressed in our Constitution and By-laws. If you're interested in reading a complete version of the core values/ Constitution email [Tina](mailto:Tina) and she'll get you a copy.

Expect the image to be represented at future Gatherings and Forums. We hope you enjoy the image.



Follow us on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009897519200>

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, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
(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/89632608507>

**One tap mobile:**

8887880099,89632608507# US Toll Free

**Telephone:**

**Dial In:**

855 703 8985 Canada Toll Free

**Webinar ID: 896 3260 8507**

***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>