

## Fraser sockeye close to certified sustainable after adjudicator rules against objection

By Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun July 12, 2010



**Fraser River sockeye are one step closer to being certified sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council after a ruling Monday (Photograph by: Vancouver Sun Files, Handout)**

Fraser River sockeye are one step closer to being certified sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council.

The council said in a news release Monday that an independent adjudicator, Halifax-based maritime attorney Wylie Spicer, has ruled against objections to the certification of the Fraser sockeye fishery.

"The certifier will now submit the Final Certification Report to MSC recommending the fishery be certified," the release stated. "The fishery is not yet certified; however, it is anticipated that, following final internal MSC review of the documents, the certifier will issue a certificate and MSC will announce certification."

In February, the David Suzuki Foundation, Skeena Wild Conservation Trust, and Watershed Watch Salmon Society filed an objection over the determination made by TAVEL Certification (now part of Moody Marine Ltd.) that the Fraser River salmon fishery should be certified.

Spicer held a hearing in late May and subsequently reviewed materials submitted by the parties involved.

The Fraser River area is one of four units of certification in the B.C. sockeye salmon fishery that sought certification to the MSC standard. The other three units — Skeena River, Nass River and

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/thewest/Fraser+sockeye+close+certified+sustainable+after+adjudicator+rules+against+objection/3267526/story.html>

Barkley Sound — were not part of this objection procedure and recently successfully completed certification.

The Fraser River certification includes 17 conditions that must be achieved by the fishery on specified time scales. Among them: a clear commitment to implement recovery action plans for Cultus and Sakinaw sockeye; evidence that First Nation issues regarding aboriginal and treaty rights have been identified and these issues are being addressed through an effective consultation or negotiation process; and a research plan that addresses identified concerns related to the impact of the fishery on the ecosystem, with emphasis on non-target stocks, and takes into consideration socioeconomic factors and anticipated changes to fisheries.

Currently, 12 Canadian fisheries are certified to the MSC standard and 17 others are in the assessment process. In B.C., certified fisheries also include halibut and albacore tuna.

The release said there is uncertainty in the scientific community as to the reasons for low sockeye returns; however, "there is general agreement that commercial fishing pressure is not the cause for these declines...."

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