2026 Pre-season Escapement Planning Fraser Sockeye Salmon Fisheries

Fraser Forum

1 April 2026

Overview

- Purpose: Receive advice from Forum about tradeoffs between escapement plan options, and the preferred approach from Forum participants
- Fishery objectives
- Summary of escapement plan options
  - Summary of advice received to date

Evaluating Escapement Plan Tradeoffs

- We are seeking input on the preferred Escapement Plan option, noting the desired outcomes and considerations between options

  - What is the anticipated outcome of your preferred escapement plan?
  - What are the cost and opportunities of the preferred option?

FISHERY OBJECTIVES

Fishery Objectives

- International objective:
  - Manage Canadian treaty fisheries to ensure that obligations within the Pacific Salmon Treaty are achieved.

- For Fraser Sockeye, see Chapter 4, para 10:

> The Parties agree that Panel management actions should meet the following objectives, listed in order of priority:
> (a) obtain spawning escapement goals by stock or stock grouping;
> (b) meet Treaty defined international allocation; and
> (c) achieve domestic objectives.

Fishery Objectives

- Conservation objectives are quantified in the harvest control rule.
- Domestic access and allocation objectives:
  - Manage fisheries to ensure that, after conservation needs are met, First Nations' food, social and ceremonial requirements and treaty obligations to First Nations have first priority in salmon allocations in accordance with the Allocation Policy for Pacific Salmon
  - Manage recreational and commercial fisheries for sustainable benefits consistent with established policies.
- Escapement planning is the key means to the ends in achieving fishery objectives for Fraser Sockeye

ESCAPEMENT PLAN OPTIONS

Draft Fraser Sockeye Escapement Options

Option 1- Escapement Weighted

Management Unit	Harvest Rule Parameters				Pre-season pMA @p50
	Low Abundance ER (LAER)	TAM Cap	Lower Fishery Reference Point	Upper Fishery Reference Point	
Early Stuart	10%	50%	350,000	700,000	1.08
Early Summer (w/o	10%	50%	260,000	520,000	0.59
Summer (w/o misc)	10%	50%	1,437,000	2,874,000	0.09
Late (w/o misc)	10%	50%	1,200,000	2,400,000	0.39

Option 2 - Harvest Weighted

Management Unit	Harvest Rule Parameters				Pre-season pMA @p50
	Low Abundance ER (LAER)	TAM Cap	Lower Fishery Reference Point	Upper Fishery Reference Point	
Early Stuart	10%	60%	350,000	875,000	1.08
Early Summer (w/o	20%	60%	180,000	450,000	0.59
Summer (w/o misc)	20%	60%	1,020,000	2,550,000	0.09
Late (w/o misc)	20%	60%	1,100,000	2,750,000	0.39

Option 3 - Hybrid

Management Unit	Harvest Rule Parameters				Pre-season pMA @p50
	Low Abundance ER (LAER)[a]	TAM Cap	Lower Fishery Reference Point	Upper Fishery Reference Point	
Early Stuart	10%	60%	350,000	875,000	1.08
Early Summer (w/o	10-20%	60%	260,000	650,000	0.59
Summer (w/o misc)	10-20%	60%	1,437,000	3,593,000	0.09
Late (w/o misc)	10-20%	60%	1,200,000	3,000,000	0.39

Variable LAER

- JTC is exploring variable LAER options – 2 approaches currently being explored
  - LAER would increase from a low value (e.g.,10%) to a higher value (e.g., 20%) at a defined "high" run size

- **Scenario 1 MA-limiting LAER**: Increase the LAER when the MU run size is "high" but a high MA is preventing TAC at any run size (e.g., 2025 Late Run)
  - consistent with current management approach (4 MUs, accounts for MA)
  - Increase the LAER at a run size likely to achieve our lower escapement target (i.e., LFRP)
  - Balances conservation with increased fisheries impacts

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  - Balances conservation with increased fisheries impacts

Variable LAER

- **Scenario 2 Total Fraser Sockeye Abundance**: Increase the LAER of all MUs (excl. E. Stuart) when total Fraser Sockeye abundance is "high"
  - Based on total Fraser abundance, not MU abundance or LAERs. Currently investigating 'high' abundance benchmark
  - Does not account for MU variability (MA or abundance)
  - More "harvested-focused" than scenario 1

Proposed Window Closures

- Window closures between 3 and 5 weeks are considered
  - 3-week window designed to protect >90% of the Early Stuart migration
  - 5-week window protects E. Stuart and protects ~60-70% to early-timed Early Summers

Areas	Start Date	End Date ~3 Weeks	End Date ~4 Weeks	End Date ~5 weeks
Areas 11 to 17, 19 to 21, 121 and 123 to 127	June 24	July 15	July 22	July 29
Areas 18 and 29	June 29	July 20	July 27	Aug 3
Steveston to Mission	June 29	July 20	July 27	Aug 3
Mission to Sawmill	July 1	July 23	July 30	Aug 6
Sawmill to Deadman	July 4	Jul 25	Aug 1	Aug 8
Deadman-Hixon	July 10	Jul 30	Aug 6	Aug 13
Hixon to Prince George	July 12	Aug 3	Aug 10	Aug 17
Prince George to Stuart River	July 14	Aug 5	Aug 12	Aug 19

Cultus Management Considerations

- Cultus forecast is low and its ER is tied to the Late Run MU
- Management options typically include managing to the Late Run ER or adjusting the Late run ER to achieve Cultus objectives
- Adjusting the ER to 0% provides limited improvement to Cultus at median forecast and some improvement at higher returns, under Option 1 – large impact on harvest

2026 projected Cultus successful spawners

		p25			p50					p75				
run size				711					1,264					2,569
exploitation rate (ER)		20%	10%	0%	30%	24%	20%	10%	0%	44%	30%	20%	10%	0%
pDBE	-0.28													
projected adults to the fence		410	461	512	637	692	728	819	910	1,036	1,295	1,480	1,665	1,850
brood stock (excluded from calculations)	200													
potential wild spawners		210	261	312	437	492	528	619	710	836	1,095	1,280	1,465	1,650
pre-spawn mortality (PSM)*	40%													
projected successful adult spawners		130	160	190	260	290	320	370	430	500	660	770	880	990

Cultus Management Objectives - projected 2026 evaluation

Management Objectives	value	p25			p50					p75				
1a. 4 year avg successful spawners **		307	314	322	339	347	354	367	382	399	439	467	494	522
	> 1000	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
1b. minimum 500 in each year (2023-2026)***		no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
2a. 4 year avg > previous 4 year avg	> 186	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
2b. current year > brood year	> 521	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes

ESCAPEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE

Draft Fraser Sockeye Escapement Options and potential fisheries

- 2026 is a 'dominant' cycle year for Fraser Sockeye typically indicative of higher abundance than other cycles

- Under all three options, full FSC Sockeye fisheries are expected at and above median (p50) forecast abundances.
- At run sizes below the p50 forecast, full FSC Sockeye fisheries are only expected under Option 2.
  - No Sockeye-directed fisheries are anticipated at p10 forecast

- Some commercial and recreational opportunities are expected at median (p50) forecasts and above.

- In-season abundance and migration conditions can vary widely from forecast and will likely affect harvest opportunities in 2026

Escapement plans performance: Sockeye Escapement

- Across all escapement plan options, as run size increases, escapement increases for all Management Units.

Option 1	Early Stuart	E. Summer	Summer	Late	Total
Escapement Target at p25	31,000	313,000	1,479,000	870,000	2,693,000
Escapement Target at p50	63,000	582,000	2,152,000	1,213,000	4,010,000
Escapement Target at p75	122,000	1,024,000	4,343,000	2,736,000	8,225,000
Option 2	**Early Stuart**	**E. Summer**	**Summer**	**Late**	**Total**
Escapement Target at p25	31,000	243,000	1,050,000	870,000	2,193,000
Escapement Target at p50	63,000	465,000	1,722,000	1,112,000	3,362,000
Escapement Target at p75	122,000	820,000	3,474,000	2,188,000	6,605,000
Option 3	**Early Stuart**	**E. Summer**	**Summer**	**Late**	**Total**
Escapement Target at p25	31,000	313,000	1,479,000	870,000	2,693,000
Escapement Target at p50	63,000	465,000	1,722,000	1,213,000	3,463,000
Escapement Target at p75	122,000	820,000	3,474,000	2,188,000	6,605,000

Escapement plans performance: Sockeye Total Allowable Catch

- Across all escapement plan options, there is no TAC for Early Stuart.
- As run size increases for E Summers and Summers, TAC increases. There is no TACs for Lates until the run size exceeds p50.

Option 1	Early Stuart	Early Summer	Summer	Late	Total
Total Allowable Catch at p25	0	113,000	652,000	0	765,000
Total Allowable Catch at p50	0	246,000	1,965,000	526,000	2,737,000
Total Allowable Catch at p75	0	433,300	3,965,000	1,647,000	6,046,000
Option 2	**Early Stuart**	**Early Summer**	**Summer**	**Late**	**Total**
Total Allowable Catch at p25	0	242,000	1,119,000	0	1,343,000
Total Allowable Catch at p50	0	430,000	2,433,000	666,000	3,529,000
Total Allowable Catch at p75	0	756,000	4,909,000	2,412,000	8,078,000
Option 3	**Early Stuart**	**Early Summer**	**Summer**	**Late**	**Total**
Total Allowable Catch at p25	0	113,000	652,000	0	765,000
Total Allowable Catch at p50	0	430,000	2,433,000	526,000	3,389,000
Total Allowable Catch at p75	0	756,000	4,909,000	2,412,000	8,078,000

Escapement plans performance: Exploitation Rates

- Among escapement plan options, Option 2 has less exploitation rate variation.
- Option 3 has a relatively low exploitation rate at small run size (like Option 1) and a relatively high exploitation rate at large run sizes (like Option 2)

Option 1	Early Stuart	Early Summer	Summer	Late
Exploitation Rate Limit at p25	10%	19%	29%	10%
Exploitation Rate Limit at p50	10%	21%	46%	24%
Exploitation Rate Limit at p75	10%	21%	46%	30%
Option 2	**Early Stuart**	**Early Summer**	**Summer**	**Late**
Exploitation Rate Limit at p25	10%	37%	57%	20%
Exploitation Rate Limit at p50	10%	37%	57%	30%
Exploitation Rate Limit at p75	10%	37%	57%	44%
Option 3	**Early Stuart**	**Early Summer**	**Summer**	**Late**
Exploitation Rate Limit at p25	10%	19%	29%	10%
Exploitation Rate Limit at p50	10%	37%	57%	24%
Exploitation Rate Limit at p75	10%	37%	57%	44%

Escapement plans performance

- At larger (p75) forecast run sizes:
  - Options 2 and 3 are the same.
  - Option 1 *increases* escapement by ~1,600,000 fish, and results in foregone harvest of ~2,000,000 fish
- At smaller (p25) forecast run sizes:
  - Options 1 and 3 are the same.
  - Option 2 *decreases* escapement by ~500,000 fish, and results in additional harvest of ~580,000 fish
- At the median forecast run size:
  - Option 1 *increases* escapement by ~650,000 fish, and results in foregone harvest of ~720,000 fish relative to Opt. 2
  - Option 3 *increases* escapement by ~100,000 fish, and results in foregone harvest of ~140,000 fish relative to Opt. 2

Escapement plans performance

	p25 (3.8 M fish)	p50 (7.0 M fish)	p75 (16.3 M fish)
Option 1	2.7 M escapement	⊕ 0.65 M escapement (+19%)	⊕ 1.6 M escapement (+25%)
	0.77 M TAC	⊖ 0.72 M TAC (-22%)	⊖ 2.0 M TAC (-25%)
Option 2	⊖ 0.50 M escapement (-19%)	3.4 M escapement	6.6 M escapement
	⊕ 0.58 M TAC (+75%)	3.6 M TAC	8.1 M TAC
Option 3	2.7 M escapement	⊕ 0.10 M escapement (+0.3%)	6.6 M escapement
	0.77 M TAC	⊖ 0.14 M TAC (-0.4%)	8.1 M TAC

Advice to date via IFMP consultations

- Commercial fishery representatives (CSAB) have expressed support for escapement Option 2; CSAB welcomes others to review their submission

- Some First Nation representatives have expressed support for escapement Option 3

Seeking advice from Forum

- We are seeking input on the preferred Escapement Plan option, noting the desired outcomes and considerations between options

  - What is the anticipated outcome of your preferred escapement plan?
  - What are the cost and opportunities of the preferred option?

EXTRA SLIDES

Draft Fraser Sockeye Escapement Options

- Re-evaluation of OCPs for achieving Early Stuart objectives
  - Recovery objectives remain consistent with past years (increase escapement, limit ER) and recovery plans
  - Escapement targets were increased considerably (350K – WSP) and TAM Caps were aligned with other MUs – applied across all options
  - OCPs differ from recent years but operationally performs similar and continues to address conservation concerns in transparent manner.
- The JTC is currently exploring consideration for a variable LAER that would transition to a higher exploitation rate (increased LAER) when no harvestable surplus is identified.
  - Considerations would be informed by technical criteria (e.g., escapement targets) and in consideration of in-season information (e.g., run size and MAs)