

NO. 3 NEWS RELEASE July 24, 1998

The abundance of Fraser River sockeye salmon increased in both Juan de Fuca Strait and Johnstone Strait this week as Early Summer and Summer-run sockeye continued to migrate through these areas. By July 21, Summer-run stocks had increased in racial analyses to 67-72% of sockeye caught in gillnet and purse seine test fisheries. The numbers of sockeye caught in test fisheries and the racial proportions observed are not inconsistent with the pre-season abundance and arrival timing forecasts provided by Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Monitoring of sockeye abundance will be continued daily throughout the season. The first in-season assessment of the magnitude of the Early Summer run is anticipated on August 1. Summer-run stocks are expected to peak in Juan de Fuca Strait (Area 20) approximately August 9. An in-season estimate of the abundance of Summer-run stocks will be made shortly thereafter.

Escapement of sockeye past the Pacific Salmon Commission hydroacoustic site on the Fraser River near Mission, B.C. began increasing in mid week. Early Summer stocks, primarily Fennel/Bowron and Gates/Nadina/Pitt stock groups, comprised 45% of the migration into the river on July 21. Cumulative escapements by stock group are as follows: Early Stuart – 169,000; Early Summer – 78,000; and, Summer-run – 46,000. Season total gross escapement targets for these stocks are: Early Stuart – 170,000; Early Summer – 484,000; Summer-run - 3,055,000.

The Fraser River Panel accepted as a guideline the Pacific Salmon Commission staff's proposed harvest pattern for the 1998 season, which covers United States and Canadian fisheries in Panel waters, and Canadian fisheries outside Panel waters. This harvest pattern may be modified in season in a manner consistent with the Parties' formal agreement for the 1998 season.

At this time, the pre-season forecasts of Early Summer and Summer-run sockeye provided by DFO are greater than identified spawning escapement and First Nations food and ceremonial requirements. Harvestable surpluses are therefore available. In order to harvest Early Summer and Summer-run sockeye, the Panel scheduled fishing times as follows:

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: Drift gillnets open 12:00 p.m. (noon) Sunday, July 26 to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Friday, July 31.

Areas 6,7 and 7A: Open to net fishing 4:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 28 to 7:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 29.

NON-INDIAN FISHERIES:

Areas 7 and 7A: Reef nets open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, July 25, and Sunday, July 26.

Gillnets open 7:10 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 29.

Purse seines open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Thursday, July 30.

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Remain closed to troll and net fishing.

The next meeting of the Panel will be at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 28, by telephone conference.