

# Watershed Talk

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for  
fisheries representatives and their organizations

## TECHNICAL UPDATE

By Pete Nicklin, Assistant Stock Management Coordinator – [indiseaent@shaw.ca](mailto:indiseaent@shaw.ca)

The following technical information is from August 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 5<sup>th</sup>.

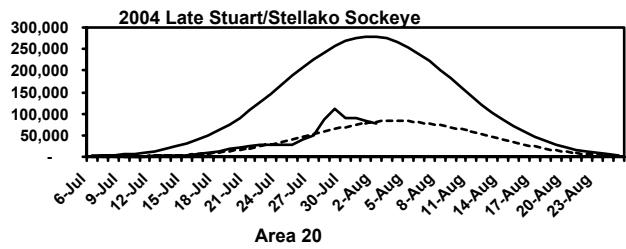
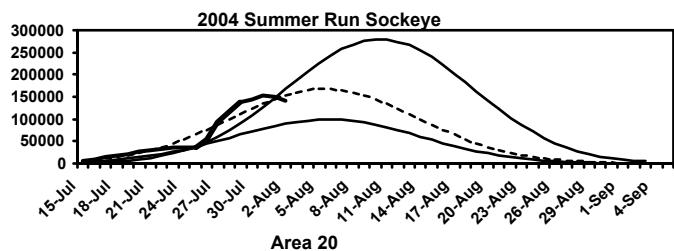
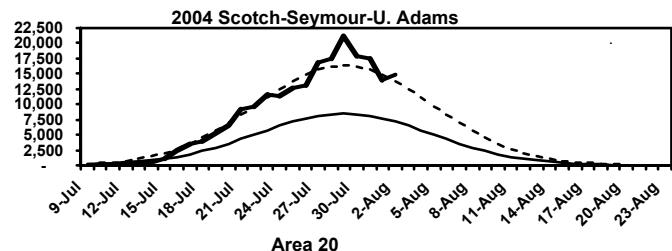
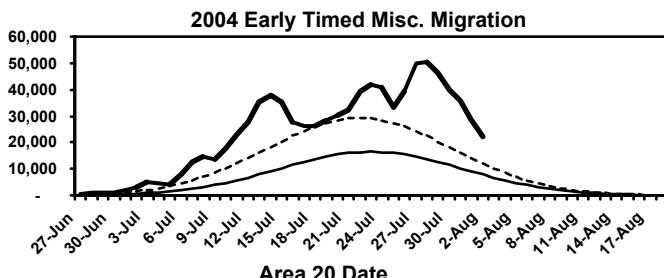
## SUMMARY

The Mission echo-sounder escapement is holding steady at a daily range of 50,000 to 75,000 since July 26<sup>th</sup>. The Early Stuarts are in the Fraser entirely at an escapement of 193,000, which sounds pretty good except preliminary information shows low abundance of this component on the spawning grounds and counts have not kept up with the brood year. Canadian commercial catch totals just over 1 million, while the US catch is less than 75,000. The Early Summer component escapement is 705,000. The Chilko/Quesnel stocks are appearing weaker than projected, with escapements of approximately 63,000 and 27,000 respectively. It is still a little early to tell if these stock components are actually weaker or later than expected. The Late Stuart and Stellako stocks appear strong with escapements of 207,000 and 93,000 respectively.

The Fraser River Aboriginal fishery is at 210,000, PSC test fishery at 20,000, and other test fisheries sit at 7,300. The total catch accounted to date is 1.4 million, and the Mission escapement is 1.1 million.

The excitement isn't over by far, and we're keeping our eyes on the late-late impact issue (remember the Cultus sockeye?), which is likely to remain unresolved in-season. The Cultus enumeration fence will be up and running quickly, and counts of that stock should be coming soon.

## GRAPHS



For more information contact **Pete Nicklin** at [indiseaent@shaw.ca](mailto:indiseaent@shaw.ca) or by phone at (250) 392-5888.

## SELECTIVELY HARVESTING FRASER SOCKEYE

By Ken Wilson, Stock Management Coordinator – [wilsonkh@telus.net](mailto:wilsonkh@telus.net)

Conservation concerns for Fraser and non-Fraser sockeye stocks, upper Fraser coho and other salmon stocks are making life increasingly difficult for fisheries managers and harvesters alike. Harvest restrictions necessary to protect weak stocks often result in fewer fish from strong stocks being harvested than called for in the fishing plans, and this in turn leads to more spawners from strong stocks reaching up river areas. While these fish can simply be allowed to spawn, they also present an opportunity for selective terminal harvest. To take advantage of these opportunities we need a process to identify salmon that are surplus to spawning requirements, we need a process to allocate

these opportunities to ensure that surplus fish are harvested safely and profitably, and we may need to negotiate changes to the Pacific Salmon Treaty to clarify the impact of terminal harvests on sharing arrangements with the US.

Protecting weak and endangered stocks like Cultus sockeye, respecting Aboriginal Rights, and providing commercial and recreational fishing opportunities in the face of increasing conservation concerns will require highly selective, flexible, innovative, and cooperative fishing arrangements. Only by establishing cooperative working relationships within and between the First Nations, commercial and sport fishing communities can we effectively address conservation concerns while maintaining fishing opportunities for all.

Unfortunately, the management process developed over many years to manage Fraser sockeye fisheries is not ideally suited to identifying and harvesting surplus salmon in terminal or near terminal areas. In fact, setting escapement goals for large timing aggregates and not individual stocks, and restricting commercial fishing on these aggregates to the ocean and tidal portions of the Fraser makes it very difficult to either identify or take advantage of terminal selective fishing opportunities when they arise.

The safest way to determine if a single sockeye stock in a terminal area should be harvested is to establish an escapement goal for each stock or lake, and monitor abundance of the stock as it migrates into the terminal area. These goals could be set conservatively to ensure that habitats were fully seeded and ecological considerations were addressed and would not necessarily affect the escapement goals set to regulate mixed stock fisheries for the large stock aggregates.

Despite the obstacles to selective terminal harvests, Chief Doug Kelly of the Soowahlie First Nation, in cooperation with FRAFS, BCAFC, the Sierra Club of BC and Area E commercial fishers, have proposed just such a fishery to harvest early run Chilliwack Lake sockeye in 2004. Up to 150,000 sockeye are returning to Chilliwack lake this year and Chief Kelly wants to explore the possibility of harvesting some of these fish, and sharing the opportunity with commercial and sport harvesters if possible. It's a modest proposal, but an important one. Conservation concerns, and restricted mixed stock fisheries will be a fact of life for many years to come. We need to develop appropriate policies and procedures to allow terminal

selective fisheries to proceed, but more importantly, we need to work towards an agreement on how these opportunities can be shared. If Chief Kelly's proposal meets with DFO's approval, he is prepared to start working immediately to develop sustainable profitable fishing arrangements to share with commercial and sports harvesters. What's stopping us?

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

## WEB LINKS

Go to the Pacific Salmon Commission's website at [www.psc.org](http://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](http://www.frafs.ca).

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Tier 1 Technical Update** teleconference call Tuesday August 10 at 3:00PM. Chairperson – Mike Staley.

**Tier 1 Technical Update** teleconference call Thursday August 12 at 4:00PM. Chairperson – Mike Staley.

## Correction Notice

There was an error on the issue numbers for:  
Issue #9. should have been Issue #8 and  
Issue #10 should have been Issue #9

This will be left as Issue #10 to get back on track, sorry for the mix up.