

Watershed Talk

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations

TECHNICAL UPDATE

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SUMMARY

The Fraser Panel met on August 20th, and issued a news release on the 20th and another on the 24th. The next scheduled Panel meeting is for the 27th. Information presented to the Panel focused primarily on the record high temperatures in the Fraser River and the very low flows throughout the watershed. As reported in last week's Watershed Talk, reports of heat-stressed sockeye continue to pour in, along with observations of sockeye holding in low-temperature refuge tributaries. The peak of the summer run sockeye is in the Fraser, and the abundance of sockeye in marine areas is declining. Commercial fisheries remain closed (these fisheries have been closed since mid-August) and the Canadian commercial total is 1,326,000 sockeye. The non-commercial catch as of August 20th was 579,000. The Summer sockeye run size (at the time of writing) remains at 3.2 million, but may be reduced due to the continuing adverse migration conditions in the Fraser. As can be expected from the sustained and record temperatures in the Fraser, escapement to the spawning grounds by the Early Stuart sockeye is not encouraging so far. In fact, the current escapement is less than 15% of the brood year escapement (2000). Cultus sockeye (late-run) have failed to materialize at the enumeration fence, but some good news comes in the form of the Chilliwack sockeye escapement, which is exceeding the brood year escapement.

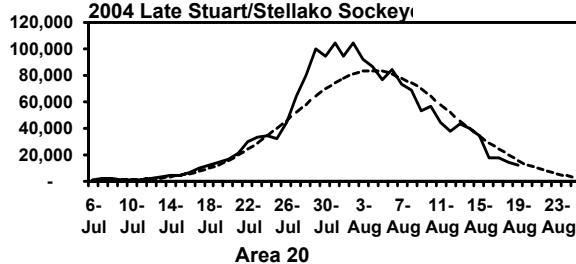
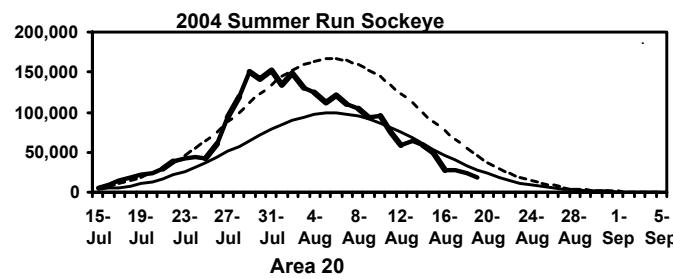
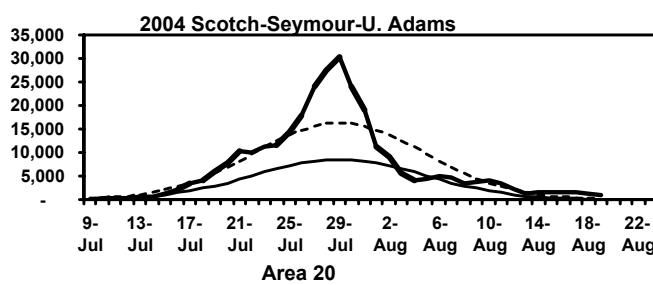
The environmental management adjustments (EMA) set by the Pacific Salmon Commission for the Early Summer and the Summer sockeye are 42% and 30% respectively. The EMA's refer to the percent of potential spawning salmon escapement that will die during migration and fail to spawn.

The temperatures in the Fraser are expected to drop due to the recent watershed-wide rain, and this will hopefully provide some relief to the migrating salmon and resident fish.

The focus of future technical updates will be on the actual salmon returns to the spawning grounds as it becomes available.

GRAPHS:

The following graphs are from Aug 20/04.

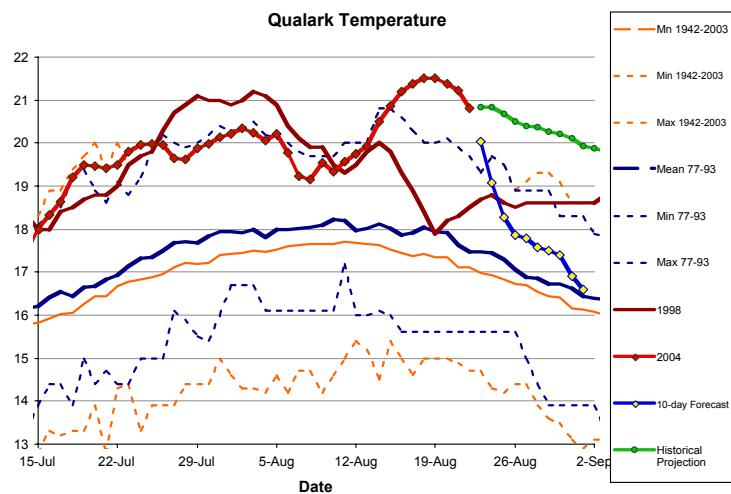


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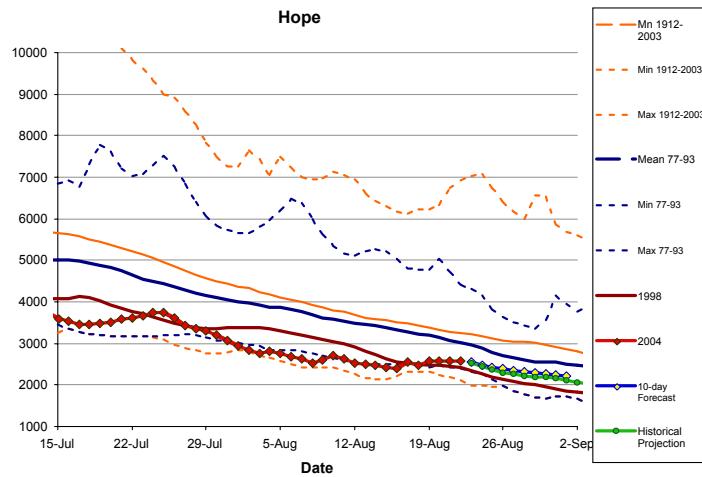
Qualark Temperatures

I've edited the original graph to show this year's record temperatures compared to 1998, the max/min from select time periods, and the mean temperatures from select time periods.



Hope Discharge

I've edited the following graph to compare this year's Fraser discharge with the highs/lows/means of select time periods.



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

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.