

Friday, August 1, 2008

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, August 1 to review the status of sockeye salmon abundance estimates, catches, migratory behavior and discuss harvest opportunities. The marine migration of Fraser sockeye over the past several days has been considerably lower than expected. Assessments of the migration timing of Fraser sockeye this season continue to indicate that they are returning much earlier than average.

At the meeting today; the run size estimate for Early Summer-run sockeye was unchanged at 425,000 fish. Their 50% marine timing through Area 20 is estimated to have occurred on July 14, which is their earliest marine timing on record. As a result of the continued sharp decline in the marine migration of Summer-run sockeye, the Panel reduced the run size estimate to 800,000 fish at the meeting today, which is lower than their 90% probability level forecast of 822,000 fish. The 50% marine timing of Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 is presently estimated to be July 23, which is their earliest marine migration timing on record. Although it is still early in the marine migration of some Late-run sockeye stocks, present assessments suggest that Birkenhead and True Late-run sockeye abundance will be substantially lower than forecast this season. For management purposes, the Panel approved run size estimates of 137,000 Birkenhead sockeye (which is their 90% probability level forecast) and 232,000 True Late-run sockeye (which is their 75% probability level forecast).

Migration conditions for sockeye in the Fraser River watershed continue to be generally favorable over the past week and should help to ensure successful upriver migration of Fraser sockeye.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Remain closed to fishing.

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: The previously announced drift gillnet fishery that was previously scheduled to close at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, August 2, 2008 will now close at 6.:00 p.m., Friday, August 1, 2008.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Remains closed to fishing.

(Note: U. S. Non-Treaty fishers should check the U.S. hotline and WDFW regulations before fishing as there are additional State of Washington regulations, including time restrictions that may be in effect).

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on August 5, 2008.