

Friday, July 31, 2009

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, July 31 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.

Test fishing catches of sockeye from the marine approach areas indicate an increase in abundance relative to the previous week although abundance indicators are still far lower than pre-season expectations for this date. The run size estimate of 150,000 Early Summer-run sockeye was unchanged at the meeting today. Similar to Early Stuart and Early Summer-run sockeye, the return of Summer-run sockeye through marine assessment areas has been much lower than expected to-date. A run size estimate for Summer-run sockeye should be available next week near their expected peak migration date through marine assessment areas.

Migration conditions for sockeye entering the Fraser River have become adverse over the past week due to the sustained period of hot, dry weather and low discharge levels. On July 30 the water temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek was 20.7 °C, which is 3.4 °C higher than average for this date. Water temperatures exceeding 20 °C may cause high pre-spawning mortality of Fraser River sockeye.

Due to the very low abundance of Fraser sockeye thus far this season, there have been no directed commercial fisheries for 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 August 4, 2009.