

recruitment. In other words, the population is getting older. At present, the population has a mean age of between 30 and 40 years.

So considering the small, aging adult population, lack of juveniles and armed with a combined 7 years of research on the Nechako sturgeon, the Province hired Carl Walters, aided by Josh Korman, to look at the data, and the analysis pointed sharply towards genetic extinction within about 20 years without some sort of intervention. This put Nechako populations in greater danger than Columbia and Kootney sturgeon populations, which were already under recovery actions.

Three years ago, the Province spearheaded the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative, consisting of both a technical Recovery Team, and an Action Planning Group (a.k.a. APG) who represent a broad cross section of the community. To date, the Recovery Team is finalizing a recovery plan and exploring technical options, and the APG is communicating with the Technical Recovery Team and community at large.

There is a lot more to this story. I have been involved with sturgeon research in the upper Fraser for a number of years now, and wanted to let people in the watershed know what was going on. Through Watershed Talk, I will continue to keep you

informed, but if you have specific questions, would like more information regarding sturgeon, or have suggestions for articles, please let me know. **For further information, contact Jason Yarmish at (250) 962-2712 or jasonyar@telus.net**

2003 FRASER SOCKEYE SEASON – STILL DRAGGING ITS HEALS

By: Jason Yarmish

Well despite another week, the start of the sockeye season is still off to a slow start. Early Stuart sockeye have now been observed in Tlaz'ten Territory, but the peak of the run should be in the Williams Lake to Prince George area. The final numbers are not yet in for the Early Stuarts, but it appears that the overall estimate past Mission will be in the 25 to 30,000 range. Early Summers are also still trickling into the Fraser. The jury is still out on whether it is a late arrival or a poor return, however things have picked up a little in the marine test fisheries. The next week or so will really start to clear up the Early Summer question. The earliest of the Summers are also starting to show in test fisheries.

The big question mark today lies with Mother Nature. We are currently experiencing low water levels and higher than average temperatures, similar to those observed in 1998, a very difficult

year for Fraser sockeye. If the current trends in temperature and discharge continue, it could pose significant migratory (if not survival) challenges to sockeye of the Early Summer and Summer aggregates. **For further information, contact Mike Staley at (604) 261-7065 or mstaley@mstaley.com**

UPCOMING MEETINGS & TELECONFERENCES

JULY 31/03: 4:00 PM - FRAFS Technical Fraser Sockeye Update Teleconference. Chair(s): Mike Staley/Ken Wilson.

Aug. 6/03: 9:00 AM – Ad Hoc Fraser Technical Committee Teleconference. Chair(s): Ken Wilson/Les Jantz

AUG. 7/03: 4:00 PM - FRAFS Technical Fraser Sockeye Update Teleconference. Chair(s): Mike Staley/Ken Wilson.