



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser Salmon Management Council

AUGUST 16, 2024

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 6

2024 WATERSHED TALK NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Contributors: Tina Chestnut, FSMC Stewardship Coordinator

Today's issue of the WST contains a T̓silhqox landslide update with links to keep at hand so you can stay informed, the Fraser River Panel summary data, a reminder about the Salmon Allocation Policy Assessment Rubric comment period, and Community Updates from the Secwepémc Fisheries Commission (Environmental Conditions Summary) and a summary of our participation at BC Elders Gathering in Vancouver.

T̓SILHQOX (CHILCOTIN RIVER) LANDSLIDE

On August 9, 2024 the T̓silhqot'in National Government requested support from downstream First Nations to protect and conserve T̓silhqot'in -bound salmon following the T̓silhqox (Chilcotin River) landslide. The T̓silhqot'in Nation Council of Chiefs is requesting support from downstream First Nations in taking all precautionary measures possible to protect and conserve salmon bound for T̓silhqot'in Territory, which are in a state of extreme conservation concern. They are asking communities to cease any fisheries that may impact these returning fish (i.e., fisheries along the migration route through the marine area and Fraser River downstream of the Chilcotin) until the impacts of the landslide are fully understood. You can read the full request [here](#).

Please visit the following links to keep informed of conditions and actions being led and coordinated by the T̓silhqot'in National Government.

[T̓silhqot'in National Government - Emergency Salmon Task Force Situation Report - August 12, 2024](#)

For regular landslide updates and fisheries communications please use the following:

<http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/>

<http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/our-territory/fisheries/communications/>

For questions please email: tngsalmontaskforce@tsilhqotin.ca

Fraser Panel Weekly Summary for August 16, 2024

See the full version of the Panel report here - [Weekly Report No. 6¹](#)

Test Fisheries and Stock Identification¹ - DNA analysis of the most recent sockeye samples collected on August 13 from Brownsville Bartest fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 6% Early Summer run, 80% Summer run and 14% Late run. The in-river test fisheries are scheduled to operate until August 25 and September 10 at Brownsville Bar and Whonnock, respectively.

Assessment Results¹ – As of August 15, a total of 363,500 Fraser River sockeye have passed Mission, consisting of 141,800 Early Summer run, 213,800 Summer run and 7,700 Late run. The overall run size is unlikely to reach the median preseason forecast of 567,000 sockeye but is expected to exceed the run size of the brood year (396,000).

The Early Summer run has nearly completed its migration into the river and is smaller than the preseason estimate of 159,000. The Panel adopted an updated run size estimate of 142,000, with a timing of July 14.

The Summer Run is smaller than the preseason estimate of 379,000. The migration timing of the Summer run seems to be tracking two days later than expected preseason. Delaying Harrison sockeye (estimated to be up to 9,000) now seem to be gradually moving into the Fraser River.

The Late run appears to be smaller than the pre-season expectations (median preseason forecast of 29,000 sockeye). The majority of these Late run fish (85%) are not expected to delay their upstream migration into the Fraser River as the forecast consists primarily of Birkenhead and Big Silver sockeye who are not observed to delay. As of August 15, 7,000 Birkenhead, Big Silver fish has been accounted for in catch plus escapement. The remainder of Late Run (Late Shuswap, Portage, Weaver, Cultus) is expected to be very small, about 4,000 sockeye based on the median preseason forecast. The in-season ability to accurately assess these delaying Late run stocks is limited given the very low abundances. The Panel adopted an updated run size for the Late run of 18,000, with a timing of August 9.

The current in-season run size estimate for total Fraser River sockeye based on adopted run size estimates is 460,000 with a timing of July 29, which is less than the pre-season forecast of 567,000 and one day later.

Migration conditions in the Fraser River¹ - Migration conditions in the Fraser River are expected to be worse than forecast as a consequences of the Chilcotin slide. The amount of sediment in the river has continued to decrease over the last week but is still not back to pre-event levels. Increased sediment and turbidity have negative impacts on salmon, can lead to physiological damage and can delay migration to the spawning grounds.

On August 15, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 2,267 cms, which is back to pre-event levels and 29% below the historical mean discharge level for this date while the temperature was 21.2°C, which is 2.6°C higher than average for this date, a temperature at which successful migration is impeded. The negative impacts of high temperatures on migration success are likely to be exacerbated by high sediment loads and water turbidity. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will decrease slightly to 19.7°C by August 21.

Within the Chilcotin, there may be episodic pulses of sediment from continued sloughing, but this impact is greatly diluted once the water hits the Fraser mainstem. Water conditions have improved at Hells Gate and observers are able to see fish passage through this area of difficult migration.

Taseko and Chilko sockeye assessment and migration within the Chilcotin River¹- The current in-season run size for Chilko is 117,000 sockeye. At the hydroacoustic site at Lingfield (5 migration days upstream of the slide area), a total of 512 sockeye have been observed to date, while under normal migration conditions 2,664 sockeye would have been expected. It is assumed that the salmon currently counted at Lingfield had migrated past the slide site prior to the landslide. Peak migration of Chilko sockeye in the landslide area is expected to occur around August 25-26.

Due to the low expected Taseko sockeye return, it is not possible to provide in-season updates of run size and timing for this stock. The Tsilhqot'in National Government, in partnership with DFO, monitor Taseko sockeye arriving at the spawning grounds.

Escapement update¹ - Surveys for Early Stuart began July 20, a few sockeye have been observed in the system. Sockeye in Sidney Creek are in the early stages of spawning, but are observed to be holding in other survey locations. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 10 and a total of 16,169 sockeye have been estimated into the river as of August 13. The Nadina River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 26 and as of August 11, 23,252 sockeye have been estimated. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 25, and 56,116 sockeye have been estimated as of August 13. Most of the sockeye salmon estimated at the Stellako site in early August are assumed to be Nadina River sockeye. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 31 and as of August 13, 512 sockeye have been estimated. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) has been operational since July 29 but no sockeye have been counted through the fence.

Regulatory Announcements & Resources¹ – Commercial fisheries in Canadian and United States Fraser River Panel area waters remain closed.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday, August 20, 2024.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA – FRASER RIVER SOCKEYE IN-SEASON UPDATE FOR AUGUST 16, 2024

[2024 Fraser River Sockeye Escapement In-season Update No.5](#)

[2024 Chilko Sockeye Escapement Update](#) – *in-season information about the Chilcotin River landslide impacts on migration timing and success of Chilko sockeye – current passage values at Chilko River hydroacoustic site are considered normal.*

CRITICAL ENGAGEMENTS

REMINDER - comments on the [SALMON ALLOCATION POLICY ASSESSMENT RUBRIC](#)

DUE MONDAY, AUGUST 19

COMMUNITY UPDATES

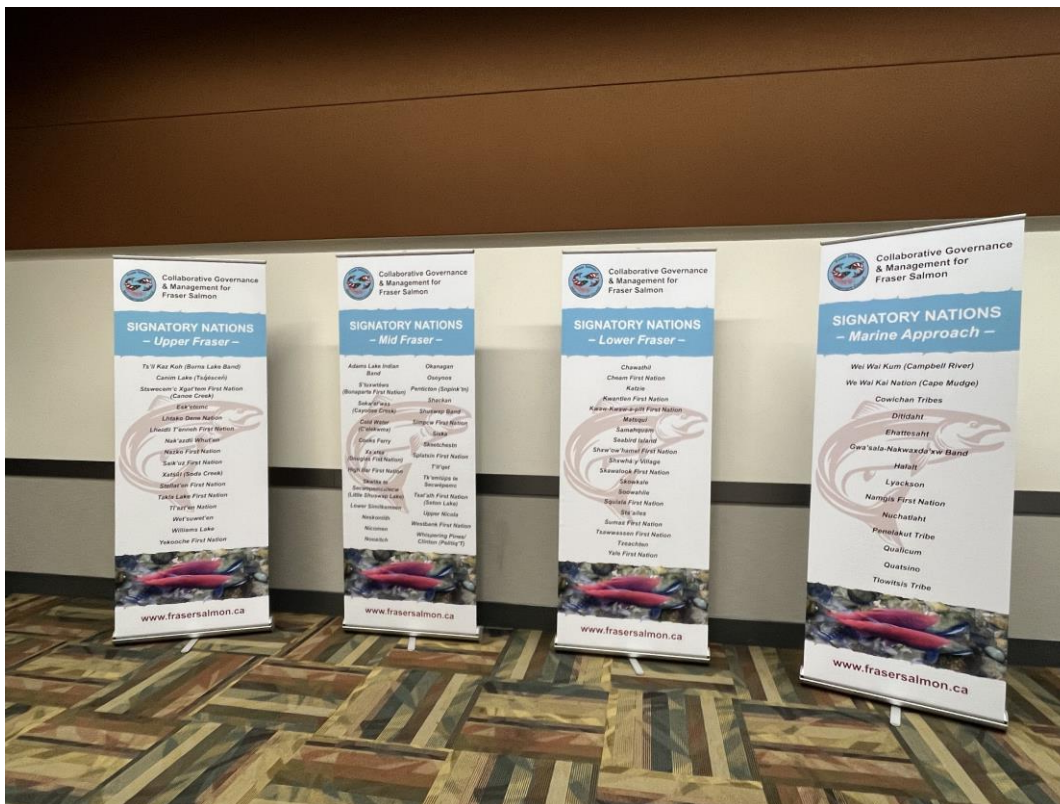
[Secwepémc Fisheries Commission – Environmental Conditions Summary](#)²

River and stream flows are continuing to drop in Secwepémc territory despite some precipitation and many streams are experiencing daily maximum temperatures above 23°C.

Both the Salmon River (Fraser Summer Chinook 5-2, Endangered) and Besette Creek (Fraser Spring Chinook 4-2, Endangered) remain at Drought Level 4 conditions. Thirty-eight Chinook have passed through Salmon River counting fence and conditions for spawning and migration are below thresholds. The SFC and its partners will be closely monitoring known problem sites.

Louis Creek (Fraser Spring Chinook 4-2, Endangered) has been elevated to Drought Level 3 conditions. Water temperature is suitable for adult spawning (70 Chinook are holding in the system); however, water temperatures are outside of the optimal range for rearing juveniles.

Deadman River (Fraser Spring Chinook 4-2, Endangered) and Lemieux Creek (Fraser Summer 5-2, Endangered) remain at Drought Level 2 conditions. Approximately 387 Chinook have passed over the Deadman River resistivity counter, flows are considered above threshold and temperatures are within optimal ranges for spawning and rearing, except near the confluence.



The Fraser Salmon Management Council was on the Road!



This week we had the privilege of participating in the **48th Annual BC Elders Gathering at the Vancouver Convention Centre**. Fraser Salmon Management Council staff (Greg Witzky, Kristin Hrapchak) were joined by Fraser Salmon Management Board Members (Pat Mathew, Ken Malloway), FSMC Main Table Directors (Pete Erickson, Victor Isaac) and special project coordinators (Marcel Shepert, Tina Chestnut) to host a Fraser Salmon drop-in room.

The Gathering brought together approximately 2000 Elders together from across BC Nations and lived into its purpose of providing “a gateway to understanding the diverse ways of life among various First Nations¹.” The Gathering gave us the opportunity to introduce Elders to the FSMC and to promote awareness of the opportunity for Fraser Nations to participate in the co-governance and co-management of Fraser Salmon. With the help of FSMC Main Table Directors and Board members and the generosity of Elders we collected perspectives and knowledge from 250 Elders on an array of salmon related topics from scarcity

and conservation, Inter-tribal relationships, family and community gatherings, security and self-reliance, to First Nations Laws and Principles, First Nations leaders and governance, Tribal and National autonomy and barriers to inclusion.



Two hundred and fifty (250) elders graciously shared their knowledge and experiences with us. In return we shared some *St. Jeans* salmon snacks, FSMC and First Nations Fisheries Commission (FNFC) swag. We also entered the names of those who sat down with us in a raffle for one of two extra-large salmon provision boxes. While we weren't around to award the prize packages, we can share that Lorna Quatell and Delores Thomas were the lucky winners! We are appreciative and grateful to all who shared their time with us.



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, August 20th**.
(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

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>