



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

September 6, 2013

Volume X, Issue 11

It's busy on the Birkenhead

“Our salmon are arriving and we are quite busy at this time of year,” reported Maxine Joseph-Bruce (Fisheries Manager, Mount Currie Band, Lil’wat Nation). “My shoes already have experienced a lot of mileage in my efforts to ensure that our projects are running smooth.”

For starters, there’s the Birkenhead River sockeye count. “As of last Monday, an estimated 6261 sockeye came through our counting fence,” Maxine said. Crews monitor the count 24/7, using an underwater camera, sonar and two laptops.

“Our fence is located just downstream of Seymour Road,” on Hwy 99 as you drive north from Pemberton to the Duffy Lake Road, according to Maxine. “If you can, go check it out,” she enthuses. “Or, when you drive by, honk for support. Kukwstumckalap!”

Maxine acknowledged the work of Lil’wat’s Fisheries Technicians. They’ve carried out: Fish Habitat Surveys in Joffrey, Spetch and Wedge creeks; habitat improvements in Crab Apple Creek; and a sampling program at Soo River.

Base funding for this work comes through an agreement with DFO for a large-scale, year-round stock assessment program.



Counting Zumak with Chief Lucinda Phillips and James Wallace (Fisheries Technician).

But the big news is that “peak spawning time” is forecast for next Thursday (the 12th) and the **Annual Chinook Walk** along, and in, the Birkenhead River. “We cover the entire spawning grounds,” said Maxine.

To volunteer, contact the Land and Resources office. Personal gear (chest waders, wading boots and polarized sunglasses) is required.

Maxine grew up in Mount Currie and is glad to be back, after 20 years on the island, working with her people in conservation and stewardship. It’s work, as she likes to say, “For Lil’wat, by Lil’wat.”

FRASER RIVER ABORIGINAL FISHERIES SECRETARIAT

c/o Nicola Tribal Association • PO Box 188 • Merritt, BC • V1K 1B8
Tel: 250-378-4235 • Fax: 250-378-9119 | frafs15@gmail.ca • www.frafs.ca



WATERSHED TALK NEWSLETTER
September 6, 2013, Volume X, Issue 11

FRAFS CONFERENCE CALENDAR: 2013 / 2014

Year	Fraser Salmon Road Map Process: Signatories Assemblies	Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning
2013	Tues. Nov. 5 - Wed. Nov. 6	
	Mon. Dec. 9 - Tues. Dec. 10	
2014	Tues. Jan. 21 - Wed. Jan. 22	
		Tues. Jan. 28 - Thur. Jan. 30
		Tues. Feb. 18 - Thurs. Feb. 20
		Tues. Mar. 11 - Thurs. Mar. 13
	<i>* More details to come</i>	

Please note that the March Forum has been moved a week ahead of the previously announced date. This is to accommodate parents of students on March Break.



Fraser Salmon In-season Update

General

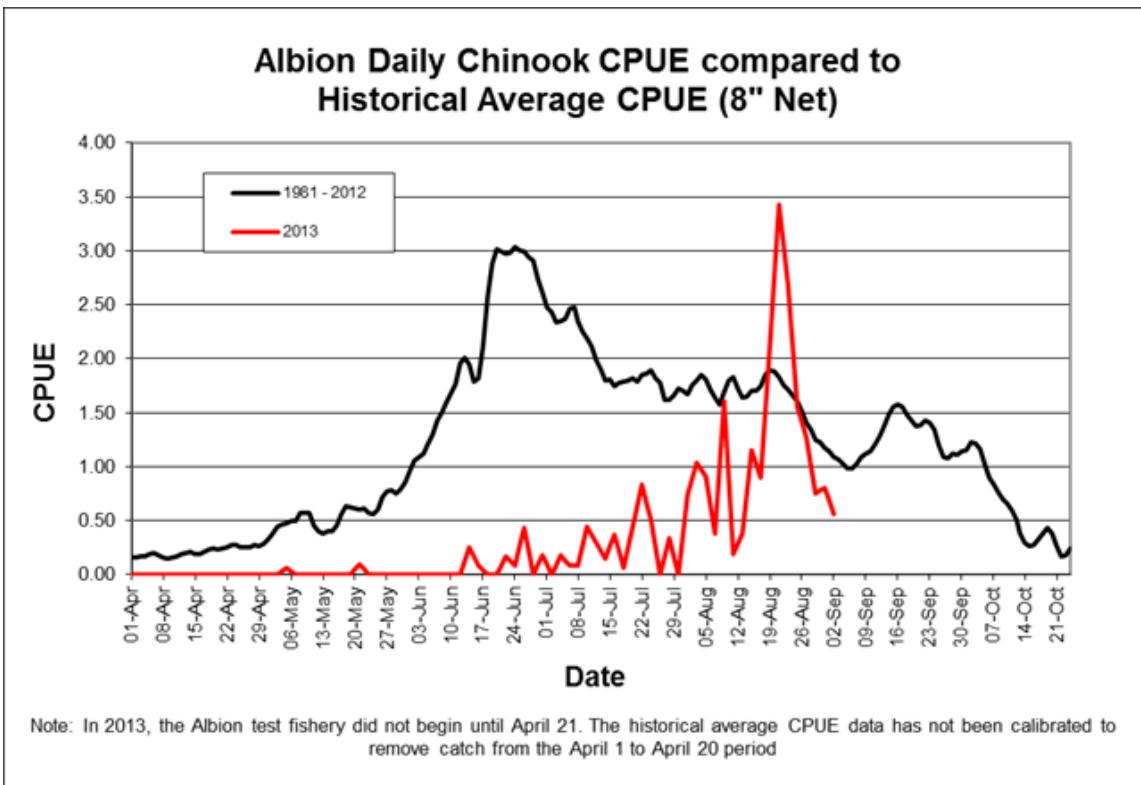
The information in this update summarizes the information from:

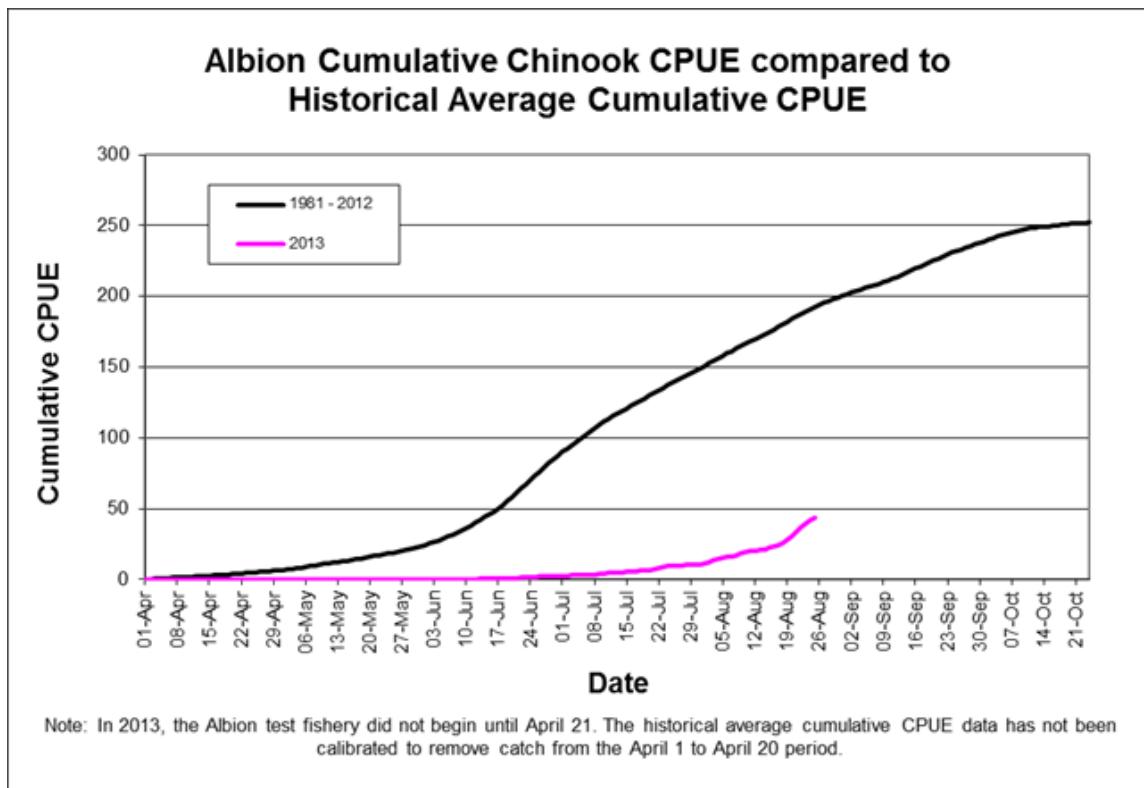
- FRAFS September 5th Thursday in-season teleconference call;
- Fraser River Panel information distribution September 6th; and
- Albion Chinook test fishery graphs from the DFO website.

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)**

NOTE: These graphs were not updated on the DFO website this week





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 remain above average for this time of year, and are once again approaching record temperatures for this time of year. Current temperatures are below the Upper Temperature range for Summer sockeye, but above the Upper Temperature range for Lates. Water discharge in the Fraser continues to track below average for this time of year. The overall high Fraser temperatures in August - along with an August 10th timing - resulted in a very high Management Adjustment for Summer sockeye.



Fraser River Temperature at Qualark

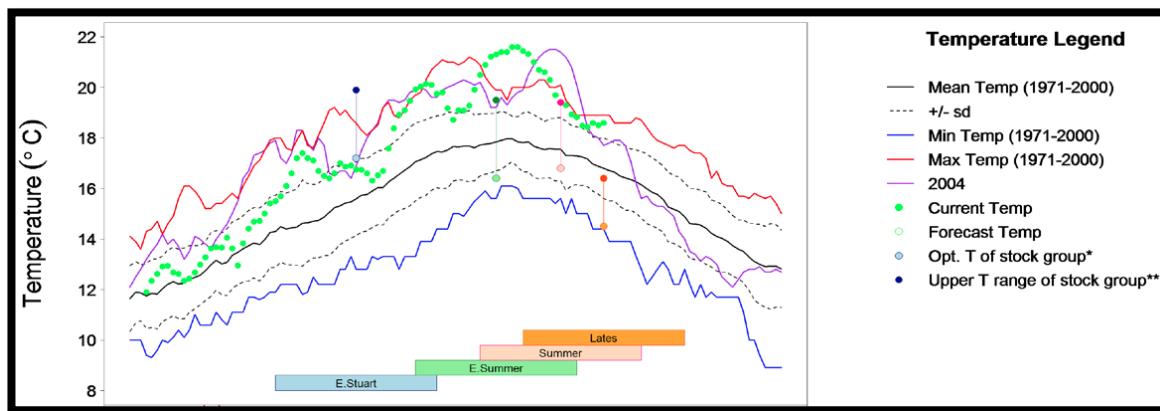


Figure 1: This graph shows the Fraser River temperatures at Qualark Creek (Lower Fraser). The line with the solid green circles shows the 2013 observed temperatures. The current temperature (September 5th) is approximately 18.5 degrees Celsius. The current temperature is above average by 2.5 degrees, and is approaching record temperatures for this time of year. The vertical lines connected by circles show the Optimal and Upper temperature range of the sockeye aggregates. Current temperatures are below the Upper Temperature range for Summer sockeye but are still above the Upper Temperature range for Late sockeye.

Fraser River Discharge at Hope

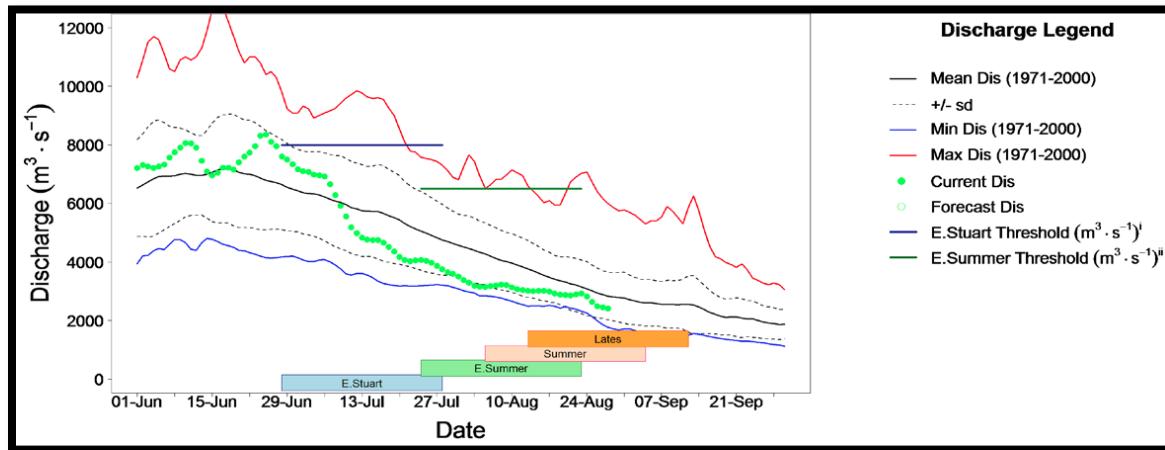


Figure 2: This graph shows the 2013 Fraser River discharge at Hope. The line with the solid green circles is the 2013 observed discharge values. Fraser River discharge is below average for this time of year. The September 5th discharge was 2252 m^3 /sec (approximately 13% lower than average for the date).



Fraser Sockeye

The marine portion of the Fraser sockeye migration is winding down. There is a small proportion of the Late sockeye delaying their entry to the Fraser River, but most Lates appear to have entered the Fraser with little or no delay. In past years, early Late sockeye river entry has been associated with high levels of pre-spawn mortality.

The Summer and Late run sockeye continue to show in marine test fisheries, but are decreasing in abundance and proportion of overall catch compared to pink abundances.

An estimated 513,800 Early Summers, 2,123,700 Summers and 493,100 Lates have been estimated through the Mission hydroacoustics station to date (September 5th).

Early Summer sockeye are now at an accounted run-to-date of 545,000, which compares to the pre-season expectation of 253,000. The adopted in-season run size is 550,000.

Summer Run sockeye have an accounted run-to-date of 2,343,000. The adopted in-season Summer aggregate estimate is 2.4 million based on August 10th timing (7 days later than pre-season expectation).

The Late sockeye have an accounted run-to-date of 529,000. The in-season estimate for Lates is 600,000.

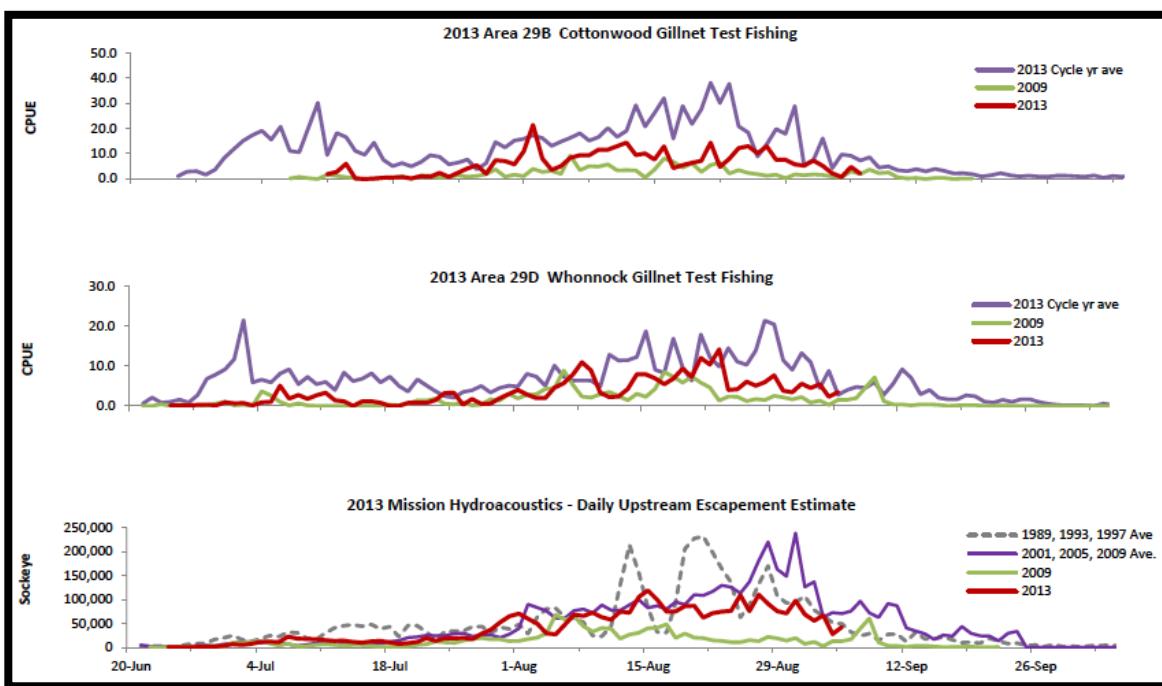
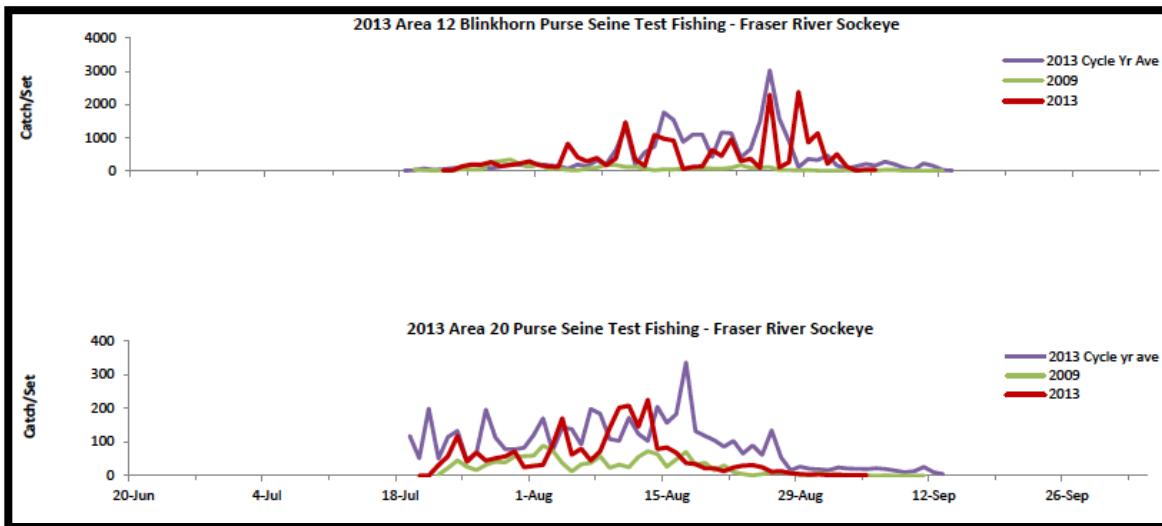
Fraser Pinks

The Fraser pink salmon return is much stronger than pre-season expectations. The in-season run size estimate for Fraser Pinks was increased to 26 million at the September 6th Fraser River Panel meeting, compared to a pre-season forecast of approximately 8.9 million, and up from the previous in-season estimate of 24 million. However, with such a strong pink salmon return, sockeye conservation concerns pose management challenges in trying to access the abundant pink salmon while limiting impacts to Fraser sockeye in the mix.

The next scheduled Fraser River Panel meeting is Tuesday September 10th.



*Fraser Sockeye & Pink Test Fishery Summary, and escapement summary
(Provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)*



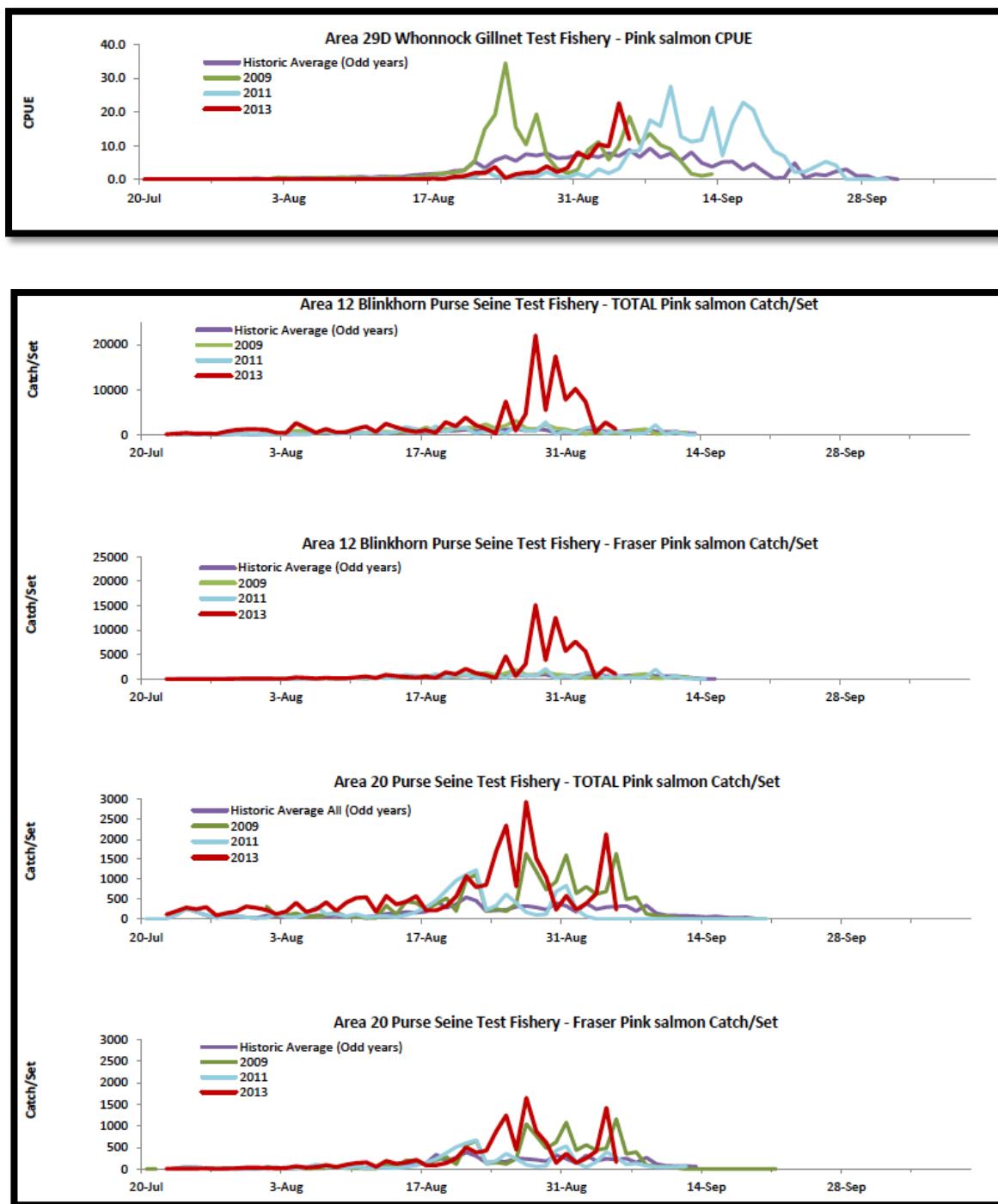


Figure 3: Pacific Salmon Commission 2013 test fisheries summary (to September 5th).
2013 Fraser Summer Sockeye and Pink Run Status (provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)

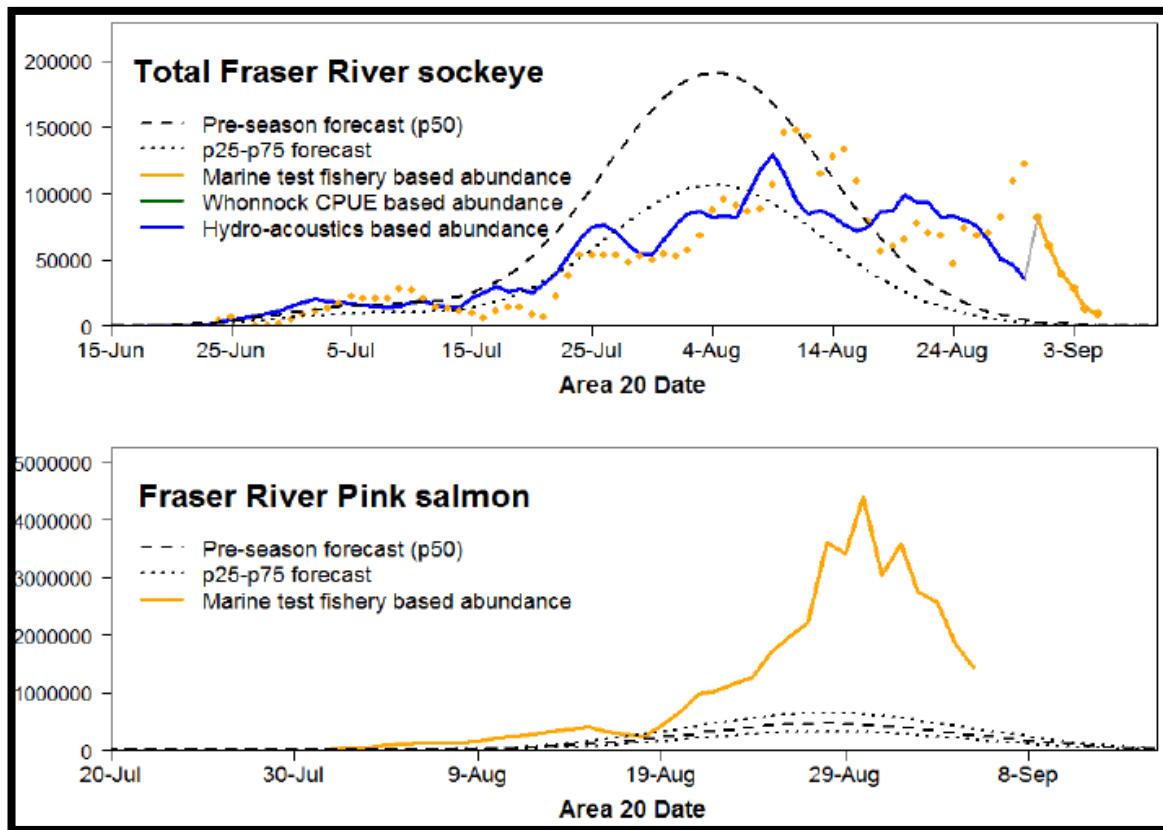
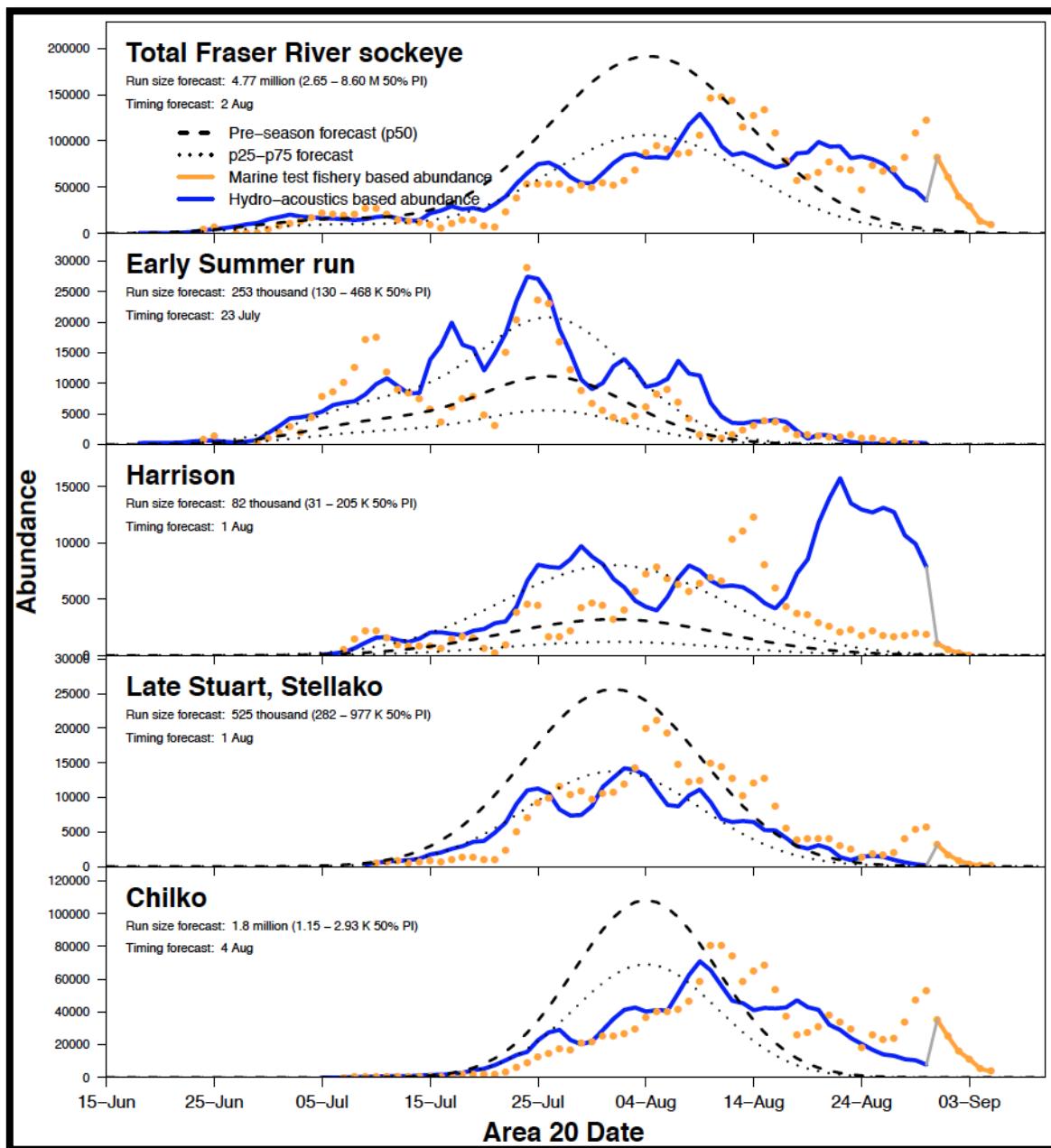


Figure 4. Fraser Summer Sockeye and Pink Run Status compared to pre-season expectations



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



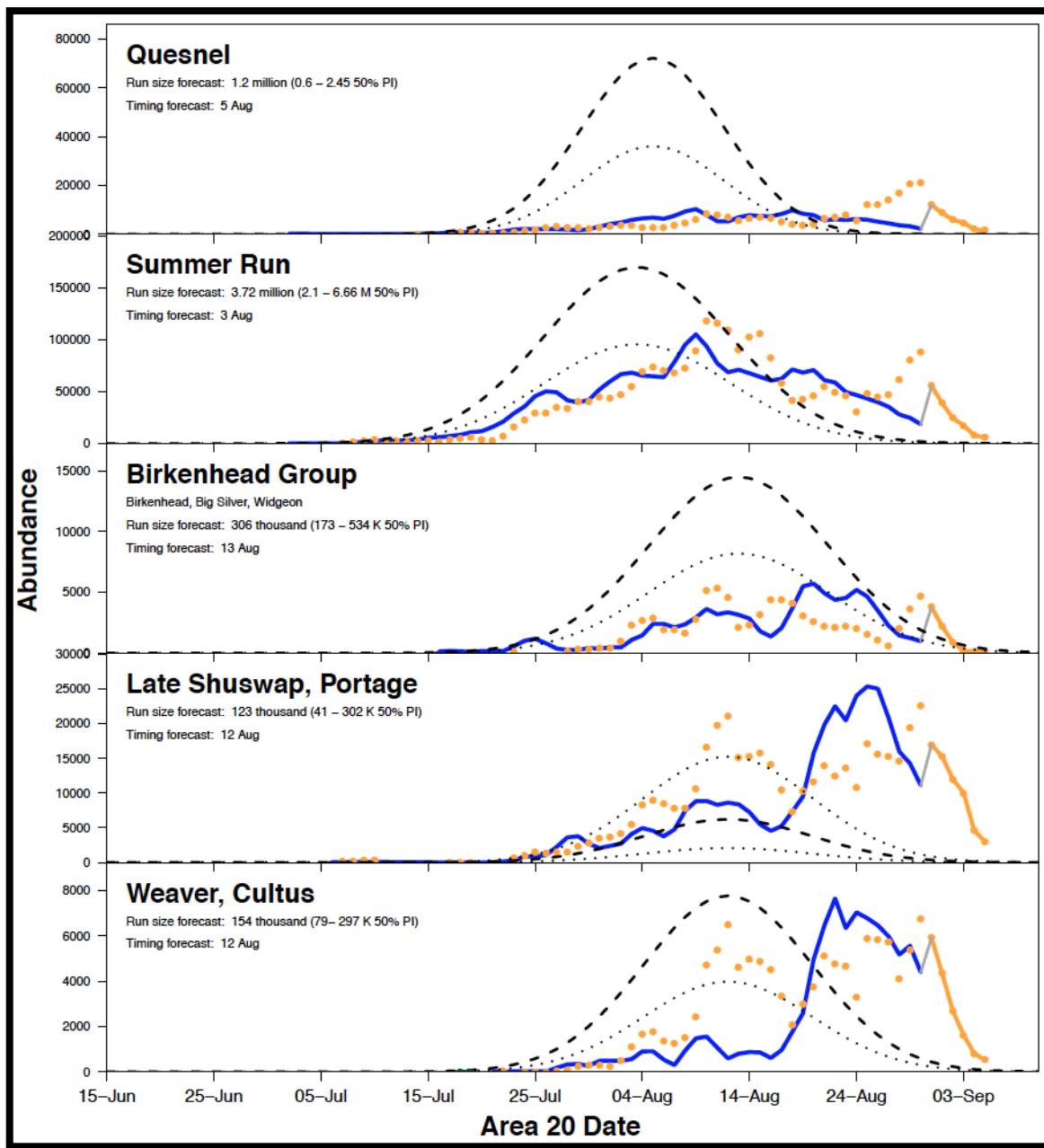


Figure 5: These graphs show the current (September 5th) information for the 2013 Fraser, Early Summer, Summer and Late sockeye migration.

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>