

Ocean Wise Seasonal salmon report 2010

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BASED ON EARLY TEST FISHERY RESULTS. ACTUAL IN-SEASON RUN STRENGTH CAN CHANGE AND WILL BE UPDATED AS NECESSARY.

Returns of Pacific salmon can vary from year to year, stream to stream, species to species, and population to population making it difficult to predict which runs will be strong for a coming season.

Troll caught is generally a better option when purchasing salmon.

Wild salmon should be avoided from Washington, Oregon, and California due to population concerns from over-fishing and habitat loss. At this time, Russian salmon should be avoided due to lack of information and management concerns. Open net pen farmed salmon should also be avoided.

Recent strong management in BC and Alaska have made these some of the most stringently managed fisheries in the world. Therefore, **any legally caught BC or Alaskan wild salmon as managed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans or the National Marine Fisheries Service is an Ocean Wise recommended option.**

We recommend that whenever possible you use the following guidelines for choosing the most sustainable options in 2010.

Chinook

- ☉ North Coast – Skeena troll caught is best option (BC)
Caution should be used with Alaskan stocks, with Bristol Bay being best option (Alaska)

Pink

2010 is an off-cycle year for pinks. Alaskan is a better option than BC.

- ☉ Possible Queen Charlotte Islands opening (BC)
- ☉ Lower Cook Inlet (Alaska)

Chum

- ☉ Yukon gill net caught chum salmon, avoid all others (BC)
- ☉ Yukon is best option, however fishery opening is in-season based (Alaska)

Sockeye

Sockeye returns are low for BC; Alaskan sockeye is a better option.

- ☉ Nass may be best choice (BC)
- ☉ Bristol Bay is best option (Alaska)

Coho

Coho still remains a stock of concern and caution should be used.

- ☉ North Coast troll caught – avoiding Skeena river runs (BC)
There is no recommended Alaskan coho option this season (Alaska)

Synopsis:

Outlooks for 2010 BC and Alaska salmon returns are variable.

2010 is an off-cycle year for pink salmon, with Alaskan Lower Cook Inlet as the best choice. Concerns remain for the majority of BC sockeye runs. Alaskan Bristol Bay is a better option. Chinook returns are poor to average for both BC and Alaska. North Coast Chinook is the best option. Yukon chum in both BC and Alaska remain best choices, with all other chum fisheries to be avoided. Whilst 2009 North Coast coho returns were positive, caution still remains for both BC and Alaskan coho.

Best recommendations for salmon are still any legally caught BC or Alaskan wild salmon - wherever possible look for troll caught salmon.

Open net pen farmed salmon and wild salmon caught south of the 49th parallel are not good options.

BC Outlook:

Sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka*):

Sockeye returns for this season are expected to be below average for British Columbia. Best option is Nass River.

Allocations of sockeye will be 350,000 fish for Northern areas 1, 3-5, 101-105. Nearly 75% of the allocation will go to the gill net fishery and 25% to seine net. The 2009 did not allow for a sockeye commercial fishery in the Skeena, and 2010 outlook looks to follow suit.

Fraser River fishery Total Allowable Catch (TAC) will be based on in-season run size estimates. Pre-season estimates are 1.75 million with (48.5% seine/46.5%gill/5%troll). The Fraser River late run sockeye is expected to be the majority of the return. Allocations for Barkley Sound, Area 23 will be 90,000 (60%seine/40%gill).

- North coast
 - Nass River – slightly below average (648,000)
 - Skeena River – poor, no fishery expected unless in-season estimates are greater than 1.05 million (663,450)
 - Areas 6 to 10 – outlook poor, no fisheries expected.

- South coast
 - Barkley Sound, Area 23 – caution. Predicted to be “above levels required to support fishing opportunities”
 - Fraser River – caution. DFO anticipates fishery opening, with catches will be based on in-season run size estimates.

Overall recommendation: Better to choose Alaskan this year. Nass may be best choice for BC.

Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*):

The 2009 season saw North and Central Coast coho return at an unexpectedly high rate. Despite the previous positive season, caution should be used for 2010 as coho stocks remain of concern. Best option is North coast troll caught – avoiding Skeena river runs.

Allocations of coho will be 100,000 fish for the North and Central Coast areas: 1-10, 100, 102, 105-107, 130, 142 (20% seine net; 75% troll).

Allocations for the South Coast are very low at 500,000 with 100% troll. West Coast Vancouver Island offshore troll hatchery adipose clipped coho is anticipated to open after September 15th.

- North coast: North coast troll caught – avoiding Skeena river runs
 - Non retention for Skeena net fisheries

- South coast: **Avoid**

- All South coast runs are low – well below desired levels

Overall recommendation: Best option is North coast troll caught – avoiding Skeena river runs.

Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*):

Chinook returns are expected to be poor to average for BC, with particular concerns for South Coast. Best option is North coast – Skeena troll caught or Central Coast, Bella Coola.

The allocation for the North Coast troll fishery 107,100. No retention of Chinook in seine net fisheries.

Allocations for southern areas 21-27, 121-127 are 83,700 (100% troll); for areas 11-20 and 29 - 3,000 (100% gill).

- North coast: **Skeena troll caught**
 - QCI – stocks appear stable, however are considered depressed
 - Skeena – average and healthy but will be closely monitored
 - Nass – average
 - Area 8 – average
- South coast: **Avoid**
 - West Coast Vancouver Island – stocks of concern, well below average
 - Fraser River – many stocks of concern, only Summer⁴, Chinook run to be considered a possible near target return
 - Strait of Georgia – poor and stocks of concern

Overall recommendation: Skeena troll caught

Pink (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*):

Due to being an even year (off-cycle), limited fisheries are expected for pink. Allocations for the North coast areas 1-5, 101-105 are 500,000 (80% seine); Central coast areas 6-10 10,000 (90% seine). No South Coast fisheries are anticipated, unless surplus occurs for Mainland Inlet.

- North coast: **Use caution**
 - Queen Charlottes – even year bares possible fishing opportunity based on in-season monitoring
 - Nass – poor
 - Skeena – below average
 - Area 5 – below average
 - Area 6 - poor
 - Area 7 – no surplus expected

- South coast:
 - Fraser – off-cycle year with no surplus expected, hence no fishery anticipated
 - Mainland Inlet – average to above average. No fishing anticipated, unless in-season surplus.

Overall recommendation: Off-cycle year. May be possible Queen Charlottes opening.

Chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*):

Chum returns are expected to be depressed. There are no troll fisheries for chum. Allocation for North Coast areas 6 to 10 is 100,000 (90% seine/10% gill). Allocation for South Coast areas 11 to 19, 28 to 29 is 605,000 (63% seine/31% gill/6% troll). Best option for chum is North Coast Yukon, avoid all others.

- North coast: **Yukon, avoid all others.**
 - Queen Charlottes – limited surplus.
 - Nass River – poor; management restrictions of avoid and release
 - Skeena River – areas 4 to 6 very poor. No retention of chum.
 - Area 7 – poor
 - Area 8 – below average to average
 - Yukon - above average.
 - No retention of chum in troll fisheries
- Central Coast:
 - possible surplus, but cautious due to last 2 years being poor returns
- South coast: **AVOID**
 - Johnstone Strait – areas 12 and 13 average
 - Fraser River – low to at target. Fishery restrictions, management to watch closely in-season due to migrating stocks of concern.
 - Area 14 - below average. Possibility for area 14 fishery anticipated if in-season surplus.
 - Area 16 – below average, no fishery anticipated.
 - Georgia Strait, areas 17 – average. Areas 18 and 19 – below average.
 - Areas 21 to 27 – no harvest
 - Nitinat and Nootka below average
 - Nimpkish – below target

Overall recommendation: Yukon only, avoid others.

Alaska Outlook:

Sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka*):

Returns for sockeye salmon are variable in Alaska this season ranging from poor/below average to above average returns. Bristol Bay best choice.

- Region 4 – Westward:
 - Prince William Sound (67,000): Coghill Lake and Eshamy Lake – average.
 - Upper Cook Inlet (2.3m): below average
 - Kodiak, Spiridon Lake (176,000): barrier preventing returns, all adults harvested
 - Ayakulik River (420,000): above average
 - Frazer Lake (133,000): below average - average
 - Karluk Lake early and late runs (495,000) – weak to average
 - Upper Station early run – below average; late run – average
 - Chignik (1.59m): average
- Region 2 – Central:
 - Bristol Bay (31.76m): above average
 - Alaska Peninsula, Bear Lake (306,000): weak to average
 - Nelson River (342,000): below average
- Region 3 – Arctic/Yukon:
 - Lack of information. High uncertainty.

Overall recommendation: Bristol Bay (Region 2) is the best option.

Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*):

Returns are not strong for coho. Estimated 179,000 fish harvest for Region 4.

- Region 4 – Westward:
 - 179,000 harvest level because of previous year restrictions
- Region 2 – Arctic/Yukon:
 - Lack of information. High uncertainty.

Overall recommendation: Avoid coho.

Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*):

Overall returns for Chinook appear low to average. Best option for 2010 is Bristol Bay with 42,000 allocation.

- Region 4 – Westward:
 - Upper Cook Inlet (17,000) Caution – due to previous years being low abundance, restrictions are applied

- Region 2 – Central:
 - Copper River (25,000)
 - Bristol Bay, Nushagak District (42,000): below average, however there is high uncertainty in this prediction.
- Region 3 – Arctic/Yukon:
 - Lack of information. High uncertainty.

Overall recommendation: Bristol Bay is best option.

Pink (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*):

Most pink salmon returns vary between. Region 4, Lower Cook Inlet is the best choice.

- Region 1 – Southeast:
 - Expected to be weak to average (19m) – small 2008 escapement
- Region 4 – Westward:
 - Prince William Sound (801,000): below average; Lower Cook Inlet (567,000): average to above average;
 - Kodiak (11.4m): weak to average
- Region 3 – Arctic/Yukon: Lack of information. High uncertainty. Norton Sound may be best option for the region.

Overall recommendation: Region 4 – Lower Cook Inlet

Chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*):

Chum returns are expected to be average for Alaska, however allocations will be in-season based. Possibility for Yukon that there will be no commercial fishery.

- Region 4 – Westward:
 - Prince William Sound (155,000): below average - environmental conditions may affect run.
- Region 3 – Arctic/Yukon:
 - Yukon area: average, however fishery is in-season based. Management is cautious.

Overall recommendation: Region 3 – Yukon area is best