

NEWS RELEASE

No. 5

July 27, 2001

Racial analysis of sockeye caught in Area 20 and Area 12 marine test fishing and at Cottonwood and Whonnock in the Fraser River indicate that Early Summer sockeye stocks are declining in abundance. The Fraser River Panel continues to estimate that the Early Summer sockeye run size is approximately 250,000 fish but that the arrival timing is closer to five days earlier than average. Age 5 fish continue to predominate in the return. The escapement of Early Summer sockeye past Mission is estimated at 172,000 fish. Of these, 75% are estimated to be age 5 fish and 25% are age 4 sockeye.

Summer-run sockeye predominate in racial analyses in all commercial fishing areas. Recent test fishing results show an increase in abundance of these stocks over the past week. Escapement past Mission stands at 236,000 fish, of which 42% are age 4 and 58% are age 5. The high proportion of age 5 fish is unexpected and suggests, as in the Early Stuart and Early Summer run-timing groups, that the age 5 return is substantially earlier timed than age 4 sockeye. Most of these age 5 fish are Late Stuart and Stellako sockeye, which normally precede the Chilko and Quesnel stocks by a few days. Recent marine test fishing samples show lower fractions of age 5 sockeye. Quesnel stocks have increased in proportion and number over this past week. This stock group is expected to provide approximately 67% of the Summer-run return in 2001.

While the appearance of stock and age composition is following an expected pattern, the high proportion of age 5 fish and a lower than expected abundance indicated by the marine area test fishing catches suggests a total Summer-run return near to or below the 75% probability level forecast (6,159,000 fish). Current in-season run-size estimates are highly uncertain as the 50% point of the migration is not expected to occur for approximately a week. Current information indicates however, that commercial pre-season catch expectations for Canada and the United States may not be met. PSC staff anticipate being able to provide an in-season run-size estimate in about one week. The run is expected to peak (i.e., the 50% arrival date) in Juan de Fuca Strait in the first week of August. Johnstone Strait migration (diversion rate) is estimated to be approximately 30% of arriving fish.

Migration conditions in the Fraser Canyon were not optimal this week as flood waters from the upper Fraser basin arrived on July 22-25. Discharge at Hope increased from 4,200 cms to 7,200 cms in three days. The suspended sediment load in the river water was very high as well. Similar conditions in 1997 adversely affected the parental stock of the 2001 return when a similar flood event occurred in mid-July. That event was one of the most damaging floods to sockeye salmon in that over one-half of the Early Stuart escapement and many Early Summer sockeye were lost en route due to the effects of high discharge and high suspended sediment load in the river. Discharge levels have since declined and are predicted to approach average to below average in the next week. River water temperatures have dropped to levels that are not threatening to the passage of sockeye salmon in the Fraser Canyon.

In order to begin the orderly harvest of Summer-run sockeye, on Tuesday, July 24, the Panel approved opening the United States Treaty Indian fishery in Areas 4B, 5 and 6C. Today, the Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters for the period July 28-August 4.

Canadian Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Area 20 - 1,3 and 4: Area "B" purse seines remain closed with an announcement on Monday, July 30.

Area 29 - 1 to 7 and 9 to 17: Area "E" gillnets remain closed.

Area 29 - 1 to 6 and Area 18 - 1, 4 and 11: Open to Area "H" commercial trolling 12:01 a.m. Saturday, July 28, to 11:59 p.m. Monday, July 30.

United States Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Treaty Indian Fisheries:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: Extended for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, July 28, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Tuesday, July 31.

Areas 6, 7 and 7A: Remain closed to net fishing with an announcement on Monday, July 30.

Non-Indian Fisheries:

Areas 7 and 7A: Remain closed to fishing with an announcement on Monday, July 30.

The Panel will meet again Monday, July 30th, to consider regulations for the remainder of the week.

2001 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Jul. 22 - Jul. 28, 2001

Date: July 27, 2001

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
<u>Canada</u>					
Areas 1-10	Net				0
Areas 1-10	Troll				0
Areas 124-27,11-12	Troll				0
Areas 11-16	Net				0
Areas 12-16	Troll				0
Areas 17-18-29	Troll				0
Area 20	Net				0
Area 29	Net				0
Canadian Total					0
<u>United States</u>					
<u>Alaska</u>	Net				0
<u>Washington</u>					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				3,800
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				0
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				0
Washington Total					3,800
U.S. Total					3,800
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					19,800
Other Test					1,200
Canadian Selective					0
Fraser River Aboriginal					24,500
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					2,700
Recreational					0
Charter					2,300
U.S. TI Ceremonial					0
Non-comm. Total					50,500
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					54,300
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					604,700
Total Accounted-to-date					659,000

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	225,000	219,200	2,000	221,200	98%
ESum	Early Summer	152,000	172,200	100	172,300	113%
Summ	Chilko/Quesnel	-	103,300	0	235,800	-
	L.Stu./Stel.		132,500	0		
Late	Birk./Adams/Cult.	-	0	0	0	-
	Weav/L.Misc.		0	0		