



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

Volume XVI, Issue 8

2019 FRASER SALMON UPDATE

By: Aidan Fisher, FRAFS Biologist

The initial strong sign of Fraser pinks has not materialized to substantial abundance. New modelling methods shown by the PSC staff are indicating a run size much closer to the p50 forecast. US fisheries have been ongoing for their share of Fraser pinks, but no Canadian commercial fisheries have been implemented to date.

There has not been any further sign of any abundance of Fraser sockeye that could be returning late, the run sizes decided upon today are likely near final for all Management Units. There has been some identification of Early Stuart fish in their spawning grounds indicating that some of the helicoptered sockeye have made it up to their spawning grounds, or a few sockeye passed the slide naturally. Although the reported numbers of escaped sockeye are not high, at least there has been some identification of wild fish in their spawning grounds.

PSC staff put forward a recommendation for an in-season run size of 5 million pinks. There were also suggestions to finish some Johnstone Strait test fisheries, in order to save money as there is no more expected abundances of Fraser salmon (sockeye or pink) seaward of those test fisheries. There are still some more fish that will be migrating through these areas, but their abundances will likely not affect the in-season identified run sizes for sockeye or pink salmon.

The Fraser River Panel adopted the recommended in-season run size of 5 million pinks with a median run size of August 20th. No US or Canadian commercial fisheries were planned.

This summary table will be updated throughout the season as information and decisions become available.

Sockeye Management Group	Pre-Season Planning Forecast (P50)	Run Accounted to Date	In-Season Adopted Run Size	Area 20 Timing (for 50% of run)
Early Stuart	41,000	25,900	27,000	July 8
Early Summer	465,000	90,800	90,000	July 26
Summer	3,393,000	270,400	400,000	August 17
Lates	359,000	10,300	40,000	August 25
TOTAL	4,795,000	359,000	557,000	Preseason (Aug 9)

	Pre-Season Planning Forecast (p50)	Run Accounted to Date	In-Season Adopted Run Size	Catch to Date	Area 20 Timing (50% of return)
Fraser Pinks	5,018,600	709,400	7,400,000	248,100	August 20

Big Bar Slide

A second fishwheel has been assembled on site, and crews continue to work diligently to assist Fraser salmon with their passage over the big bar slide.

To date 49,500 chinook and sockeye have been transported over the slide site via helicopter. A few pink and coho salmon have also been air lifted to date.

Sockeye Closures

The Early Stuart window closure is up for all areas of the Fraser River and the marine approach. However, to date no sockeye directed fisheries have yet been licenced due to extremely low abundances observed.

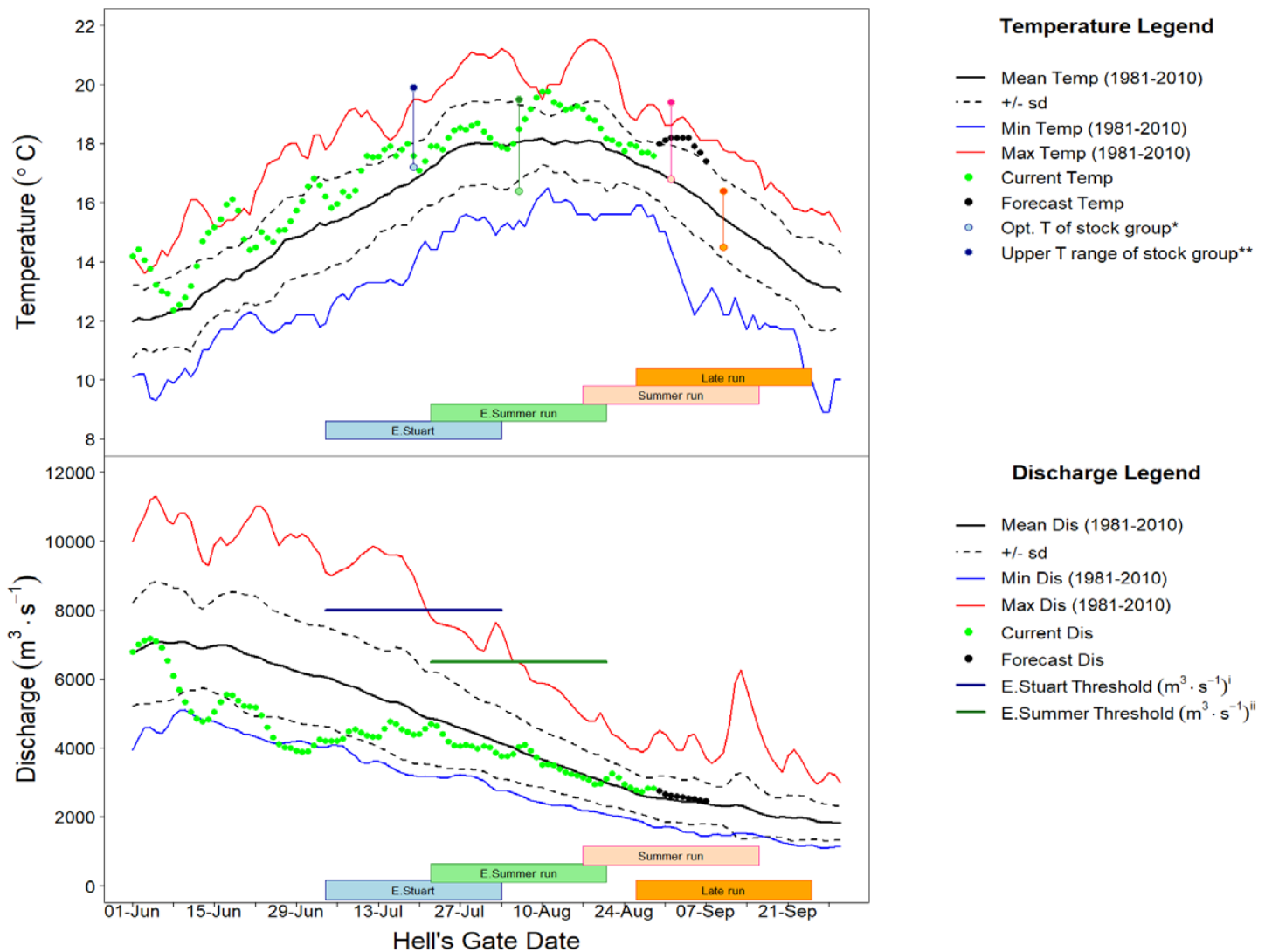
Fraser River Conditions

The main source of information for Temperature and Discharge data and forecasts is DFO's Environmental Watch Program (see link below).

The BC River Forecast Centre website (see links below) has information and links related to discharge and temperatures at various monitoring stations throughout the Fraser watershed, including snow pillow and melt updates.

Environment Canada's Water Office webpage provides access to real time hydrometric data at many locations throughout the Fraser watershed (see links below).

Fraser Discharge and temperatures at Hope and Qualark Creek (near Hope) respectively look like this (graphs from the Fraser River Panel Distribution August 29th, 2019):



The Fraser River water temperature at Hope is currently 17.6 degrees Celsius (0.5 degrees Celsius above average for this time of year), and is forecast to increase to 18.2 degrees Celsius by September 4th. The Fraser River discharge is within the usual annual differences at 2,829 m^3/sec at the Qualark water station on August 29th (11% above average for this time of year). The discharge is continue to tracking at the average discharge, with a forecast discharge of 2,543 m^3/sec by September 4th.

Environmental data and observations are critical in identifying Management Adjustments (MA) in-season. Currently, the flow and temperature data are sitting within the historic range for pre-season MA forecasts, we are currently not expecting a major change in MAs compared to pre-season forecasts. The Panel is unlikely to announce a major change in MAs for sockeye MUs based on environmental variables because we are now past the peak of river temperatures and moving into cooler weather. The Panel may still announce changes to the MA based on the Big Bar slide and its impact to Fraser sockeye migration.

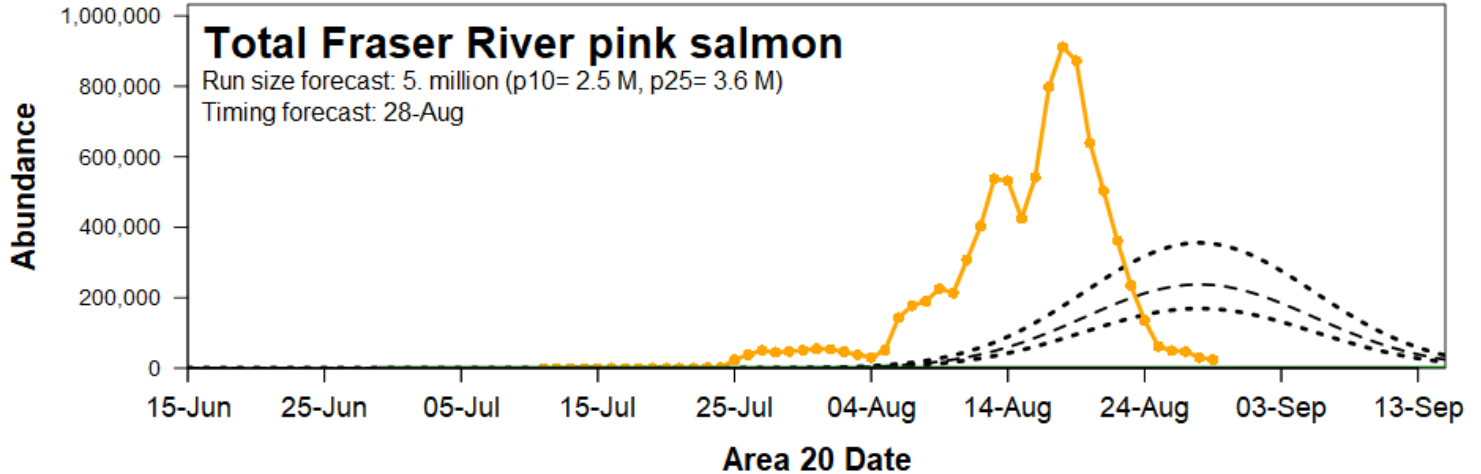
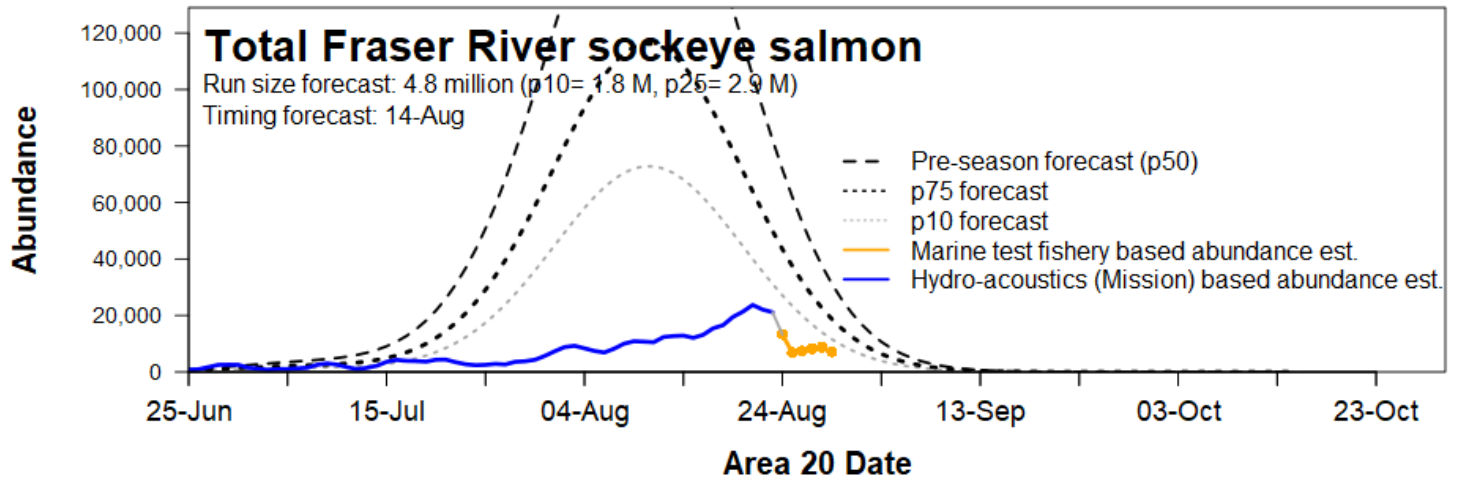
Fraser River Fisheries Information

Fraser First Nations Fisheries information can be found on the DFO website at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/index-eng.html>

DFO staff will be distributing Fraser Salmon Bulletins, and we strongly encourage people to review and comment on the DFO bulletin if time and resources permit. Contact your local DFO Resource Manager for a copy, and addition to the distribution list.

Estimated Abundance and In-Season Timing Compared to Forecast



The next Fraser River Panel meeting is scheduled for 10:30AM Tuesday September 3rd.

Fraser River Panel Schedule:
Tuesday and Friday 11am.

Canada dial-in: 1-888-299-2873
(USA dial-in: 1-888-585-9008)
Conference ID: 287-053-397

Links

Big Bar Slide Updates are available: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-response-and-recovery/incident-summaries/big-bar-landslide-incident>

With Chinook and sockeye approaching and in the Fraser, these links may be of interest:

BC River Forecast Centre Website: <http://bcRFC.env.gov.bc.ca>

Environment Canada's Water Office Website: http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: www.psc.org

Pacific Salmon Commission Test Fisheries: http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission News and Regulatory announcements: <http://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/fraser-river-panel-regulatory-announcements/>

Fraser River Mission Escapement Reports: <http://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/fish-passage-past-the-psc-hydroacoustic-counting-station-near-mission-bc/>

Fraser River Environmental Watch Reports: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html>

The Albion Test Fishery information can be found at:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/fraser/docs/commercial/albionchinook-quinnat-eng.html>

For more information contact Aidan Fisher by email: Aidan.Fisher@lffa.ca