

Friday, August 14, 2009

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, August 14 to receive an update on the migration of the Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon runs and review the status of migration conditions in the Fraser River watershed.

Test fishing catches of Fraser sockeye have remained far below expectations over the past several days. At the meeting today, the run size estimates of 175,000 Early Summer-run sockeye and 600,000 Summer-run sockeye were unchanged. Recent DNA analyses indicate that the proportion of Late-run sockeye in the marine approach areas is increasing. At the meeting today, the run size estimate of Harrison sockeye was increased from 125,000 fish to 150,000 fish, which is close to their 25% probability level forecast of 160,000 fish. The estimated peak marine timing of Harrison sockeye through Area 20 is August 4, which is one day later than expected. It is too early to provide an assessment on the run size of Birkenhead and non-Harrison Late-run sockeye, however, if they are near their forecast level of abundance, their 50% marine timing through Area 20 would have to be several days later than expected.

Test fishing catches of pink salmon by purse seines in Johnstone Strait have been at moderate levels over the past week. In Juan de Fuca Strait, test fishing catches of pinks have been generally low, although they increased on August 13. Assessments of the abundance of Fraser River pink salmon will be made near their expected peak migration through the marine approach areas, which usually occurs in late August.

Due to the 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 18, 2009.