



2025 Fraser Forum #2

Feb 25-27

What We Heard

Presentation to Forum
Greg Witzky (FSMC) & Amy Wakelin (DFO)
February 27, 2025



Item: Overarching themes

Overview

- Forum renewal and new process features, collaboration guidelines
- Given important issues with USA, importance stressed of moving forward collectively with FSMC, and also of ensuring First Nations' hereditary laws and values are reflected
- Interest in discussions regarding UNDRIP and UNDA implementation
- Important to continue to think about what management actions may be appropriate in-season when faced with significant events, such as landslides
- Continued interest in better understanding who to contact within DFO to advance various conversations and understanding where decisions are made

Next Steps / Actions

- Forum Planning Committee will explore opportunity for UNDRIP and UNDA implementation discussion at Forum #3
- [Proposed] First Nations reps work with AAAs and Strategic Advisors in respective areas to map out area contacts/processes

Tech Questions

- None identified

Deadlines

- Ongoing

Item: Joint Technical Working Group

Overview

- Support for continuing involvement in the FSAR process and how First Nations and First Nations values can drive those processes
- Support for exploring Sockeye escapement options that increase escapement
- Accompanying documentation is important to complement outputs from the Rapid Assessment tool and this needs to be reviewed by First Nations
- Highlighted importance of acknowledging the variability of the forecast and its impact to the escapement plans

Next Steps / Actions

- Develop a process map to show how FSAR, FSP, PSSI rebuilding pilots all fit together
- DFO to distribute the escapement planning worksheet to participants to allow them to explore alternate options

Tech Questions

- Request to see a breakdown of FMI in-river

Deadlines

- For next forum?

Item: Fraser Sockeye Management – Looking forward

Overview

- Fraser Sockeye escapement planning was informed through a comprehensive technical process, the Fraser River Sockeye Spawning Initiative (FRSSI)
- Given changing productivity, a focus on individual stocks over aggregates, and a reprioritization of rebuilding over harvest, Forum participants expressed a desire to reevaluate Sockeye harvest control rule, including the Fishery Reference Points, TAMs, and LAERs
- Technical capacity may be available from AAROM organizations to contribute to analysis
- In addition, re-evaluating the harvest control rule, some Forum participants expressed a desire to re-evaluate how the LAER is utilized to facilitate fisheries with incidental Sockeye mortality
- Heard concerns that some management actions, such as window closures, are not resulting in desired outcomes and the importance of ensuring fish actually make it to the upper Fraser.

Next Steps / Actions

- FSMB to consider JTC work plan and capacity to complete this work, and provide JTC direction
- Start by seeking confirmation of objectives, how we achieve these objectives. Focus on the ends, not the means. For example, if the objective is to increase escapement, several means could be explored
- Changing how fish are harvested under the LAER requires clear sharing arrangements. This is currently an FSMB work plan item.

Tech Questions

Deadlines

- Ongoing

Item: 2025 Expectations – Fraser Sockeye and Pink

Overview

- Median Fraser Sockeye forecast is 2.9 million fish. This is higher than recent years, but only 37% of the historical median run size.
- Median Fraser Pink forecast is 27 million fish. If realized, this would be the highest return on record, but this forecast is highly uncertain.
- The majority of the Sockeye return is forecast to be composed of the Summer Management Unit, and more specifically the Chilko stock
- Subject to the escapement plan adopted, harvestable surplus is anticipated for Pink and some Sockeye Management Units

Next Steps / Actions

- N/A

Tech Questions

- None identified

Deadlines

- N/A

Item: 2025 Management – Fraser Sockeye and Pink

Overview

- Fraser Salmon Management Board considered escapement plans and endorsed 2 collaboratively-developed options for inclusion in the draft IFMP. Acknowledged the success of working together in a new way. It is noted in the IFMP that the final escapement plan that will be included in the IFMP may differ from the two options described in the draft IFMP based on input received.
- Some Forum participants noted an interest to further explore other options that increases escapement and permit more mortality under LAER.
- Further interest in understanding how escapement planning can better support rebuilding objectives.
- Window closure are implemented to protect stocks of concerns and will likely constrain fisheries.
 - Seeking feedback on the duration of the directed sockeye window closure - between three and five weeks.
- Pre-season fishery planning will attempt to identify Pink fishery opportunities that avoid Sockeye, in particular Late run sockeye.
 - Environmental conditions and stock composition will meaningfully influence harvest opportunity for Lates.

Next Steps / Actions

- Draft IFMP, with escapement plan options, is available for consultation
- Alternative escapement plan options have been identified as a discussion topic at the next FSMB meeting

Tech Questions

- None identified

Deadlines

- March 3, 2025 FSMB meeting
- April 4, 2025 IFMP feedback deadline

Item: Southern BC Chum

Overview

- The Department heard concern that marine Recreational Chum fisheries starting the season open with reduced retention limits in place was not necessarily sufficiently precautionary

Next Steps / Actions

- Provide updated recreational Chum catch summary for 2024
- Follow up with Kent Spencer, DFO SCA directly for discussions about proposed commercial fisheries in Johnstone Strait

Tech Questions

- None identified

Deadlines

- By next forum?

Item: Fraser Chinook

Overview

- Discussion of Fraser Salmon Management Board Scenarios
- Heard challenges with identifying indicators for reviewing outcomes of different FSMB Chinook Summer 5₂ scenarios
- Heard some preferences for scenarios 4 and 5
- Asking about reference fishery funding and future monitoring
- Heard support for review of recreational fishing conditions of license (e.g., hook type and its effect on release mortality)

Next Steps / Actions

- FSMB receives and review feedback on preferred scenario and the impact of all scenarios on your community
- Make process for MSF Technical WG more inclusive
- Review MSF evaluation framework
- Present reference fishery report when available
- DFO to follow up on plans and funding for 2025 reference fishery

Tech Questions

- Where is mass-marking happening in BC?
- What enhanced recreational fishery monitoring is done?

Deadlines

- April 4th for feedback on options

Item: Southern BC Coho

Overview

- Heard no objection from the Forum to maintaining the 3-5% ER on IFR Coho, and not making any changes to the existing management strategy for Coho in Southern BC.

Next Steps / Actions

- None

Tech Questions

- None identified

Deadlines

- N/A



Questions?
Comments?
