



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MARCH 18, 1985

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No. 3

NEWS RELEASE

July 24, 2009

The abundance of Fraser River sockeye migrating through marine assessment areas is still tracking below pre-season expectations. The proportion of four year old Fraser sockeye returning thus far this season continues to be lower than expected, which is of concern since they were expected to dominate the return of Fraser sockeye this season. Estimates of sockeye passage in the Fraser River past the Mission hydroacoustic site and Hells Gate have also been low over the past week.

At the meeting today, the Fraser River Panel decreased the run size estimate for Early Stuart sockeye from 110,000 fish to 85,000 fish (which is below their 90% probability level forecast of 107,000 fish). The estimated 50% migration timing of the Early Stuart sockeye run through Area 20 is June 29 (five days earlier than forecast). The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 23 is approximately 81,000 fish.

There has been low migration of Early Summer-run sockeye through the marine approach routes thus far. Estimates of their run size are still uncertain; however they suggest that the return is considerably lower than the pre-season forecast. Consequently, for fisheries planning purposes the Panel adopted the 90% probability level forecast of 264,000 fish. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 23 is approximately 33,000 fish.

Summer-run sockeye have been entering marine assessment areas over the past couple weeks and they presently comprise approximately 55% of the fishery mixtures. The main Summer-run sockeye stocks include Quesnel, Chilko, Late Stuart and Stellako. Most of the possible harvest opportunities on Fraser sockeye this season are expected to be directed at this run-timing group. An update on their run size this season will not be available until early August after their peak migration through Area 20 is forecast to occur. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 23 is approximately 5,000 fish.

On July 23 the Fraser River discharge at Hope was approximately 4,300 cms, which is about 15% lower than normal, while the water temperature at Qualark Creek was 18.0 °C, which is 1.1 °C higher than average for this date. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to reach almost 21 °C by August 1. Water temperatures exceeding 20 °C may cause high pre-spawning mortality of Fraser River sockeye. At the meeting today, after reviewing environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel approved a decrease in the management adjustment factor for Early Stuart sockeye from 0.49 to 0.38. An update on the management adjustment for Early Summer-run sockeye should be available next week. Management adjustments are employed to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

Spawning ground enumeration fences have been installed in Gluske and Forfar Creeks in the Early Stuart system and there are plans to also install fences in Kynock and Dust Creeks. Three sockeye were observed at the mouth of Forfar Creek on July 17.

The Pacific Salmon Commission reports daily test fishing catches of sockeye salmon on its recorded message at (604) 666-8200 and on the internet at: http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing_collections_2009.htm In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases,

fishery regulations, sockeye and pink salmon escapement data, and sockeye and pink salmon stock status reports will be available on this website.

United States fishing schedules during the season will be available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules will be available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-800-662-9825. Canadian commercial fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at 604-666-2828 (from the lower B.C. mainland), and toll free from outside the lower B.C. mainland at 1-866-431-3474, and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations pertaining to species other than sockeye and pink salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

All commercial fisheries in Panel Area waters remain closed to fishing.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on July 27 (if warranted by stock assessment information) or July 28. News releases in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon runs.