



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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NEWS RELEASE

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The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. The migration of sockeye through lower Fraser River assessment areas has been low to date. Marine area test fisheries began in Areas 12 and 20 on Monday. Sockeye catches have been at levels consistent with past cycle years at this time of year. The observer at Hells Gate has reported low but consistent sockeye migration over the past several days.

DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 20 gillnet test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately 40% Early Stuart, 55% Early Summer-run, and 6% Summer-run sockeye. The start of marine-area test fisheries and the Mission acoustics program was delayed this year in anticipation of a low run-size for Early Stuart sockeye. The delay has reduced the quantity of assessment data used to estimate Early Stuart timing and abundance. The currently available data is consistent with an Early Stuart return within the pre-season forecast range (one in two chance that the return will be between 16,000 and 58,000.). More precise quantitative assessments will be available next week. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 16 is 8,100 fish.

Assessment programs have started to collect data on Early Summer-run sockeye abundance. Most components of the Early Summer-run group are now represented in samples from marine test fisheries. Early Summer-run sockeye run-size estimates should be available in early August after their expected peak migration through marine areas. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 16 is 4,600 fish.

On July 16, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 3,532 cms, which is approximately 34% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek on July 16 was 20.0°C, which is 3.5°C higher than average for this date. These river discharge and temperature conditions are well beyond the normal range of data observed for this time of year. After reviewing environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel anticipates an increase in the management adjustment factor for Early Stuart sockeye when further information on run timing and river temperature is available. Management adjustments are additional fish that are removed from identified allowable harvest levels and instead allowed to escape upstream to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

The Areas 12 and 20 purse seine test fisheries are scheduled to start on Tuesday, July 21.

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.htm.

Environmental data collected in the Fraser River watershed through DFO's Environmental Watch program will be included in weekly in-season news releases from the Pacific Salmon Commission (<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html>). Fraser River discharge levels and water temperatures will be monitored closely this summer to guide specific Panel management actions that may be required during the in-river sockeye migratory period to help achieve escapement goals.

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 Panel Area waters remain closed to commercial salmon fishing.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday July 21. News releases in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission every Friday during the in-season management period to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye salmon runs. News releases and regulatory announcements can be obtained via http://www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm or by subscribing to our eNews <http://tinyurl.com/PSCeNews>.