

Friday, August 17, 2007

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, August 17 to receive an update on the status of the Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon runs and review the status of migration conditions in the Fraser River watershed.

The total return of Fraser River sockeye this season is presently tracking an abundance level approximately 25% of that expected during pre-season fishery planning. Purse seine test fishing catches of sockeye in Johnstone Strait have been steady over the past week and the diversion rate of Fraser River sockeye through Johnstone Strait is currently estimated to be between 60% and 65%. DNA analyses conducted over the past few days indicate that the marine migration of Early Summer-run sockeye is extending over a longer period than was projected last week. At the meeting today the run size estimate of Early Summer-run sockeye was increased from 120,000 fish to 150,000 fish and the run size estimate of Summer-run sockeye was unchanged at 750,000 fish. The Panel increased the run size estimate for true Late-run sockeye from 504,000 to 600,000 fish at the meeting today. The run size estimate for Birkenhead sockeye remained at 227,000 fish.

Test fishing catches of pink salmon by purse seines in Johnstone Strait have been generally building over the past week, while in Juan de Fuca Strait catches of pinks have been low. The diversion rate of pink salmon through Johnstone Strait is presently estimated to be 85%. Assessments of the abundance of Fraser River pink salmon will be made near the expected peak migration of these fish through the marine approach areas, which usually occurs in late August.

On August 16, the Fraser River discharge at Hope was about 3,300 cms, which is close to average for this date and the water temperature at Qualark Creek was 17.4 °C, which is also close to average.

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 21, 2007.