



TNG FISHERIES

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



Photo: Setting up the Upper Chilcotin brood capture fence for Big Bar Landslide emergency enhancement. The main TNG crew on this project includes Gerald William, Winston Bambrick, and Leonard English.

TNG Weekly Salmon Fisheries Season Update: Wednesday, August 4, 2021

We're 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.

Fraser Ts'eman (sockeye) are about 4 weeks into their annual migration, and we're seeing more early summer and summer runs showing up in test fisheries. Ja̓s̓ (Chinook) fisheries were steady during the T̓silhqot'in opening in July, with catches confirmed in both the Chilcotin watershed and the Fraser mainstem. See more details on the following pages.

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 continue to provide weekly updates on Wednesdays via Zoom and written TNG Fisheries Bulletins.

The temporary T̓silhqot'in Ja̓s̓ (Chinook) fishery ended on Friday, July 30 at 6:00pm.

At this time, fisheries are closed for both Ja̓s̓ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (Sockeye).

TNG Fisheries and Leadership are actively discussing potential fisheries openings for Ts'eman (sockeye). Updates on openings will be shared directly with communities by TNG Central Communications.

FISHERIES TEAM

RANDY BILLYBOY

Fisheries Manager

PETE NICKLIN

Fisheries Biologist

MICHELLE TUNG

Fisheries Strategy Lead (on leave)

LEONARD ENGLISH

Fisheries Field Coordinator

WINSTON BAMBRICK

Fisheries Technician

GERALD WILLIAM

Fisheries Technician

With support from:

Andrea Sterling, Biologist, Water Quality and Quantity Program, Conservation Hatchery Feasibility, Emergency Enhancement;

John Hagen, Conservation Biologist, Chilcotin Steelhead;

Gottfried Pestal, Quantitative Biologist, Biological Benchmarks;

Aimee Arsenault, Communications

Jaŝ (Chinook)

- Confirmed steady passage of Jaŝ through Big Bar.
- Tŝilhqot'in members had Jaŝ catches both in the Chilcotin watershed and the Fraser mainstem during the 2-week fisheries opening in July (confirmed by TNG Fisheries catch monitors).
- TNG Fisheries had a crew in the Upper Chilcotin working on emergency enhancement for Upper Chilcotin Jaŝ.

Ts'eman (Sockeye):

- Ts'eman are about 4 weeks into their annual migration.
- Early Stuart confirmed to have reached their spawning grounds in the Stuart River nursery.
- After an Early Stuart Ts'eman run that substantively exceeded the forecast, we're still waiting to see what numbers will be for Early Summer Ts'eman runs, including Taseko, Bowron and Nadina.
- At this point in the season, it's possible that Early Summers are either returning later than average, or returning below the forecast. The current in-season estimate for Early Summers is 84k, with a forecast of 108k. We will report more on Early Summers once we have more details.
- Early indication of Summer returns, including Late Stuart, Stellako, Quesnel, and Chilko, in the marine area. We are still a few weeks away from most Summers reaching Tŝilhqot'in Territory (normal for this time of year).
- TNG Fisheries Monitors have reported that Early Summer Ts'eman, including Taseko, are now entering the Chilcotin Watershed in low numbers.
- Ts'eman fisheries remain closed until we have more info on Early Summer and Summer Ts'eman.

Environmental conditions:

- Higher water temperatures earlier in the season, but temps are now just a bit above average, and are forecast to drop to average. If temps drop as expected, salmon shouldn't be adversely impacted.
- Discharge levels are tracking significantly below average (lowest levels since 1990); this creates good conditions for natural passage at Big Bar.
- Thanks to the work done at Big Bar, both Jaŝ and Ts'eman have been able to pass through without delay over the last several weeks.

Key considerations for the 2021 fishing season:

- Low forecasted returns for Ts'eman (sockeye) and Jaŝ (Chinook); however, news remains positive about the Early Stuart Ts'eman 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.
- 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.
- 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:

- The temporary Tŝilhqot'in Jaŝ (Chinook) fishery ended on July 30 at 6pm.
- At this time, fisheries are closed for both Jaŝ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (Sockeye).
- TNG Fisheries, senior staff, and Tŝilhqot'in Leadership are actively discussing potential fisheries openings for Ts'eman (sockeye).
- TNG Fisheries staff, Fraser First Nations, and DFO are meeting weekly to exchange information and discuss potential openings later in the season.
- Updates on openings will be shared directly with communities by TNG Central Communications.

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 Jaš 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 Jaš (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.



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

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2021 Dates:

Wednesdays, July: 14, 21, 28

Wednesdays, August: 4, ~~11~~, 18, 25

Fisheries update call cancelled on August 11th for the T̓silhqot̓'in Nation Gathering. We hope to see you there!

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

For questions please contact TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy
rbillyboy@tsilhqotin.ca • 250-392-3918

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 T̓silhqot̓'in Territory and other parts of the upper Fraser, decisions about 2021 community fisheries openings and closures are made by T̓silhqot̓'in Leadership, and also by DFO. Fisheries opening and closure notices are shared broadly with communities by TNG central communications.

Dipnet fishing for Jaś (Chinook) at Farwell Canyon

