

# SOCKEYE UPDATE

August 25, 2017

Mike Staley is now providing sockeye season weekly in-season updates via conference call for First Nations every Thursday at 4 pm. **First Nations are encouraged to phone in to these updates in order to get the latest information on the status of the runs.** The conference call numbers are:

**1-866-512-0904**

**Password: 4954972#**

Following is the combined information from yesterday's call and today's Fraser River Panel call.

## **1. Early Stuart**

The **pre-season forecast** was for a return of 99,000 this year, although DFO Science staff were warning DFO management that this number might be a bit optimistic. An in-season adjustment has been made to the forecast which is now for a return of 50,000 fish.

**Returns to date:** A final in-season run size of 46,000 fish was decided on by the Fraser Panel along with 50% migration timing of July 4<sup>th</sup> (predicted timing was July 1<sup>st</sup>). The test fisheries are no longer picking up an Early Stuarts.

**Outlook:** The Early Stuart return was observed to be just above the P10 forecast of 42,000.

## **2. Early Summer Run stocks**

The **pre-season forecast** was for a total return of 343,000 this year. The bulk of this aggregate is made up of 3 stocks: Pitt (25%); Chilliwack (23%); and Nadina (20%). The remaining Early Summer stocks make up the rest of the forecasted run size.

**Returns to date:** 155,000 (88,000 of which are Pitt fish).

**Outlook:** An in-season run size of 150,000 fish (between P10 and P25 forecasts) was adopted by the Fraser Panel last week, along with median migration timing of August 3<sup>rd</sup> (predicted timing was July 20<sup>th</sup>). Earlier timed stocks came in weak while the Pitt/Alouette/Coquitlam group contributed the most. There are still a few Early Summers being accounted for in the test fisheries.

## **3. Summer Run stocks**

The **pre-season forecast** was for a total return of 3,407,000 this year (all stocks combined in this management group). Summer run fish numbers are starting to drop off in test fisheries.

**Returns to date: 863,000. The 6-day projections report another 63,000 fish to Mission by August 16<sup>th</sup>.**

**Outlook: The Fraser River Panel adopted a run timing of August 11<sup>th</sup> and an in-season run size of 1 million (down from previously adopted run size of 1.25 M) which is between the P10 and P25 forecast. At this level, there are no directed harvesting opportunities and the retention of summer run sockeye will be managed through a Lower Abundance Exploitation Rate (LAER). The purpose of the LAER is to allow for by-catch in fisheries directed at stocks or species with available surpluses (e.g. chinook). DFO will be monitoring the by-catch of sockeye in such fisheries and as maximum allowable impacts to sockeye are approached fisheries will be shut down.**

#### **4. Late Run stocks**

The **pre-season forecast** was for a total return of **583,000** this year (all stocks combined in this management group).

**Returns to date: 70,000**

The 6-day projection estimates another 27,000 fish to Mission by August 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Outlook: The Fraser River Panel adopted a run timing of August 18<sup>th</sup> and an in-season run size forecast of 247,000 (P25) last week. At this level, there are no directed harvesting opportunities and the retention of late run sockeye will be managed through a Lower Abundance Exploitation Rate (LAER).**

#### **5. Environmental Conditions**

Migration conditions appear to be improving at this time, as water temperature is decreasing. Flows remain low but night-time cooling and shorter days likely mean a lower risk of high water temperatures. Various surveys occurring at sockeye spawning grounds throughout the watershed report healthy, vigorous fish (although few in numbers).

- Flow (discharge): 2088 cms (cubic metres per second). This value is well under (26% lower than) the average historical discharge that migrating sockeye have faced at this time in the past.
- Temperature: 18.6 C. This value is believed to be above the stress-level temperature of approximately 18 C and is predicted to rise further over the coming days.

This information was accurate as of August 24<sup>th</sup> at Hope.

*Next conference call: Thursday August 31<sup>st</sup> at 4 p.m. THIS MAY BE THE FINAL SOCKEYE CALL FOR FIRST NATIONS.*