



TECHNICAL UPDATE AND COMMENTARY

By Pete Nicklin, Assistant Stock Management Coordinator – Phone (250) 392-5888 or email: indiseaent@shaw.ca

SUMMARY

Those of us keeping tabs on the salmon world will remember summer 2004 as a challenging migration for the Fraser River bound salmon. Among the other management issues, the Fraser River water temperatures are hot and the flow conditions are low. Just how hot and how low? The Qualark temperatures are tracking above the maximum temperatures from 1977 to 1993 and are approaching 21 degrees, with minimal relief forecasted for the next 10 days. As high as the temperatures are, the Fraser River flows are very near the minimum flows from 1977 to 1993 for the second year in a row.

Reports of very stressed sockeye salmon have started to circulate in the last week, and sustained high temperatures will most certainly contribute to continued sightings and catches of stressed fish. No one should be surprised by this, and technical folks were comparing this year to 1998 weeks ago, when talking about en-route mortalities and sustained warm temperatures.

The game of fisheries management went into overtime this week, just when people might have been thinking that was all she wrote, except for the in-river FSC (Food Social and Ceremonial) fisheries and some sport fish openings. The summer run sockeye aggregate was downgraded to 3.2 million, and this management adjustment eliminated any remaining Total Allowable Catch (TAC) (in-fact the TAC has been exceeded due to the Summer run downgrade), and appears to have resulted in an exploitation of Cultus sockeye exceeding the 10-12% limit. What happened? Well, the Chilko and Quesnel runs have continued to show weakness in run strength rather than later run timing.

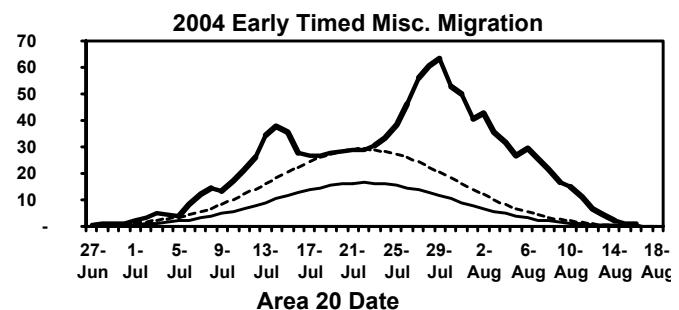
The TAC issue creates an interesting situation for DFO, because there are on-going FSC fisheries, and proposed sport fisheries. How will the Department respond?

Despite the optimism at the start of the season, starting with an FSC fishery on the Early Stuart run, and upgraded run size estimates for the Early Summers, the fact is that many First Nations upstream of Sawmill Creek have had poor catch success, and see little reason to hope for a turnaround. The last estimate I heard for spawning ground estimates of Early Stuarts put the number at less than 10,000.

Stay tuned for more in-river information as it becomes available, because although the frantic pace of in-season management is winding down, the game is not over.

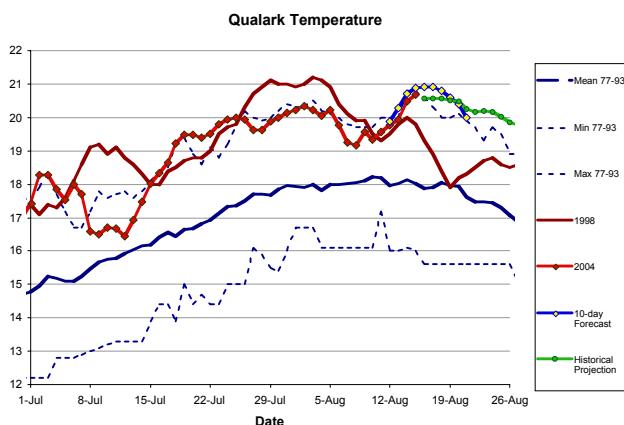
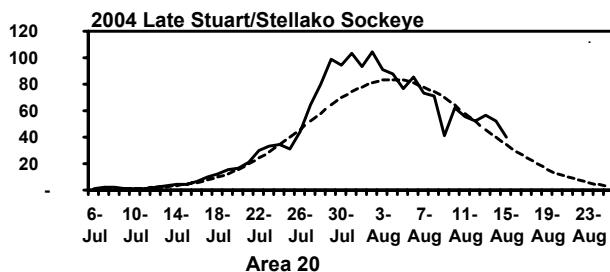
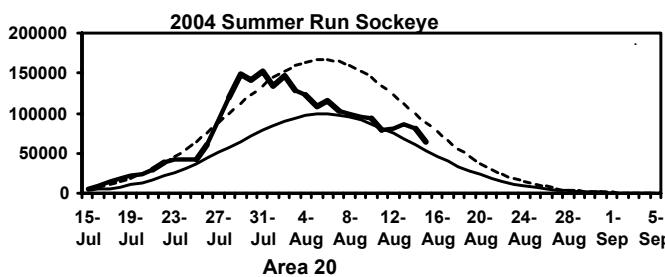
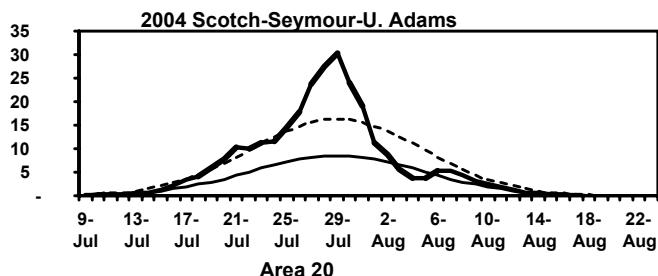
For more information contact Pete Nicklin at (250) 392-5888 or by email at indiseaent@shaw.ca.

GRAPHS

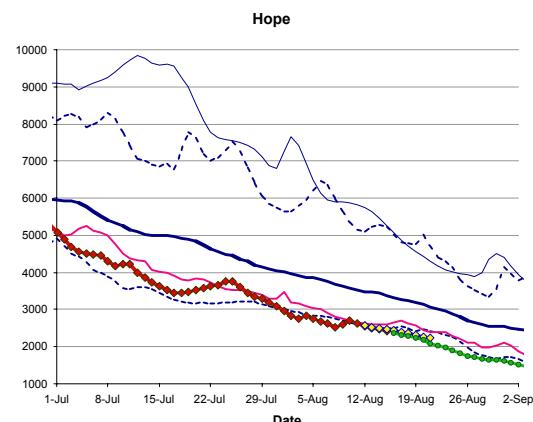


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Watershed Talk

Volume VIII
Issue 12A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations

Hope Discharge



For more information contact **Ken Wilson** at wilsonkh@telus.net or by phone at (604) 301-0418.

WEB LINKS

Go to the Pacific Salmon Commission's website at www.psc.org for the most up to date technical information. Download the Excel file titled PSC_ESC.xls for a complete breakdown of the sockeye escapements.

Current Opening/Closing Times and the Harvest Information for Lower and Upper Fraser is posted on the FRAFS website at www.frafs.ca.

UP COMING MEETINGS, ETC.

IEC Meeting August 27, 2004, Vancouver
Chair Person: Marcel Shepert