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Watershed Talk

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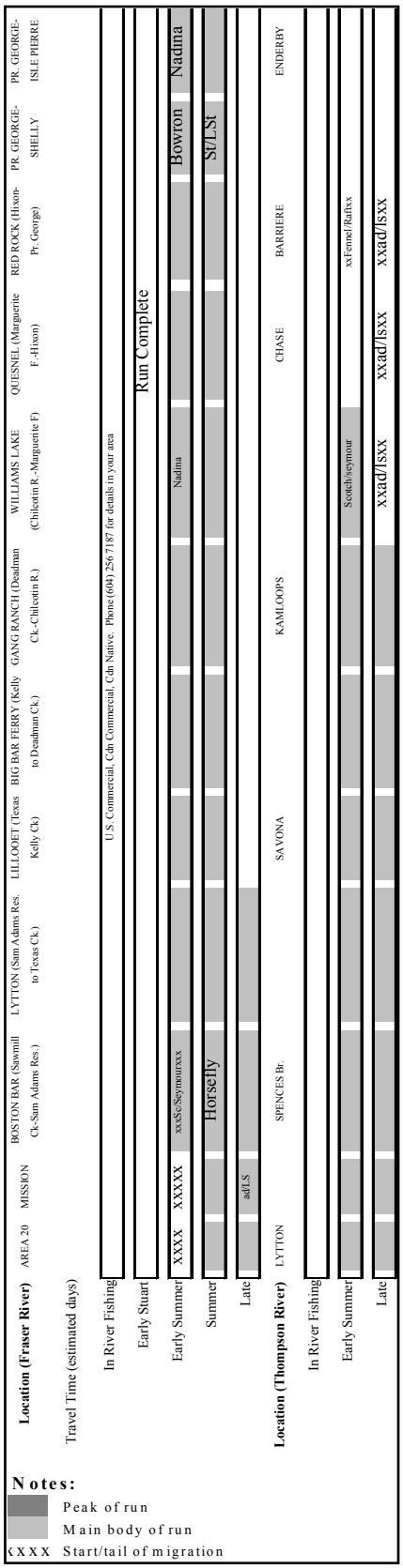
A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for fisheries representatives and their organizations



The following is a Department of Fisheries and Oceans Press release.

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE ROBERT G. THIBAULT MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA

Appeal by the Attorney General of Canada in the Kapp Case

ST-PR-03-001e *August 19, 2003*

I am pleased that the Attorney General of Canada filed an appeal today in the Supreme Court of British Columbia, on the July 28th decision in the case of *R. v. Kapp*.

British Columbia Provincial Court Judge William Kitchen decided that First Nation pilot sales fisheries are inconsistent with Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The pilot sales program has been an important component of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy since it was introduced in 1992. It has provided economic benefits for First Nation communities, fostered self-sufficiency by building Aboriginal capacity, and contributed to improved management of the Aboriginal fishery.

I also realize that members of the commercial fishing sector have increasingly expressed their opposition to the program through fisheries protests. Regrettably, these actions threaten conservation and risk the safety of all participants. The current conflict over the commercial harvest of salmon by First Nations participating in the pilot sales program is serving no one's objectives. It jeopardizes resource management, creates uncertainty and instability, and undermines the economic performance of the fishery.

We can do better. We need to reach arrangements that will support the legitimate desire of First Nation communities to enjoy economic benefits from the fishery, and provide certainty and stability for all participants. These arrangements must be coordinated within an overall management framework that is practical and effective and which takes into account all fishing activities.

I am counting on the collaboration of all those involved to accomplish this, and thus, to secure an orderly and prosperous fishery.

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SOCKEYE UPDATE

By Jason Yarmish

With large numbers of pink salmon now showing up in the test fisheries and in the lower Fraser, future updates concerning the status of Late sockeye will be very difficult, at best. It is likely that Mission counts will be terminated soon, due to the numbers of pinks. Any conservation issues associated with late sockeye will be masked in-season by the inability to monitor their progression with any amount of confidence, and may only be confirmed in terminal assessment programs. It does appear that there will be some problems with Late sockeye. They entered the river early, and water temperatures have remained relatively high. For this reason, a high en-route mortality rate of 78% has been assigned. Further adding to the stress on Late sockeye stocks, commercial fisheries harvested over 160,000 late Lates, despite a pre-season target of 60,000. Based on the math, every last late sockeye will count this year.

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