



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

2015 FRASER SALMON UPDATE

By: *Pete Nicklin, FRAFS Fraser Fisheries Biologist*

This will be the final in-season update for the Fraser sockeye and pink season, unless something dramatic and completely unexpected happens over the next week.

The Late run sockeye migration has continued at low levels, as indicated by the lowered adopted in-season estimate. The pink salmon migration spiked quickly, and dropped off just as rapidly. This rapid drop off has resulted in a lowered pink salmon fishery planning abundance of 6 million. At a 6 Million pink salmon abundance, there is only a very small amount of Total Allowable Catch available, and the likelihood of commercial, economic opportunity and demonstration fisheries is not looking promising.

Fraser River Conditions

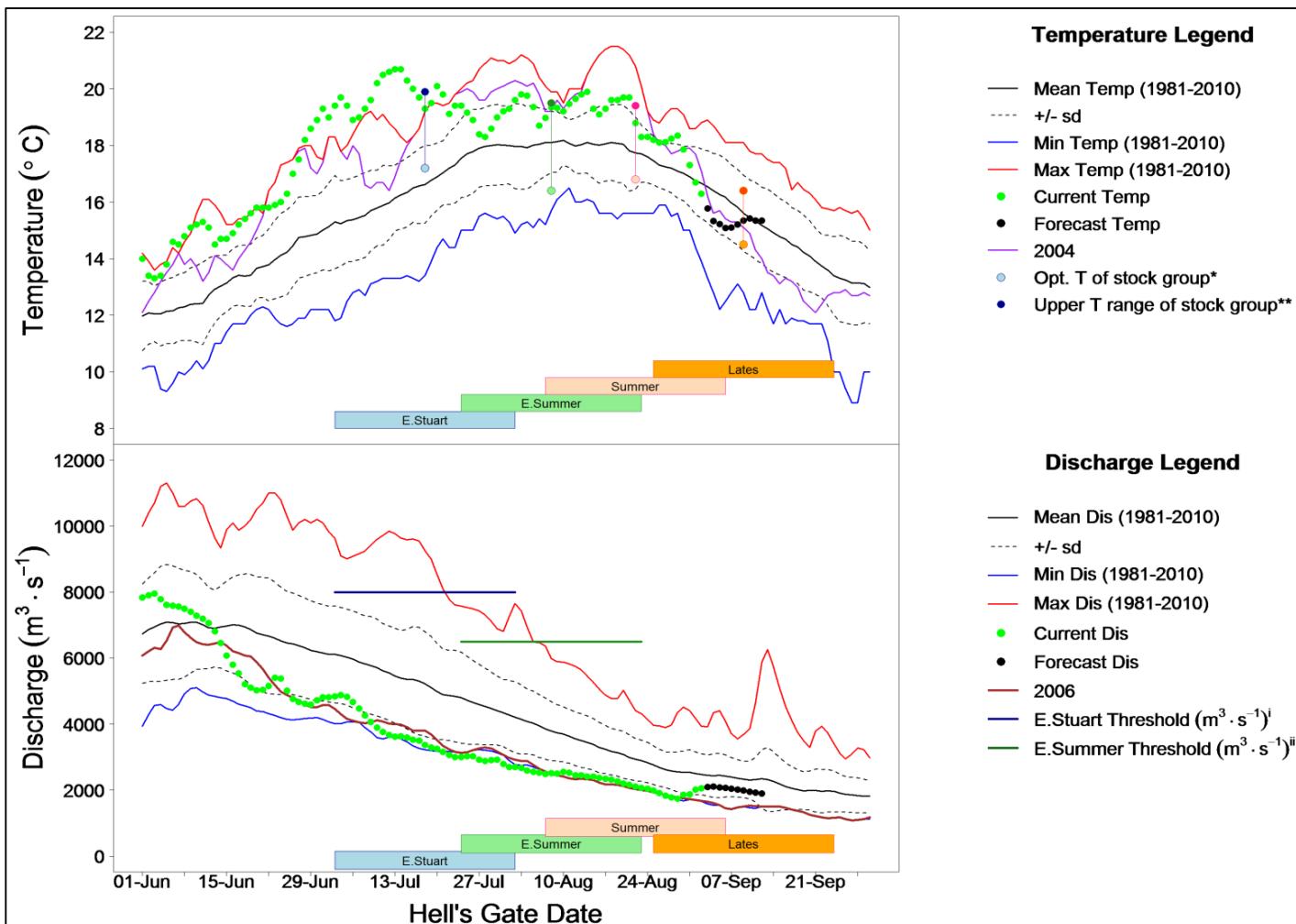
The main source of information for Temperature and Discharge data and forecasts is DFO's Environmental Watch Program (see link below).

The BC River Forecast Centre website (see links below) has information and links related to discharge and temperatures at various monitoring stations throughout the Fraser watershed, including snow pillow and melt updates.

Environment Canada's Water Office webpage provides access to real time hydrometric data at many locations throughout the Fraser watershed (see links below).

Fraser Discharge and temperatures at Hope and Qualark Creek (near Hope) respectively look like this (graphs from the Fraser River Panel Distribution September 3rd, 2015):

Continued next page



The Fraser River water temperatures have dropped over the past week and are now close to average 16.1 degrees Celsius (0.4 degrees Celsius below average for this time of year), and forecast to decrease to 15.7 degrees Celsius by September 9th. The Fraser River discharge has increased from the record lows seen for most of the season due to cooler temperatures and rain. Current flow is 1,982 m³/sec at the Qualark water station, (19% below average). The discharge is predicted to continue tracking below average flows, with a forecast discharge of 1,870 m³/sec by September 9th.

Fraser River Fisheries Information

Fraser First Nations Fisheries information can be found on the DFO website at:
<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/index-eng.html>

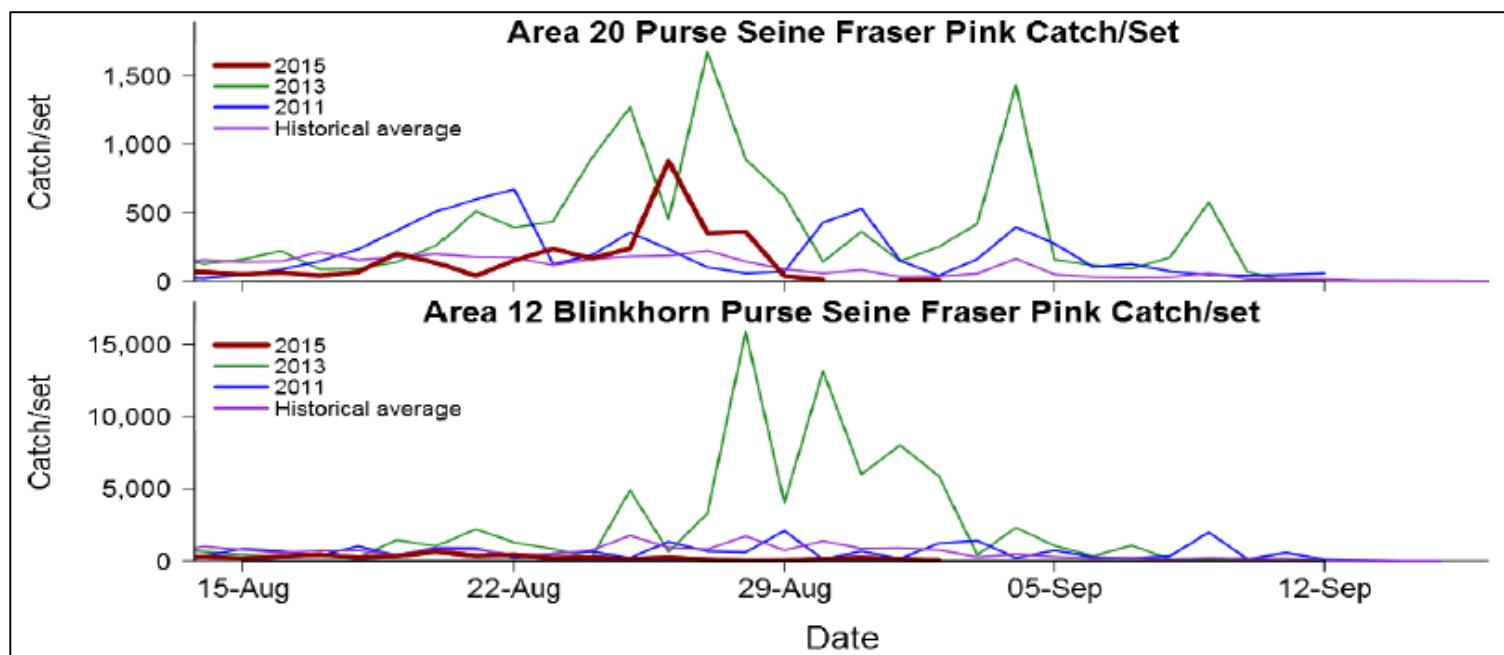
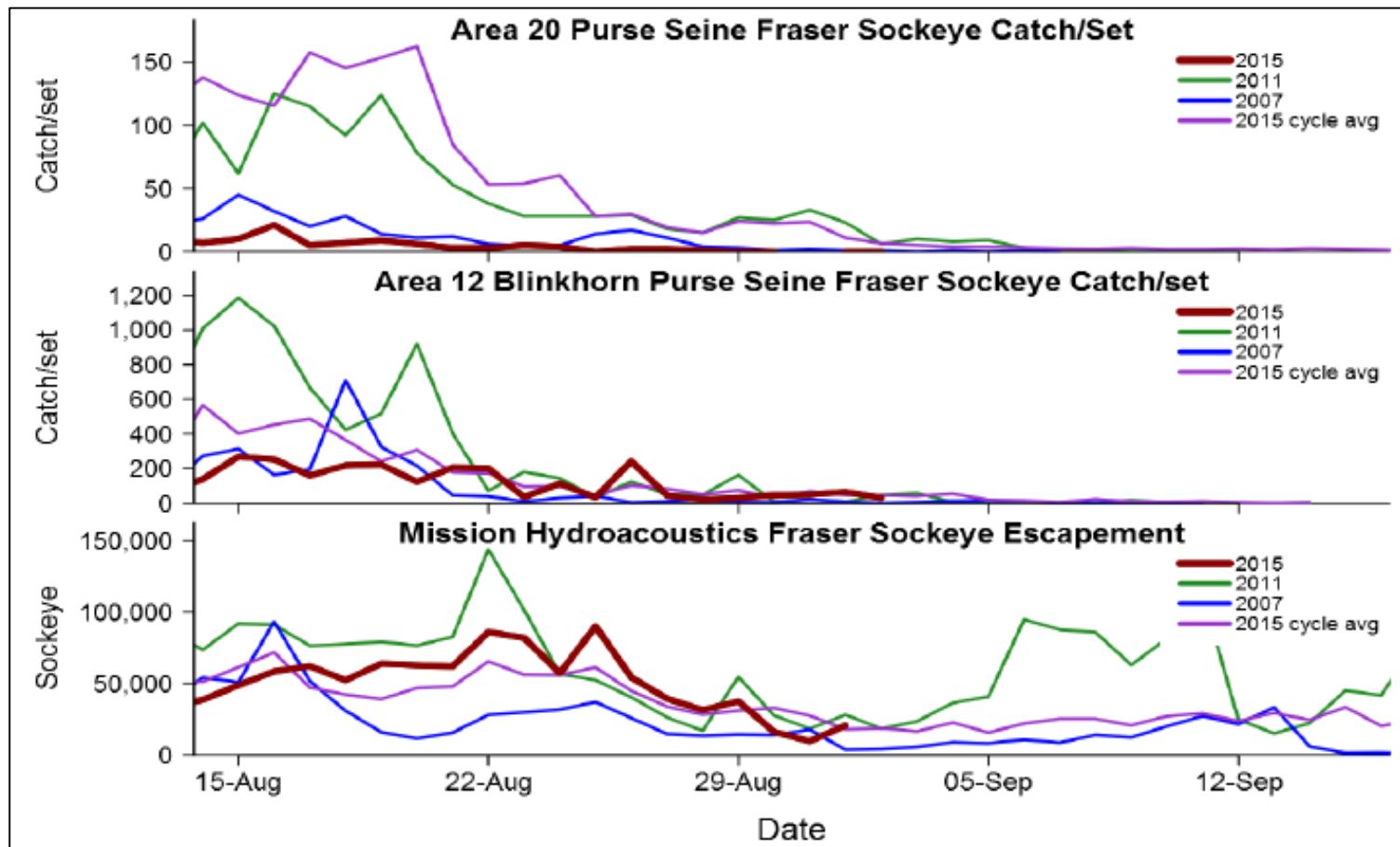
Fraser Sockeye & Pink Salmon

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) distributes the Fraser River Panel meeting agenda and technical information for Panel members and observers to the process. The following information is a summary of key information from that document (September 3rd, 2015) and the Fraser River Panel meeting from Sept 4, 2015.

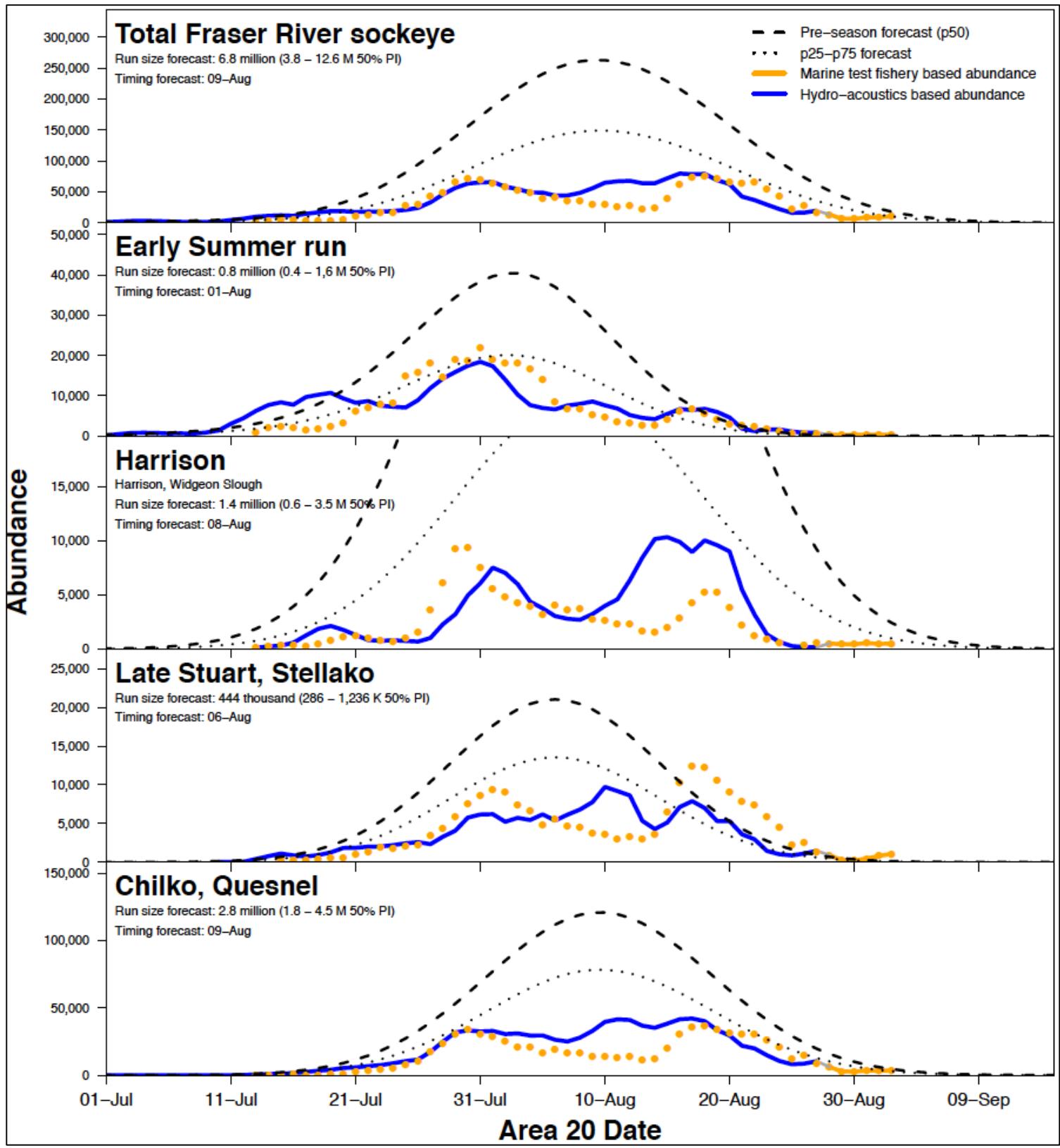
At this time, marine gillnet test fisheries have been suspended as a result of low abundance. The purse seine test fisheries have been suspended in Area 13 (lower Johnstone Strait) but remain in operation in Area 12 (upper Johnstone Strait) and Area 20 (Juan de Fuca) but, as stated above, are no longer retaining sockeye with the exception of some fish for sampling purposes. Hydroacoustics programs remain in full operation at Mission and Qualark (Yale). A total of 1,974,000 Fraser sockeye have been

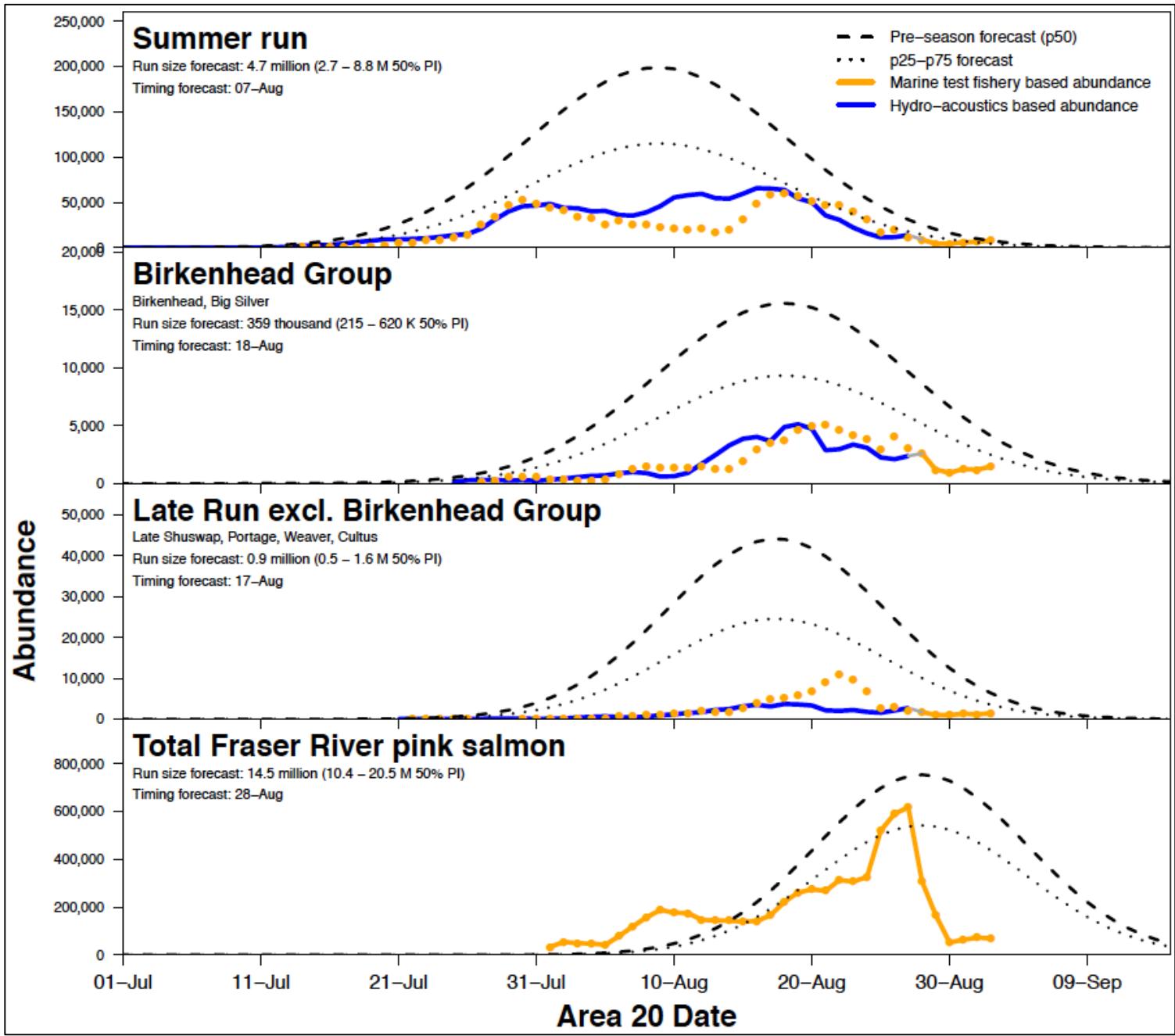
accounted-to-date, comprised of an in-season estimate of 32,000 Early Stuart sockeye, 370,000 Early Summer run sockeye, 1,456,000 Summers and 116,000 Lates. The Fraser Pink migration is well underway, with an accounted catch + escapement of 2,045,000.

Test fishing graphs and Mission hydro-acoustics information from the September 3rd PSC distribution package look like this:



Estimated Abundance and In-Season Timing Compared to Forecast





The next Fraser River Panel meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 8th.

Links

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

BC River Forecast Centre Website: <http://bcrfc.env.gov.bc.ca>

Environment Canada's Water Office Website: http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: www.psc.org

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/index-eng.html>

The Albion Test Fishery information can be found at:

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

For more information contact Pete Nicklin by email: pnicklin@telus.net



**Volume 12, Issue 13
September 4, 2015**