

Wednesday, June 30, 2004

The Fraser Panel met Wednesday, June 30 to receive an update on the migration of Early Stuart sockeye and the status of migration conditions in the Fraser River watershed. Early Stuart sockeye have been migrating through the marine approach areas over the past week and have begun entering the Fraser River. Although it is early in the migration of Early Stuart sockeye (projected 50% arrival timing in Area 20 of July 3) they are currently tracking close to their forecast (50% p level) abundance.

The low snowpack levels in the Fraser River watershed are projected to result in lower than normal flows in 2004, which will likely result in periodic high water temperatures in the Fraser River this summer. This could result in elevated, in-river mortality of migrating sockeye. The Fraser River discharge rate at Hope is currently 5,200 cms, which is approximately 20% lower than normal for this date. The Fraser River water temperature at Qualark Creek is 17.3<sup>0</sup> C, which is almost 3<sup>0</sup> C higher than normal for this date. Fraser River discharge levels and water temperatures will be monitored closely to determine if specific management actions are required during the in-river migratory period to help achieve sockeye escapement goals.

All commercial fisheries in Panel Area waters remain closed to fishing.

The Panel will meet again Thursday, July 8, at which time News Release # 1 will be distributed that summarizes management considerations and the general fishing plan for this season.