

Update on the Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon

A Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon meeting was held on March 28th-30th, 2011 at the Best Western Dorchester Hotel in Nanaimo, BC. The March 28th session was focused on technical issues, including an overview of the Fraser River Sockeye Spawning Initiative (FRSSI) and IFMP escapement options for sockeye salmon.

During the Tier 1 sessions over the next two days, First Nations participants agreed to put forward the following recommendations to DFO:

CHINOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

Statement: The 2010 management restrictions for Fraser spring 4sub2 Chinook were a reflection of the 2006 brood year spawner numbers. The 2007 brood year spawner numbers were 75% lower than those of 2006. Repeating the 2010 regulations in 2011 is clearly inadequate to sufficiently protect the 2011 returns. DFO's refusal to implement the measures put forward by First Nations at the February 2011 Forum is an insult to the Forum participants, and could have dire consequences for 2011 Fraser spring 4sub2 Chinook.

Recommendation #1: Based on available data, effective immediately all marine recreational fisheries where spring 4sub2 Chinook stocks are known to occur should be closed until July 10th, and all Fraser River recreational fisheries should be closed while spring 4sub2 Chinook are present.

Recommendation #2: Have the JTWG review available management tools such as Albion, and examine the feasibility of others such as Qualark, in order to meet the needs for assessing marine and in-river areas.

Recommendation #3: Have the JTWG design and apply a DNA sampling process for marine sport fisheries to determine stock composition of their catch (timeline: implementation in 2011).

Recommendation #4: Conservation concerns for Chinook are not exclusive to the Fraser; island Chinook stocks are also declining and require protection. Declining coastal stocks means more pressure on Fraser stocks. Recognizing that DFO is currently developing a South Coast Chinook Management Framework, DFO must commit to meeting with Vancouver Island First Nations to discuss a rebuilding plan for their stocks.

Recommendation #5: Have the JTWG explore the option of installing cameras at all sport lodges and major landing sites to capture recreational catch and species composition (or other options for areas where there is no creel survey).

Recommendation #6: Implement catch monitoring programs to account for catch beginning January 1. There needs to be catch monitoring for all fisheries in all areas at all times of the year. First Nations must be involved in the design and implementation.

Recommendation #7: Increased monitoring and enforcement, and decreased fishing time and retention limits, are required in the Georgia Strait and Juan de Fuca recreational fisheries.

Recommendation #8: ONA and UFFCA have collaboratively developed methodology for measuring the efficacy of DFO's slot sizes for partial

mark selective fisheries (discussion document presented at the IHPC 2 years ago). DFO should implement a monitoring program to measure the efficacy of size restriction measures for protecting Chinook.

Recommendation #9: The management tool presented by Rishi Sharma should be reviewed through a peer review process with DFO and First Nations participation, and if required, reviewed by CSAP.

Recommendation #10: Use traditional knowledge to address the seal issue at Albion (local knowledge may be applicable and should be considered).

SOCKEYE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation #1: Implement a 3 week moving window closure to protect Early Stuart sockeye.

Recommendation #2: Implement an additional 1 week window closure (following the 3 week Early Stuart closure) to protect early summer sockeye, and where necessary, additional measures to keep the exploitation of early summer miscellaneous stocks to a maximum of 25%.

Recommendation #3: A method for evaluating the efficacy of closure windows for protecting Early Stuart and early summer sockeye is needed (if Early Stuart are not responding to management actions, why not?).

Recommendation #4: In response to the need to minimize test fishery impacts on early Stuart sockeye, we recommend using the Matsqui fish wheels to provide the information on species composition and sockeye stock composition samples during the migration period for early Stuart sockeye. Many of the early Stuart sockeye caught by the Whonnock gillnet test fishery are lost to seals. The Matsqui fish wheels are a proven effective method for sampling the sockeye return during the early Stuart migration period and all fish caught (sockeye, early timed Chinook) can be released alive.

Recommendation #5: Data request: Have DFO provide the TAC sheets by management group with the forecast run size under each proposed TAM rule option (1-4) for discussion at the April 13th JTWG meeting.

Recommendation #6: The JTWG will provide further calculations to the First Nations Forum participants following their meeting on April 13th. The Secwepemc Fisheries Commission is proposing TAM rule option 4 for late runs (still under consideration by other First Nations).

First Nations Forum participants also received a response to their letter dated March 10, 2011 from the DFO Regional Director General (RDG), Sue Farlinger. This response letter will be distributed to First Nations via the FRAFS email distribution list.

The next Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon meeting will be held on May 10th-11th, 2011, with a technical session to be held on either May 9th or May 12th (to be determined). The meeting location is the Kamloops Convention Centre, at 1250 Rogers Way in Kamloops, B.C. (accommodations can be booked at the Kamloops Towne Lodge).

*A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations*

DFO launches program to assist sockeye salmon with poor visual acuity

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pacific Region announced a pilot program today that will assist sockeye salmon with poor visual acuity as they travel up the Fraser River to their spawning habitat. The four million dollar program, called "Specs for Salmon", will provide corrective lenses to sockeye in need.

B.C. Interior Area Chief of Resource Management Les Jantz has high hopes for the SFS program. "As a wearer of glasses myself, I can sympathize with sockeye who have, until now, been forced to make their arduous journey up the Fraser River with blurry vision. The DFO staff is confident that the SFS initiative will go a long way in helping to make their journey a little easier – not to mention stylish, with the latest frames in a variety of shapes and colors," he said.



For its first year, the program will focus specifically on sockeye. "Their hooked noses make it easier to keep the glasses on," Jantz said. "We tried it with Chinook salmon too, but the glasses just kept slipping off." With further experimentation planned for spring 2011, DFO hopes to expand the program to include contact lenses for Chinook salmon next year.

DFO is encouraging British Columbians to support the SFS program by donating their old glasses. "There is a demand for children's glasses in particular," said Jantz, "as the smaller frames provide a snug and comfortable fit for sockeye."

For more information about the Specs for Salmon program, visit the DFO website at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca.



MEETING NOTICES

FORUM ON CONSERVATION AND HARVEST PLANNING FOR FRASER SALMON

May 10th-11th, 2011

Location: Kamloops Convention Centre
1250 Rogers Way, Kamloops BC

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Kamloops Towne Lodge at a rate of \$105 plus taxes for single occupancy, and \$115 plus taxes for double occupancy (standard rooms with two queen size beds). To reserve your accommodations, please call the hotel directly at 250.828.6660 or toll free 1.800.665.6674.

FRASER SALMON ROADMAP MEETING DATES

June 22-23, 2011:

Campbell River Band -- Thunderbird Hall

1420 Weiwaikum Road, Campbell River, B.C.
(Accommodations information to be announced soon)

Mark your Calendars!

October 12-13, 2011: Chase, B.C. (Location TBD)

December 6-7, 2011: Richmond, B.C. (Location TBD)

February 8-9, 2011: Chilliwack, B.C. (Location TBD)

If you plan to attend these meetings, please RSVP to Aimee Arsenault, FRAFS Communications Coordinator, by emailing info@frafs.ca or by calling 604-836-1909.

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