

Friday, August 19, 2005

The Fraser River Panel met Friday, August 19 to receive an update on the migration of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon.

The run size estimate of Early Summer-run sockeye was increased from 250,000 fish to 300,000 fish (approximately 42% of the 50% p level forecast of abundance, 718,000 fish) at the meeting today as a result of the sustained marine migration of these sockeye. There is still high uncertainty in the estimation of Summer-run sockeye abundance due primarily to variability in assumptions regarding their late marine migratory timing. It is projected that the run size of Summer-run sockeye is likely to exceed 3,000,000 fish. However, if information suggesting a potential late pulse of sockeye outside the assessment areas is verified in test fisheries, this may result in higher assessments of Summer-run sockeye abundance. The low return of Fraser sockeye to-date this season has prevented the commencement of numerous fisheries since at current abundance levels most of the sockeye are required for meeting spawning escapement goals, which are the highest priority management goal of the Fraser River Panel.

Catches of pink salmon in the purse seine test fisheries in Johnstone Strait have been at moderate levels over most of the past week, while catches in the Juan de Fuca Strait test fisheries have been generally low. An in-season run size estimate of Fraser River pink salmon should be available within two weeks; near their projected peak migration timing through the marine assessment areas.

The discharge level in the Fraser River (at Hope) on August 18 was approximately 2,625 cms, which is 23% lower than average and the water temperature of the Fraser River (at Qualark Creek) was 18.8 °C, which is 1.3 °C higher than average for this date. Water temperatures in this range are expected to cause some physiological stress to migrating sockeye.

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: Open to drift gillnets 12:00 p.m. (noon), Saturday, August 20, 2005 to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Tuesday, August 23, 2005.

NON INDIAN FISHERY:

Remain 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 Monday, August 22, 2005.