

THE 2010 FISHING SEASON: A HUGE SUCCESS (but nothing's perfect)

Mike Staley held his last 2010 in-season update conference call yesterday (Thursday September 9). Everyone is familiar with the surprising abundance of sockeye salmon returning to the Fraser River this year; at this time in the season, there isn't much more to anticipate. While there will likely be some post-season adjustments to the estimated run sizes, the fact will remain that up to three times as many sockeye returned in total as were predicted by the pre-season forecasts. Most First Nations, and most sectors, have had a good fishing year for sockeye.

However, the books aren't yet closed on a couple of "issues" of interest:

1. Interior Fraser River Coho Mortality: in the understandable effort by the Department to make sockeye fishing opportunities available as long as possible, and over as wide an area as possible, there is a chance that Interior Fraser coho may suffer. The models and calculations used to estimate potential Interior Fraser coho mortality in those fisheries are not an exact science. Most of those significant sockeye fisheries are managed to an allowable coho "mortality allocation". It is not generally known outside the Department how those "allocations" were arrived at, what they are for each fishery, and how First Nations rights-based fisheries near the terminal areas are figured into them.

2. Birkenhead sockeye: all the major sockeye stock groupings, and therefore numbers of stocks within each grouping, have been returning in numbers well in excess of the pre-season forecast. At this time the Birkenhead stock seems to be an exception; it is returning at or near pre-season forecast. Swamped by the huge run of the Adams/Weaver component of the Late Run sockeye, it is feasible that the Birkenhead sockeye numbers will eventually be found to be greater than currently accounted for.

3. Late Run sockeye: as discussed over the last 2-3 weeks at the Fraser Panel, good numbers of Late Run sockeye appear to be holding off the mouth of the Fraser in accordance with historical behaviour patterns. However, there is difficulty in ascertaining just how big a "pool" of fish is out there and how long it will contribute to the daily flow of fish past Mission. There are roughly 150-200,000 fish going past Mission each day; those numbers will have to increase soon if the full in-season estimate of Late Run sockeye is going to be realized.

Environmental conditions: while the river is lower than normal for this time of year, temperatures in the Fraser are at the average that they should be for good migrating conditions.

Update on Visions Conference

The Visions planning committee is busy working on the program for the 2010 conference, scheduled for October 13 and 14 at the Seabird Island Band. The proposed theme for this year is "Fisheries Data: Bridging gaps and building trust", which will address a variety of issues related to technical information and stock assessment.

The planning committee is currently considering the following potential topics for discussion:

- Different types of data collection (CWT, DNA, etc.)
- Linking data to policy/management objectives and practices
- Test fisheries
- First Nations stock assessment and catch monitoring initiatives
- Updates on DFO stock assessment, and status report on DFO's development of a Fraser River stock assessment framework
- Sharing the responsibility for stock assessment and catch monitoring
- Data storage and ownership

A guest room block has been set aside at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort. The cost varies between \$99 and \$135 depending on room type and occupancy. Participants are responsible for making their own reservations. You can reach Harrison Hot Springs by calling toll free 1-(866) 638-5075. The group reservation is under "Visions Conference (FRAFS)". We are also in the process of reserving some additional guest rooms at the Harrison Beach Hotel. More information regarding accommodations options will be posted as it becomes available.

As in past years, Visions participants are encouraged to bring displays of fisheries projects to share. Please contact us to reserve a display table. We are also accepting door prize donations, so if you have items to contribute please let us know.

We look forward to seeing everyone in October!

**First Nations Fisheries Council
Fall 2010 Assembly
November 2, 3 & 4, 2010
at the Nisga'a Hall, Prince Rupert BC**

Visit www.infisheriescouncil.ca for more info or to register

**VISIONS CONFERENCE
October 13 & 14, 2010
at Seabird Island Band,
Agassiz BC**

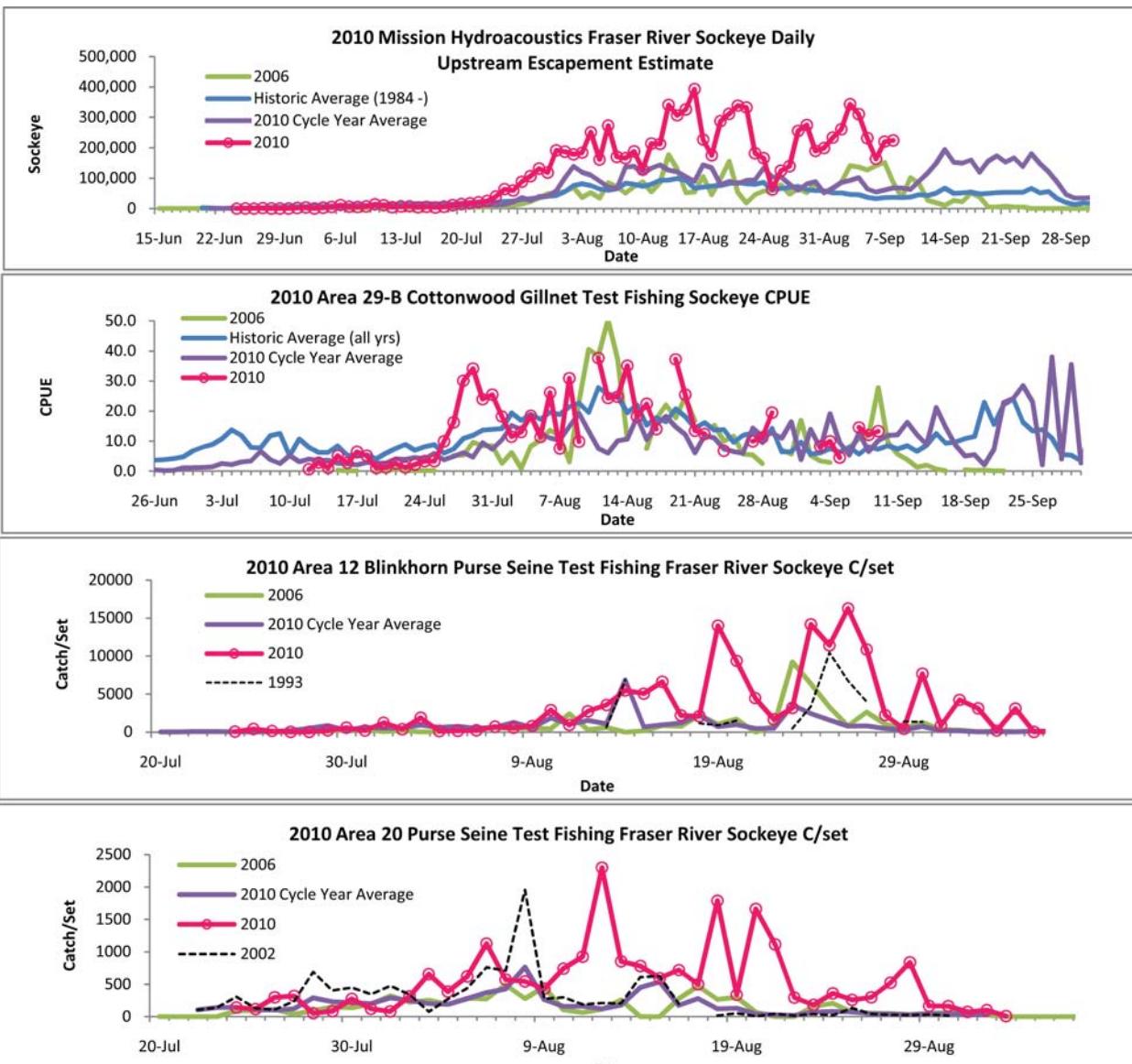
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Watershed Talk

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations

FRASER SOCKEYE - IN-SEASON UPDATE (GRAPHS)

Provided by the Pacific Salmon Commission Fraser River Panel



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