

Friday, August 20, 2004

The Fraser Panel met Friday, August 20 to receive an update on the progress of the Fraser River sockeye runs and the extremely adverse temperature conditions that migrating sockeye are encountering in the Fraser River. The estimates of 1,500,000 Early Summer-run sockeye (69% higher than the 50% p level forecast of 885,000 fish) and 3,200,000 Summer-run sockeye (9% lower than the 50% p level forecast) were unchanged at the meeting today. The marine migratory abundance of Summer-run sockeye is declining rapidly and it is possible that the run size estimate for these sockeye will decrease next week after additional assessment data are available.

The water temperature of the Fraser River (measured at Qualark Creek) is currently 21.3 °C and it is forecast to exceed 20 °C for the next two days before declining towards temperatures more satisfactory (< 18 °C) for successful sockeye migration. Fraser River water temperatures over the last five days are the highest on these dates since at least 1942. The mortality rate of Fraser sockeye resulting from these adverse migratory conditions is expected to be severe, as in 1998 when high in-river mortality also occurred as a result of elevated river temperatures.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

**CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remain closed to fishing.

**UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

**TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:**

Remain closed to fishing.

**NON INDIAN FISHERY:**

Remain closed to fishing.

Further commercial fishing in Panel Area waters is not expected this season. The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on August 27, 2004.