

The Fraser River Panel met today to review stock monitoring and other biological data associated with the migration of Fraser River sockeye salmon. Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye comprise most of the Fraser sockeye currently migrating through Johnstone Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait. Estimates of the diversion rate of Fraser sockeye through Johnstone Strait have increased from approximately 30% earlier in the season to about 50%. In United States Panel waters, Treaty Indian Fisheries in Areas 4B, 5, and 6C that commenced on July 18, have caught 4,300 sockeye to date.

Recent DNA analyses indicate that the marine migration of Early Stuart sockeye is virtually complete. On July 20, the Panel agreed to increase the run size estimate of Early Stuart sockeye from 190,000 to 200,000 fish (slightly lower than the 50% p level forecast of 216,000 fish). It is expected that Early Stuart sockeye will experience some en route mortality since they are encountering adverse (warm) temperatures in their upstream migration.

DNA samples from Area 12 and 20 purse seine test fisheries collected on July 20 indicated contributions of 51% Early Summer-run and 46% Summer-run sockeye. Within the early-timed component of the Early Summer-runs, the DNA analyses indicate strong returns to the Chilliwack and Nadina stocks. Current estimates of the run size and timing of Early Summer-run sockeye are variable due to the migratory pattern of these fish through the marine approach areas. Early Summer-run sockeye abundance through marine assessment areas to date is tracking above the 50% p level forecast of abundance (885,000 fish) assuming normal timing of these fish. The estimated migration of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission to July 22 is 270,000 fish.

Summer-run sockeye are forecast to contribute over 70% (3,501,000 fish at the 50% p level) of the total Fraser River sockeye run in 2004 and harvest opportunities are focused on this run timing-group. Estimates of Summer-run sockeye abundance through the marine approach areas are currently tracking close to the 50% p level forecast of abundance. Assuming that the 50% migration timing of Summer-runs through Area 20 is close to forecast (August 6 for Chilko sockeye), it is unlikely that an in-season run size estimate of Summer-run abundance will be available for the next two weeks. The estimated migration of Summer-run sockeye past Mission to July 22 is 38,000 fish.

In-river migration conditions for Fraser sockeye have worsened over the past several days. Fraser River discharge at Hope is currently 3,650 cms (29 % lower than normal for this date) and the water temperature (at Qualark Creek) is presently 19.8 ° C. Prolonged exposure of migrating sockeye to water temperatures in this range may induce stress and increase their likelihood of disease infections, which have been associated with high mortality rates. Environmental conditions for migrating sockeye in the Fraser watershed will be monitored closely over the coming weeks.

Sockeye enumeration fences on Forfar, Gluske, Kynock, and Dust Creeks in the Early Stuart System have been installed. The first sockeye were observed at the mouths of Kynock and Rosette Creeks (Middle River tributary downstream of Kynock Creek) on July 18.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

## **CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Area 20-1, 3, and 4: Open to Area B purse seines authorized by a Scientific Licence from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 28, 2004.

Area 18-1, 4 and 11; and Area 29-3, 4, and 6 (outside of a 27 fathom contour boundary): Open to Area B purse seines authorized by a Scientific Licence from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 28, 2004.

Area 18-1, 4 and 11; and Area 29-1 to 6: Open to Area H troll 12:01 a.m., Monday, July 26, 2004, until further notice.

Area 29-1 to 7 and 9 to 17: Open to Area E gillnets from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 27, 2004.

## **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) Saturday, July 24, 2004 to 12:00 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, July 28, 2004.

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Open to net fishing from 4:00 a.m., Monday, July 26, 2004 to 8:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 28, 2004.

### **NON INDIAN FISHERY:**

(Note: U. S. Non-Treaty fishers should check the U.S. hotline before fishing as additional State of Washington regulations, including time restrictions are in effect).

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to purse seines and reef nets from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 28, 2004, and from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Thursday, July 29, 2004.

Areas 7 and 7A: Open to gillnets from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 28, 2004, and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 29, 2004.

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) 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/TestFish/>. The PSC has provided information on Late-run Fraser River sockeye migration behavior, en route mortality, and research results and plans on the Internet at: <http://www.psc.org/Pubs/LateRun/Index.htm/>. In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye escapement data and stock status reports are available on the Internet at: [www.psc.org](http://www.psc.org). United States fishing schedules during the season are available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules are 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, on the Internet at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/> and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations in addition to those adopted by the Panel for the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on July 27. 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.