



TNG FISHERIES

The latest information important to T̓silhqot'in fish and fishing activities

Dipnet fishing for Jaš (Chinook)
at Farwell Canyon



TNG Weekly Salmon Fisheries Season Update: Wednesday, July 21, 2021

We're well into the salmon fishing season now, the busiest time of the year for the TNG Fisheries Department! After the first few weeks, salmon in-season information continues to flow in from assessments along the migration route from the ocean to the spawning grounds.

With the Early Stuart Ts'eman (sockeye) run tapering down and the bulk of the early summer and summer runs yet to arrive, we don't have much new technical information to report this week. We continue to monitor incoming salmon information, and should have more details to report in next week's update.

Jaš fisheries have been steady over the past week and a half, with catches confirmed in both the Chilcotin watershed and the Fraser mainstem.

The TNG Fisheries Department is focusing on providing the best information to T̓silhqot'in Leadership to inform decision making on fisheries, and keep T̓silhqot'in people up to date on everything we know. We'll provide weekly updates on Wednesdays via Zoom and written TNG Fisheries Bulletins.

Fishing for T̓silhqot'in member communities is currently open for Jaš (Chinook) until 6:00pm on Friday, July 30, 2021

Further updates on fisheries openings will be shared with communities by TNG Central Communications

**The opening is for Jaš (Chinook) only
Fishing remains CLOSED for Ts'eman (sockeye)**

FISHERIES TEAM

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With support from:

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Gottfried Pestal, Quantitative Biologist, Biological Benchmarks;

Aimee Arseneault, Communications

Jaŝ (Chinook)

- Confirmed steady passage of Jaŝ through Big Bar.
- Tŝilhqot'in members have had Jaŝ catches both in the Chilcotin watershed and the Fraser mainstem, as confirmed by TNG Fisheries catch monitors on site at fishing areas.
- TNG Fisheries has the crew in the Upper Chilcotin working on emergency enhancement for Upper Chilcotin Jaŝ; we will report more on that project later in the season.

Ts'eman (Sockeye):

- It was confirmed last week that the Early Stuart run exceeded its forecast of 18,000, with an estimated run size of 69,000. However, Early Stuart at this run size are still a conservation concern, and fishing for Ts'eman remains closed.
- Returns for Early Summer runs, including Taseko Ts'eman, are still low. This could mean that Early Summer numbers are below the forecasted return, or that the return is later than average—or both. We will have more details on this next week.
- TNG Fisheries Monitors have reported that early summer Ts'eman, including Taseko, are now entering the Chilcotin Watershed in very low numbers. Ts'eman fisheries remain closed until we have more information about early summer and summer Ts'eman.
- There is early indication of summer runs, including Late Stuart, Stellako, Quesnel, and Chilko Ts'eman returns in the marine area. They are still a couple weeks away from reaching Tŝilhqot'in Territory, which is normal for this time of year.

Environmental conditions:

- Water levels are decreasing rapidly in the Chilcotin and Fraser Rivers, and are now significantly below average levels, but have not yet reached extreme levels.
- Water temperatures remain slightly above average, but are not yet extreme; however, the water temperature forecast suggests temperatures will rise to levels significantly above average.

Key considerations for the 2021 fishing season:

- Low forecasted returns for Ts'eman (sockeye) and Jaŝ (Chinook); however, we had some good news last week about the Early Stuart run and the first part of the Jaŝ migration through Big Bar being better than expected.
- Passage continues to be excellent at Big Bar for both Jaŝ and Ts'eman at current water levels; work completed at the site has resulted in successful migration past the slide.
- Available information and environmental conditions are constantly changing; we're monitoring Ts'eman and Jaŝ data nearly daily, and providing up-to-date information to support awareness of key issues.
- Extreme and unusual environmental conditions, including wildfires, very hot weather, and high water temperatures, broadly related to climate change and impacts to the landscape.
- The protection of every salmon stock is critical to the health of the Tŝilhqot'in fishery (bio-diversity and eco-system health).

Fishing Activities Update:

- DFO has issued a communal fishing licence for the Chilcotin watershed and the mainstem Fraser effective until 6:00 on July 30, 2021.
- TNG Fisheries staff and DFO are meeting weekly to exchange information and discuss potential openings for Jaŝ and Ts'eman later in the season.
- TNG Fisheries senior staff will be meeting with Tŝilhqot'in Chiefs and senior TNG staff to plan for further fishing opportunities.

TNG Fisheries Department Activities

TNG Fisheries activities this season are focused on:

- Stock assessment and information analysis to inform decision making, e.g., catch monitoring, aerial counts, SONAR (Taseko and roving), and partnership with DFO annual programs
- Emergency enhancement activities to support at-risk stocks (Upper Chilcotin Jaŕ (Chinook) and Taseko Ts'eman)
- Territory-wide water monitoring (station installations were completed in late July and are now active!)

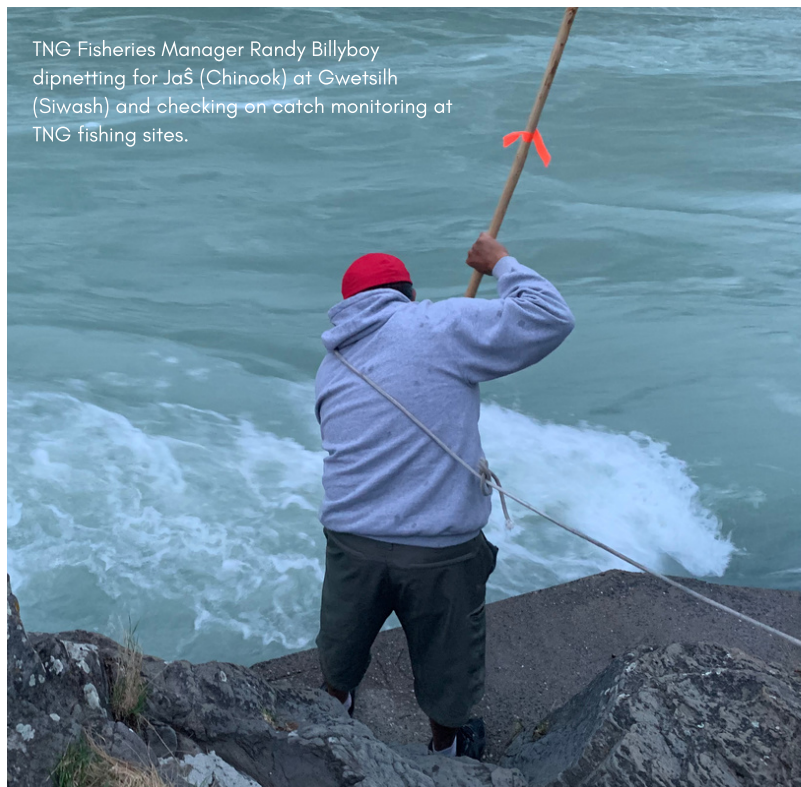
We're receiving in-season salmon information from various sources (e.g., Pacific Salmon Commission, DFO), and are also collecting information internally. TNG's catch monitoring program is now underway, and we're in the process of putting our on-the-ground and helicopter assessments in place within the Territory:

- Test fisheries (dipnet)
- Installation of SONAR in the Lower Chilcotin is complete
- Phase 1 of SONAR installation in the Taseko is complete; phase 2 to be completed mid-August
- Installation of telemetry stations to track radio tagged Jaŕ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) is complete

To reduce the risk of loss of at-risk Upper Chilcotin Chinook populations, TNG is working with the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance (UFFCA) and DFO to implement **emergency enhancement** activities.

Enhancement refers to activities that increase the number of offspring produced from returning spawners. In this case, collecting brood stock (eggs/sperm) from spawners, incubating fertilized eggs, rearing fry in a hatchery, and releasing them back into the natal streams when the fry are ready.

TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy dipnetting for Jaŕ (Chinook) at Gwetsilh (Siwash) and checking on catch monitoring at TNG fishing sites.



Water monitoring station at Chilcotin Lake for TNG's Water Quality and Quantity monitoring program; station installations are complete and Territory-wide water monitoring is now active!



Fisheries Biologist Pete Nicklin and the TNG and DFO crew installing the Taseko SONAR system to count Ts'eman (sockeye) and Jaŕ (Chinook) migrating through the Taseko River.

WEEKLY IN-SEASON FISHERIES UPDATES

Wednesday Afternoons

1:00PM to 2:00PM

mid-July to end of August

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ZOOM MEETING LINK:
fisheries.live/tng2021

Meeting ID: 869 9877 1924
Passcode: 830690

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OR JOIN BY PHONE:
Toll Free: 1-855-703-8985

Meeting ID: 869 9877 1924
Passcode: 830690

2021 Dates:

Wednesdays, July: 14, 21, 28

Wednesdays, August: 4, 11, 18, 25

These calls are to share fisheries information with T̓silhqot̓in Chiefs, Councils, TNG and community staff, and T̓silhqot̓in members, including Elders. We'll present on salmon populations and returns, fishing opportunities, and TNG Fisheries Dept activities.

For questions please contact TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy
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The TNG Fisheries Department collects, receives and analyzes in-season salmon and fisheries information on a weekly basis from our own programs, and from DFO and the Pacific Salmon Commission. We'll share weekly in-season fisheries bulletins and host weekly update Zoom calls on **Wednesday afternoons** from July 14th to the end of August to keep folks up to date on in-season fisheries information.

Although TNG Fisheries provides information and works on many aspects of salmon returning to T̓silhqot̓in Territory and other parts of the upper Fraser, decisions about 2021 community fisheries openings and closures are made by T̓silhqot̓in Leadership, and also by DFO. Fisheries opening and closure notices are shared broadly with communities by TNG central communications.

TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy, Fisheries Technician Winston Bambrick, and Fisheries Field Coordinator Leonard English scoping access for Jaᓄ (Chinook) emergency enhancement, overlooking Chilcotin Lake.

