



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

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Bobo Michel, Xwisten



"I try to protect every source of water."

Gerald (Bobo) Michel is the Lands and Resource Coordinator for the Bridge River Indian Band (Xwisten). He's a soft-spoken man and when the waters of the Bridge River rush down the valley, you have to listen carefully.

But there's much to learn from a person with such a strong connection to his community, the land, water and fish. Next week I'll report on the tour of salmon habitat sites in Xwisten territory that we took.

Dip Net Fishery on the Fraser at Bridge River Rapids



This fisher is at a spot nicknamed the Bluff.

"Gotta be half mountain goat to get there," according to a Facebook post by Milton Doss. "Not much to stand on ... very good fishing place though," he added.

See the entire photo album at: [Dip Net Fishery](#).

FRASER RIVER ABORIGINAL FISHERIES SECRETARIAT

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Fraser Salmon In-season Update

General

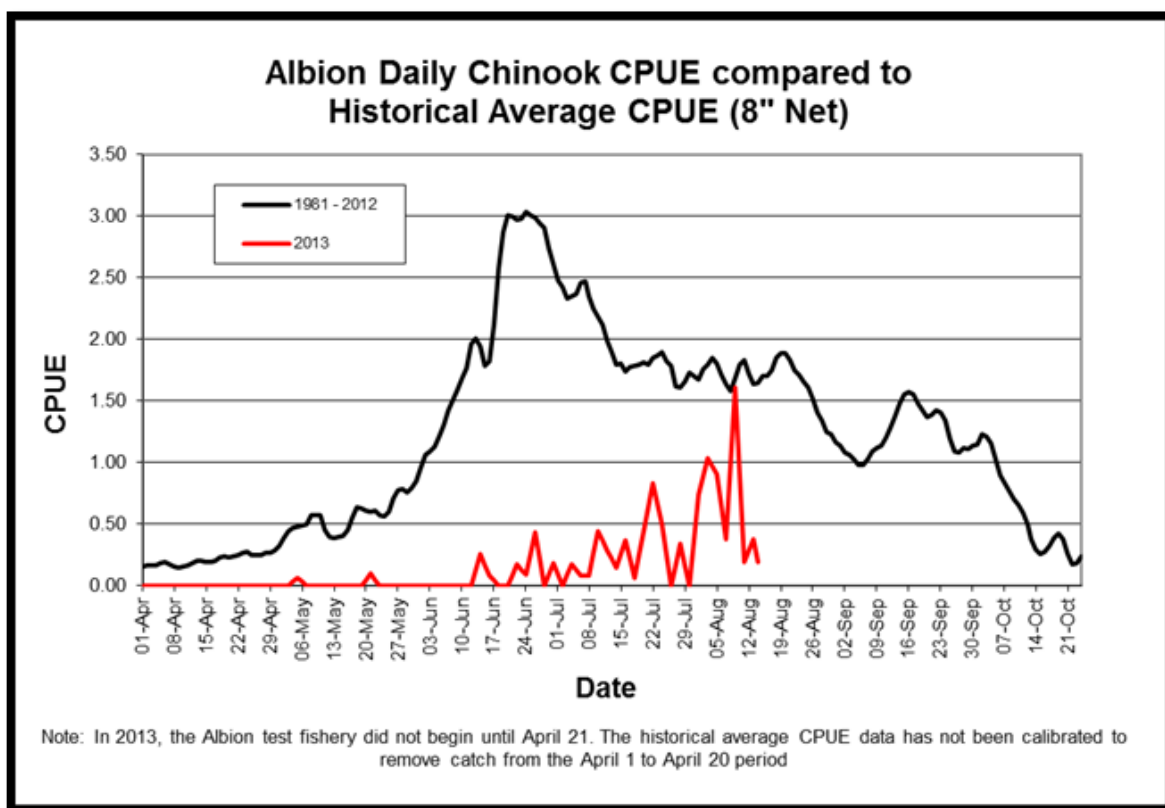
The information in this update summarizes the information from:

- FRAFS August 15th Thursday in-season teleconference call;
- Fraser River Panel information distribution August 16th; and
- Albion Chinook test fishery graphs from the DFO website.

Note that the Thursday in-season updates (presented by Mike Staley) will continue weekly throughout the sockeye season.

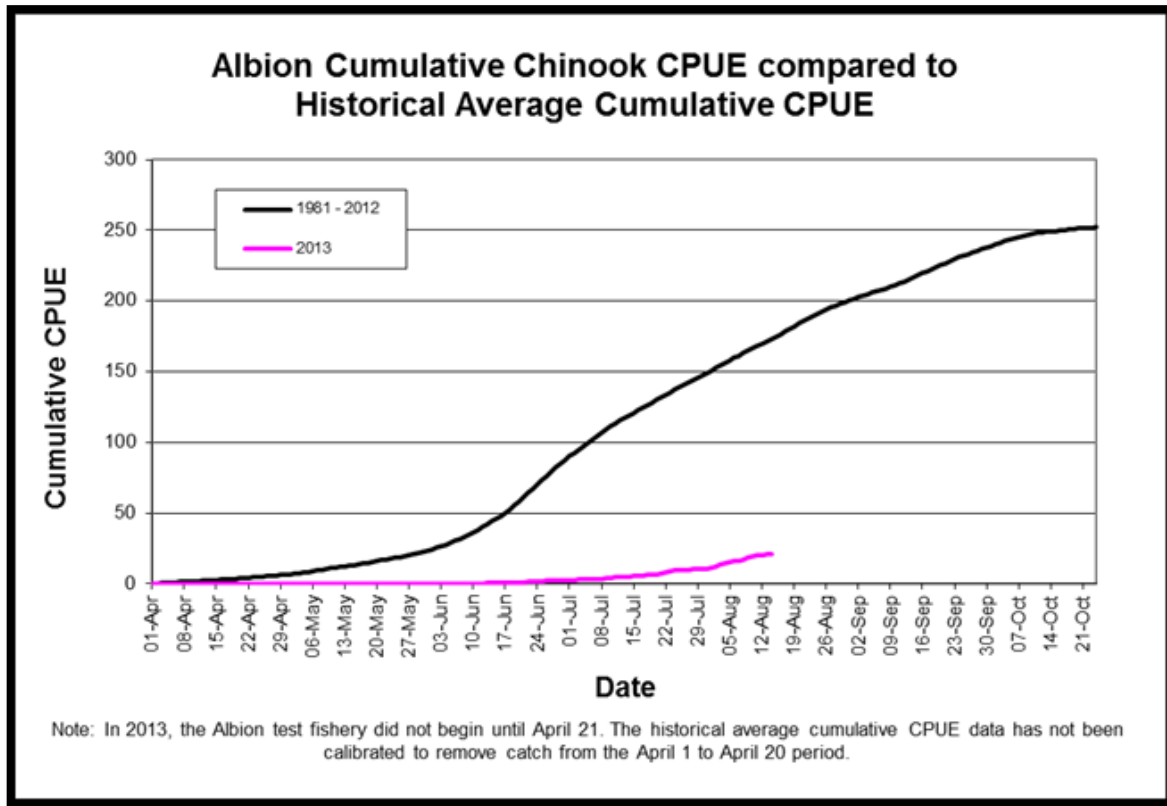
Fraser Chinook Albion Test Fishery (Graphs from DFO website: Albion Chinook Test Fishery)

Daily abundance





Cumulative abundance



Water Conditions

Fraser River discharge and temperature information is updated and distributed by the Pacific Salmon Commission. The graphs in this section are taken directly from that update.

Current Fraser River temperatures at Hope are above average for this time of year, **and are at record levels for this time of year**. These water temperatures are very stressful to migrating salmon and are currently above the upper temperature range for Early Summer, Summer and Late sockeye. Water discharge in the Fraser continues to track slightly below average for this time of year and forecast to continue this trend. ***These high temperatures are driving the major increase to the Summer Run Management Adjustment.***

On the Fraser River Panel call today, there was a report of sockeye holding at the mouths of some Fraser tributaries and observations of sockeye carcasses floating in the Fraser. These observations are consistent with the extreme migration conditions the sockeye are encountering.



Fraser River Temperature at Qualark

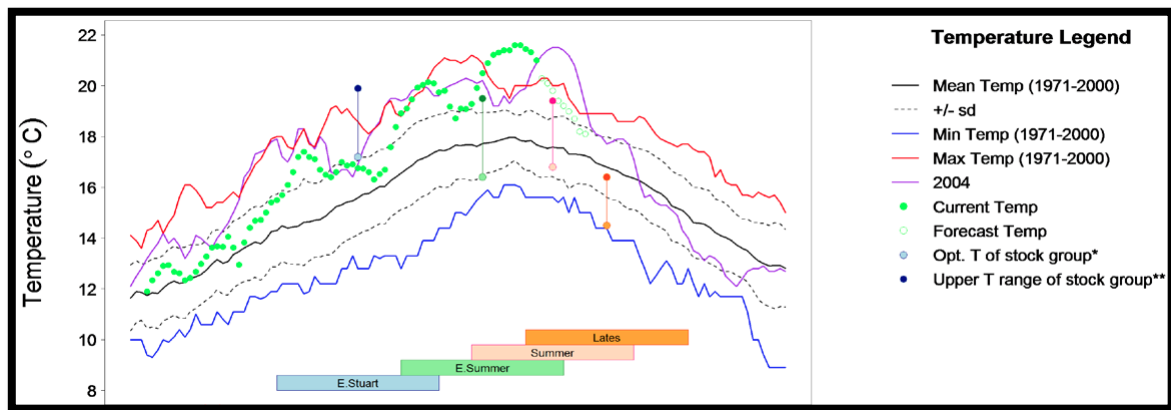


Figure 1: This graph shows the Fraser River temperatures at Qualark Creek (Lower Fraser). The line with the solid green circles shows the 2013 observed temperatures. The unfilled green circle portion of the line shows the forecast temperatures. The current temperature is approximately 21 degrees Celsius and forecast to decrease to 19 degrees Celsius by August 21st. The current temperature is above average by 3.3 degrees, and at record levels (1971-2000). The vertical lines connected by circles show the Optimal and Upper temperature range of the sockeye aggregates. Current temperatures are far above the Upper Temperature range for Early Summer, Summer and Late sockeye.



Fraser River Discharge at Hope

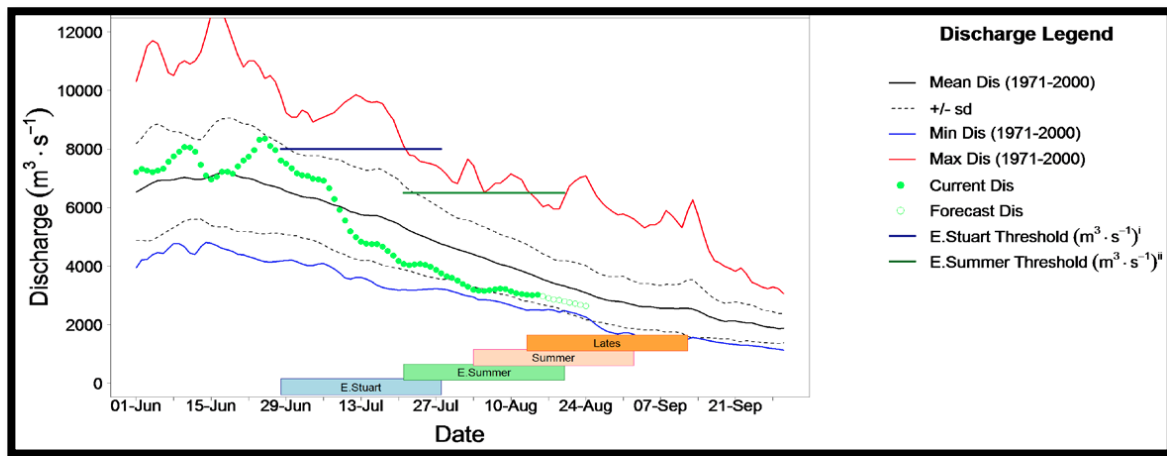


Figure 2: This graph shows the 2013 Fraser River discharge at Hope. The line with the solid green circles is the 2013 observed discharge values, and the forecast discharge shows as unfilled green circles. Fraser River discharge is below average for this time of year. The August 15th discharge was 3010 m³/sec (approximately 17% lower than average for the date), and forecast to decrease to approximately 2757 m³/sec by August 21st.

Fraser Sockeye

Fraser sockeye are in marine approach areas, migrating in the Fraser River and on their spawning grounds.

Marine test fisheries have been scaled back to reduce test fishery impacts on Fraser sockeye. Early Summers are still showing in marine test fisheries, and continue to show abundances significantly higher than pre-season expectations. The Summer run sockeye continue to show in marine test fisheries, and are showing later timing than expected pre-season, but remain at lower abundance than pre-season expectations. Late sockeye are now showing in marine and in-river test fisheries.

An estimated 477,000 Early Summers, 994,000 Summers and 65,000 Lates have been estimated through the Mission hydroacoustics station to date (August 15th).

The Early Stuart migration is complete in marine areas and these sockeye are on the spawning grounds, and past the peak of spawn in surveyed tributaries. Spawners are reported to be in good condition.

Early Summer sockeye are now at an estimated aggregate abundance of 520,000, which continues to climb from the pre-season expectation of 253,000. The Pitt and Early Thompson groups returned in abundances significantly higher than expectations, and the Nadina group is now above pre-season forecast as well.

Summer Run sockeye remain the dominant management group in test fisheries, but are still estimated to be returning in abundances significantly lower than expected pre-season. However, the news over the past few days is a little more positive than a week ago. Summers continue to show some strength in marine test



fisheries, and later timing than expected. The in-season Summer aggregate estimate has been increased to 2.3 million based on August 9th timing. Harrison and Raft/North Thompson are above pre-season expectation levels, but the remaining stocks in this aggregate are below forecast. Quesnel sockeye remain at estimated abundance far below forecast. As mentioned in the previous 2 weeks, the other major issue facing the return of the Summer sockeye is the extremely high river temperatures in the Fraser. Temperatures are at record levels for this time of year, and today the Fraser Panel increased the Summer pMA to 2.35 associated with August 9th timing. With a pMA of 2.35 and an estimated run size of 2.3 million, there are currently not enough Summer sockeye to achieve the aggregate escapement target. **Therefore, despite today's increase in run size for this aggregate, there is still no TAC on this management group.**

It is still too early in the Late Run sockeye migration for an in-season run size estimate, but current information shows Birkenhead returning at levels below pre-season expectations, with most of the Late return (thus far) in the Late Shuswap component of this management group.

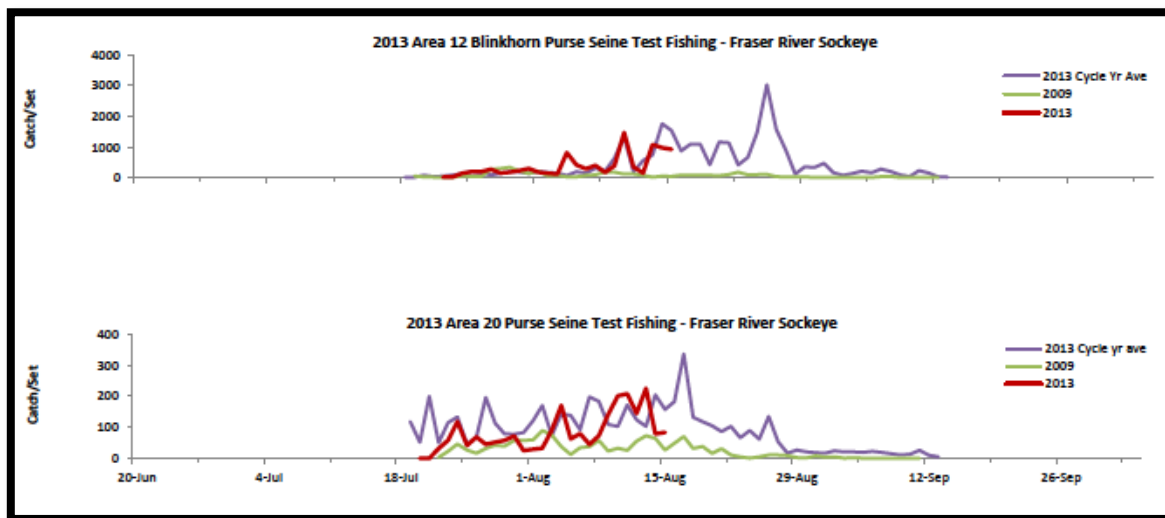
Reports of Fraser sockeye spawning escapement are still early in the season, but spawners appear to be in good condition thus far in the Early Stuart and Nadina systems.

The next scheduled Fraser River Panel meeting is Tuesday August 20th.

Fraser Pinks

Fraser pink salmon are early in their migration, but appear to be tracking early or above pre-season abundance expectations (or both) (see graph). Fraser pinks are building in the marine areas, and starting to show in the Fraser.

Fraser Sockeye & Pink Test Fishery Summary (Provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)



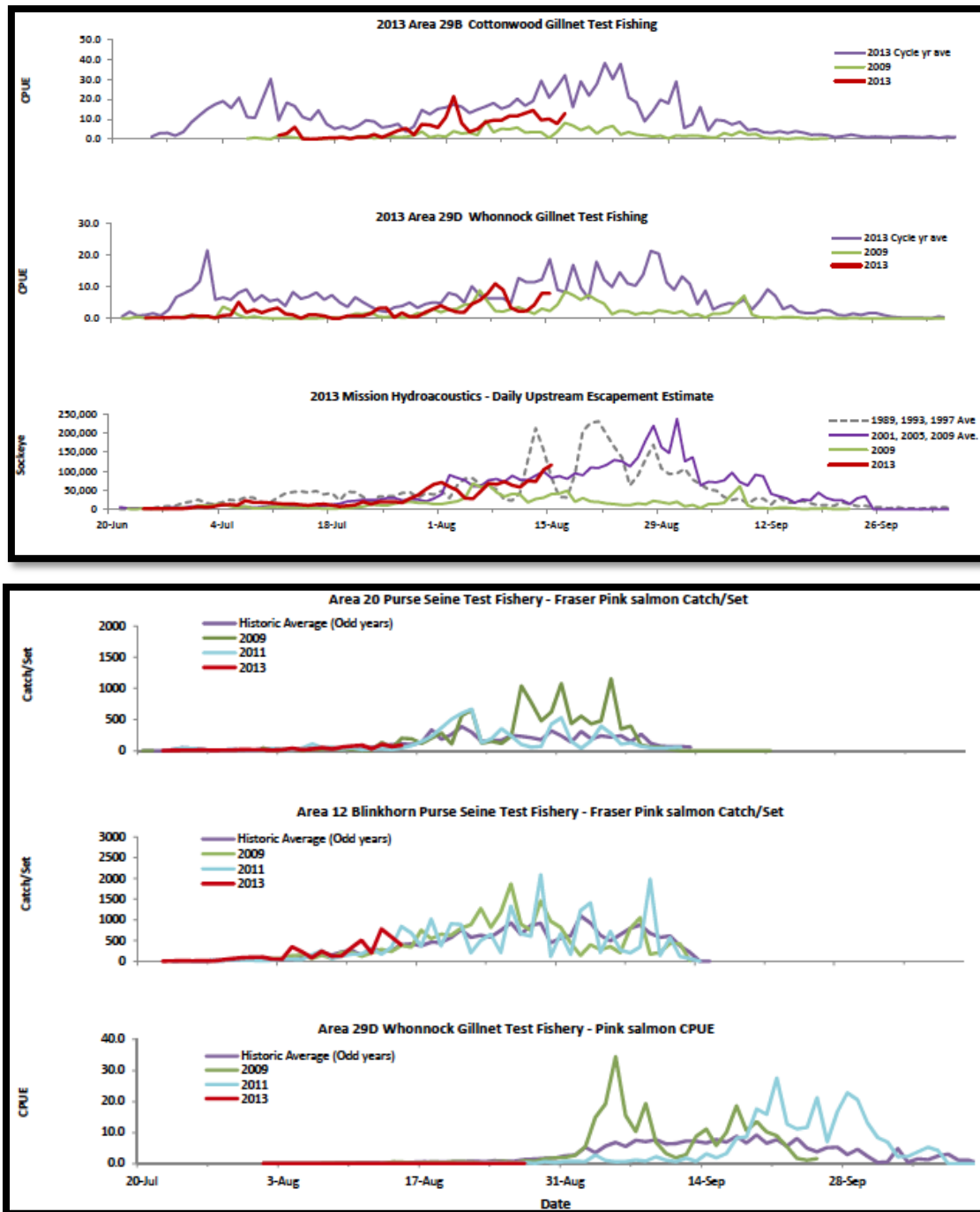


Figure 3: Pacific Salmon Commission 2013 test fisheries summary (to Aug 15th).

2013 Fraser Sockeye and Pink Run Status (provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)

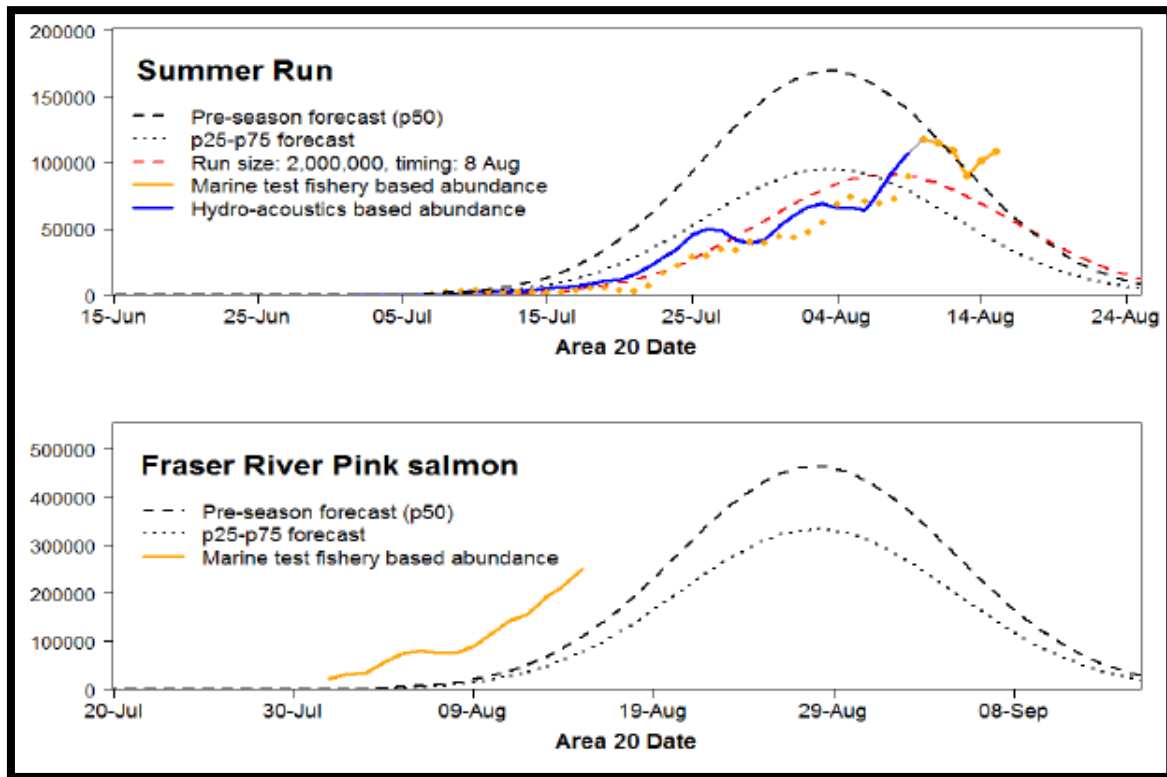
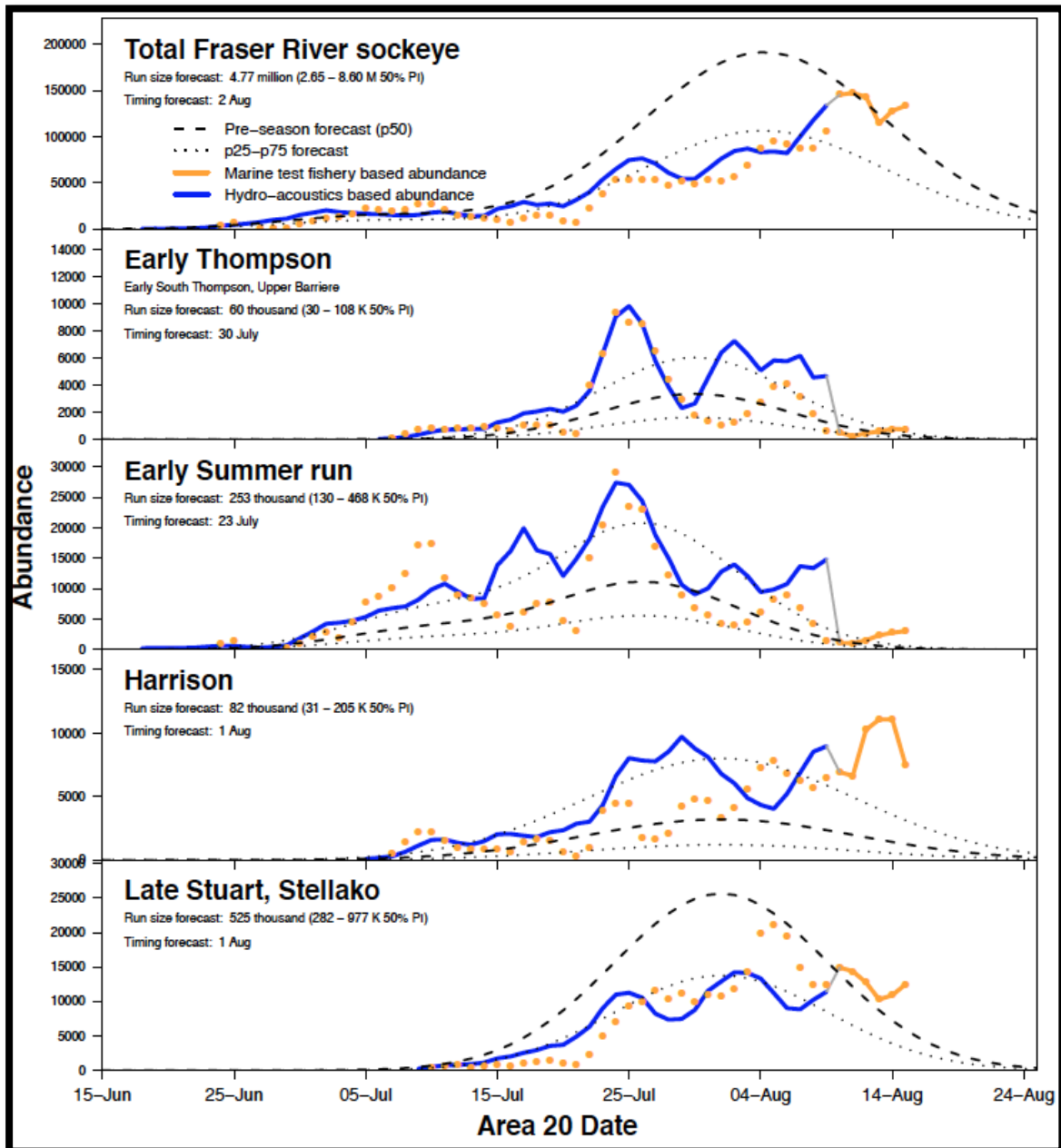


Figure 4. Fraser Sockeye and Pink Run Status compared to pre-season expectations.



*Fraser Sockeye Area 20 sockeye passage Graphs
(Provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)*



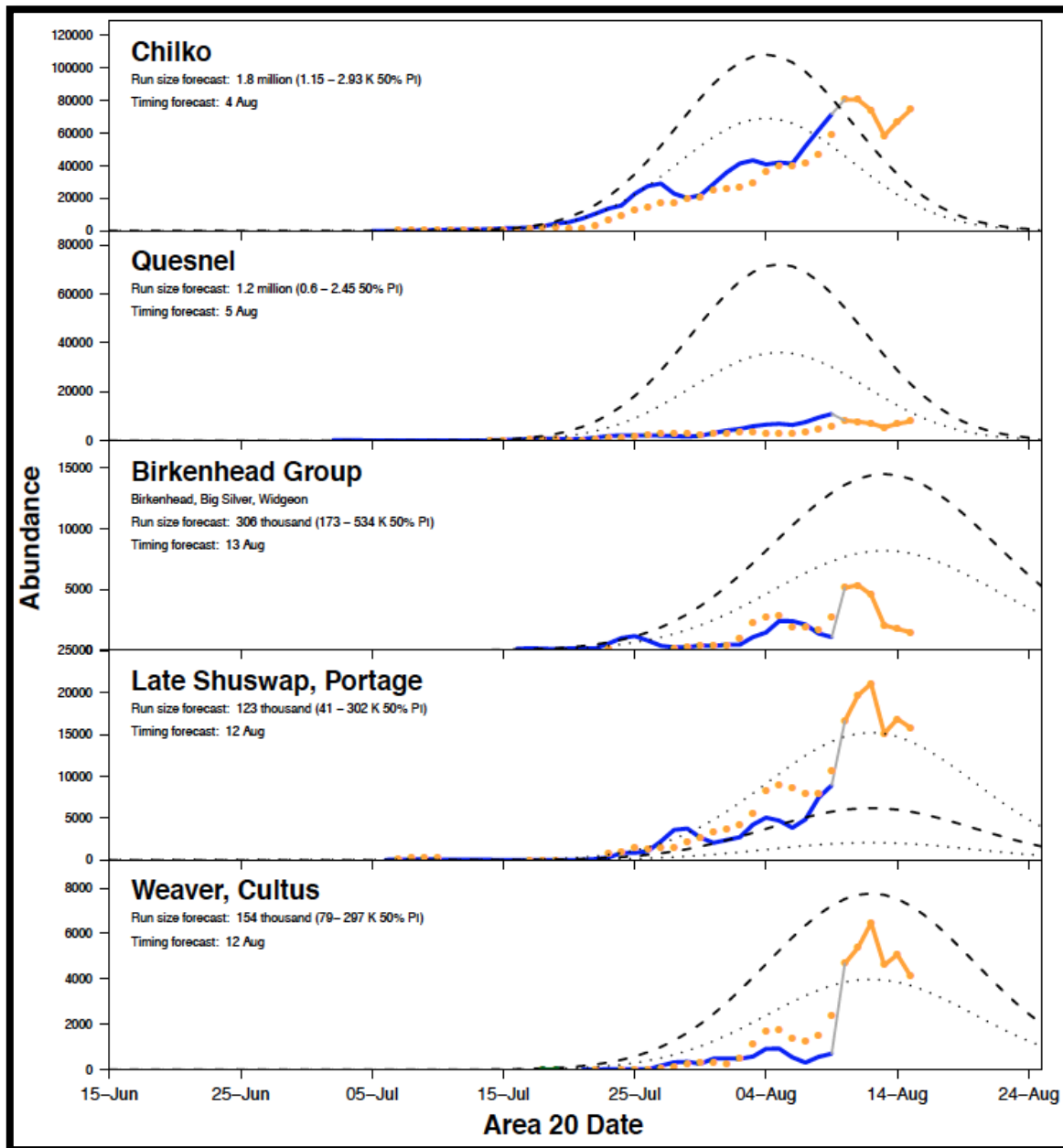


Figure 5: These graphs show the current (Aug 15th) information for the 2013 Fraser, Early Summer, Summer and Late sockeye migration.

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



FRAFS First Nations In-Season Technical Conference Calls

- Thursdays at 4PM unless otherwise noted
- Hosted by FRAFS Biologist Mike Staley
- Dial in numbers:
- Toll-free: 1-866-512-0904
- Passcode/conference number: 4954972#

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/index-eng.html>