

Tuesday, August 15, 2006

The Fraser River Panel met Tuesday, August 15 to discuss assessment data on the Fraser River sockeye runs and consider harvest opportunities.

Test fishing and commercial catch data collected over the past several days continues to indicate steady migration of sockeye through Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait. However, the estimated total abundance of Fraser sockeye migrating through marine assessment areas remains considerably below pre-season expectations for this period.

The Panel is continuing to use the 50% probability level forecast of 1,303,000 Early Summer-run sockeye for fisheries planning purposes. The peak marine timing of Summer-run sockeye through Area 20 was forecast to be on August 9, however, current assessments suggest that it will be later than this. The Panel is continuing to use the 75% probability level forecast for Summer-run sockeye of 4,020,000 fish for fisheries planning purposes, due to the weak return of Quesnel sockeye to-date. It is too early to provide an assessment of the run size of Late-run sockeye, however, if they are at 50% probability level forecast of abundance of 8,812,000 fish, their 50% marine timing through Area 20 would have to be several days later than the forecast of August 15.

The water temperature of the Fraser River measured at Qualark Creek was 18.4 °C on August 14. Fraser River water temperatures are forecast to exceed 20 °C by August 21, which would create adverse conditions for migrating sockeye. Fraser River discharge at Hope is presently about 2,200 cms, which is near the lowest discharge in the historic record for this date.

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Area 20 – 1, 3, 4: As previously announced: Open to Area B purse seine in waters deeper than 55 meters or 30 fathoms from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., August 15, 2006. Fishery may extend subject to by-catch concerns.

Area 29 – 1 to 7 and 29 – 9 to 17: As previously announced: Open to Area E gillnets from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

Area 18-1, 18-4 and 18-11 and Area 29-1 to 6: As previously announced: the Area H troll: ITQ Demonstration Fishery remains open until further notice.

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C: Extended for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, August 16, 2006, to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Saturday, August 19, 2006.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Open for net fishing from 4:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 16, 2006 to 10:00 p.m. Thursday, August 17, 2006.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 7 and 7A: As previously announced: Open to gillnets from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

Areas 7 and 7A: As previously announced: Open to reef nets from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 15, 2006 and from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 16, 2006.

Areas 7 and 7A: As previously announced: Open to purse seines from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

(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 17, 2006.