

Questions and/or Requests for Advice from FORUM Presentations

Note: The FORUM provides an annual process for information sharing and discussion on Fraser salmon fisheries issues between DFO and First Nations (Tier 2) and First Nations with other First Nations (Tier 1). First Nation attendees have the opportunity to provide their advice and recommendations on management plans. The intent of the April meeting is to provide further detail on some of the contents of the draft 2016/2017 IFMP for southern BC salmon and to continue discussions on fishery planning for 2016.

A number of presentations were provided at the March Forum meeting (copies are available at frafs.ca). Within those presentations, there were a number of questions posed. The first section of this document summarizes those questions. The second section of this document provides a summary of some of the requests and questions raised by the FORUM planning committee.

The Forum Planning Committee has heard from Forum participants regarding the need at the April Forum for more Tier 2 discussion. The intent of this document is to provide some background and context for discussion. We hope this approach is helpful and we welcome your feedback.

Section 1: A summary of questions from the March Forum Presentations

Fraser Sockeye

1. The Department is seeking feedback on the value of extending the Early Stuart window closure in 2016? Current proposal is for an approximately three week window closure (see below). In some years, a one week extension of the Early Stuart closure is implemented with the aim of providing some protection to some of the earliest returning Early Summer sockeye (Bowron and Taseko for example).

The table below (from the draft IFMP) contains dates that would be in effect for a three week closure. Add 7 days for the end dates for a four week closure.

Area	Date Start (date, time)	Date End (date, time)	Management Action
Area 127	Open 14-Jul, 7 days/week		Earliest potential opening to FN FSC fishing for Fraser sockeye = July 14 (Sn, Gn, Tr)
Area 11	Open 14-Jul, 7 days/week		Earliest potential opening to FN FSC fishing for Fraser sockeye = July 14 (Gn, Tr); July 25 (Sn) ¹
Area 12	Open 14-Jul, 7 days/week		Earliest potential opening to FN FSC fishing for Fraser sockeye = July 14 (Gn, Tr); July 25 (Sn) ¹
Area 13	Open 14-Jul, 7 days/week		Earliest potential opening to FN FSC fishing for Fraser sockeye = July 14 (Gn, Tr); July 25 (Sn) ¹
Area 20	Open 14-Jul, 7 days/week		Earliest potential opening to FN FSC fishing for Fraser sockeye = July 14 (Sn, Gn, Tr)
Areas 18 & 29	26-Jun 00:00	20-Jul Noon	Earliest potential opening to FNs FSC fishing for Fraser sockeye = July 20, noon
Steveston-Mission Bridge	26-Jun 00:00	20-Jul Noon	
Mission Bridge-Sawmill Cr	27-Jun 00:00	22-Jul 00:00	
Sawmill Cr-Texas Cr	01-Jul 00:00	24-Jul 00:00	
Texas Cr-Kelly Cr	01-Jul 00:00	24-Jul 00:00	
Kelly Cr-Deadman	01-Jul 00:00	24-Jul 00:00	
Deadman-Chilcotin	08-Jul 00:00	29-Jul 00:00	
Chilcotin-Quesnel	08-Jul 00:00	29-Jul 00:00	
Quesnel-Hixon	08-Jul 00:00	29-Jul 00:00	
Hixon-Prince George	11-Jul 00:00	02-Aug 00:00	
Prince George-Stuart R	11-Jul 00:00	02-Aug 00:00	

¹ Gear restrictions remain in place to protect Sakinaw sockeye until July 25, 2016.

- The Department is seeking feedback on two proposed Fraser sockeye management group escapement options (separate handout from March Forum).
- The Department is seeking feedback on the following proposed sockeye Low Abundance Exploitation Rates (LAER).

Management Group	Proposed LAER
Early Stuart Sockeye	10%
Early Summer Sockeye	10%
Summer Sockeye	10%
Late Run Sockeye	20%-30% (goes to 30% if the run returns at the P75 or greater.) OR 20% at all run sizes.

- The Department is seeking feedback on how to manage FSC sockeye fisheries when there is not enough Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for all to catch the amount as set out in licences issued by DFO.

Chinook

With respect to 2016 fishery planning, the Department is seeking feedback on the management approach outlined.

Note: This references the objectives in the IFMP. In summary:

- conserve Fraser Spring 4₂ chinook by minimizing incidental harvests in marine waters,
- use the zoned approach for Fraser Spring/Summer 5₂ chinook; and

- manage summer 4₁ chinook so that fisheries impacts are not increased in 2016.

5. What are the key considerations that need to be taken into account?
6. Are there any modifications you would suggest?
7. What considerations should be given to managing chinook fisheries during the Early Stuart sockeye window closure?
8. Are there any additional adjustments that should be considered in the event of adverse environmental conditions (e.g. low flows / warm water temperatures)?

ALSO:

9. Is it time for a review of DFO's Chinook management approach in recent years (e.g. over the last 5 years) to understand the assessment and effectiveness of management actions that have been implemented? This would apply to Fraser Spring/Summer 5₂ and Fraser Summer 4₂ Chinook.
10. If so, what should be considered in the work plan? What are the key questions that need to be addressed?

Coho

To further advance recovery and conservation, the objective for Interior Fraser River coho (including Thompson River coho) is to manage Canadian fisheries in a highly precautionary manner with fisheries management measures similar to those in place prior to 2014. This approach is expected to achieve an overall exploitation rate within the 3 – 5 % range.

11. With respect to the general direction of adopting similar management measures similar to those in place prior to 2014, what are the key considerations that need to be taken into account? Are there any modifications you would suggest?

Steelhead

The objective for Interior Fraser River steelhead is to minimize the impact of Canadian fisheries managed by DFO taking into account conservation concerns for these populations.

For Fraser River commercial gill net fisheries, the strategy will be to protect 80% of the Interior Fraser River steelhead runs with a high degree of certainty.

Some areas for discussion:

12. Is the current management approach (above) appropriate?
13. What information is available on fisheries impacts?
14. How to best respond to in-season information on IFR steelhead returns?

Section 2: A summary of some of the requests & questions raised by the FORUM planning committee.

Chinook

- FN needs on Chinook (and other species) will increase given low forecast to sockeye. How will this priority be met?
 - In particular, DFO should expect a request for increased FN harvest of Summer 4₁ Chinook. How will this be dealt with given the general management approach outlined by DFO in the Draft IFMP and Forum presentations?
- What changes are being considered to management in 2016? This question applies to both FN fisheries and to recreational and commercial fisheries? DFO must provide details of any proposed changes to FORUM reps so they may have time to analyze how these changes might affect other fisheries.

Sockeye

- **Test fisheries –**
 - How they will be managed in 2016?
 - What are the two options being considered and what are the implications to data flow?
 - How will information be provided to figure out when and where fisheries can take place?
 - How will Early Stuart be managed? What test fisheries will be in place? For example: If this is the pre-season run timing, and this is the test fishing proposal, what is the earliest date we will have an in-season update and how will this affect potential FSC fisheries and ability for food fisheries to occur (recognizing the constraints on the start and end of the sockeye return)? The proposed test fishery plan should be compared against things like the Early Stuart window closure and expected run timing of the management groups as a point of reference and discussion. Are other methods being considered to assess run size/timing? I.e. FSC fisheries.
- **Sharing Arrangements**
 - Background info from DFO must be provided. Such as what it looks like on paper versus what actually happens in-season?
 - How will fisheries off the main stem be managed for example Chilliwack sockeye – will any harvest count against the aggregate?
 - What are the implications to other fisheries throughout the watershed?
 - Early Stuart sharing table– how it is currently done.
 - Past principles used for sharing.
 - What happens to uncaught food fishery amounts, are those amounts available for catch in other areas?
 - What happened in 2015? Actual allocations, catches and approaches.
- **2016 Fraser Sockeye forecast**
 - There are several stocks with low forecast abundances, some in relation to cycle line averages, and at least one with a very low brood year escapement (Late Shuswap). This presents challenges in each management group. What is the plan for recognizing, assessing and managing for these challenges?