

**NEWSLETTER****Fraser Sockeye Information for 2016 Fisheries**

Fraser Sockeye Pre-Season Update

The 2016 Fraser sockeye run has begun with the Early Stuart and Early Summer components now apparent in the Fraser River! Here at A-Tlegay we thought it would be helpful for us to send out a couple of newsletters throughout the sockeye fishing season to help keep the most up to date information flowing.

2016 Fraser Sockeye Forecast

The Fraser sockeye forecast is presented as a range of probabilities where there is a 1 in 2 chance of the total return falling at or below 2.27 million. Fraser Sockeye are managed as four aggregate groups based on run timing – Early Stuart, Early Summer, Summer, and Late. The bulk of the forecast is in the Summer component (1.68 million). The forecast diversion rate through the northern entrance of Vancouver Island is 76%.

In the Johnstone Straights, food fisheries are focused on the Summer run component and usually take place late July into August.

The Early Stuart run enters the river almost primarily through the southern route (Juan de Fuca). This stock is a concern with fishing opportunities remaining limited to in-river First Nations, mainly in the Stuart region.

This year, the Early Summer run is forecast to have some harvestable surplus for food fisheries and will likely be caught solely as bycatch while fisheries focus on the more abundant Summer run.

The final component of the Fraser run is the Late run. The Late run often causes constraints to Johnstone Straits fisheries due to small run size forecasts, Cultus (stock of concern), and the overlap in run timing with

the more abundant Summer run which we focus our fisheries on.

Test Fishing

Fraser Sockeye test fisheries typically operate in Area 12 (Northern Johnstone Strait), Area 13 (Quadra, Cortez), Area 20 (Juan de Fuca), and several locations in the Fraser River.

In 2015, the run did not materialize as predicted, therefore the amount of fish needed to fund the test fishery last year was not obtained. The limited funds generated in 2015 combined with the low forecast in 2016 have resulted in a reduced test fishery for 2016.

The Area 13 test fishery is not scheduled to operate this year, but the Area 12 gillnet and seine test fisheries will be running on a reduced schedule starting on July 11th and July 21st.

Daily test fishing summaries can be found at the link below:

http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing_summaries.htm#2016

Environmental Conditions

Although snowpack throughout the Fraser watershed and much of BC was normal in early April it had melted to well below normal conditions by May 1st. By June there was little to no snow pack in much of the watershed. The earliest observed freshet followed this since 1912 in the Fraser.

Water temperatures measured in Hope were the highest on record by over 3 degrees in April. Current water temperatures remain well above normal at hope.

Water flows are projected to remain below average throughout July.

Fisheries

Food Fishery

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has yet to release the final Southern BC Integrated Fisheries Management Plan. Management actions are in place to limit fisheries on various stocks of concern including Nimpkish, Sakinaw, and some Fraser stocks passing through the Straights in July. **The FSC opening will rely on information, like run size estimates and stock composition from the test fisheries, that would indicate abundances appropriate to support fisheries.** Realistically, based on predicted run timing and constraints of other co-migrating stocks of concern and low abundance, A-Tlegay Member Nations might not be permitted to fish, by the Department, until **late July or early August** when the appropriate information is observed.

It is also important to keep in mind that given the breakdown of the forecast amongst management stock

groupings and run timing that our window for food fisheries, this year, could be short.

A-Tlegay will be communicating and working with the Department daily to help warrant the maximization of any and all opportunities possible and that the flow of information such as opening and closing times is relayed to fishers as efficiently as possible.

We will be providing weekly updates every Wednesday afternoon on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/A-Tlegay-Fisheries-205621336140778/>

Reporting catch to A-Tlegay as soon as possible during food fish openings will also help us to communicate, to the department, the dynamics of the fishery in Area 13 in the absence of the Area 13 test fishery.

Other Fisheries

At the current forecast, there are no domestic commercial or recreational fisheries anticipated. There is, however, a small portion of Total Allowable Catch for US fisheries (as outlined in the Treaty) at the current forecast if the return is at or above 2.27 million.

A-Tlegay Summer Camp (August 15-19th, 2016)

A-Tlegay Fisheries Society will be organizing a Training Camp for Youth between the ages of 12 years and 14 years of age. Camp will be held from August 15th – August 19th, 2016.

During the camp, participants will learn various fisheries techniques. Training Camp will consist of:

1. Fish Identification
2. Fish Preparation for Smoking Salmon and Barbecuing Salmon
3. Stream Enumeration
4. Crab Surveys
5. Clam Surveys

The camp will give youth an opportunity to learn about A-Tlegay Fisheries Society and the projects we are

involved in. It will also provide work experience for youth who wish to pursue a career in a fisheries related field.

Training camp will be open to all youth of the 5 Member Nations of A-Tlegay who meet the age requirement. Space will be limited to a maximum of 10 participants. Due to limited space available, please apply early.

Deadline to apply will be: August 1st, 2016.

If you have any questions, please call Kim Duncan at 250-287-8868.