



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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NEWS RELEASE

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The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. Marine test fisheries indicate a moderate migration of Fraser sockeye through the marine assessment areas over the past several days. Sockeye catches in the lower Fraser River gillnet test fisheries have been low over the past few days. High Fraser River discharge levels have increased the uncertainty in hydroacoustic estimates of sockeye passage. The observer at Hells Gate has reported a strong migration of sockeye over the past several days.

Stock identification analysis of sockeye samples recently collected from the Area 20 gillnet test fishery indicates contributions of approximately 5% Early Stuart, 70% Early Summer-run, and 25% Summer-run sockeye. At the meeting on July 17, the Panel increased the run size estimate for Early Stuart sockeye from 120,000 fish to 140,000 fish. At the meeting today, the run size estimate of Early Stuart sockeye was increased to 180,000 fish. The 50% marine migration timing of Early Stuart sockeye through Area 20 is estimated to be July 3, which is four days later than the pre-season forecast of June 29. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 19 is 172,000 fish.

Early Summer-run sockeye (Chilliwack, Nadina, Pitt, Bowron, Fennell, Gates, Nahatlatch, Scotch, Seymour, and South Thompson) stocks are presently migrating through the marine and in-river assessment areas. Chilliwack sockeye continue to be the dominant Early Summer-run sockeye stock this season. The Panel approved a run size estimate of 170,000 Chilliwack sockeye at the meeting today, with 50% marine timing through Area 20 of July 6, which is three days earlier than expected. Run size assessments of the other components of the Early Summer-run group should be available later in July after further assessment data are available. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 19 is 227,000 fish.

Most of the fishing opportunities this season are expected to be directed at Summer-run sockeye (Chilko, Late Stuart, Quesnel, Stellako, Harrison, Raft, and North Thompson) stocks. Late Stuart and Stellako sockeye currently comprise most of the Summer-run sockeye presently migrating through the marine assessment areas. In-season assessments of Summer-run sockeye abundance will not be available until their expected peak migration period through Juan de Fuca Strait between late July and early August. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 19 is 14,000 fish.

Fraser River discharge levels have continued to decrease over recent days; however they are still at levels that will have a negative effect on the upstream migration of sockeye. On July 19 the discharge of the Fraser River at Hope was approximately 7,700 cms, which is approximately 41% above average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek on July 18 was 16.7^oC, which is 0.7^oC higher than average for this date. At the Panel meeting on July 17, after reviewing environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel approved an increase in the management adjustment factor for Early Stuart sockeye to 4.55, and at the meeting today it was reduced to 3.79. Management adjustments

are additional fish that are allowed to escape upstream to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

The Pacific Salmon Commission 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/info_testfishing_collections. In addition, Fraser River Panel news releases, fishery regulations, sockeye catch and escapement data and sockeye and salmon stock status reports will be available on this website.

United States fishing schedules during the season will be available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules will be available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-800-662-9825. Canadian commercial fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at 604-666-2828 (from the lower B.C. mainland), and toll free from outside the lower B.C. mainland at 1-866-431-3474, and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations pertaining to species other than sockeye salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

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

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday, July 24. 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.