

The United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union (UFAWU-Unifor) is urging the Canadian Caucus and DFO to adopt the Pacific Salmon Commission's recommended run-sizes and not allow the Fisheries Minister's virus of ultra-conservative management at all costs to infect the need for planning and implementation of commercial fisheries for the Canadian salmon fleet on Summer Run sockeye returning to the Fraser River. We are further calling on Minister Murray and Regional Director General Rebecca Reid to authorize DFO Pacific Region to open preliminary fisheries for Area D & E gillnet, Area B Seine, and Area H troll post haste, as per the below described [Fraser Sockeye Fishing Plan](#).

The Pacific Salmon Commission, who's mandate is to protect the five salmon species and act as a regulatory body for salmon that cross international borders, has recommended a run size of 4.4 Million for Summer run stocks, and 2 Million for Late Summer run stocks. These run-sizes leave a remaining TAC of 2,014,614 for all Canadian salmon fisheries, including test fishing, recreational and FSC. It is recognized that there were prior constraints on commercial TAC due to Early Summer stock models, and that the less than predicted return for Early Summers has increased Canadian Caucus concern with the uncertainty around the Late Summer stock return numbers and timing. The bulk of the desirable Summer Run we should already be harvesting is passed or passing very soon. Time is of the essence.

However, UFAWU-Unifor is asking you to recognize that hundreds of harvester livelihoods are being affected, as well as lost protein contributing to our sovereign food security. The south coast salmon fleet has fished ZERO days in the Fraser sockeye fishery in the past four years and has had their Fraser chum fishery curtailed entirely over the past 2 years under first the "one dead steelhead is too many" policy & then the PSSl Long-Term Closures. Let us remind you that the perceived "salmon crisis" currently guiding DFO's management practices came under Federal stewardship of this once prosperous resource.

Despite some poor conditions for commercial fishery opportunities in some areas, not all salmon stocks are doing poorly. There have been many identified stocks with sufficient abundance to harvest, and this year has seen record Sockeye runs across the Northwest and high returns of Pinks to Canadian systems. However, politically charged fisheries management decisions have resulted in the non-harvest of approximately 1.012 Million available sockeye in the 2022 season alone. If 1 Million more are added to that number now, the losses to boats and harvesters alone will approach \$20 million dollars¹, with further losses to ancillary businesses and the broader economy at upwards of \$140 million. That additional 1 Million sockeye may be a conservative estimate of loss to commercial fleets considering the Pacific Salmon Commission identifies 2,014,614 Fraser fish are available for harvest by all user groups.

These losses have come as direct results of ultra-conservative management decisions. The Nass River exceeded its escapement goal by over 300,000, of which 189,000 would have been for the commercial fleet; the draconian restraints on the Skeena commercial fishery resulted in 823,337 fish earmarked for commercial fisheries going unfished. Together that is over 1 Million sockeye left in the water due to the extreme mitigations enforced through the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI), and the negligent lack of operating budget provided to in-season management of North Coast fisheries. That does not even touch the loss of access to other fisheries in the past 4 years through the abuse of the Minister's powers in the name of "Conservation". To add another 1 Million or more from the abundant Summer Run sockeye bound for the Fraser to that is outright embarrassing and an insult to commercial fish harvesters who have invested their blood, sweat and pay-cheques into this industry; and to the sovereign food security of Canada at over 12 Million meals worth of high quality, internationally sought protein forgone.

¹ *Assumes a low price estimate of \$2/lb. and 4.5 lb. average per sockeye

To the salmon fleet following our correspondence, please stay tuned for action plans on discussed demonstrations from our meetings today if we are further denied PSC advised fishing opportunity.

All we have offered in return for these missed opportunities is a licence buyback related PSSI. You have ignored our calls for a labour force adjustment plan and aid in recouping our lost investment in gear and vessels. This buyback is nothing close to a comprehensive plan that would help transition and support all harvesters. You've been clearly told by harvesters and the province that what you propose is grossly inadequate.

To starve us of a harvestable surplus of sockeye identified by the Pacific Salmon Commission feels like the latest blow to devalue our livelihoods enough to justify offering us a low-ball "market value" price for our licenses. Those prices, or any plan at all, remain to be seen despite DFO repeatedly stating it would be released in late June. All further correspondence has been vague terms around expecting information in the "coming weeks" – as if its not important enough to set a hard deadline and follow through with your promises. We have yet to see any pillars of the PSSI or Joint Task Force on Steelhead enacted besides commercial closures, furthering the devaluation of our livelihoods.

The fact of the matter is that it is already too late for appropriate management. This is especially true for Area D gillnetters who are not licensed past the Johnstone Straits, where most fish have already passed by and where Late Summer sockeye with less TAC available are increasing in proportion. The Americans are fishing Fraser-bound stocks north of us in Alaska, and South of us in Washington. Today, from Canadian soil, we will be able to see American vessels fishing so close they're visible with the naked eye. We remain tied to the dock bearing the burden all the expenses it takes to maintain commercial fishing operations on the orders of our government.

Despite knowing it is too late to make the best possible use of this clean protein, we are still requesting access and we are proposing a fishing plan below. In your decisions we hope you truly consider and recognize the issues outlined above, and do not simply use our calls for a fishery as a token opportunity to trigger Economic Opportunity and recreational fisheries. You are playing with our lives - our social and economic needs do not fit into any sort of model you may try to conceive like you attempt to do with salmon. Please observe the impacts you have on us, just as you should be prioritizing observation over modelling in fisheries management.

Proposed Canadian Fraser River Sockeye Fishing Plan:

Area B Seine: Open Monday following conclusion of Fraser Panel call with a TAC of 242500 divided between active vessels (preferred) or all licenses (less preferred).

Area H Troll: Open Monday following conclusion of Fraser Panel call with a TAC of 24000 divided between active vessels (preferred) or all licenses (less preferred).

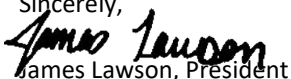
Area D Gillnet: Open for 41 hours in Area 12 (minus 12-9), Area 13 starting as soon as possible

Area E Gillnet: Open in Area 29, Wednesday August 24 & Thursday August 25, 06:00 to 22:00

This plan was made with the following considerations:

- The longer we delay, the more likely Late Summer catch numbers will increase
- Area D gillnet is in the most likely position to miss adequate opportunity, and is nearly out of time given their licensed area constraints
- The longer we delay the bigger share of non-directed Late Summers the Americans will take, further reducing Canadian TAC

Sincerely,


James Lawson, President

To the salmon fleet following our correspondence, please stay tuned for action plans on discussed demonstrations from our meetings today if we are further denied PSC advised fishing opportunity.