

Friday, July 24, 2009

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, July 24 to receive an update on the migration of the Fraser River sockeye runs and review the status of migration conditions in the Fraser River watershed.

The abundance of Fraser River sockeye migrating through marine assessment areas is still tracking below pre-season expectations. The proportion of four year old Fraser sockeye returning thus far this season continues to be lower than expected, which is of concern since they were expected to dominate the return of Fraser sockeye. At the meeting today, the run size estimate for Early Stuart sockeye was decreased from 110,000 fish to 85,000 fish. Estimates of Early Summer-run sockeye run size are still uncertain; however they suggest that the return is considerably lower than the pre-season forecast. Consequently, for fisheries planning purposes the Panel adopted the 90% probability level forecast of 264,000 Early Summer-run sockeye.

On July 23 the Fraser River discharge at Hope was approximately 4,300 cms, which is lower than normal, while the water temperature at Qualark Creek was 18.0 °C, which is higher than average for this date. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to reach almost 21 °C by August 1. Water temperatures exceeding 20 °C may cause high pre-spawning mortality of Fraser River sockeye.

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 27 (if warranted by stock assessment information) or July 28, 2009.