



**WCVI Salmon Bulletin  
July 11, 2019 Assessment Update  
Area 23 Sockeye – Barkley Sound/Alberni Inlet**

**Catch Estimates:**

Total catch estimated to date is 52,965 adult sockeye:

Maa-nulth Treaty	12,792
Tsu-ma-uss	27,770
Commercial Gillnet (Area D)	6,500
Commercial Seine Net (Area B)	-
Recreational	2,577
Test Fishery	3,326
Stewardship	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,965</b>

**Escapement Estimates:**

The total adult sockeye escapement to the Somass system is estimated at about 93,176 adults (66,498 Sproat, and 26,679 Great Central) through Wednesday, July 10 (the estimates are extrapolated for July 10). The number of jacks at both counters continues to increase with 23,160 estimated at Sproat and 8,421 at Great Central (total 31,580) to July 10.

Approximately 29% of the observed adult escapement to date is from the Great Central population. Future fisheries management of Somass sockeye as a combined stock requires similar productivity among the two populations.

Below, are a series of figures that express 2019 sockeye escapement observations relative to average escapement timing for the period from 2001 to 2018 and the target escapement for GCL and Sproat Lake based on the average stock composition of the aggregate forecasted run size in the sockeye management table. Although informative, in some years the observed escapement rate relative to average escapement timing may be a poor indication of final run abundance. In contrast to 'run timing', (i.e., the return of sockeye to Alberni Inlet) escapement timing tends to be more variable and is influenced by the impact of fisheries and environmental conditions, such as river temperature or flow.

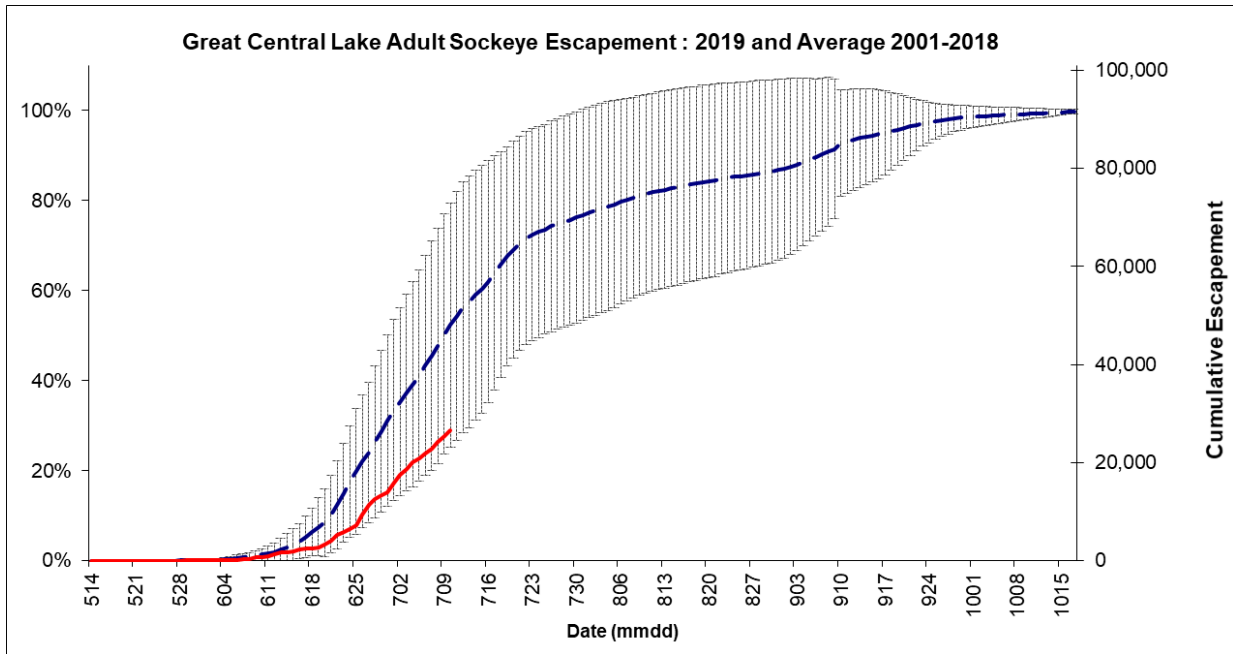


Figure 1. 2019 Great Central Lake sockeye escapement relative to average escapement timing. The total expected escapement is based on a target of 91,800 assuming Great Central Lake sockeye will comprise 54% of the Somass return.

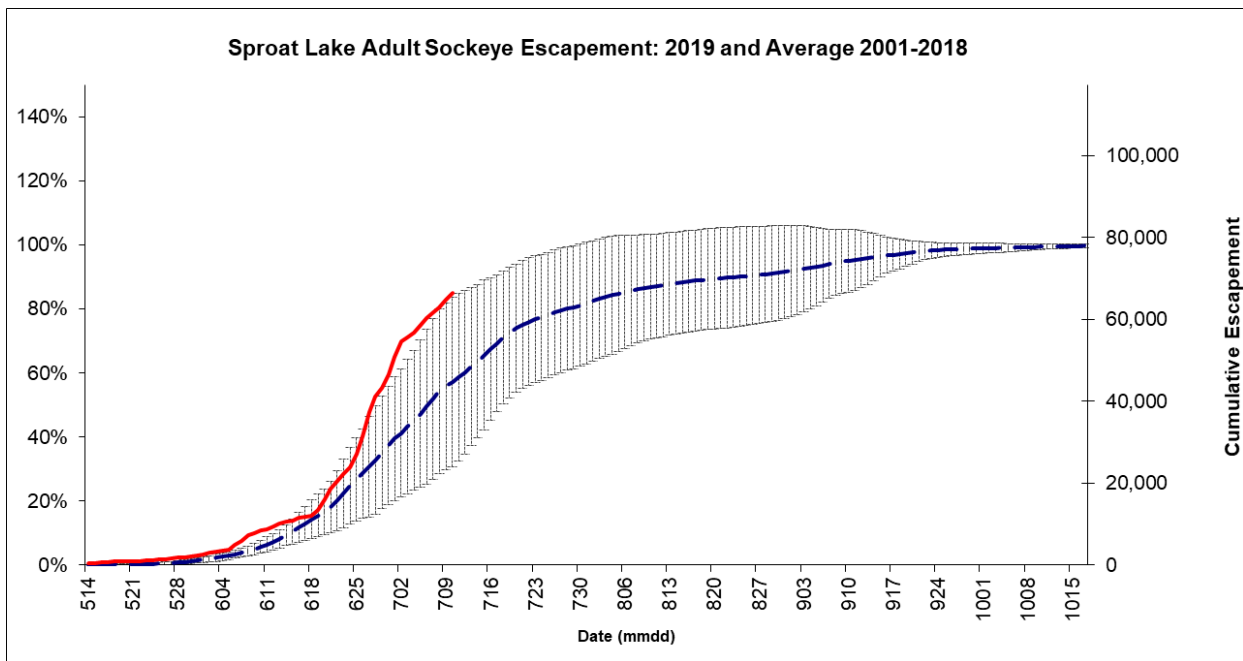


Figure 2. 2019 Sproat Lake sockeye escapement relative to average escapement timing. The total expected escapement is based on a target of 78,200 assuming Sproat Lake sockeye will comprise 46% of the Somass return.

### Test Fishery Observations:

The test fishery operated for two days this week on July 8 and July 9. The estimates of abundance outside 10-Mile Point and inside 10-mile Point fish were 8,000 and 5,000, respectively. The average catch per set was 21 in the outside area and 14 from the inside area.

There was no evidence of fish holding in this week's test fishery. No average size information was available again this weeks but increased proportions of jacks were reported this week and a continued relative decline in the average fish size.

### Biological Monitoring Results:

Additional DNA samples are available this week from the test fishery. Results are tabulated below.

The portion of Henderson sockeye in the outside test sample has increased this week to 3.1%.

The relative portions of Great Central Lake sockeye remains lower than desired.

	2019		2019		2019		2019		2019		2019		2019		2019	
	seine test		seine test		gillnet		Gillnet		seine test		seine test		seine test		seine test	
	OUTSIDE		INSIDE		Tsu-ma-uss		Maa-nulth		OUTSIDE		INSIDE		INSIDE		OUTSIDE	
	10-Jun		11-Jun		June3-June6		13-Jun		17-Jun		18-Jun		23-Jun		24-Jun	
	96(0)		96(0)		50(0)		25(0)		93(0)		100(0)		100(0)		100(0)	
Stock	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD
GCL	20.4	(4.6)	20.4	(4.7)	15.7	(5.6)	39.8	(9.9)	40.6	(5.3)	23.7	(4.6)	37.6	(5.3)	26.3	(4.7)
Hend	0.0	(0.6)	0.1	(0.7)	0.1	(1.3)	0.0	(2.2)	0.2	(0.9)	0.0	(0.5)	0.0	(0.6)	1.7	(1.6)
Sproat	79.6	(4.6)	79.5	(4.8)	84.2	(5.7)	60.1	(10.0)	59.2	(5.3)	76.3	(4.6)	62.3	(5.4)	71.9	(4.7)

	2019		2019		2019		2019		2019		2019		2019		2019	
	Gillnet		gillnet		gillnet		seine test		seine test		Gillnet		seine test		seine test	
	Area D		Maa-nulth		Tsu-ma-uss		INSIDE		OUTSIDE		Maa-nulth		INSIDE		OUTSIDE	
	18-Jun		16-Jun		Jun14-Jun21		30-Jun		1-Jul		June29-30		9-Jul		8-Jul	
	99(1)		25(0)		58(0)		100(0)		100(0)		18(0)		95(0)		96(0)	
Stock	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD	Est	SD
GCL	33.8	(5.1)	46.4	(10.0)	20.1	(5.8)	31.0	(5.0)	19.8	(4.6)	43.4	(12.8)	24.4	(4.6)	23.3	(4.7)
Hend	0.1	(0.7)	0.0	(2.1)	0.1	(1.0)	0.0	(0.7)	0.9	(1.3)	0.2	(3.2)	0.9	(1.2)	3.1	(1.9)
Sproat	66.1	(5.1)	53.6	(9.9)	79.8	(5.9)	69.0	(5.0)	79.3	(4.5)	56.4	(13.0)	74.7	(4.6)	73.6	(4.9)

Weekly information from the test fishery in June appears to give a good indication of the relative proportions of Great Central and Sproat Lake in the final return. Analysis uses simple linear regression to relate proportions of GCL from the weekly test fishing samples to the final proportion in the Somass sockeye return. Additional models have been developed which use combined data from Inside and Outside fishing areas and weeks and appear to better represent the data. A summary of the predicted %GCL from Week 62, 63 and 64 data is presented below.

Model	Predicted	Upper 95%	Lower 95%	Regression r <sup>2</sup>
Week 62 Average	26.2%	44.3%	8.1%	0.8514
Week 63 Average	35.3%	49.0%	21.7%	0.8481
Week 62 and 63 Average	30.4%	47.0%	13.8%	0.8632
Week 62, 63 and 64 Average	32.2%	43.3%	21.0%	0.9020

Using the predicted value from the Week 62, 63 and 64 Average model, the estimated proportion of GCL in the final return is approximately 32% (95% PI of 21% to 43%).

### Area D Gillnet Catch:

Catch rates from the Area D gillnet fishery from the third and fourth weeks of June provide a good indication of the final Somass sockeye adult return. The figure below shows the relationship between the average catch per vessel hour and the final Somass run size for the Week 63 fishery.

Since last week's summary, additional reports from harvesters have been received which has slightly reduced the average catch in the June 18 fishery. Using the updated CPUE data in the regression relationship, the Somass sockeye adult return in 2019 is predicted at approximately 277,000 sockeye (95% prediction interval of 0 to 856,000).

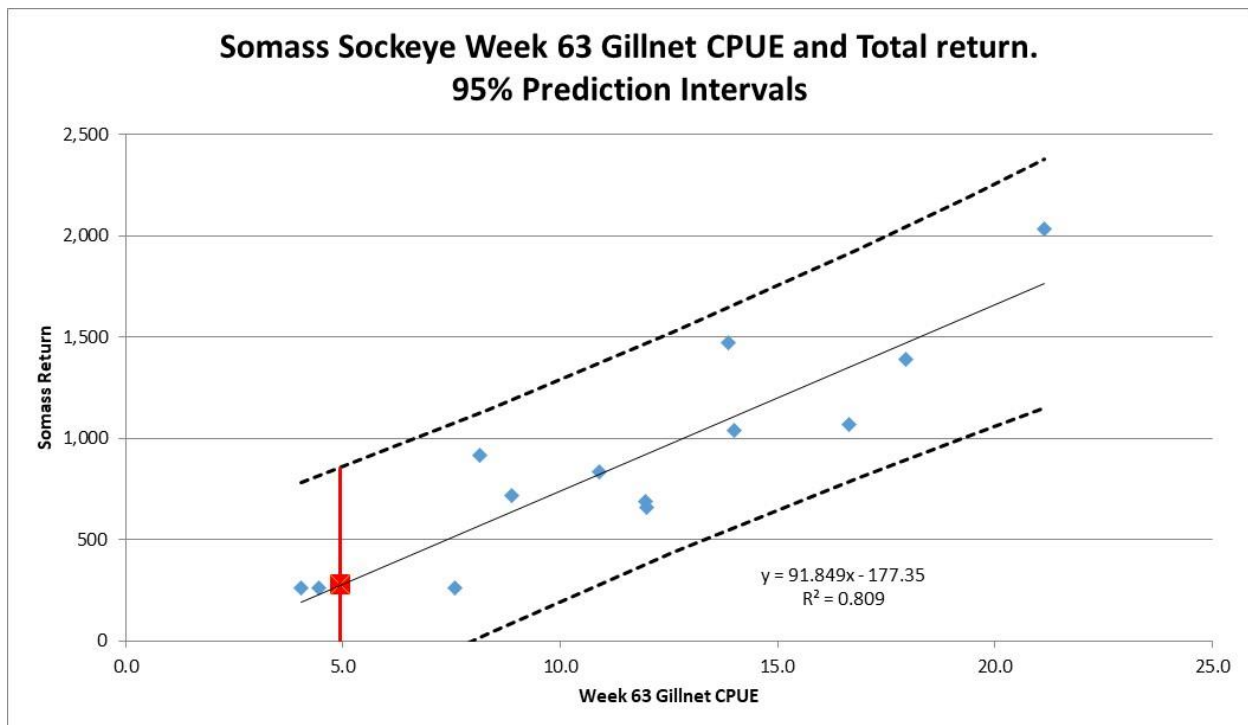


Figure 3: The relationship between standardized gillnet CPUE (sockeye/vessel hour) and total Somass adult return for week 63 gillnet fisheries in Area 23. Red point indicated 2019 value of 4.95 sockeye per vessel hour and the predicted Somass Return of 277,000 with a 95% prediction interval of 0 to 865,000.

### Environmental Monitoring Results:

Daily river temperatures over the past week ranged between 20.8 °C and 22.8 °C (average 21.6 °C) at the Sproat River fishway and between 17.6 °C and 21.2 °C

(average 18.8 °C) at the Stamp River fishway. These temperatures are similar to last week in both rivers.

Alberni Inlet surface temperatures inside 10-Mile Point measured between 16 °C and 17 °C by the test boat on July 9. The sea surface temperatures measured outside 10-Mile Point were between 15 °C and 16 °C on July 8. These temperatures are about 1 degree cooler this week compared to last in both areas.

### Accounting to Date:

Parameter		Observed	Expected (300K)	Target (300K)
<b>Escapement</b>	Sproat	66,498 (71%)	62,300 (to July 10)	108,100
	Great Central	26,679 (29%)	66,400, (to July 10)	126,900
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93,176</b>	<b>128,700 (to July 10)</b>	<b>235,000</b>
<b>Catch</b>	Sproat	38,310 (73%)		
	Great Central	14,508 (27%)		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,818</b>		
<b>Somass Age Composition (Adults)</b>	4 <sub>2</sub>	29%	13%	
	5 <sub>2</sub>	64%	76%	
	5 <sub>3</sub>	5%	10%	
	6 <sub>3</sub>	2%		
<b>Stock Composition</b>	Sproat	72%	81%	46%
	Great Central	28%	19%	54%
<b>Harvest Rate</b>		32%	<b>20% (June)</b>	22%
<b>Somass Run Size Forecast</b>		Pre-season management forecast: 350,000 (low) June 27 – In-season reforecast: 300,000		

The following tables summarizes the accounting for Somass sockeye to July 10, 2019:

### SOMASS (GCL + SPL)

TOTAL ADULT CATCH=	52,965	
TOTAL ADULT ESCAPEMENT=	93,176	
TOTAL CATCH PLUS ESCAPEMENT=	145,994	
Abundance Estimates:	Estimate	Lower CI
inner Alberni inlet estimate=	8,000	4,000
outer Alberni Inlet estimate=	5,000	2,500
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	13,000	6,500
<i>lower river abundance est</i>	<b>5,630</b>	<b>2,815</b>
TOTAL ACCOUNTING=	<b>164,624</b>	<b>155,309</b>
Harvest rate	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>

### Total Expected total Return Based on Run Timing and Week 63 Gillnet CPUE index:

Timing	50% date	% of run to date	Predicted GCL return	Predicted SPR return	Predicted Somass return
Early	28-Jun	75.8%	60,461	156,453	216,915
Average	1-Jul	70.9%	64,612	167,194	231,806
Late	6-Jul	59.0%	77,676	201,001	278,677
Week 63 Gillnet CPUE Index:					277,000

### Stock Specific Accounting to Date:

Stock	Catch	Esc	Catch + Esc	Catch + Esc Stock comp (%)	Inner Alberni Inlet estimate	Outer Alberni Inlet estimate	In-river estimate	Total Accounting	Total accounting Stock comp (%)	Harvest rate
SPR	38,310	66,498	104,808	72%	5,973	3,682	4,110	118,572	72%	32%
GCL	14,508	26,679	41,186	28%	1,952	1,164	1,520	45,822	28%	32%
HED	147	-	147	-	76	154				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,965</b>	<b>93,176</b>	<b>146,141</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,630</b>	<b>164,394</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>32%</b>

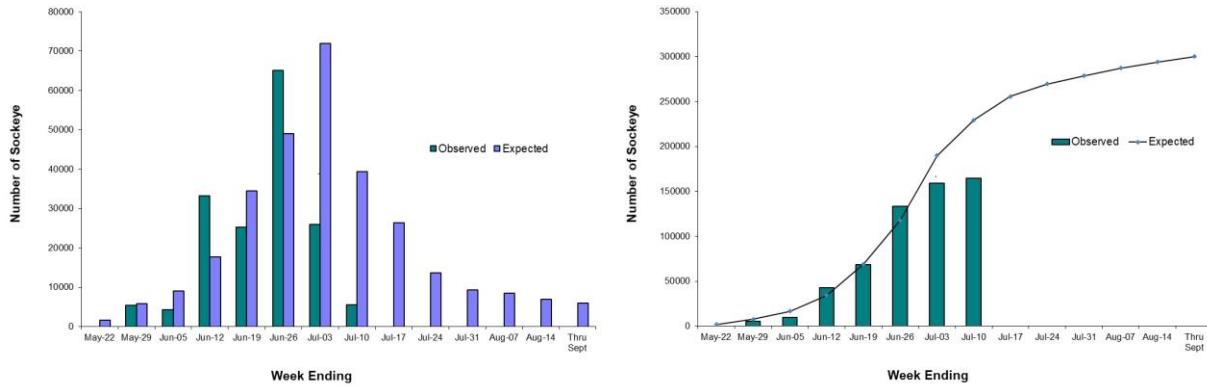


Figure 4: Observed and Expected accounting to date for a 300,000 run size with July 1 peak.

**In-Season Run Re-forecast:**

**A decrease in the run size to 200,000 is recommended. Based on accounting to date, peak timing appears to have occurred much earlier than the recent average of July 1. The recommendation of 200,000 total return is based on the early run timing estimate using a June 28 peak date (217,000 total return, Figure 5 below).**

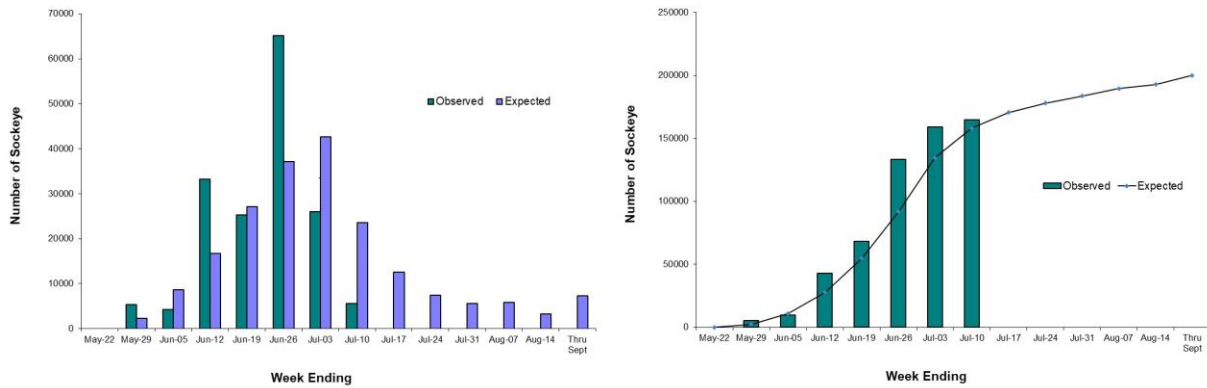


Figure 5: Observed and Expected accounting to date for a 200,000 run size with a June 28 peak.

**Sources of Uncertainty:**

There are several sources of uncertainty in the in-season assessment and management process:

One of the key sources of uncertainty is the test fishery assessment of the abundance of fish in Alberni Inlet, which is based on a subjective assessment by an experienced seine captain. Although this index has been reliable over the years, as source of uncertainty it becomes more of an issue when a large portion of the accounting is based on this number relative to more certain catch and escapement numbers. Both the overall accounting and harvest rate estimate rely on this assessment.

In addition to the overall accounting, another source of uncertainty with the in-season forecast is the presumed run timing. The in-season forecast expands the total accounting for the portion of the return that is normally accounted for by the date. However, run timing can vary significantly from year to year depending on factors such as environmental conditions and the age composition of the run. For this reason, the run size is not adjusted until the end of the June when about half the run has normally been accounted for.

Another source of uncertainty is the effect of adverse environmental conditions on spawners. The escapement is assessed at the Sproat and Stamp fishways prior to spawning. However, fish that hold in Alberni Inlet for prolonged periods and/or are subject to very high temperatures during their river migration may not spawn successfully.



## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **RUN SIZE EXPECTATIONS:**

#### **Somass sockeye:**

For 2019 fishery management purposes, the Area 23 round table agreed to begin fisheries in the “low” zone for early season harvest management, using a forecast for Somass Sockeye of 350,000 adult sockeye.

There is considerable uncertainty in the 2019 forecast. The forecasts vary between 196,000 based on Sibling models, to 1.3M based on coho survivals in the same ocean entry year. Model forecasts for the 2019 aggregate Somass sockeye return are 196,000 (Sibling); 312,000 (Sea Surface temperature); 379,000 (Sea Surface Salinity), 563,000 (SEP Biostandards), 1,340,000 (Coho Leading Indicator).

The forecast from the Sibling Model suggests a low proportion (19%) of Great Central Lake sockeye in the 2019 return which may result in the total return to Great Central Lake falling below the fishery reference point of 100,000, requiring a precautionary management approach to fishery management.

The first reforecast is expected June 27 but actions may be taken as early as June 20 to reduce fishery impact if stock composition indicate a very poor GCL return.

The age of return for sockeye to Sproat and Great Central lakes ranges from 3 to 6 years with age 4 and 5 fish predominant. Sockeye produced from brood years 2013 to 2016 will return in 2019, with 2014 and 2015 being the main contributing brood years. There are two key points to consider for these contributing brood years.

Point 1: Low returns from the 2013 brood year (age 3 and age 4 returns so far), results in expected low returns of 5 year olds in 2018.

Point 2: The returns so far from both the 2013 and 2014 brood years had a low proportion of Great Central Lake stock (23%, and 8%, respectively).

#### **Henderson sockeye:**

The recommended management outlook for Henderson sockeye is the “very low” zone for harvest management, corresponding to an expected return of less than 15,000. The key factors influencing this outlook are the low spawner abundances in the main contributing brood years (2014, 2015) for the 2019 return, as well as apparently low marine survival rates experienced by these two brood years. There were no surveys in Henderson Lake to estimate juvenile production from either of the main contributing brood years (2016 and 2017 sea-entry years). Based on the spawner abundances in 2014 and 2015, the smolt abundances in the 2016 and 2017 sea-entry years are estimated to be low (less than 1M).

### **IN-SEASON ASSESSMENT:**

#### **Test Fishery:**

The purpose of the test fishery is to estimate abundance of sockeye in the Alberni Canal, to collect biological specimens for assessment (age and stock composition and parasite load) and to provide observations of fish behavior and condition. The test

fishery uses a combination of hydro-acoustic soundings and seine sets to determine the abundance of sockeye in Alberni Inlet. The boat follows a systematic route sounding throughout the canal by zigzagging in transects from one side to another. Choice of set location is dependent on either identifiable sockeye schools or typical holding areas. For both the area 'inside' 10-mile point and for the area 'outside' 10-mile point, an average catch per set is determined. These numbers are then expanded to total abundance for each area given scalars to account for the quality of sets/fishing conditions and also a scalar approximating the number of similar sets that are required to fish the entire area. There is considerable judgment and subjectivity involved in the determination of the abundance estimate; however over the years this information has been an important component of the in-season re-forecast method.

### **Catch Monitoring:**

All harvesters in the Maanulth First Nation, Tsu-ma-uss Economic Opportunity, Area B Seine and Area D Gillnet fisheries are required to report catch and total catch is estimated from the sum of reports. Verification programs are in place for the Maanulth, Tsu-mas-uss Economic Opportunity and Area D fisheries. All Area B catch is validated. Validation and verification information may be used to revise catch estimates generated from individual harvester reports. The recreational catch is monitored and estimated through the WCVI Creel Survey program. Catch is estimated from the average catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) and effort (boat-days).

### **Escapement Monitoring:**

Video monitoring systems were installed at the Sproat fishway and Stamp Falls fishway in late April. Fish passing through both fishways are recorded 24 hours a day (i.e., tunnels are lit up at night) using a video monitoring system. Trained and experienced observers review a subsample of the video from both sites in order to generate estimates of escapement to each system. Biological samples of sockeye salmon are collected 2-3 times/week from fish at both counting sites to estimate the age and sex composition of escapement. The age results from biosampling are applied to total escapement numbers in order to estimate daily adult and jack escapement numbers. Escapement estimates reported here are preliminary as not all video has been sampled and reviewed.

Escapement for Henderson Lake sockeye will be estimated through a mark-resight program conducted on Clemens Creek spawning grounds in September and October. The Uchucklesaht First Nation is working on developing an in-season monitoring program at the outlet to Henderson Lake.

### **Biological Monitoring:**

Fish are sampled for age composition from all fisheries and escapement. Fish are sampled for stock composition (estimated through DNA analysis) from the test fishery and commercial fisheries.

### **Environmental Monitoring:**

Other information is considered such as river or Inlet conditions that may impact run and escapement timing. River temperature, discharge and barometric pressure are monitored remotely at Stamp Falls and the Sproat fishway. As river temperatures increase, the migration rate from Alberni Inlet to the Somass River system slows down

resulting in lower daily escapement rates and often higher “catchability” of fish in Alberni Inlet fisheries.

**Fishery Indices:**

In addition to information gathered through the test fishery and catch and escapement monitoring, there is a strong relationship between the commercial gillnet CPUE in *late* June and final run size. One objective of the “standardized early season fishing regime” developed in 2012 is to plan more consistent early-season fisheries to gain assessment information. Additional monitoring data (e.g. effort, average CPUE) gathered through verification programs will support this initiative.

**Run Size Estimation:**

In order to forecast the return of Somass sockeye in-season the two most pertinent questions are: What is the abundance accounted for to date? Is the run on-time, early or late? In the simplest form, the run reforecast is the total abundance accounted for divided by the portion expecting to return by the reforecast date. However, when considering these questions, uncertainty in the data must be accounted for. If most of the abundance is accounted for in either catch or escapement, then the data are fairly certain. On the other hand, if the bulk of the abundance is associated with test fishery estimates the data are more uncertain. In the latter case, a more precautionary approach is warranted before major upgrades or downgrades in the forecast. The observed age and stock composition of the return provides an indication of run timing and abundance; particularly when compared to pre-season expectations and long-term average observations. As well, environmental conditions that may affect “catchability” need to be considered. For example, extended holding of fish in Alberni Inlet due to inhospitable river conditions may create the impression of abundance when in fact new migration is insignificant.

Attachment 1. Somass management table.

Somass Run Size	Escapement Goal	Harvest Rate	Test Fish	Total TAC	Maanulth Treaty	Recreational (expected)	Commercial TAC	Comm Stewardship	Tsumass TAC	Area B Seine	Area D Gillnet
200,000	170,000	15%	5,000	25,000	5,000	4,000	16,000		12,800	-	3,200
250,000	200,000	20%	5,000	45,000	9,000	10,000	26,000		20,800	-	5,200
300,000	235,000	22%	5,000	60,000	11,000	15,000	34,000		27,200	-	6,800
350,000	262,500	25%	5,000	82,500	13,250	21,000	48,250		28,950	11,580	7,720
400,000	283,333	29%	8,000	108,667	14,179	28,000	66,487		33,244	19,946	13,297
450,000	304,167	32%	8,000	137,833	15,016	36,000	86,817		41,672	27,087	18,058
500,000	325,000	35%	8,000	167,000	15,853	45,000	106,147	5,000	45,516	33,378	22,252
550,000	331,250	40%	8,000	210,750	17,109	49,500	144,141	10,000	60,363	44,267	29,511
600,000	337,500	44%	8,000	254,500	18,365	54,000	182,135	10,000	65,411	64,034	42,690
650,000	343,750	47%	8,000	298,250	19,620	58,500	220,130	10,000	79,849	78,168	52,112
700,000	350,000	50%	8,000	342,000	20,876	63,000	258,124	10,000	81,881	99,746	66,497
750,000	358,333	52%	8,000	383,667	22,072	67,500	294,095	10,000	93,751	114,206	76,137
800,000	366,667	54%	8,000	425,333	22,886	72,000	330,447	10,000	105,748	128,820	85,880
850,000	375,000	56%	8,000	467,000	22,886	76,500	367,614	10,000	118,013	143,761	95,841
900,000	383,333	57%	8,000	508,667	22,886	81,000	404,781	10,000	130,278	158,702	105,801
950,000	391,667	59%	8,000	550,333	22,886	85,500	441,947	10,000	142,543	173,643	115,762
1,000,000	400,000	60%	8,000	592,000	22,886	90,000	479,114	10,000	145,425	194,213	129,475
1,050,000	400,833	62%	8,000	641,167	22,886	94,500	523,781	15,000	147,546	216,741	144,494
1,100,000	401,667	63%	8,000	690,333	22,886	99,000	568,447	15,000	149,431	242,410	161,607
1,150,000	402,500	65%	8,000	739,500	22,886	100,000	616,614	15,000	162,436	263,507	175,671
1,200,000	409,286	66%	8,000	782,714	22,886	100,000	659,828	15,000	174,104	282,435	188,290
1,250,000	416,071	67%	8,000	825,929	22,886	100,000	703,043	15,000	185,771	301,363	200,908
1,300,000	422,857	67%	8,000	869,143	22,886	100,000	746,257	15,000	197,439	320,291	213,527
1,350,000	429,643	68%	8,000	912,357	22,886	100,000	789,471	15,000	209,107	339,218	226,146
1,400,000	436,429	69%	8,000	955,571	22,886	100,000	832,685	15,000	220,775	358,146	238,764
1,450,000	443,214	69%	8,000	998,786	22,886	100,000	875,900	15,000	232,443	377,074	251,383
1,500,000	450,000	70%	8,000	1,042,000	22,886	100,000	919,114	15,000	244,111	396,002	264,001
1,550,000	465,000	70%	8,000	1,077,000	22,886	100,000	954,114	15,000	253,561	411,332	274,221
1,600,000	480,000	70%	8,000	1,112,000	22,886	100,000	989,114	15,000	263,011	426,662	284,441
1,650,000	495,000	70%	8,000	1,147,000	22,886	100,000	1,024,114	15,000	272,461	441,992	294,661
1,700,000	510,000	70%	8,000	1,182,000	22,886	100,000	1,059,114	15,000	281,911	457,322	304,881
1,750,000	525,000	70%	8,000	1,217,000	22,886	100,000	1,094,114	15,000	291,361	472,652	315,101
1,800,000	540,000	70%	8,000	1,252,000	22,886	100,000	1,129,114	15,000	300,811	487,982	325,321

Attachment 2. Henderson Management Table

Henderson Run Size	Escapement Goal	Harvest Rate	Total TAC	Maanulth Treaty	Remaining TAC	Other Fisheries	Maanulth Harvest Agreement
5,000	4,250	15%	750	201	549	439	110
10,000	8,500	15%	1,500	403	1,097	878	219
15,000	12,750	15%	2,250	604	1,646	1,317	329
20,000	16,375	18%	3,625	973	2,652	2,121	530
25,000	20,000	20%	5,000	1,343	3,658	2,926	732
35,000	25,750	26%	9,250	2,484	6,766	5,413	1,353
45,000	31,500	30%	13,500	3,625	9,875	7,900	1,975
52,500	33,750	36%	18,750	5,034	13,716	10,973	2,743
60,000	36,000	40%	24,000	6,444	17,556	14,045	3,511
67,500	36,750	46%	30,750	8,256	22,494	17,995	4,499
75,000	37,500	50%	37,500	10,069	27,431	21,945	5,486
90,000	45,000	50%	45,000	12,083	32,918	26,334	6,584
105,000	52,500	50%	52,500	14,096	38,404	30,723	7,681
120,000	60,000	50%	60,000	16,110	43,890	35,112	8,778
135,000	67,500	50%	67,500	18,124	49,376	39,501	9,875
150,000	75,000	50%	75,000	20,138	54,863	43,890	10,973

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