



TNG FISHERIES

The latest information important to T̓silhqot̓in fish and fishing activities



Photo: Upper Chilcotin brood capture fence for Big Bar Landslide emergency enhancement.

TNG Weekly Salmon Fisheries Season Update: Wednesday, August 11, 2021

The salmon season is in full swing, and it's the TNG Fisheries Department's busiest time of the year! In-season activities are well underway, including salmon assessments, catch monitoring, emergency enhancement, and water monitoring.

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 5 weeks into their annual migration, and we're seeing more summer run populations showing up in test fisheries. Chilko Ts'eman are just starting to move into the Fraser River, and should begin arriving in T̓silhqot̓in Territory in the next couple of weeks.

Jaš (Chinook) fisheries were steady during the 2-week T̓silhqot̓in opening in July, with catches confirmed in the Chilcotin, Chilko, and mainstem Fraser River.

The TNG Fisheries Department provides the best available information to T̓silhqot̓in Leadership to inform decision making on fisheries, and to keep T̓silhqot̓in people up to date. We'll continue to provide weekly updates on Wednesdays via Zoom and written TNG Fisheries Bulletins until the end of the salmon season in September.

FISHERIES TEAM

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With support from:

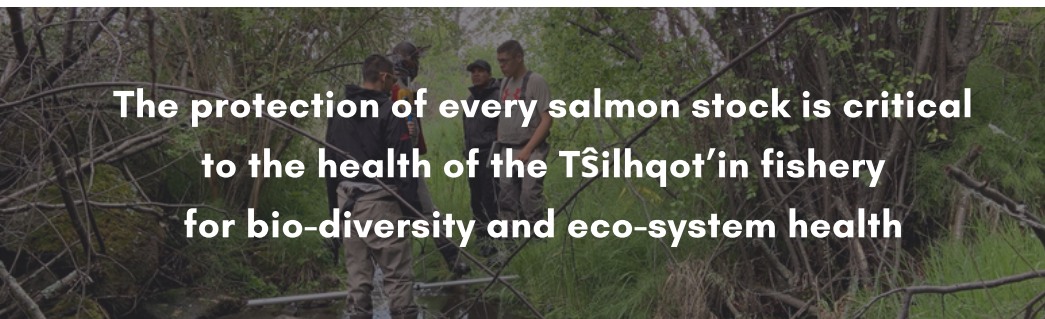
Andrea Sterling, Biologist, Water Quality and Quantity Program, Conservation Hatchery Feasibility, Emergency Enhancement;

John Hagen, Conservation Biologist, Chilcotin Steelhead;

Gottfried Pestal, Quantitative Biologist, Biological Benchmarks;

Aimee Arsenault, Communications

**The protection of every salmon stock is critical
to the health of the T̓silhqot̓in fishery
for bio-diversity and eco-system health**



Jaŝ (Chinook)

- Confirmed steady passage of Jaŝ through Big Bar.
- Tŝilhqot'in members had Jaŝ catches in the Chilcotin, Chilko, and Fraser mainstem during the 2-week fisheries opening in July.
- TNG Fisheries work is complete on emergency enhancement for Upper Chilcotin Jaŝ.
- Now starting our in-season spawning ground assessments for Jaŝ throughout Tŝilhqot'in Territory; we'll report the results during our weekly updates.

Ts'eman (Sockeye):

Early Stuart (earliest run):

- Near peak spawning timing at the spawning grounds in Stuart River; the run is basically complete.
- The in-season run size of 69,000 is significantly higher than the pre-season estimate of 18,000—good news!
- Still a conservation concern, but a much better run size than expected.

Early Summer (includes Taseko, Bowron, and Nadina):

- Test fisheries indicate early summers might be slightly later than expected; if not, the run size will be less than the forecast of 108,000.
- Current in-season estimate for all early summers is 93,000, of which Taseko is only a small portion.
- Emergency enhancement plans for at risk Taseko Ts'eman (September 8-15).
- Taseko Ts'eman are now in Tŝilhqot'in Territory in small numbers, and are a conservation concern. Ts'eman fisheries remain closed, and we're exploring harvest opportunities for the stronger Chilko Ts'eman run (more info below).

Summer (includes Chilko, Stellako, Quesnel, and Late Stuart):

- Now at the mid-point of the summer run entering the Fraser River; marine test fisheries indicate summers are tracking a bit below forecast with all 4 stocks combined.
- Forecast for Chilko is 300,000; Chilko is showing to be the strongest of all Fraser Ts'eman stocks in 2021, and appears to be at or above forecast—good news!
- Most Chilko Ts'eman are still in the marine environment, en route to the Fraser River. Most are expected to arrive in the Lower Fraser in the next several days; more detailed run size information will be available at that time.
- Most summers are still a couple of weeks away from reaching Tŝilhqot'in Territory (normal for this time of year).
- We're now focused on the summer Ts'eman return for harvest opportunities.
- TNG is partnering with DFO on a SONAR assessment program for Chilko Jaŝ and Ts'eman, which begins this week; Gerald William and Winston Bambrick are a key part of this program.

Environmental conditions:

- Water temperatures were higher earlier in the season, and are forecasted to stay above average, but not extreme.
- Discharge levels holding steady below average (lowest levels since 1991), so far resulting in good conditions for natural passage at Big Bar.
- Thanks to discharge levels and the work done at Big Bar, both Jaŝ and Ts'eman continue to pass through without delay.

At this time, fisheries are closed for both Jaŝ (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.

TNG Fisheries Department Activities

TNG Fisheries Department 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 Upper Chilcotin JaꞤ and Taseko Ts'eman
- Territory-wide water monitoring (station installations were completed in late July and are now active!)

We're receiving and analyzing in-season salmon information from various sources (e.g. TNG Fisheries assessments including catch monitoring, Pacific Salmon Commission, DFO).

TNG Fisheries staff, Fraser First Nations, and DFO are meeting weekly to exchange information and discuss potential openings later in the season.

Current assessment activities:

- Installation of SONAR in the Lower Chilcotin is complete
- Phase 1 of SONAR installation in the Taseko is complete; phase 2 starts August 17
- Installation of telemetry stations to track radio tagged JaꞤ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) is complete



Updates on fisheries openings will be shared directly with T̕ilhqot̕in communities by TNG Central Communications

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.

Brood capture for Upper Chilcotin emergency enhancement was successful, with 4 females and 6 males captured

Photo: Setting up the Upper Chilcotin brood capture fence for Big Bar Landslide emergency enhancement.



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

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**

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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 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 Jaš (Chinook) at Farwell Canyon

