



TNG FISHERIES

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



T̓silhqot̓'in Council of Chiefs request voluntary measures to protect at-risk Ja̓ (Chinook)

On July 15, 2022, TNG issued a Ja̓ (Chinook) Harvest Notice on behalf of the T̓silhqot̓'in Council of Chiefs that requests that fishers voluntarily follow 2 limited measures to protect extremely vulnerable early timed Ja̓ that spawn in the Little Chilcotin system.

1) **For the full fishing season:** Please do not fish for Ja̓ (Chinook) in the **LITTLE CHILCOTIN SYSTEM** above the Chilko/Chilcotin junction.

2) **July 15 to August 1:** Please release any Ja̓ (Chinook) caught on the **CHILCOTIN MAINSTEM** between the Fraser River and the Chilko/Chilcotin junction.

These measures will help at-risk early-timed Ja̓ populations 1) pass safely through the Chilcotin mainstem on their way to their spawning grounds; and 2) protect the few that make it to their spawning grounds in the Little Chilcotin system.

Why are protective measures for early-timed Ja̓ (Chinook) so important this year?

Very low returns of Ja̓ from the ocean in 2022:

- Current information indicates that Ja̓ populations returning to the Upper Fraser (including the T̓silhqot̓'in Territory) may return at some of the lowest levels ever recorded.
- In particular, the Upper Chilcotin Ja̓ population is already considered to be at very high risk of extirpation (local loss of population).
 - In both 2019 and 2020, not enough spawners returned to sustain the population for the future (less than 20 spawners counted both years).
 - TNG Fisheries conducted **emergency enhancement** (hatchery) work on Upper Chilcotin Ja̓ in 2021 as a conservation priority. TNG Fisheries staff are currently implementing 2022 brood collection for hatchery rearing due to the risk of extirpation.



Carl Siwallace and Brendan Wright doing brood collection with the TNG crew (hired by UFFCA).



Setting up weirs for Upper Chilcotin Ja̓ (Chinook) adult brood collection for emergency enhancement. Winston and Gerald worked with Carl Siwallace, Brendan Wright, and the Big Bar Enhancement Team.



TNG Fisheries worked with UFFCA and DFO to release approx. 14,000 Upper Chilcotin Ja̓ (Chinook) fry by helicopter on May 9, 2022 for emergency enhancement.

FISHERIES TEAM

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With regular support from:
Andrea Sterling, Biologist, Water Quality and Quantity Program, Conservation Hatchery Feasibility, Emergency Enhancement; and **Aimee Arsenault**, Communications.

High spring run-off in the Fraser blocks earliest returning Jaŝ (Chinook):

- Since early June, water levels in the Fraser River mainstem have been extremely high.
- The earliest Jaŝ populations to return to the Fraser have been in the Fraser system for several weeks.
- At these water levels, most Jaŝ can't currently swim upstream along their migration route to reach their spawning grounds and **have been using up limited energy reserves for weeks** while waiting for water levels to drop.
- **This includes the two earliest populations that return to the Tŝilhqot'in Territory** – the Lower Chilcotin population and the already at-risk Upper Chilcotin population. Both return to the **Little Chilcotin system** to spawn.
- **Very few fish from these early-timed Jaŝ populations are expected to make it back to their spawning grounds this year – a critical conservation concern.**

In summary:

- Due to a combination of very low abundance from the ocean and current high flows in the Fraser, **very few early-timed Jaŝ (Chinook) have been able to migrate through the Fraser system.**
- Early timed Upper and Lower Chilcotin Jaŝ have already been in the Fraser system for an extended period, burning up critical energy needed to reach their spawning grounds in the Little Chilcotin.
- **It is a high conservation priority to protect the few Jaŝ that are currently making their way back through the Chilcotin mainstem to their spawning grounds in the Little Chilcotin system.**
- The requested limited measures provide protection to these two specific stocks by providing:
 - A **short protective window of time** (July 15–August 1) to allow these early-timed Jas to pass through the Chilcotin mainstem and make it back to their spawning grounds.
 - **Protection for the few fish that make it back to their spawning grounds** in the Little Chilcotin system.

Tŝilhqot'in Jaŝ (Chinook) Fishery:

We anticipate that current very high water levels will come down later in the season, allowing later-timed Jaŝ (Chinook) runs to return to Tŝilhqot'in Territory. This would support a near-typical Tŝilhqot'in Jaŝ fishery after August 1.

Ts'eman (Sockeye) In-Season Update

- It is early in the Ts'eman season. Early Stuart, the earliest timed run, have now moved into the Fraser River.
- Initial information on Early Stuart shows a good ocean return for this stock. However, Ts'eman are also facing migration/passage barriers due to extremely high water levels on the Fraser.
- Ts'eman returning to the Chilcotin (early summers and summers) will not be in the system for a few more weeks; this provides time for water levels to drop.
- TNG Fisheries will continue to monitor in-season information on abundance (how many are returning from the ocean) and passage issues daily. We will provide updated information in our weekly bulletins.

Tŝilhqot'in Ts'eman (Sockeye) Fishery:

Though the forecast is highly uncertain, current information indicates that there will be enough Chilko Ts'eman (sockeye) to support a sustainable Tŝilhqot'in Ts'eman fishery this year.

TNG Fisheries Weekly Updates

For weekly updates on the status of Tŝilhqot'in salmon populations and returns, Tŝilhqot'in fisheries, and TNG Fisheries Department activities, please see our weekly TNG Fisheries updates at www.tsilhqotin.ca/fisheries and on the TNG Facebook page.

For questions please contact TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy

Email: rbillyboy@tsilhqotin.ca / Tel: 250-392-3918

PLEASE SEE THE JULY 15 JAŝ (CHINOOK) HARVEST NOTICE AND MAP BELOW



Jâs (Chinook) Harvest Notice

July 15, 2022

The T̂silhqot'in Council of Chiefs request voluntary compliance with limited measures to protect extremely vulnerable Chinook populations.

Very high water in the Fraser is causing extreme stress for early timed Chinook that return to the Little Chilcotin system. Very few fish may make it back to spawn.

We can all help protect these at-risk Chinook populations for the future by allowing them to safely return to their spawning grounds.

Please follow these limited measures:

- 1. For the full fishing season:** Please **do not fish for Chinook in the LITTLE CHILCOTIN SYSTEM** above the Chilko/Chilcotin junction.
- 2. July 15 to August 1:** Please **release any Chinook caught on the CHILCOTIN MAINSTEM** between the Fraser River and the Chilko/Chilcotin junction.

We anticipate that later-timed Chinook will support a near-typical T̂silhqot'in fishery after August 1, 2022.

Note: Current information indicates that there will be enough Chilko Ts'eman (sockeye) to support a sustainable T̂silhqot'in Ts'eman fishery this year.

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For weekly update on the status of T̂silhqot'in stocks, please see our weekly TNG Fisheries updates at www.tsilhqotin.ca/fisheries and on the TNG Facebook page.

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Jaṣ (Chinook) Harvest Notice

Voluntary Measures to Protect Early Timed Chinook - July 15, 2022

