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Fraser Sockeye and Pink Management Considerations for 2013

FORUM Meeting,
March 19 & 20, 2013



Canada



Early Summers

- Implications on fishing plans will be strongly influenced by in-season run size estimates and management adjustments (MAs) for environmental conditions as well as Early Stuart management approach.
- One week window closure has been used in past to address poor returns of the earliest stocks in this run timing group. Recently has been added onto the back end of the Early Stuart window closure but if no Early Stuart window closure in 2013 and Early Summers are weak may need for additional actions. Other options are for reduced weekly fishing times.
- Forecasts for individual stocks (relative to stock cycle avg):
 - Gates – above average p50 forecast
 - Chilliwack p50 forecast 57,000.
 - Fennell, Scotch and Seymour – slightly below average
 - Bowron, Pitt & Nadina – weak, well below cycle average



Summers

- Summer Run sockeye make up a majority (78%) of the 2013 run size forecast and will be focus of harvest opportunities. Cycle average is 6.8 million; forecast range of 1.2 to 12.1 million, median is 3.7 million.
- Harvest may be limited by constraints on co-migrating stocks of concern (Early Summers and Lates).
- Forecasts for individual stocks:
 - Chilko and Raft – above cycle average (but Raft a small contributor)
 - Stellako and Harrison – moderate, with uncertainty around Harrison given limited data on returns for large spawner abundances that occurred in brood years.
 - Late Stuart and Quesnel – well below cycle average (cyclic stock and this would be a dominant year - May no longer be a dominant cycle or cyclic stock).



Lates

- Total return of Late Run (excluding Harrison) in 2009 was the third smallest return on this cycle since the 1950s, but total escapement in the 2009 brood year was the third largest on this cycle.
- Late Run sockeye make up a small proportion of the 2013 run size forecast (~ 12% of the total return at p50 forecast).
- Cycle average is 834K, forecast range of 167K to 2.1 million; median of 583K
- Since mid-1990s, Late Run sockeye have entered the Fraser River much earlier, and have experienced very high levels of en-route and/or pre-spawn mortality.
- 2009-2011: the Late Run delay off the river mouth had increased to approximately two weeks.
- In 2012, there was little to no delay. *Planning for 2013 will need to make assumptions about what the delay will be.*



- Management approach for 2013 proposed to be similar to 2012 with a 20% ER at run sizes less than the p75. At or above P75 ER would increase to 30%.
- Need to consider appropriate ER if other sockeye returns are at p25 or lower. Should ER remain at 20% or be lowered to 10% similar to Early Stuarts.
- Cultus ER 20%.
- **Based on a number of constraining stocks likely to be in a situation requiring sharing of limited Sockeye TAC in 2013.**



Pink Salmon

- At the p50 forecast, should meet spawning escapement goal of 6 million, with some abundance available for harvest.
- Considerable uncertainty around the forecast.
- Conservation constraints for co-migrating stocks of concern (e.g. Late run and Cultus sockeye, Interior Fraser coho and Interior Fraser steelhead) will likely constrain the ability to harvest all available Fraser River Pink TAC identified in-season.
- Late run sockeye impacts will likely be the largest impact on pink fisheries if the pink return is larger than the p50.



Next Steps

- Feedback on first DRAFT of the SC IFMP by April 12th.
- Draft 2 of the SC IFMP expected to be released on April 26th.
- IHPC meeting on May 1 and 2 to review draft 2.
- Next Forum meeting in Lillooett on May 7 to 9.