

Recent analyses by PSC staff indicate that the migration of Early Stuart sockeye through Juan de Fuca Strait is almost complete. The current run size estimate of these sockeye (60,000 fish) is close to the 75% probability level forecast of 59,000 fish. The escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission has reached 56,000 fish and their peak (50%) timing past Mission (July 9) was normal. Age 4 Early Stuart sockeye have comprised about 60% of the return to date; substantially lower than their forecast contribution of 83%. This shortfall in the contribution of age 4 sockeye to the run is likely due to the adverse river conditions encountered by the parent spawners in 1998.

Early Summer-run and Summer-run sockeye presently comprise the largest contribution of Fraser sockeye in Area 20. The Early Summer stock group appears to be returning below the 50% probability level forecast or have later than forecast timing. An update on the abundance of the early-timed component of Early Summer-run sockeye will be provided next week after a larger proportion of the return has migrated through assessment areas. The escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission thus far is estimated at 32,000 fish.

The 50% probability level forecast return of Summer-run sockeye is 9,006,000, which is 67% of the total forecast return of Fraser River sockeye in 2002. Quesnel sockeye dominate the forecast of returning Summer-run sockeye (6,721,000 fish at the 50% probability level) and are the focus of harvest opportunities in 2002. Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided a run timing forecast (50% arrival timing in Area 20) for Chilko sockeye of August 8, which is five days later than the long-term mean. Recent racial analyses indicate that the contribution of Summer-run sockeye is building in Area 20. If Summer-run sockeye return at the forecast timing and abundance levels, their presence in the Area 20 gillnet test fishery will increase considerably over the coming week. An in-season update on Summer-run sockeye abundance should be available in early August.

Environmental conditions for Fraser River sockeye migration have improved considerably over the last two weeks when river discharges recorded at Hope were more than 9,000 cms, and the migration of Fraser sockeye was severely impeded. The present discharge measured at Hope (6,700 cms) is not expected to impede sockeye migration through the Fraser Canyon. However, it is still considerably over normal flow levels (5,400 cms) for this date. Observations of sockeye migration through Hells Gate increased considerably after July 9 when river flows declined below 7,000 cms, easing fish passage. River flows are forecast to continue to decline over the coming week. Currently, water temperatures recorded in the Fraser River at Qualark Creek are approximately 16 °C, while in the Nechako River they are approximately 17 °C, which is suitable for successful migration.

After careful review of the in-season data, the Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

United States Panel Area waters:

Treaty Indian Fishery:

Areas 4B, 5, and 6C:

Open for drift gillnets from 12:00 p.m. (noon), Sunday, July 21 to 12:00 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, July 24.

All other Treaty Indian and non-Indian fisheries in United States Panel Area waters remain closed to fishing.

Canadian Panel Area waters:

Remains closed to fishing.

The Pacific Salmon Commission makes available daily test fishing catches of sockeye and pink salmon and Panel Area fishery regulations on its recorded message at (604) 666-8200. These and other data are available on the Internet at: www.psc.org/TestFish/. United States fishing regulations during the season will be available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing regulations will be available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-888-858-9319. Canadian fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at (604) 666-2828.

The Panel will meet again Tuesday, July 23 to consider regulations for the remainder of the week.