

## FIRST NATIONS SALMON FISHERIES ARE FINDING A PLACE AT THE TABLE

July 31, 2006

By Dave Moore

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drafted between representatives of the Commercial Salmon Advisory Board (CSAB) and a number of First Nations in the Fraser Watershed, aimed initially at balancing exploitation rates on Cultus Lake Sockeye with conservation and stewardship interests. Funded so far by industry contributions, the process was designed as an interest-based dialogue on Fraser River Sockeye management. The emerging agreement engages in-season management and dispute resolution as an alternative to conflict. Meetings began this spring, and were led by CFAB, Sto:lo Tribal Council, Sto:lo Nation, Katzie and Chehalis Indian Bands, to collaboratively manage harvest rates and restoration plans for Cultus Lake Sockeye.

As interest in the process has grown since proposed this spring, the MOU has been expanded to involve the full range of Fraser River salmon species, and has opened up to any interested Fraser River First Nations. According to the facilitator Richard McGuigan (Diamond Consulting), the initial focus on Cultus Lake Sockeye has since broadened based on a growing appreciation of the process within industry and a growing interest expressed by Fraser River First Nations, both upstream and on the coast. Now named the "*Fraser River Salmon Table*", it became clear to the participants that there are cross-cutting issues that affect various co-migrating stocks of salmon, and fishing rights/interests up-stream. As well, it appears to have broader implications, in particular around expanded economic opportunities for First Nations around the Fraser Watershed.

In return for agreement on higher harvest rates on late-run Sockeye, CFAB points out that their fishery will now be better able to adapt their ocean harvesting through progressive small-bite fisheries as part of a more manageable exploitation-rate target of 30%. The exploitation rate will implicitly include any early late-run migrants that have in recent years been considered lost to early-migration-related mortalities.

Funding contributions to the Cultus Lake Sockeye restoration programming for 2006 comes with an important adaptive approach to management of exploitation rates in the future. The proposed restoration activities will be funded from an industry contribution

raised through the sales of Sockeye "off the top of" this years sockeye commercial TAC, according to Dave Barrett of the CFAB. The restoration activities will compliment initiatives already underway by DFO and stewardship groups in the area, and include removal of a target 50,000 Pike-minnow from Cultus Lake, pilot scale research into the effects of E. Milfoil weed removal (on spawning grounds and rearing areas), ground-water monitoring, support for a stewardship coordinator, and extended/expanded hatchery supplementation for Cultus Lake Sockeye. The agreement also includes a commitment to create a formal Fraser River Salmon Stock Re-building Trust Fund" for other purposes agreed to by the Parties in the future.

An up-river meeting of the *Fraser River Salmon Table* was hosted by Nicola Tribal Association in Merritt on July 17 to introduce the table to other First Nations expressing interest in the table from the Middle and Upper Fraser Watershed. At that meeting the participants reviewed the history of the MOU and listened to presentations from First Nations involved in the 2005 demonstration commercial sales projects, and discussed areas of possible future collaboration. Grand Chief Doug Kelly reiterated the commitment of the table he helped create to openness to other First Nations around the watershed, and highlighted planning for a fall "Summit" involving First Nations and their political organizations in broader dialogue about their place in the fishery. According to host-Chief George Saddleman of the Nicola Tribal Association, "Our people have always been part of the Fraser Salmon fishery, this process is one way for us to find our place at the table". For further information: Richard McGuigan 1-888-594-9450

*Editor's Note: Thanks again to Dave Moore for providing this summary on the MOU and process of the Fraser River Salmon Table.*

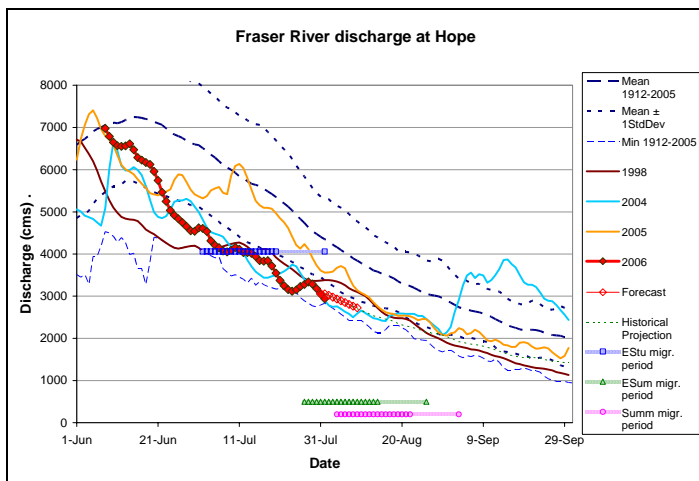
## FRASER SALMON UPDATE

By Pete Nicklin, Assistant Stock Management  
Coordinator FRAFS

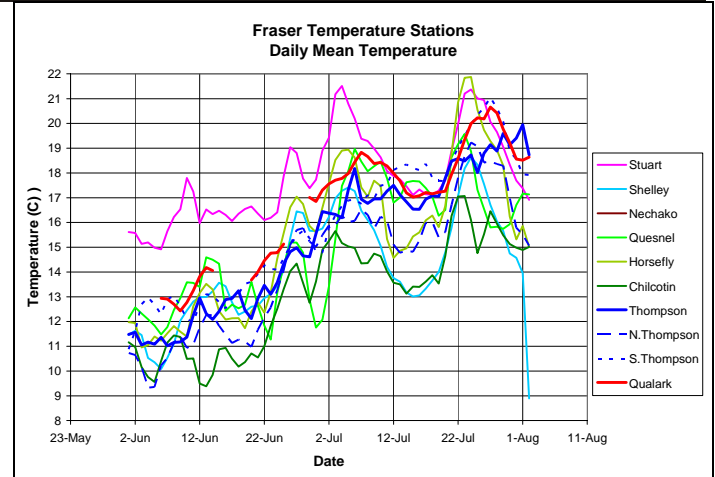
### General Info

Sockeye test fisheries are being conducted in Area 20 (gillnet and seine), US Area 7, Area 12 (gillnet and seine), Area 13, Cottonwood and Whonnock. The Area 20 seine test fishery (Juan de Fuca) has picked up over the last couple of days, but the Area 12 gillnet test fishery is not doing as well as the Area 12 seine (Johnstone Strait), so there may be differing catch vulnerabilities between the Area 12 gillnet and seine. This diversion rate for sockeye through Johnstone Strait is still low, and there is a higher proportion of sockeye migrating through Juan de Fuca (down the west coast of Vancouver Island).

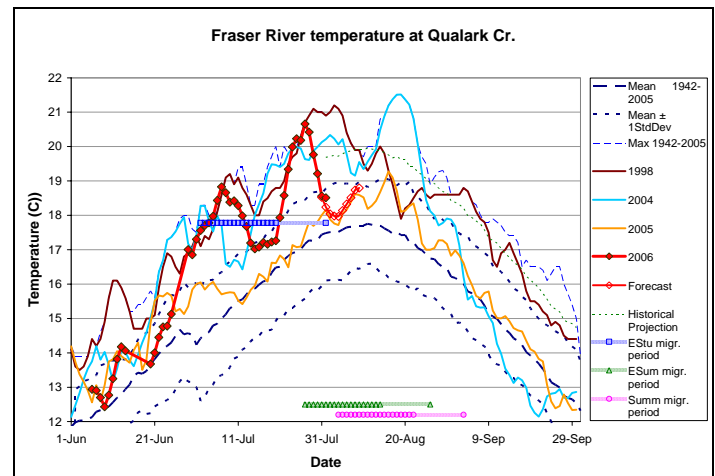
Water conditions in the Fraser are at low discharge levels and warm, but temperatures are forecasted to drop over the next several days.



This graph shows the 2006 discharge (flow) at Qualark (Lower Fraser) compared to other years (the line with diamonds). The mean discharge is shown by the heavy dashed line. Discharge is forecast to stay higher than 2004, but below 1998 levels.



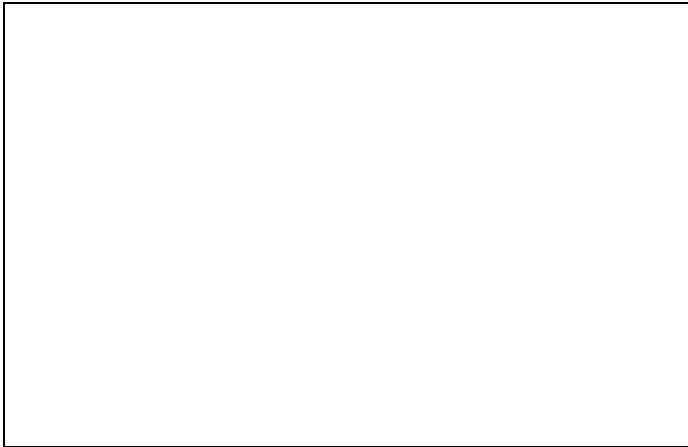
The above graph shows the water temperatures at various locations throughout the Fraser watershed..All areas are currently below 19 degrees Celsius.



The line with the diamonds shows the temperatures at Qualark for 2006. The big dashed line is the mean temperature from 1942 to 2005. Temperatures are still above average, and briefly reached record highs, but the trend over the past week was cooler. Temperatures are more than a degree cooler than in 2004 and approximately 2 degrees cooler than in 1998. However the forecast is for more warm weather over the next several days.

## Fraser Chinook

The Albion Test Fishery Cumulative catch results for 2006 continue at levels below the 1981 to 2005 average.



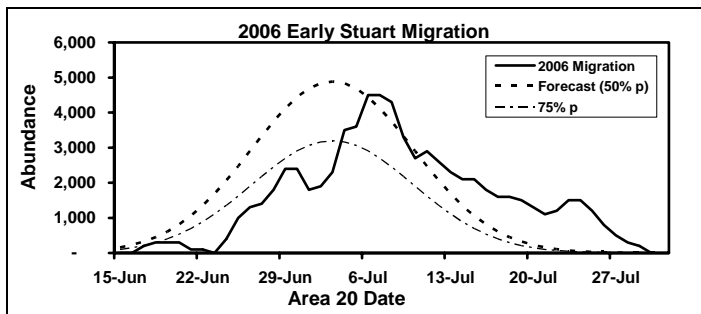
The cumulative test fishery catch at Albion for 2006 is the bottom line in this graph. The top line is the average from 1981 to 2005.

## Fraser Sockeye

The following information is from information dated August 2 (Early Stuart graph) and August 3. Also, it is important to know that this information still reflects early season information, so things could change rapidly in the next little while.

### Early Stuarts

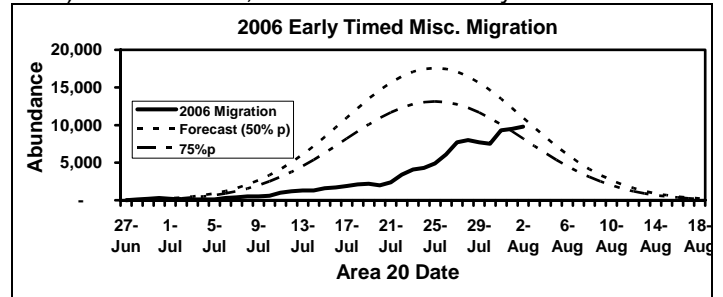
The in-season run size for the Early Stuarts remains at 70,000, which is between the 50%P and 75% forecast levels.



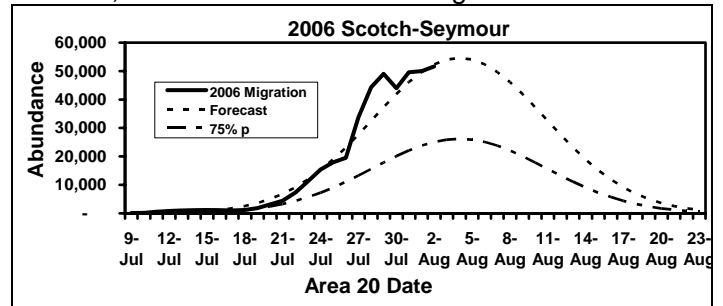
The Early Stuarts appear to have completed their migration past Area 20.

## Early Summers

The Early Summer Miscellaneous group (excludes Early Shuswap sockeye) is tracking either weaker or later (or both) than forecast, but it is still too early to tell.

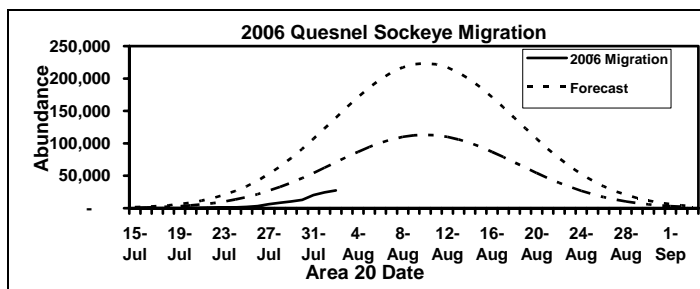
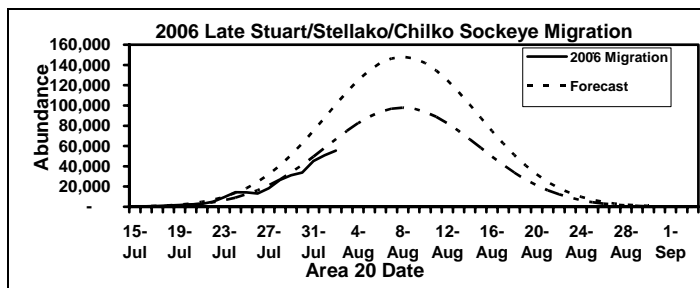
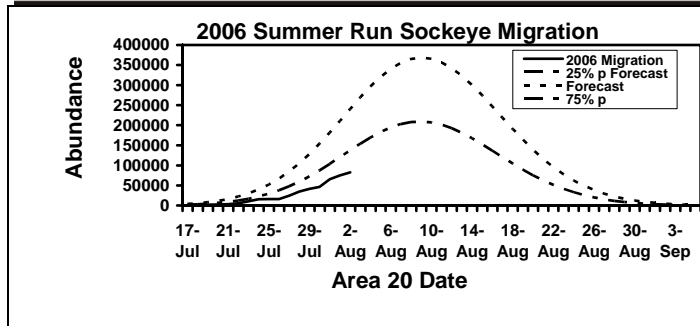


The Scotch Seymour Early Summer component is tracking quite strongly when compared to the Early Summer miscellaneous component, and looks to be on forecast, if it is on the forecast timing.



## Summers

The Summer run sockeye are tracking at lower than forecast abundance when considered in aggregate, but may be migrating later than forecast, at lower abundance or both, but it is still too early to tell. However, the Quesnel proportion of the summer run has been showing in low abundance in the stock ID of the test fisheries, and when the Quesnel sockeye are separated from the rest of the Summers, it looks like the remaining Summer sockeye are tracking on schedule and on forecast.



## Late Run Sockeye

Although the Lates are showing in the stock id analysis from the test fisheries, it is still too early to tell the in-season strength and timing of that aggregate.

For more information contact Pete Nicklin @ (250) 392-5888 or by email [indiseaent@shaw.ca](mailto:indiseaent@shaw.ca).

## FIRST NATIONS IN-SEASON TELECONFERENCE CALLS

The in-season teleconference calls will be occurring weekly throughout August. Time: 4:00PM Thursdays: Dial in number 1-877-385-4099: Passcode 3196930#. All calls will be chaired by Mike Staley.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

With the sockeye approaching and in the Fraser, these links may be of interest to many.

Upper/Mid/Lower Fraser Catch and Openings:  
<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraserriver/firstnations.htm>

Albion Test Fishery (Chinook Gill Net):  
[http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraserriver/commercial/commercialalbionchnk\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraserriver/commercial/commercialalbionchnk_e.htm)

Pacific Salmon Commission Test Fisheries:  
[http://www.psc.org/info\\_testfishing\\_summaries.htm](http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing_summaries.htm)

Fraser River Mission Escapement Reports:  
[http://www.psc.org/info\\_inseasonfraserescapement.htm](http://www.psc.org/info_inseasonfraserescapement.htm)

Snow Survey Bulletin – Water Supply Outlook for BC:  
[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/rfc/river\\_forecast/bulletin.htm](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/rfc/river_forecast/bulletin.htm)

Fraser River Environmental Watch Program:  
[http://www-sci.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fwh/index\\_e.htm](http://www-sci.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fwh/index_e.htm)