

Friday, July 21, 2006

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, July 21 to receive an update on the migration of the Fraser River sockeye runs. Test fishing catches indicate that the migration of sockeye through Juan de Fuca Strait has been building over recent days, although catches in the Johnstone Strait test fisheries have been low.

The run size estimate of 70,000 Early Stuart sockeye, with 50% migration timing through Area 20 of July 7, was unchanged at the meeting today. Early Summer-run sockeye abundance through the marine approach areas is presently tracking below expectations, unless their marine timing is considerably later than forecast. Summer-run sockeye have begun to enter the marine assessment areas, however, an update on their run size will likely not be available until after the first week of August.

Fraser River discharge at Hope is currently about 3,400 cms and the water temperature at Qualark Creek on July 20 was 17.3 °C. Hot weather in the Fraser watershed is forecast to cause a rapid rise in water temperatures over the next week, with temperatures forecast to exceed 21 °C by July 26. Prolonged exposure of migrating sockeye to water temperatures in this range can lead to severe stress and can result in death prior to spawning.

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 July 25, 2006.