



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

July 26, 2013

Volume X, Issue 5

New 10 a.m. start time for Friday Fraser Panel calls

On Friday, August 2, 9, 16 and 23, Fraser Panel calls **will begin at 10:00 a.m.**

For dates and times of Fraser Panel calls, please visit: [FNFC Events Calendar](#).

Families and Fisheries



Rita Pete (Chawathil) at her dry rack camp with her grandchildren.

This summer FRAFS will follow the salmon up river to learn the importance of the fisheries for First Nations families and communities.

To see photos from our first visit, please click: [Dry Rack on the Lower Fraser.](#)

On river



Aaron Gillespie (Secwepemc Fisheries Commission) on the Thompson River.

First Nations in the mid-Fraser region have taken a number of initiatives in Chinook conservation. Look for our story later this summer in Watershed Talk. For photos from my day of on-river research, go to: [Eagles.](#)

Road Map Workshop Dates

Please mark these confirmed dates on your calendar:

- Tuesday, Nov. 5th – Wednesday, Nov. 6th
- Monday, Dec. 9th – Tuesday, Dec. 10th
- Tues. Jan. 21st – Wed. Jan. 22nd (2014)

More details to come.



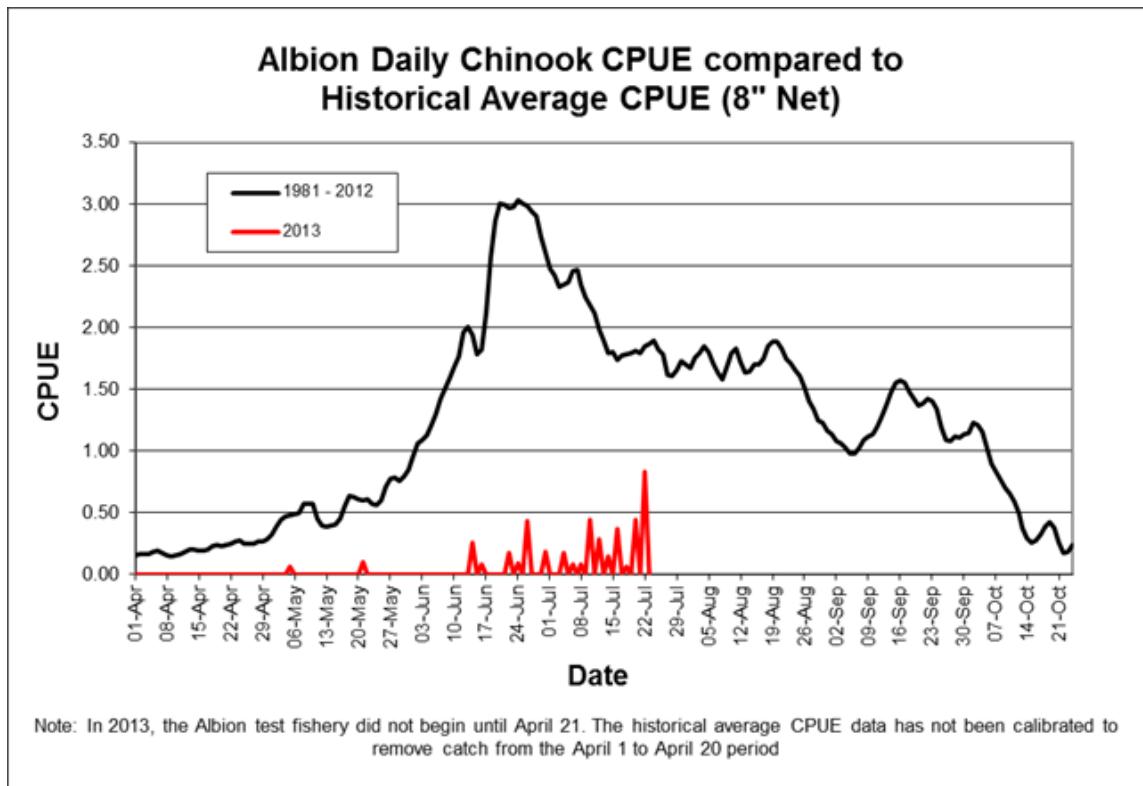
Fraser Salmon In-season Update

By Pete Nicklin,
Fraser Fisheries Biologist,
Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

General

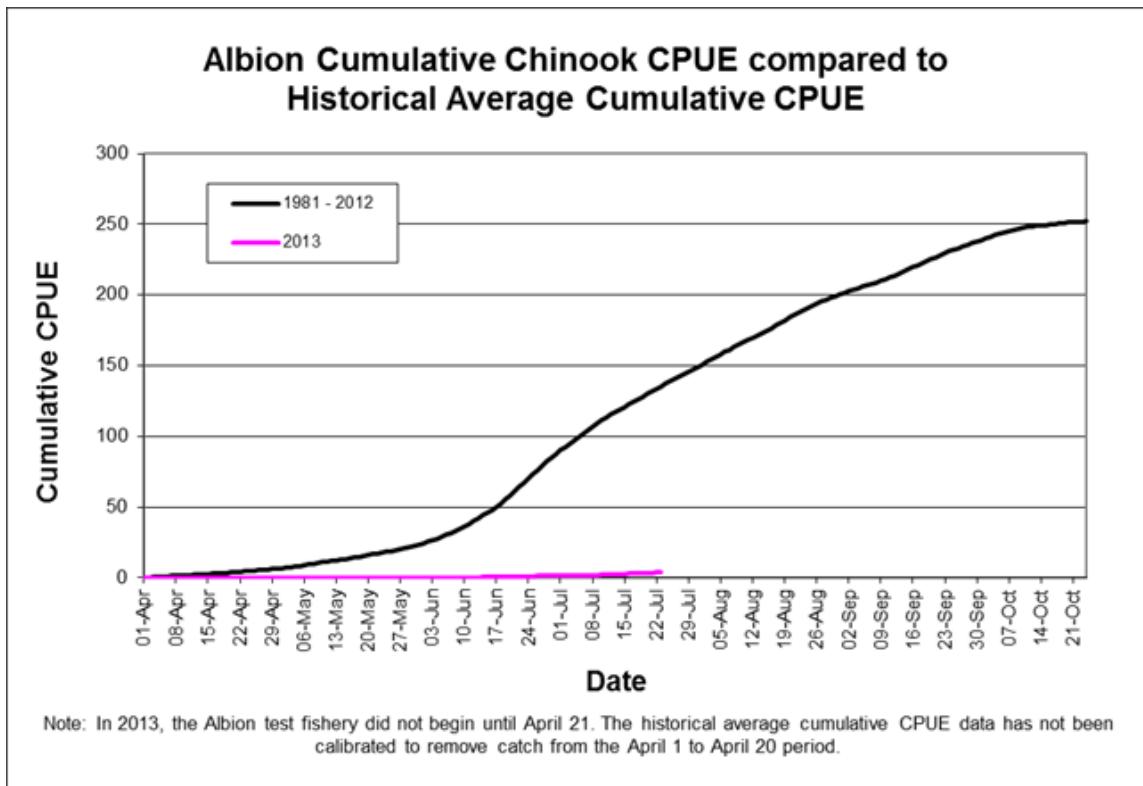
The information in this update summarizes the information from the FRAFS July 25th Thursday in-season teleconference call, the Fraser River Panel information distribution July 26th, and Albion Chinook test fishery graphs from the DFO website. Note that the Thursday in-season updates (presented by Mike Staley) will continue weekly throughout the sockeye season.

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





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



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 hit record temperatures for the past couple of days**. These water temperatures are very stressful to migrating salmon and are currently above the upper temperature range for Early Summer sockeye. Water discharge in the Fraser continues to track below average for this time of year and forecast to continue this trend.



Water Conditions (continued)

Fraser River Temperature at Qualark

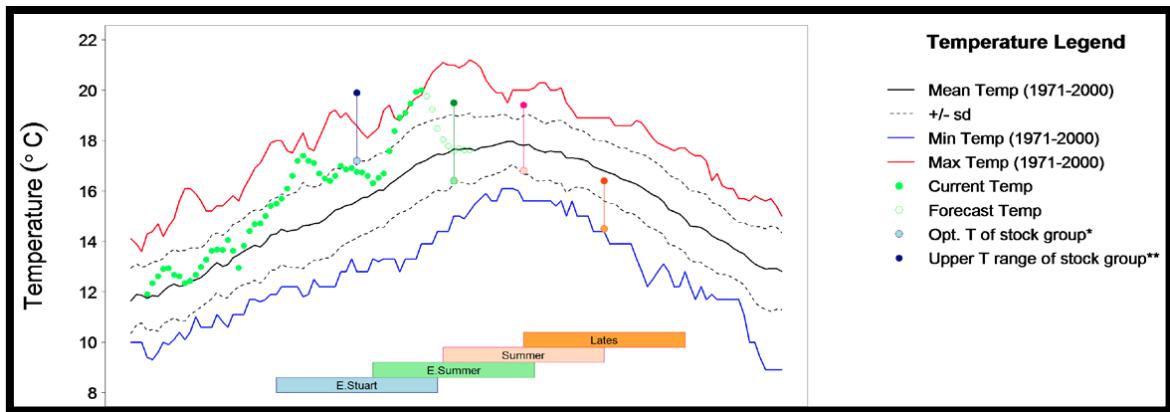


Figure 1: This graph shows the Fraser River temperatures at Qualark Creek (Lower Fraser). The line with the solid green circles shows the 2013 observed temperatures. The unfilled green circle portion of the line shows the forecast temperatures. The current temperature is approximately 20 degrees Celsius and forecast to decrease to 17.6 degrees Celsius by July 31st. The current temperature is above average and has been at or above record temperatures for the past few days. The vertical lines connected by circles show the Optimal and Upper temperature range of the sockeye aggregates. Current temperatures are above the Upper Temperature range for Early Summer sockeye.

Fraser River Discharge at Hope

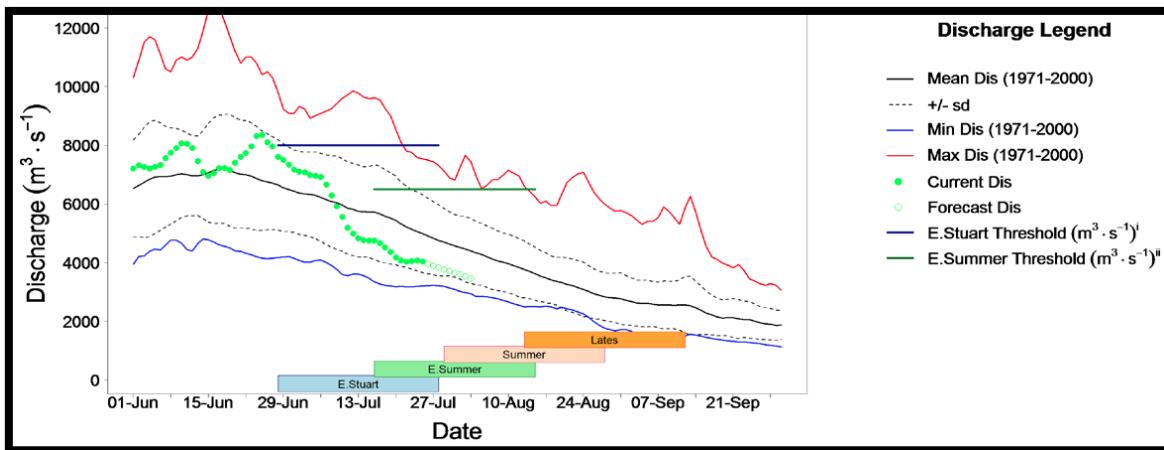


Figure 2: This graph shows the 2013 Fraser River discharge at Hope. The line with the solid green circles is the 2013 observed discharge values, and the forecast discharge shows as unfilled green circles. Fraser River discharge is below average for this time of year. The July 25th discharge was 4036 m³/sec (approximately 19% lower than average for the date), and forecast to decrease to approximately 3650 m³/sec by July 31st.



Fraser Sockeye

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

The marine test fisheries have been variable in both approaches especially between the Gillnet and Purse Seine test fisheries. The Round Island GN test fishery (Johnstone Strait) has been relatively strong and steady and the Area 12 and 13 test fisheries appear to be on an increase. According to the PSC the variability in the test fisheries is an indication overall sockeye marine abundance has not yet increased to a point that will steady the test fishery catches. The estimated diversion rate through Johnstone Strait appears to be higher than expected pre-season thus far (35% expected pre-season & current estimate of >40%).

An estimated 177,500 Early Stuarts, 181,200 Early Summers, and 49,800 Summers have passed the Mission hydroacoustics station to date (July 25th). A few Lates are also starting to show in the river.

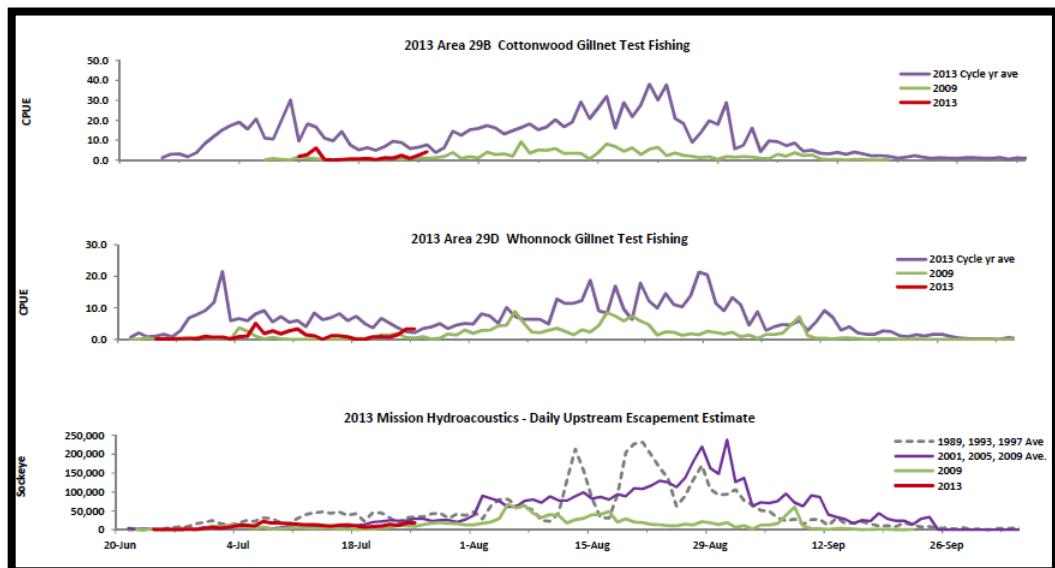
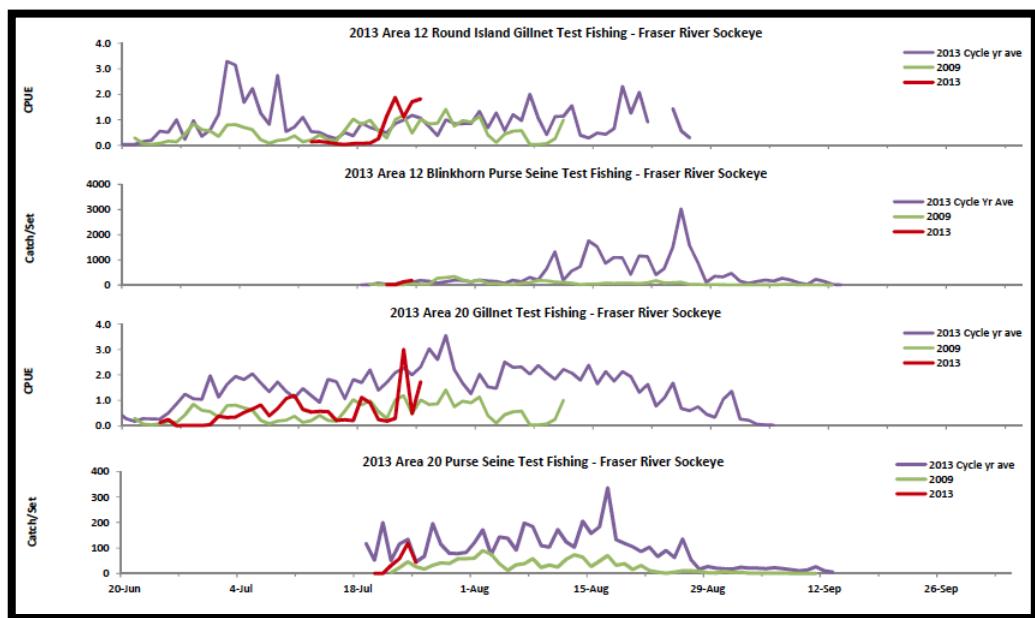
The Early Stuart migration is essentially complete in marine areas and most of these sockeye are in the river, with the first spawners arriving on July 19th. Early Stuart Area 20 timing is still estimated at July 2nd in Area 20, three days earlier than expected pre-season. Based on a proportional Management Adjustment of 1.33 and an estimated run size of approximately 180,000 (lower than pre-season forecast), the escapement target of 108,000 will likely not be met. At the current in-season run size estimate, Management Adjustment and escapement goal there is no Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the Early Stuarts.

Early Summer sockeye are starting to decline in proportion to Summer sockeye in the mix of Fraser sockeye in both marine approaches, but not as much as was expected pre-season. The pre-season 50% date for Early Summers is July 23rd and it is still too early for an in-season estimate of the Early Summers and in-season estimate of timing. It appears the Early Summers are tracking above forecast in aggregate, mainly due to a much stronger than expected abundance of Pitt sockeye (pre-season forecast of 15,000 vs a current Catch and Escapement total of 95,000). As of July 25 (yesterday) the PSC models estimate a total of 181,200 Early Summers to Mission -- 135,100 for lower Fraser tributaries and 48,000 destined for upper Fraser and Thompson tributaries. The models are predicting escapement projections at Mission on July 31st an aggregate projection of 272,500, with lower Fraser tributaries (Pitt and Chilliwack) estimated to contribute approximately 170,000 of that projected total. Although the model estimates for the Early Summer aggregate are estimating abundances higher than forecast, this is currently due to the extremely strong performance of Pitt. Model estimates for Chilliwack, Nadina group and Early Thompson group components are at or below forecast. Very high temperatures in the Fraser river are now a significant concern for Early Summer stocks migrating to the mid and Upper Fraser (Nadina and Early Thompson groups).

The next scheduled Fraser River Panel meeting is **Monday July 29th at 1PM**

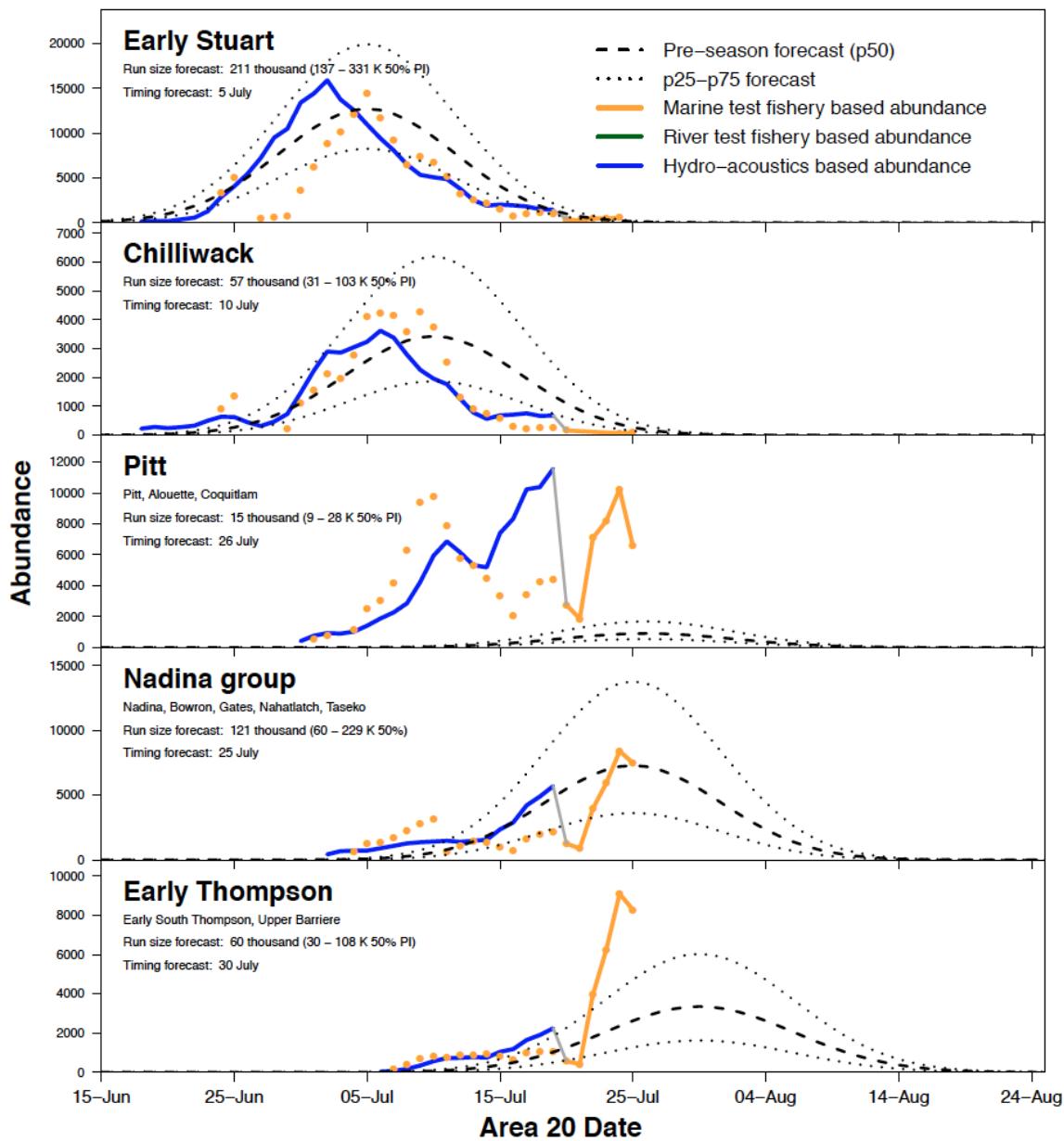


Fraser Sockeye Test Fishery Summary (Provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)

Figure 3: Pacific Salmon Commission 2013 test fisheries summary (to July 25th)



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





Fraser Sockeye Area 20 sockeye passage Graphs

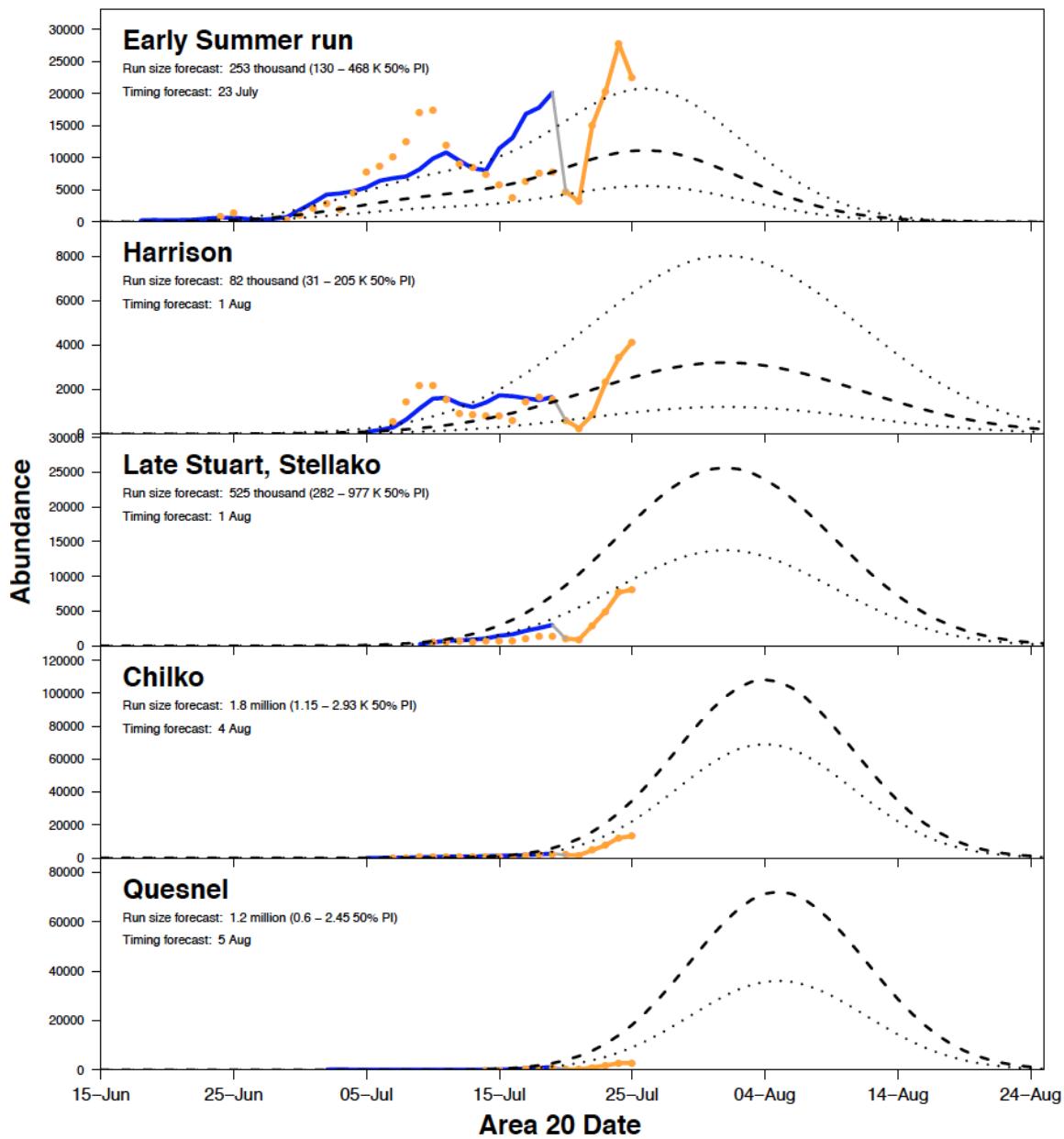


Figure 4: These graphs show the current (July 25th) information for the 2013 Fraser, Early Stuart, Early Summer and Summer sockeye migration.

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>