



## PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA  
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
MARCH 18, 1985

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No. 2

NEWS RELEASE

July 13, 2012

The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. The migration of Fraser sockeye through Juan de Fuca Strait has been moderate over recent days as indicated by catches in the Area 20 gillnet test fishery. The Area 12 gillnet test fishery began on July 9 and sockeye catches have been low thus far. Sockeye catches in the lower Fraser River gillnet test fishery at Whonnock have increased over the past week. High Fraser River flows have delayed the start-up of shore-based components of the lower Fraser River hydroacoustic program that is used for estimating sockeye passage. Therefore, sockeye passage to date has been estimated from test fishing catches in the lower Fraser River. The observer at Hells Gate has reported an increase in sockeye migration over the past few days.

Stock identification analysis of sockeye samples recently collected from the Area 20 gillnet test fishery indicates Early Stuart sockeye comprise about 30% of the Fraser bound stocks with the remainder being comprised primarily of Early Summer-run sockeye. At the meeting today, a run size estimate of 120,000 Early Stuart sockeye was adopted by the Panel. Current run size assessments have high uncertainty associated with them due to the lack of hydroacoustic estimates of sockeye passage. 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 12 is 107,000 fish.

Chilliwack sockeye presently comprise most of the Early Summer-run sockeye migrating through the marine and in-river assessment areas. Early Summer-run sockeye run size assessments should be available later in July after their peak migration through marine areas has occurred. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 12 is 81,000 fish.

Fraser River discharge levels have continued to decrease over the past several days; however, they are still at levels that will have a negative effect on the upstream migration of sockeye. On July 12 the discharge of the Fraser River at Hope was 8,400 cms, which is approximately 46% higher than average for this date. The water temperature probe at Qualark Creek was damaged during the very high flows that have occurred over the past few weeks. Interim checks of water temperature measurements are more uncertain than those obtained from the probe. Current Fraser river temperatures from checks at Hells Gate, Qualark Creek, and the lower Fraser River indicate water temperatures in the 15-16 °C range, which is similar to slightly above average for this date. At the Panel meeting today, after reviewing environmental and stock assessment information, the Panel approved an increase in the management adjustment factor for Early Stuart sockeye from 1.95 to 3.38. 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](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 17. 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.