



TNG FISHERIES

The latest information important to T̓silhqot̓in fish and fishing activities



2023 T̓silhqot̓in Fisheries Plan

On July 8th, 2023 TNG shared the **2023 T̓silhqot̓in Fisheries Plan** on behalf of the T̓silhqot̓in Council of Chiefs. The plan **prioritizes harvest opportunity**, while shaping the fishery to support T̓silhqot̓in Nation conservation goals and **help protect our most vulnerable salmon stocks**. Please see the Fisheries Plan attached (page 3).

The unique traditional T̓silhqot̓in dipnet fishery is one of the most selective and sustainable fisheries in the world, and the T̓silhqot̓in Nation is home to some of the strongest Ja̓s̓ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) stocks in the Fraser. However, our salmon are facing unprecedented challenges. This year, our returning Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman include babies from 2019 parents. That year, Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman returned in record low numbers, and were highly impacted by the Big Bar Landslide. Our highly vulnerable earliest-timed Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman stocks were hit hardest by Big Bar.

Current information indicates 2023 returns will support a **Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman fishery during the typical fishing time** in mid to late August when the stronger Chilko populations of Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman return to the Territory. 2023 is also a Dandzex (pink salmon) year!

The 2023 Fisheries Plan asks fishers to follow voluntary protection measures to help **protect highly vulnerable early-timed Chilcotin Ja̓s̓ and Taseko Ts'eman**. This includes not fishing before the scheduled time in August to allow these fish to safely reach their spawning grounds. TNG is leading emergency conservation enhancement (hatchery) efforts to rebuild and restore these endangered stocks.

2023 Fisheries Plan – Voluntary Protection Measures:

#1. Please do not fish for Ja̓s̓ in the Che̓qox system above the Chilko/Chilcotin junction for the full fishing season.

- Protect our most vulnerable Ja̓s̓ populations as they return to their spawning grounds.

#2. Please do not fish for Ja̓s̓ or Ts'eman in the Chilcotin/Chilko mainstem until the scheduled opening of **August 17 to 27, 2023**.

- Allow vulnerable early-timed Ja̓s̓ and Taseko Ts'eman to return to their spawning grounds.
- Reduce initial pressure on Ts'eman in a difficult year.
- This opening may be extended based on in-season information.

St'at'imc Fisheries Forum:

TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy attended the St'at'imc Fisheries Forum on July 18th to present the 2023 T̓silhqot̓in Fisheries Plan to other Fraser Watershed groups to communicate T̓silhqot̓in Nation's conservation priorities and our plan for the 2023 season.

2023 Technical Highlights

- 4-year-old salmon returning in 2023 are the babies from the first Big Bar year (2019). Early returning stocks — especially early-timed Chilcotin Jaš and Taseko Ts’eman — were badly impacted by Big Bar. The few fish that reached the spawning grounds were highly stressed and in poor condition, which can impact spawning success.
- Last year (2022) we were dealing with migration challenges early in the season because of high water. This year it’s the opposite — we’re facing very low water levels and hot temperatures. Hot water stresses salmon (especially Ts’eman), which can impact their ability to reach their spawning grounds.
- Fortunately, with the low water levels, combined with work done the past few years to restore passage at Big Bar, salmon passage hasn’t been a problem at Big Bar. This is good news, especially for our vulnerable early-timed Ts’eman and Jaš.
- It is still early in the salmon season — we expect to start receiving data on Chilko Ts’eman in the ocean in the next couple weeks.

FISHERIES TEAM

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

Responding to Crisis, Leading Recovery

TNG is leading recovery initiatives to rebuild our most vulnerable salmon stocks. We’ve been working on **Emergency Conservation Enhancement** since 2020. We conducted fry releases in May 2023 by helicopter for Upper Chilcotin Jaš and Taseko Ts’eman.



Fisheries Coordinator Leonard English and Biologist Pete Nicklin conducting the Upper Chilcotin Jaš fry release. Over 38,000 fry were released on May 10, 2023.



TNG Fisheries crew with technicians from DFO and UFFCA conducting the Taseko Ts’eman fry release. Over 38,000 fry were released on May 24, 2023.

After several years of technical feasibility work, engineering design, site preparation, and hatchery construction, we completed installation of TNG’s **Salmon Conservation Hatchery** in February 2023 — a key milestone in our staged approach to developing long-term hatchery capacity in the Territory. We’re now conducting systems testing and staff training, and are on track for full operation for egg incubation and rearing by September 2023.



Fisheries Coordinator Leonard English and new Hatchery Manager Wayne Levesque at the TNG Hatchery.



Building new skills: Fisheries Technician Winston Bambrick and Hatchery Manager Wayne Levesque training at Snootli Hatchery in April 2023 (left), Dunn Creek Hatchery in May 2023 (middle), and Takla Lake Hatchery in June 2023 (right, with Biologist Cory Williamson).



TNG Fisheries Weekly Updates

For weekly updates on the status of Tšilhqot’in salmon, Tšilhqot’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: rbillyboy@tsilhqotin.ca / Tel: 250-392-3918



TŚILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

2023 Tśilhqot'in Nation Salmon Fisheries Plan

July 8, 2023

The Tśilhqot'in Council of Chiefs requests voluntary compliance with limited measures to protect extremely vulnerable Jaś (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) populations this year.

Requested Voluntary Protection Measures:

#1. Please do not fish for Jaś in the Cheźqox system above the Chilko/Chilcotin junction for the full fishing season.

- Protect the most vulnerable Jaś populations as they return to their spawning grounds.

#2. Please do not fish for Jaś or Ts'eman in the Chilcotin/Chilko mainstem until the scheduled opening of August 17 to 27, 2023 (this opening may be extended based on in-season information).

- Allow vulnerable early-timed Jaś and Taseko Ts'eman to return to their spawning grounds.
- Reduce initial pressure on Ts'eman in a difficult year.

PLEASE NOTE: Fishery opening dates may be adjusted in-season as more information becomes available, and under extreme circumstances, emergency conservation measures may be implemented.

Reminder: 2023 is a Dandzex (pink salmon) year!

We can all help protect our at-risk Jaś and Ts'eman populations for the future by allowing them to safely return to their spawning grounds.

For weekly updates on the status of Tśilhqot'in stocks, please see our weekly TNG Fisheries updates (starting the week of July 17) at www.tsilhqotin.ca/fisheries and on the TNG Facebook page.

**For questions please contact TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy
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