

## **Sockeye salmon stocks in Fraser River report massive rebound**

**Estimated at 14 million**

By KELLY SINOSKI, Vancouver Sun, August 16, 2010



**Sockeye salmon.**

VANCOUVER - Fraser River sockeye are returning in droves, with commercial fishermen catching their limit within a few hours of casting their nets.

And with the estimated sockeye salmon stocks now at 14 million and expected to rise, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is considering opening another commercial salmon fishery on the Fraser later this week, said Barry Rosenberger, federal fisheries director for the B.C. Interior.

The fishery would add to a sport fishery opened on the Fraser last week as well ongoing fisheries in Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca. The sockeye fishery was last open to commercial fleets in 2006 when a total commercial catch of 3.7 million fish was approved.

"It's phenomenal," said Jason Assonicis, co-owner of Bon Chovy Fishing Charter. "It's something we haven't seen in four years for sockeye."

Assonicis said he took out a fishing charter Monday morning for a planned all-day excursion, but they returned two hours later after catching their limit. "On a typical day right now we're getting 30 to 50 bites in the morning," he said.

In Port McNeill, commercial fisherman Julius Boudreau they're laughing at how many sockeye are available.

"It's out of the ordinary. The catches have been way more than the quota. It's crazy," he said. "We're seeing thousands and thousands of fish."

Phil Eidsvik, of the B.C. Fisheries Survival Coalition said seine fishermen are catching 10,000 to 15,000 fish in one set. There surplus is expected to result in a drop in the price of wild salmon, he said, but it won't likely be a huge amount.

He added there needs to be more fisheries opened to catch the surplus or the fish will be wasted. "We're looking at what looks to be a very large run coming," he said. He noted the stock could reach 20,000 but "we're fishing like it's 5,000.

"We're going to have to put some fisheries in if we're going to catch the surplus."

Stan Proboszcz, a fisheries biologist with Watershed Watch Salmon Society, said the increasing numbers of salmon are a result of the four-year cycle of the Adams River run. "Every four years we know a strong run is going to come back to us," he said.

ksinoski@vancouversun.com

© Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun