

FRASER SALMON UPDATE - By Pete Nicklin, Fraser Fisheries Biologist, FRAFS

GENERAL

The information in this update summarizes the information from the FRAFS July 16th Thursday in-season teleconference call, the Fraser River Panel info distribution package July 17th, and the DFO website.

The second 2009 FRAFS in-season teleconference took place at 4PM Thursday July 16th, and these calls will continue weekly throughout the sockeye season, unless otherwise specified.

WATER CONDITIONS

Fraser River discharge and temperature information is updated and distributed by the Pacific Salmon Commission. The graphs in this section are taken directly from that update.

Water conditions in the Fraser are currently satisfactory for sockeye migration from a discharge and temperature point of view. However, the temperature at Qualark has been increasing quite rapidly and forecast to increase slightly above 19 degrees by the end of the forecast period. If water temperatures continue to increase as per the forecast, migration conditions for sockeye will become increasingly stressful.

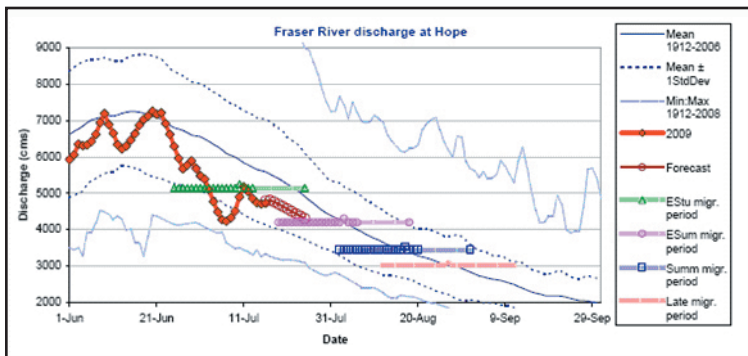
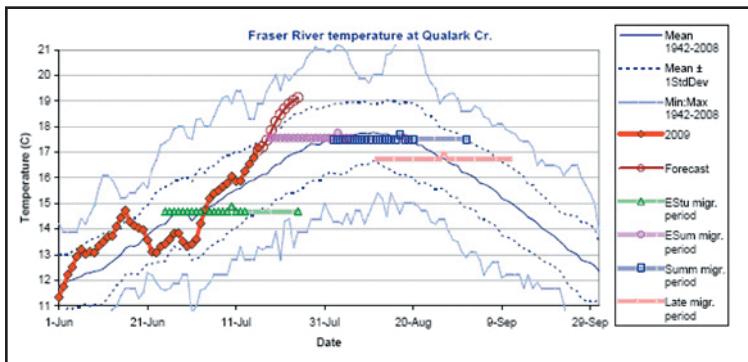
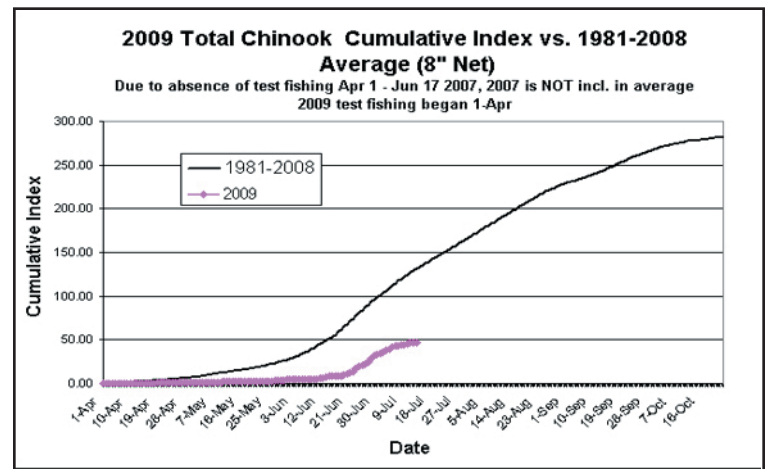
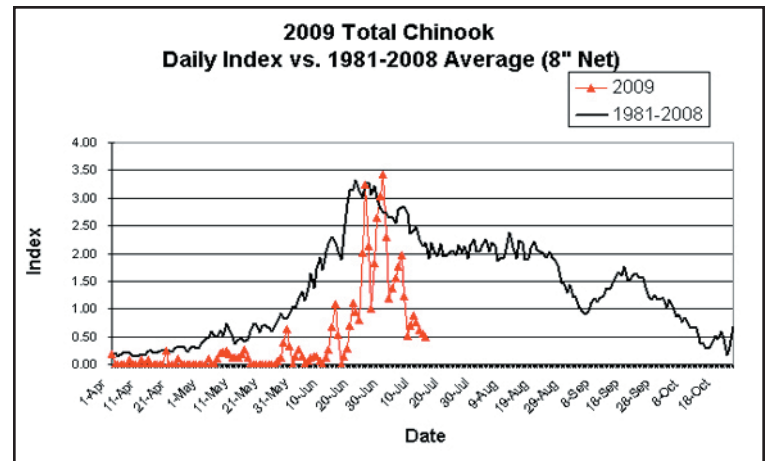


Figure 1: This graph shows the Fraser River temperatures at Qualark Creek (Lower Fraser). The line with the diamonds shows the 2009 temperatures. The unfilled circle portion of the line shows the forecast temperatures. The current temperature is above 17 degrees and forecast to increase to just above 19 degrees. These temperatures are above average for this time of year, increasing rapidly due to hot and dry temperatures around the Province, and approaching temperatures that are considered stressful for sockeye migration.

Figure 2: This graph shows the 2009 Fraser River discharge at Hope. The

line with the solid red diamonds is the 2009 discharge, and the forecast discharge shows as unfilled circles. Fraser River discharge at Hope is below the historical mean, and satisfactory for sockeye migration. Current discharge is approximately 4700 cms, and forecast to decrease to approximately 4300 cms by July 25th.

Fraser Chinook (Graphs from DFO website: Albion Chinook Test Fishery)



Fraser First Nations Reported Catch 2009: Reporting period up to July 12th, 2009.

	Species			Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Chum	
Lower Fraser	9,333	233	13	9,579
Mid-Upper Fraser	279	16	0	295
Total	9,612	249	13	9,874

The above catch information is available from the DFO website at the link provided under the GENERAL INFORMATION section.

FRASER SOCKEYE

Fraser sockeye are approaching and migrating in the Fraser. The in-season abundance of Early Stuarts is less than the 75%P pre-season forecast of 165,000, and the current low abundance of Early Summers and Summers in marine test fishery catches is a concern.

Early Stuarts, Early Summers and a small proportion of Summer and Late sockeye (3sub1s) have showed in test fisheries conducted to date. The continued low abundance of Early Summer sockeye showing in marine test fisheries is a concern, however stock id proportions in the marine test fishery samples remain within the possibility for later-than-expected timing of Early Summers and Summers. An estimated 100,000 Early Stuarts, 27,600 Early Summers and 1,800 Lates (3sub1s) have passed the Mission hydroacoustics station.

The current in-season run size estimate (July 17th) for Early Stuarts is 110,000 which is a reduction of the previous in-season estimate of 140,000. The Management Adjustment (MA) for Early Stuarts is 53,900.

Fraser Sockeye Test Fishery and Mission Hydroacoustics Summary (Provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)

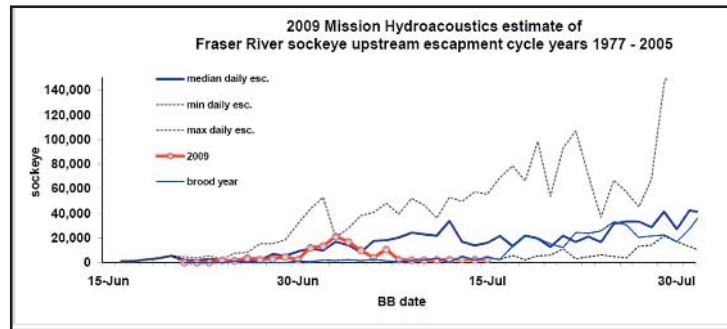
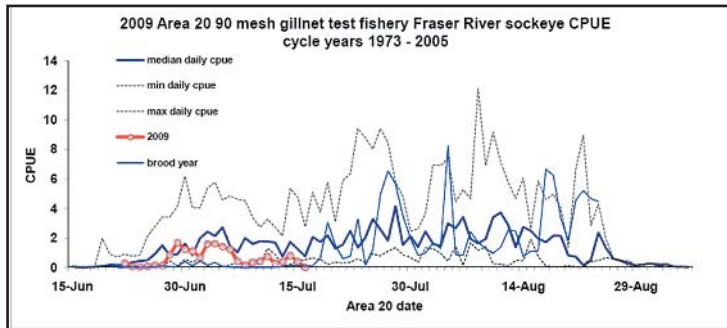


Figure 3: Pacific Salmon Commission 2009 test fisheries and Mission Hydroacoustics summary (July 17th).

Fraser Sockeye Area 20 sockeye passage Graphs (Provided by Pacific Salmon Commission)

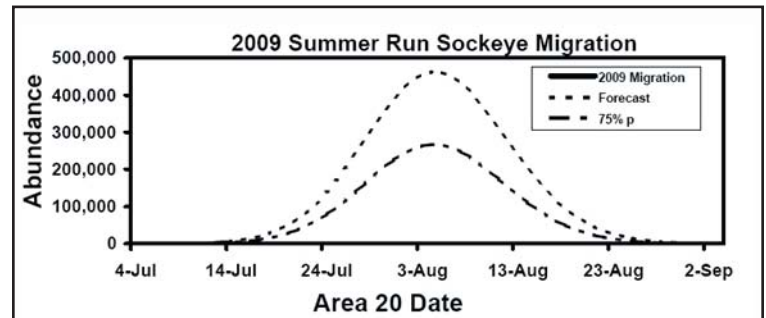
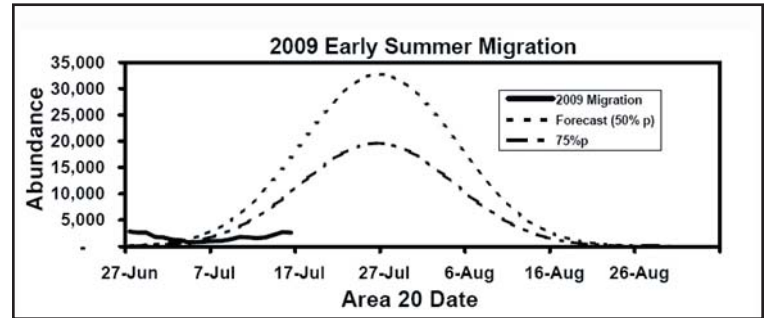
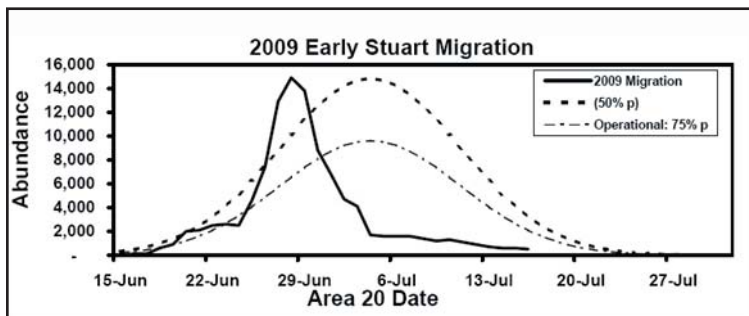


Figure 4: These graphs show the current (July 17th) information for the 2009 Early Stuart, Early Summer and Summer sockeye migration..

For more information contact Pete Nicklin @ (250) 392-5888 or by email at indiseant@shaw.ca.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

Albion Test Fishery – Chinook Gill Net:
www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraser/river/commercial/commercialalbionchnk_e.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: www.psc.org

LGL Fishwheel Catch Updates:
www.psc.org/info_lglfishwheelcatch.htm

Upper/Mid/Lower Fraser Catch and Openings:
www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraser/river/firstnations.htm

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

Pacific Salmon Commission News and Regulatory announcements:
www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm

Fraser River Mission Escapement Reports:
www.psc.org/info_inseasonfraserescapement.htm

Fraser River Environmental Watch Program:
www.sci.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fw/h/index_e.htm

FRASER SOCKEYE 2009: TROUBLE ON THE HORIZON?

By Neil Todd, FRAFS Operations Manager

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The 2009 sockeye season is not starting out on a positive note.

The Fraser Panel has just set an in season run size estimate of 110,000 for Early Stuart sockeye. This is stark contrast to the pre-season forecast of 255,000 (50% probability estimate), and the season planning forecast of 165,000 (75% probability estimate). Luckily, migration conditions have been reasonably favourable for this stock group, although rising water temperatures in the Fraser may have an impact on the tail end of the run as it is making its way home.

The next stock group, the Early Summer Run sockeye, does not appear to be showing up in numbers that would be consistent with the pre-season forecast. Also, it would be expected to see more Summer Run fish in the outside test fisheries at this time if they were returning in forecast strength. This is worrisome. It is possible that these two stock groups are running a little late (note, however, that Early Stuart was about five days early this year) so it is a little too early to hit the panic button. But it is not too early to think about the location of that button. Particularly when we consider that if the Early Summers do begin to show in good numbers in the next few days, they will likely be running into very stressful water temperature conditions as they make their way into and up the Fraser.

One very positive note came out of the First Nations Fraser weekly sockeye update conference call yesterday: First Nations appear to be sensitive to this discouraging information, and seem to be willing to consider changes to fishing plans based on current information – rather than pre-season forecast numbers coupled with blind hope.



Tuesday, July 21, 2009

AREA B (LOWER FRASER RIVER) SEINE FISHERY PROPOSAL CONFERENCE CALL (hosted by DFO)

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has received a proposal from Area B to conduct a limited seine fishery in the lower Fraser River. The Lower Fraser is within Area B but the seine fleet has not used this area for some time. DFO wishes to host a telephone conference call to explain and discuss the proposal, and to receive advice/feedback from Fraser First Nations regarding the proposal. All interested Fraser First Nations are invited to participate in this teleconference.

Call in: 1-866-792-1316
Access Code: 7623259#

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Wednesday Mornings

NORTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CALLS 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

The Northern Vancouver Island Conference calls are of particular interest to anyone who wants the earliest information available about test fishery results, and when and where the various First Nations fisheries are catching fish.

Call in number: 1-866-646-2080,
Access Code: 2865880#

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Thursdays at 4:00pm (unless otherwise noted)

FIRST NATIONS IN-SEASON TECHNICAL CONFERENCE CALLS

Hosted by FRAFS Biologist Mike Staley
Dial in numbers:
Local Vancouver Area: 604-899-2339
Toll-free: 1-877-385-4099
Access Code: 3196930#

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FRASER PANEL MEETINGS

This is your opportunity to listen to the in-season management decision-making process for Fraser sockeye. Call in times and numbers will be distributed by FRAFS via email prior to the calls.

Call in numbers:
Local Vancouver Area: 604-639-5228
Toll-Free: 1-888-789-9572
Access Code: 3269389#