



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 stock assessment data on the Fraser River sockeye runs and to discuss fishery planning. A large proportion of the Fraser sockeye return to-date have been five year old fish, which is likely associated with the very large return of four year old Fraser sockeye in 2010. Test fishing catches over the past week indicate a modest but steady migration of Fraser sockeye through the marine approach areas; however, migration abundance increased considerably in Area 20 yesterday. The diversion rate of Fraser sockeye through Johnstone Strait is currently estimated to be 40%. High Fraser River discharge levels continue to create adverse upstream migration conditions for Fraser sockeye, although discharge levels are expected to decrease over the coming weeks.

The marine migration of Early Stuart sockeye is nearly complete. At the meeting today, the run size estimate of 22,000 Early Stuart sockeye and their estimated 50% marine timing through Area 20 of July 2 were unchanged. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 21 is 21,000 fish.

Early Summer-run sockeye (e.g. Fennell, Bowron, Raft, Gates, Nadina, Pitt, Scotch, Seymour, and North Thompson River stocks) will continue to enter the marine assessment areas over the next few weeks. Recent assessments suggest that the marine migration timing of Early Summer-run sockeye is tracking about three days later than expected. An in-season assessment of how the run size of Early Summer-run sockeye is tracking relative to forecast (453,000 fish at the 50% probability level) should be available by early August. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 21 is 17,000 fish.

On July 21, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was approximately 8,100 cms, which is about 53% higher than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek on July 21 was 15.0 °C, which is 1.5 °C cooler than average for this date. At the Panel meeting on July 19, after reviewing environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel approved a decrease in the management adjustment factor for Early Stuart sockeye from 4.71 to 4.10 and the decreased factor was retained at the Panel meeting today. Management adjustments are additional fish that are allowed to escape upstream to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

The Pacific Salmon Commission reports daily test fishing catches of sockeye and pink salmon on its recorded message at (604) 666-8200 and on the internet at: http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing_collections_2011.htm In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye and pink catch and 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 at the present time.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on July 25. 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 and pink salmon runs.