



## PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA  
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

**July 14, 2006**

At the Fraser River Panel meeting today, PSC staff provided an update on the status of the Early Stuart and Early Summer-run sockeye runs. The abundance of sockeye salmon migrating through Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait has been low over the past several days. This is not unusual since there is often a decrease in migratory abundance in marine areas during the transition period between the peak of the Early Stuart migration and the build-up of the Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye migrations. The Area 12 gillnet test fishery began this week and will help in assessing the abundance and migration pattern of Fraser sockeye migrating through Johnstone Strait. The migration of sockeye past the observation site at Hells Gate has been generally steady over the past week and the fish are reported to be in good condition.

Four year old Early Stuart sockeye were forecast to contribute approximately 90% of the production this season, however, thus far approximately 60% have been from this age class. DNA analysis of a sockeye sample collected from Area 20 on July 11 indicated that Early Stuart and Lake Washington sockeye each comprised approximately 40% of the sample with the remaining 20% being Early Summer-run fish (Chilliwack, Nadina and Seymour stocks). The run size of Early Stuart sockeye is currently tracking close to the 50% probability level forecast of 84,000 fish. The 50% arrival timing of Early Stuart sockeye in Area 20 is currently estimated to be July 6, which is three days later than the forecast timing (July 3) for these sockeye. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 13 is 34,000 fish.

Early Summer-run sockeye will be continuing to enter the marine assessment areas through July. It is too early to provide an update on their return abundance; however, their marine timing is currently tracking later than average. An in-season estimate of their run size should be available by the beginning of August when their migration through the marine assessment areas is expected to peak. However, if their marine timing is much later than normal, an accurate estimate of their run size would be delayed. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 13 is 2,000 fish.

The later than expected arrival of Early Stuart and Early Summer-run stocks and the weakness of the Early Stuart sockeye run has caused the Panel to delay the scheduled start-up of a number of test fisheries accordingly.

The cooler weather in the Fraser River watershed over the past week has resulted in a decrease in water temperatures and has improved migration conditions for Fraser sockeye. The discharge level in the Fraser River (at Hope) is currently about 4,000 cms, which is almost 30% lower than normal. Fraser River water temperature (at Qualark Creek) was 17.7 °C on July 13, which was approximately 2 °C higher than average for this date. The temperature at this site is forecast to increase to almost 19 °C over the next 10 days. Early Stuart sockeye will be migrating up the Nechako River over the next several weeks and will likely encounter higher water temperatures, which is expected to cause some en route mortality.

As in previous years, the Panel may employ Management Adjustments (MA) during the in-season management period to help ensure that spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye are achieved. Management adjustments for Fraser sockeye are typically increased when the runs encounter adverse river migration conditions attributable to high river temperatures and flows. The adjustments are intended to allow additional fish to escape upriver to help achieve spawning escapement targets.

The Pacific Salmon Commission reports daily test fishing catches of sockeye salmon on its recorded message at (604) 666-8200 and on the internet at: [http://www.psc.org/info\\_testfishing.htm](http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm). In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye escapement data, and stock status reports will be available on this website.

United States fishing schedules during the season will be available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules will be available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-888-858-9319. Canadian commercial fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at 604-666-2828 (from the lower B.C. mainland), and toll free from outside the lower B.C. mainland at 1-866-431-3474, and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations pertaining to species other than sockeye and pink salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

All commercial fisheries in Panel Area waters remain closed to fishing at this time.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur via teleconference on July 18. Periodic news releases in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye salmon runs.