

Friday, August 9, 2013

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, August 9 to receive an update on the migration of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon and review the status of migration conditions in the Fraser River watershed.

The passage of Fraser sockeye through the marine assessment areas has increased slightly since last week but is still far below pre-season expectations. At the meeting today, the run size estimate of 452,000 Early Summer-run sockeye was unchanged. Also at the meeting today, the Panel approved a run size estimate of 2,000,000 Summer-run sockeye, which is slightly over half of their median forecast level of abundance with an estimated 50% migration timing though Area 20 of August 8, which is five days later than expected. The low return of Summer-run sockeye thus far has severely constrained harvest opportunities that were expected during pre-season planning. DNA analyses of sockeye sampled from recent marine test fisheries indicates that Late Shuswap sockeye comprise most of the Late-run sockeye currently migrating through the marine approach routes. Run size assessments for Late-run sockeye will be conducted over the next few weeks. DNA analyses indicate that Fraser River pink salmon continue to comprise a small proportion of the pink salmon migrating through the marine approach routes. An in-season estimate of the abundance of Fraser River pink salmon will not be available until late August, which is when their peak migration through the assessment areas is expected to occur.

Migration conditions for sockeye in the Fraser River have worsened over the past week with water temperatures reaching record highs for the date on some days. On August 8, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 3,230 cms, which is approximately 20% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek on August 8 was 21.3 °C, which is 3.5 °C higher than average for this date, and a record high temperature for this date. Sustained exposure of sockeye to Fraser River water temperatures in this range may cause severe stress and early mortality.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

**CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remains closed to fishing.

**UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

**TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:**

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: As previously announced, extended for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, August 7, 2013, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, August 10, 2013.

**ALL CITIZEN FISHERY:**

Remains closed to fishing.

(Note: U. S. All Citizen fishers should check the U.S. hotline and WDFW regulations before fishing as there are additional State of Washington regulations, including time restrictions that may be in effect).

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday, August 13, 2013.