



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

AUGUST 7, 2012

VOLUME IX, ISSUE 7

FRASER SOCKEYE UPDATE

By Neil Todd, FRAFS Operations Manager (with notes from the Fraser River Panel meetings August 6-7, 2012)

Test Fisheries

The Area 20 test fishery experienced moderate catches last week, with higher catches occurring on Saturday and Sunday (Aug 4 & 5), but a low catch yesterday. Area 12 catches have been relatively low, with one noticeable increase occurring yesterday (Aug 6). Overall, the diversion rate is still relatively low with about 75-80% of the fish still returning through Area 20;

Stock Identification

From information reported to the Panel yesterday, in-river the Early Summers are still strong at about 25% of the fish, with the Summer Run aggregate making up the bulk of the fish. The Late Run aggregate is showing stronger than expected, anywhere from 3 to 13% of the fish present depending on the sample; of these, Birkenhead is by far the predominant stock. Fish sampled in Area 20 on August 4 consisted of 7% Early Summer Run aggregate, 80% Summer Run aggregate, and 13% Late Run aggregate.

Early Summer Run Aggregate

These fish continue to arrive. Today the PSC recommended increasing the **in-season run size estimate to 550,000** from 530,000. The stock composition is: Chilliwack 211,000; Pitt 130,000; and total interior/upper Fraser stocks 209,000. Area 20 peak timing is now determined to be July 25, dropping the MA for interior stocks to 1.03, which means that of the 209,000 in-season run size estimate for these stocks, only about 100,000 would survive to reach the spawning grounds (assuming there were no fisheries on them).

Summer Run Aggregate

Good news! As noted above, a significant increase in numbers of fish going past Mission yesterday and today reflects the test fishery bump in A20 on July 28 and 29. This has changed the picture for the Early Summer Run aggregate: timing of the peak is now thought to be August 5, four days later than pre-season forecast; and the **in-season data** now indicate that the Summer Run Aggregate is returning at abundances **consistent with the pre-season forecast of 1,585,000**. Within this aggregate the Harrison stock is exceeding the pre-season forecast; Chilko/Quesnel appear to be arriving near or at pre-season forecast; and Late Stuart/Stellako appear to be below pre-season forecast.

Late Run Aggregate

As of right now, Birkenhead abundances look stronger than the pre-season forecast, assuming they aren't significantly early.

Environmental Conditions

River flows continue to drop but are still about 18% higher than normal for this time of year. Water temperature is 0.9C above normal for this time of year; and the hot weather in the Interior is expected to result in more temperature increases over the next few days. It is hoped that the shorter days and longer nights from here on will keep the temperatures from reaching sub-lethal (high stress) levels as the Summer Run stocks make their way up river.

FRASER RIVER ABORIGINAL FISHERIES SECRETARIAT

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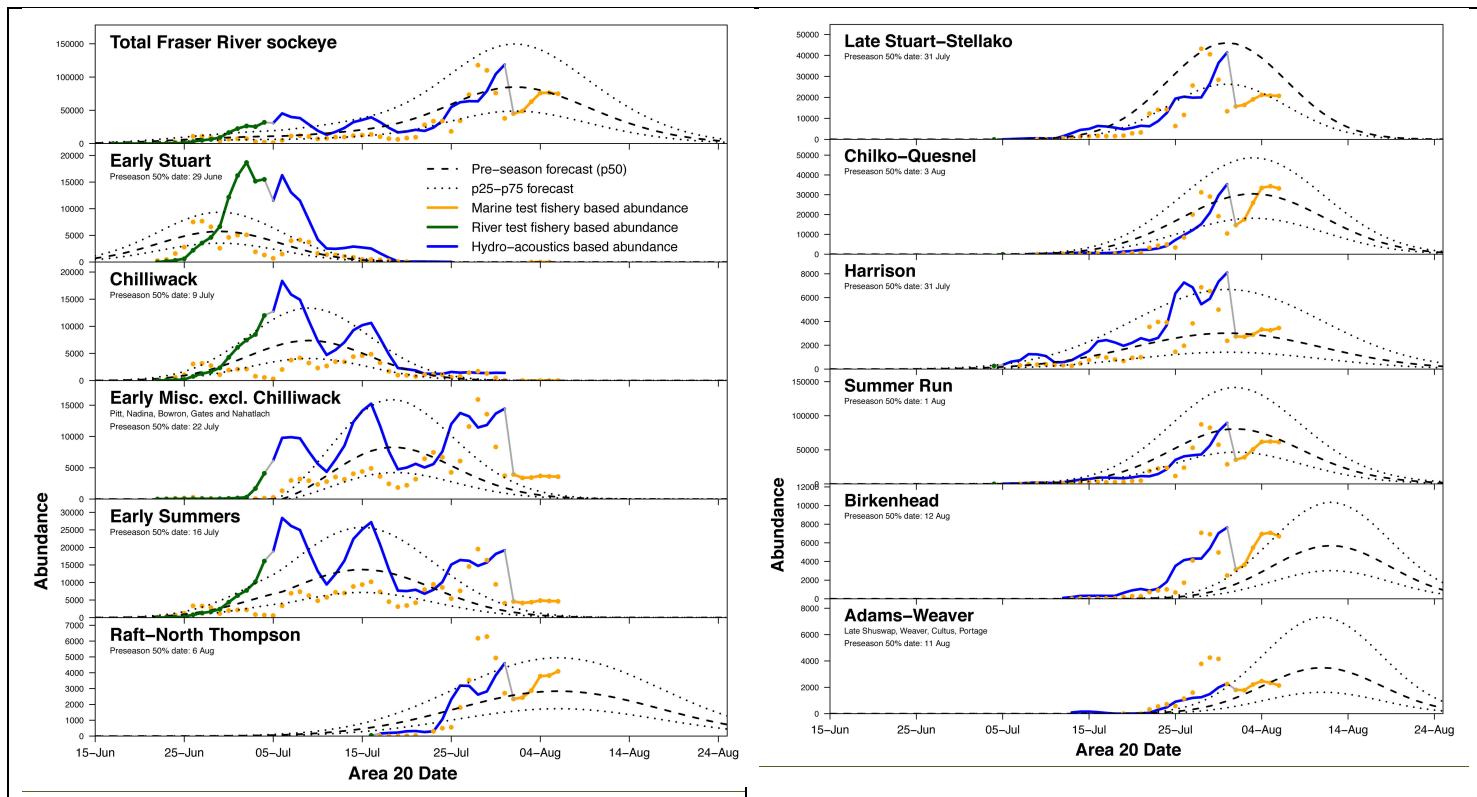
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2012 Fraser River Sockeye Daily Migration Abundance



Graphs courtesy of the PSC Fraser River Panel

FRAFS First Nations In-Season Technical Conference Calls

Thursdays at 4:00 PM unless otherwise noted

Hosted by FRAFS Biologist Mike Staley

Dial in number: 1-866-512-0904; Passcode: 4954972#

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General Information

With Chinook and sockeye approaching and in the Fraser, these links may be of interest:

Albion Test Fishery – Chinook Gill Net:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/docs/commercial/albionchinook-quinnat-eng.htm>

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: www.psc.org

Fraser River Fisheries Information: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/index-eng.htm>

Pacific Salmon Commission Test Fisheries: http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission News and Regulatory announcements:

http://www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm

Fraser River Mission Escapement Reports:

http://www.psc.org/info_inseasonfraserescapement.htm

Fraser River Environmental Watch Reports:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/reports-rapports/2012/reports-rapports-12-eng.htm>