

Watershed Talk

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations

SOCKEYE UPDATE - Press Release from the Pacific Salmon Commission - www.psc.org

The Fraser River Panel met today to review stock assessment data on the Fraser River sockeye runs, plan fisheries, and discuss sockeye migration conditions in the Fraser River watershed. The marine migration of Fraser sockeye through Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait has declined over the past week; however there is still a steady migration of these sockeye en route to the Fraser River. DNA analyses indicate that Late-run sockeye are the dominant run-timing group in the marine assessment areas, with Summer-run sockeye comprising a low proportion of the migratory abundance. The diversion rate of Fraser sockeye through Johnstone Strait is presently estimated to be approximately 95%. The migration of sockeye past Mission has been lower over the past few days, while the migration of sockeye past Hells Gate continues to be strong. The estimated total commercial catch of Fraser sockeye to-date is 8,683,000 fish, while non-commercial catches (from test, First Nations FSC, Charter, and recreational fisheries) total 911,000 fish.

At the meeting today, the run size estimate of 3,700,000 Early Summer-run sockeye was unchanged. Their 50% marine migration timing through Area 20 is estimated to be August 9. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 2 is 2,653,000 fish.

The marine migration of Summer-run sockeye is nearing completion. The run size estimate for Summer-run sockeye of 4,800,000 fish was unchanged at the meeting today. Their 50% marine migration timing through Area 20 is estimated to be August 15. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 2 is 3,015,000 fish.

Assessments of Late-run sockeye in the lower Strait of Georgia indicate that a high fraction of these fish are delaying prior to entering the Fraser River. Prior to 1996, most Late-run sockeye delayed in marine areas near the mouth of the Fraser River for approximately a month prior to migrating upstream. Since 1996, Late-run sockeye delay behaviour has been quite variable and in some years they have migrated into the Fraser River with virtually no marine-area delay. Late-run sockeye entering the Fraser River without delaying in marine areas have frequently experienced very high in-river mortality as they migrate to their spawning grounds, which has been attributed to several factors including higher than average water temperatures as well as greater susceptibility to parasites and diseases. Current assessments suggest that slightly under 17,000,000 Late-run sockeye are presently delaying. At the meeting today, the run size estimate of 1,200,000 fish Harrison sockeye was unchanged. The 50% marine migration timing of Harrison sockeye through Area 20 is currently estimated to be August 11. At the meeting on August 31, the Panel approved an increase in the

run size estimate for Late Shuswap/Weaver sockeye from 20,000,000 fish to 24,000,000 fish and at the meeting today; this run size estimate was unchanged. The 50% marine migration timing of Late Shuswap/Weaver sockeye is currently estimated to be August 22. The Panel is continuing to use the forecast run size for the Birkenhead stock-group of 241,000 fish, during fisheries planning. The total run size estimate for Late-run sockeye is 25,441,000 fish. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through September 2 is 2,227,000 fish.

Migration conditions for sockeye in the Fraser River are currently satisfactory. The present management adjustment factors of 0.36 for Early Summer-run sockeye and 0.15 for Summer-run sockeye were unchanged today. The estimated marine timing of Late-run sockeye past Mission is presently September 12. The Panel agreed during pre-season planning that if the Mission timing of Late-run sockeye was later than September 3, their pMA would be 0.35. Management adjustments are employed to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

The DFO spawning escapement update for Fraser sockeye on September 2 reported that sockeye arriving on their spawning grounds throughout the watershed are generally in good condition, with the exception of heavy pre-spawning mortality among early migrants into the Nadina River spawning channel. A post-season estimate of escapement into the Nadina River spawning channel will be provided because the channel operator had to leave the site for several days due to a forest fire evacuation order and therefore enumeration records are incomplete. The escapement enumeration program on Scotch Creek has counted approximately 447,000 sockeye past the fence through September 1. Visual surveys of North and South Thompson streams indicate record counts of sockeye in several streams and the fish are at or near their peak spawning period. The Gates Creek spawning channel had about 8,200 sockeye counted into it through September 1, while approximately 5,900 sockeye have passed into spawning areas in the creek. A mark-recapture program for sockeye is underway on the Seymour River. DIDSON hydroacoustic units are enumerating the migration of Chilko and Horsefly sockeye and the Chilko crew reports that the migration of Chilko sockeye is strong. The Stellako River enumeration fence became operational on August 25 and about 31,000 sockeye have been counted through the enumeration fence through September 1. The Birkenhead River enumeration fence was operational on August 28 and 147 fish have been counted past it through September 1. A total of 607 Cultus Lake sockeye have passed the Sweltzer Creek enumeration fence through September 1 and an additional 185 fish have been retained for broodstock.

Pacific Salmon Commission website: www.psc.org

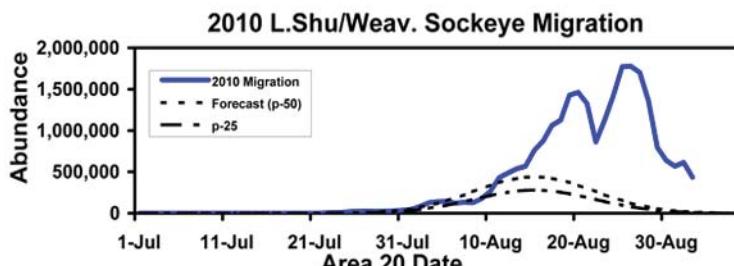
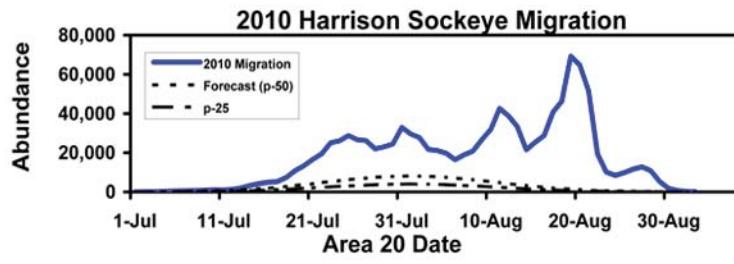
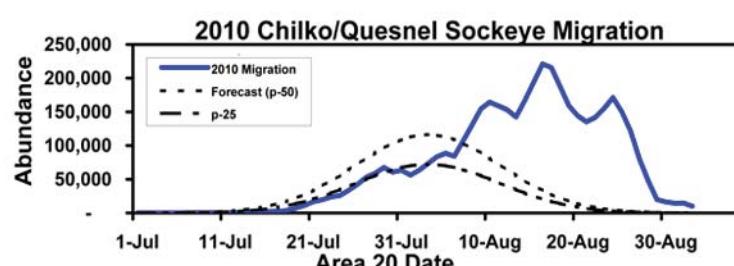
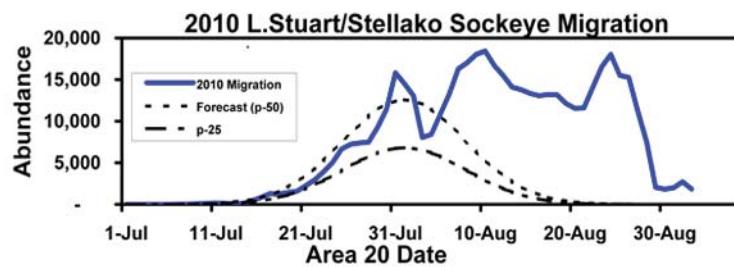
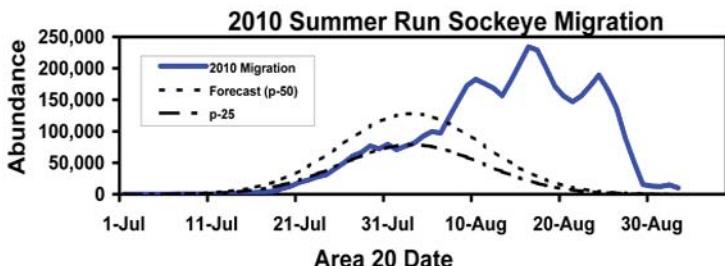
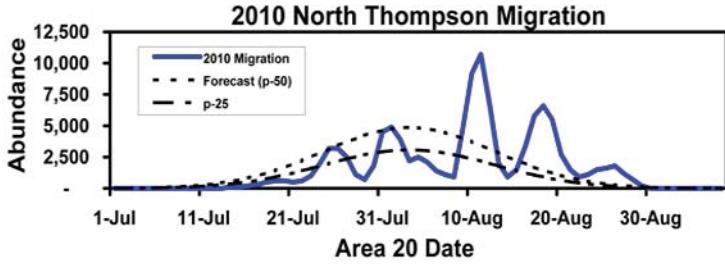
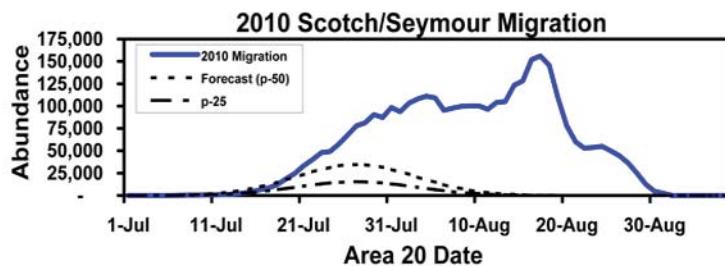
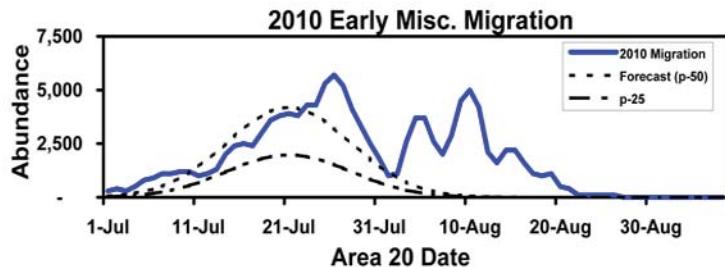
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FRASER SOCKEYE - IN-SEASON UPDATE (GRAPHS)

Provided by the Pacific Salmon Commission Fraser River Panel



In-Season Technical Update Conference Calls

Thursdays at 4:00pm, Hosted by FRAFS Biologist Mike Staley

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE HAVE A NEW DIAL-IN NUMBER FOR THESE CONFERENCE CALLS!

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