



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

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2018 FRASER SALMON UPDATE

By: Aidan Fisher, FRAFS Biologist

The Fraser sockeye picture is looking slightly better than last week. Estimates from recent Gulf troll test fisheries have shown more fish estimated than last week. The last week's estimate of holding sockeye in the Gulf was around 2 million, but due to increased test fishing catches the new estimate is closer to 3.5 million. It should be noted that these estimates have a high degree of uncertainty, however it is a better sign for the Late run run-size.

Fraser sockeye is nearly 8 million in catch and escapement. Area 20 test fishery has stopped running after numerous days of catches below 20 fish, only remaining marine seine test fishery is the Area 12 test fishery where catches are also declining. The 5.8 million Late run management provisional run-size decision from last week is looking closer to reality. Test fisheries in the Gulf troll seem to be indicating a greater amount of sockeye holding than expected last week. The two estimation methods used by the PSC staff for Late run sockeye in-season estimates have started to show similar results (near 6 million sockeye).

The Fraser Panel has held off on further fisheries management decisions until next Tuesday. For Late run sockeye, the provisional management number remains 5.8 million. No fisheries were put forward in panel waters from Canada or the US.

Fraser escapement programs have been underway in the watershed. Eagle river escapement has now surpassed brood. Nadina escapement has surpassed brood. Chilko escapement is moderate, but below brood with some sockeye expected en route. Quesnel is showing good escapement, nearing brood. Birkenhead has seen escapement but minimal to date. Cultus has only seen 14 fish through the Sweltzer creek fence, there is an expectation that some more Cultus fish are on the way. Some carcasses have been observed throughout the watershed, but not as many as 2014.

Canadian catch in commercial fisheries is 2,532,700, predominantly in the Area B purse seine (1,269,000) and gillnet fisheries (in-river Area E: 601,800, marine Area D: 473,000). The commercial troll fishery has also been ongoing, total catch of 354,300. For First Nations, FSC fisheries have been ongoing throughout the marine approach and in-river (793,820), and EO fisheries (266,700) have been occurring. Recreational fisheries in the marine approach and in-river are ongoing. Catch reports from the recreational fishery are only reported after multiple weeks of fishing and are currently unavailable.

US catch in commercial fisheries of Fraser sockeye (All citizens and Treaty Indian) is 981,300. There is likely no more Fraser Panel approved fisheries for the US, they do have some small ongoing fisheries.

Sockeye Management Group	Pre-Season Planning Forecast (P50)	In-Season Adopted Run Size	pMA (preseason / in-season)	Area 20 Timing (for 50% of run)
Early Stuart	84,000	125,000	0.69	July 5
Early Summer	2,155,000	1,800,000	0.23	August 6
Summer	4,344,000	4,344,000	0.10	August 11
Lates	7,398,000	5,800,000 *provisional	0.43	August 16
TOTAL	13,981,000	12,069,000		Preseason (Aug 14)

Early Stuarts

To date, 123,100 Early Stuart sockeye have been accounted for in catch and escapement. This is below the in-season adopted run size of 125,000. The Fraser River Panel has not adjusted the in-season run size for Early Stuarts.

Early Summers

Early Summers were forecasted at 2,155,000 (P50). To date the Mission hydroacoustic passage has accounted for 1,099,500 sockeye and a downstream catch of 638,000. The Fraser Panel has adopted an in-season run size of 1,700,000 and a median run-timing date of August 6th. The majority of Early Summers have migrated through the marine and Lower Fraser, the remaining Early Summers in the marine and Lower Fraser are Early Thompson.

Summer Run

Summers are forecasted at 4,344,000 (P50). To date the Mission hydroacoustic passage has accounted for 2,006,600 sockeye with a catch downstream of 1,982,500. On the Panel call on Tuesday, the Fraser Panel adopted an in-season run size of 4,344,000. The majority of the Summer run are Chilko and Quesnel.

Late Sockeye

Lates are forecasted at 7,398,000 (P50). To date the Mission hydroacoustic passage has accounted for 551,200 sockeye with a downstream catch of 1,593,800. There has been an observed increase in test fishing catches which is indicating more Late run sockeye holding in the Gulf than expected last week. The estimate of holding Late run sockeye is now closer to 3.5 million.

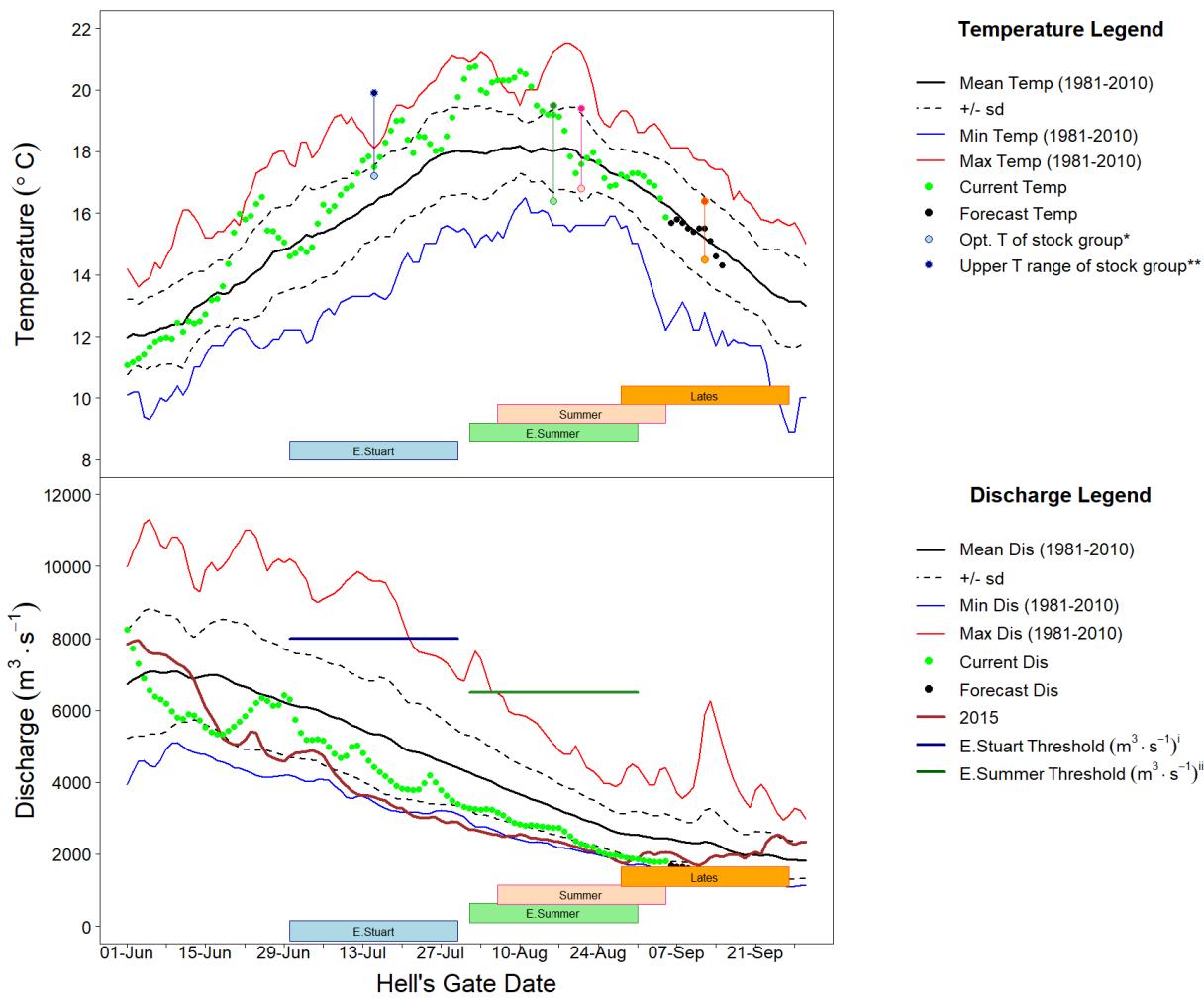
Fraser River Conditions

The main source of information for Temperature and Discharge data and forecasts is DFO's Environmental Watch Program (see link below).

The BC River Forecast Centre website (see links below) has information and links related to discharge and temperatures at various monitoring stations throughout the Fraser watershed, including snow pillow and melt updates.

Environment Canada's Water Office webpage provides access to real time hydrometric data at many locations throughout the Fraser watershed (see links below).

Fraser Discharge and temperatures at Hope and Qualark Creek (near Hope) respectively look like this (graphs from the Fraser River Panel Distribution September 7th, 2018):



The Fraser River water temperature at Hope has decreased to 15.7 on September 6th nearly equivalent to the historical median (0.5 degrees Celsius below average for this time of year) and is forecast to decrease to 15.5 degrees Celsius by September 12th. The Fraser River discharge is very low at 1,695 m³/sec at the Qualark water station on September 6th (30% below average for this time of year). The discharge is predicted to continue tracking well below average with a forecast discharge of 1,490 m³/sec by September 12th.

Fraser River Fisheries Information

Fraser First Nations Fisheries information can be found on the DFO website at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/index-eng.html>

DFO staff have distributed 19 Fraser Salmon Bulletins, and we strongly encourage people to review and comment on the DFO bulletin if time and resources permit. Contact your local DFO Resource Manager for a copy, and addition to the distribution list.

Fraser Sockeye Salmon

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) distributes the Fraser River Panel meeting agenda and technical information for Panel members and observers to the process. The following information is a summary of key information from that document (September 7th, 2018) and the Fraser River Panel meeting from the same day.

Stock Identification

In marine test fisheries, Early Summers are holding on in minimal amounts. Summer run sockeye are still present in marine approach fisheries, mostly Chilko/Quesnel but a few Late Stuart/Stellako have been identified. Late run sockeye are dominant in both approaches.

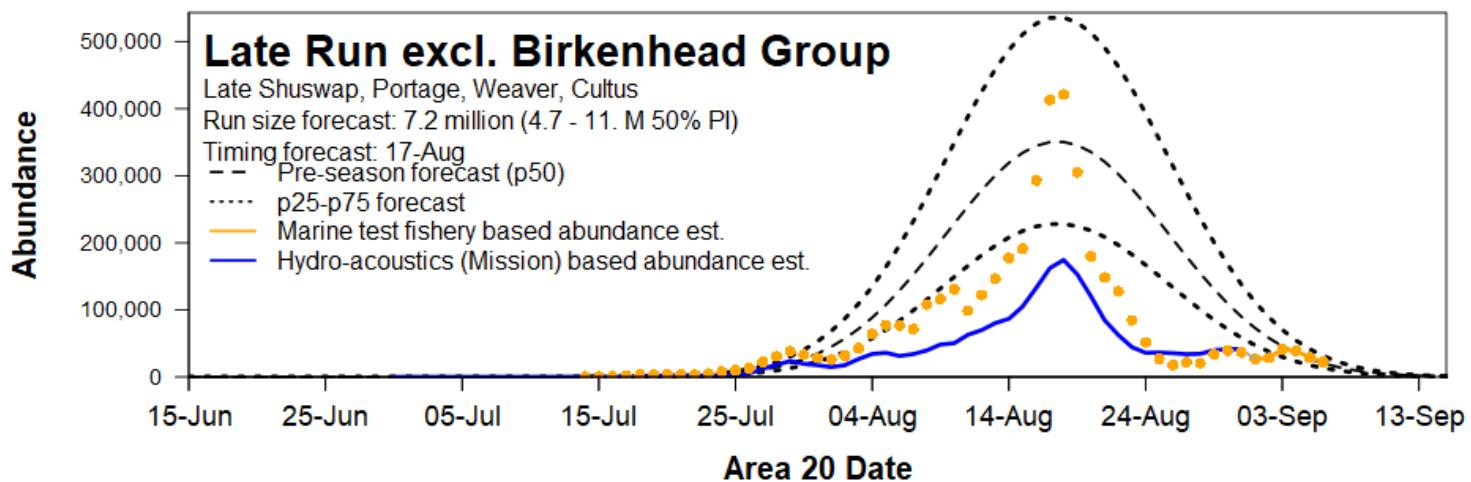
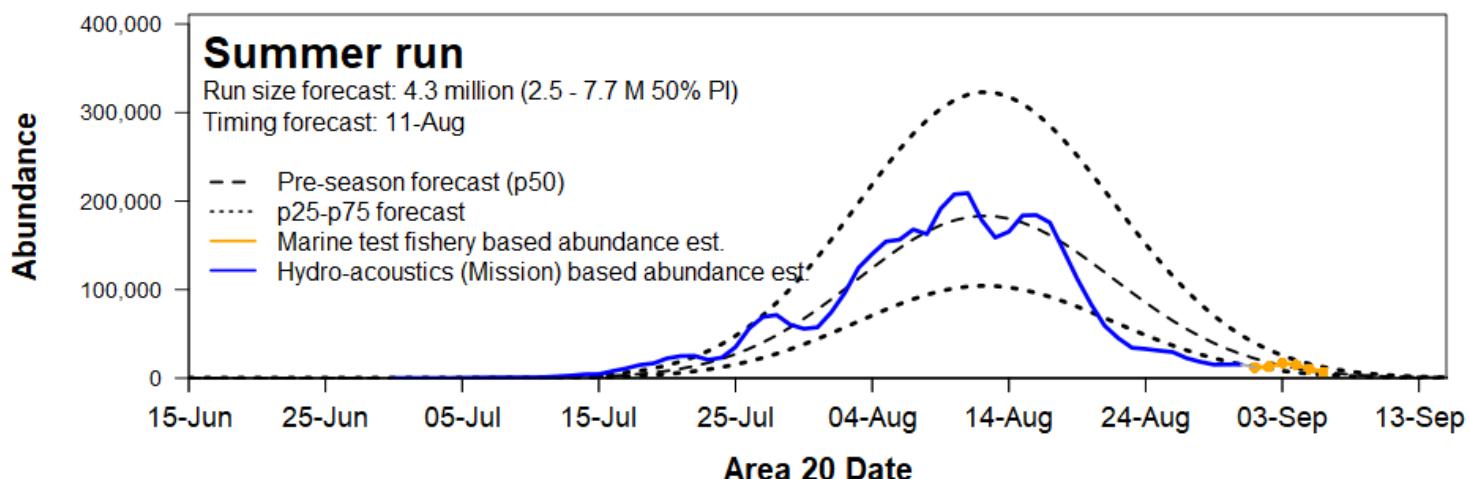
In-river test fisheries, Early Summers are still present in nearly 10% stock ID. Summers are still present in large proportions, mostly Chilko/Quesnel. Late run have started to show up in larger amounts, indicating some amount migration from the holding fish.

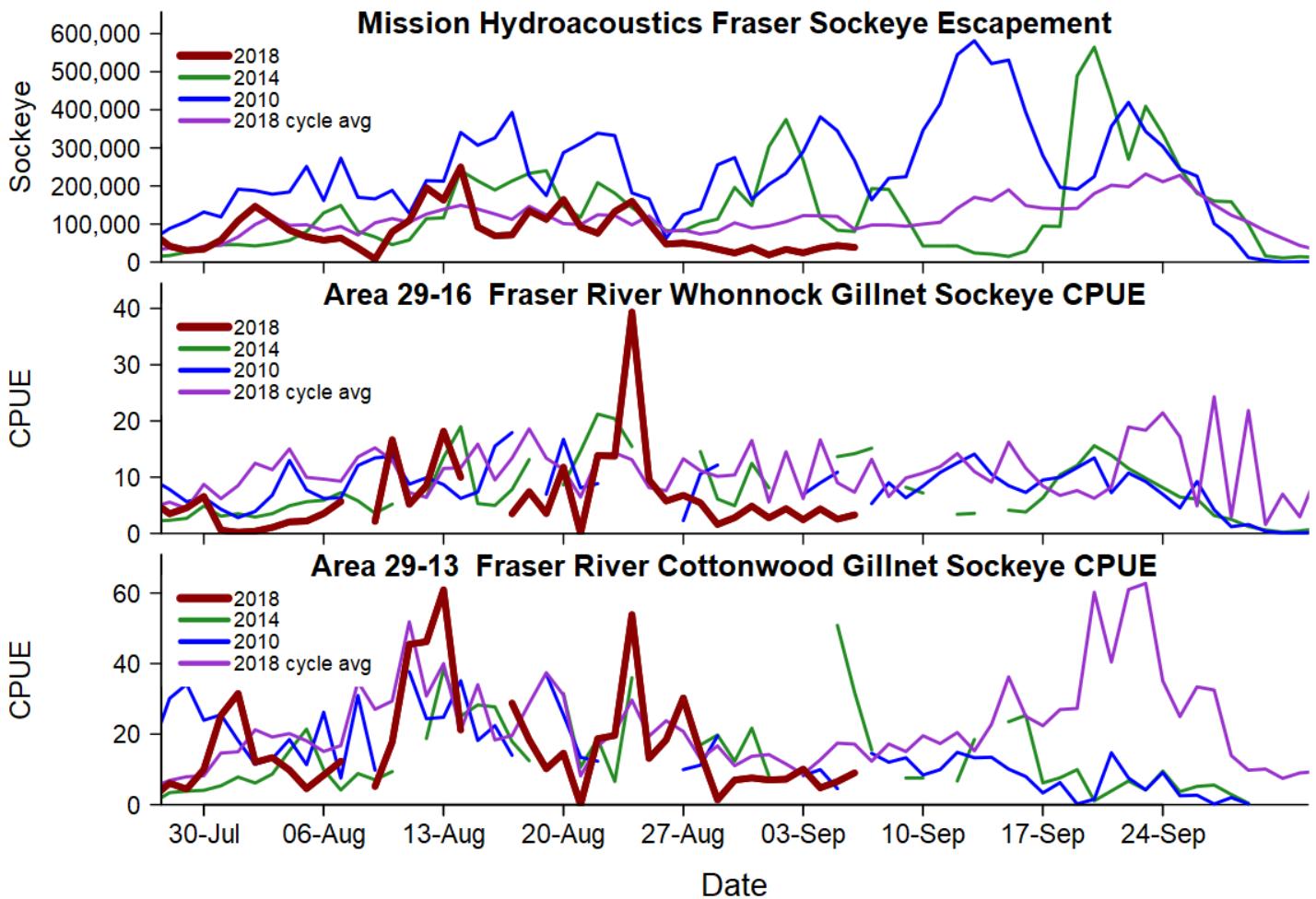
Test Fisheries

A total of 7,994,700 Fraser sockeye have been accounted-to-date. The run comprises of 123,100 Early Stuart sockeye, 1,737,500 Early Summer run sockeye, 3,989,100 Summer run sockeye, and 2,145,000 Late run sockeye. Fishery catch to date downstream of Mission is 4,216,000 sockeye (1,700 Early Stuart, 638,000 Early Summer, 1,982,500 Summer, 1,593,800 Late).

Test fishing graphs information from the PSC distribution package:

Estimated Abundance and In-Season Timing Compared to Forecast





The next Fraser River Panel meeting is scheduled for 11:00AM Tuesday September 11th.

Fraser River Panel Schedule:

~~July 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27 (Tuesdays and Fridays) 11am~~

~~July 31 (Tuesday), August 7, 14, 21, 28 (all Tuesdays) 10:30am~~

~~August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 (all Fridays) 11 am~~

~~September 4, 7, 11, 14 (Tuesdays and Fridays) 11am (TBC)~~

Canada dial-in: 1-888-299-2873

(USA dial-in: 1-888-585-9008)

Conference ID: 902-802-337

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>

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