



TNG FISHERIES

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

2023 T̄silhqot̄'in Fisheries Plan

On July 8th, 2023 TNG shared the 2023 T̄silhqot̄'in Fisheries Plan on behalf of the T̄silhqot̄'in Council of Chiefs. The plan prioritizes harvest opportunity while shaping the fishery to help protect our most vulnerable salmon stocks. Please see the Fisheries Plan on page 4.

The plan schedules harvest opportunity during what is typically the best fishing time, August 17 to 27, when the stronger Chilko populations of Jās̄ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) return to the Territory; current information indicates 2023 returns will support Jās̄ and Ts'eman fisheries during that time. 2023 is a Dandzex (pink salmon) year, which may also provide fishing opportunity.

The plan also supports T̄silhqot̄'in Nation conservation goals and asks fishers to follow voluntary measures to help protect highly vulnerable early-timed Chilcotin Jās̄ and Taseko Ts'eman. This year, our returning Jās̄ and Ts'eman include babies from 2019 parents, which were severely impacted by the Big Bar Landslide. Our highly vulnerable earliest-timed stocks were hit hardest by Big Bar and high water levels early in the season. TNG is leading emergency conservation enhancement (hatchery) efforts to rebuild and restore these endangered stocks.

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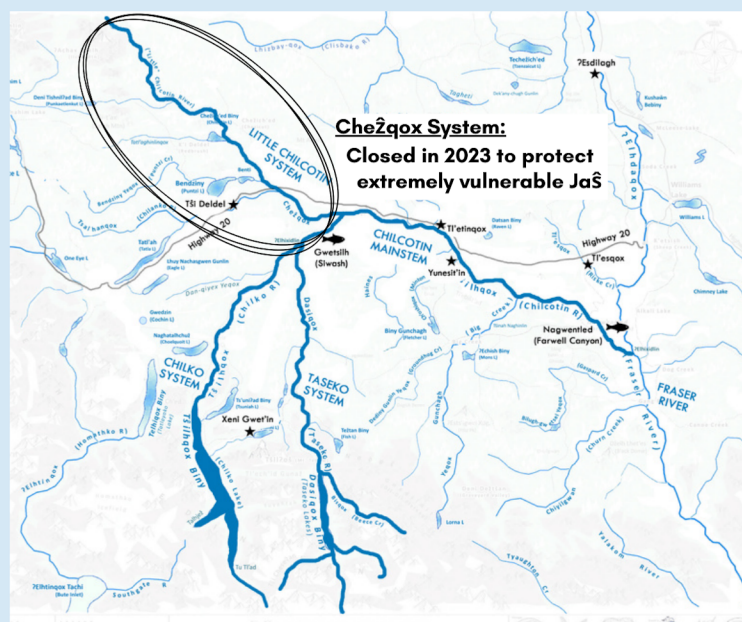
2023 Fisheries Plan – Voluntary Protection Measures:

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

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

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

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



Ts'eman (Sockeye) Update

- Our new TNG-led Fraser/Chilcotin junction SONAR confirmed that **highly vulnerable early-timed Taseko Ts'eman** arrived in the Territory earlier than expected. Typically, 70–80% of this year's run would be from the 2019 parent year—so this is encouraging, as no spawners were confirmed in 2019 due to the Big Bar Landslide. We will soon have more detailed information on how many Taseko Ts'eman have returned to the system.
- As in past years, we will be conducting emergency hatchery enhancement to rebuild highly vulnerable **Taseko Ts'eman** (collecting brood stock [eggs and milt], fertilizing eggs, and raising babies in hatcheries to increase their chance of survival).
- As in the past few years, **Chilko Ts'eman** are by far the strongest returning Ts'eman population in the Fraser.
- **Chilko Ts'eman** numbers are increasing in marine test fisheries and Lower Fraser SONAR assessments, with significantly earlier timing than expected.
- While it's still too soon to predict what the **Chilko Ts'eman** return will be, current information indicates an ocean return in the range of 250,000. Based on this current estimate, we are cautiously optimistic that the return will be at a level that will support a robust population in the future and support a sustainable T̓ilhqot'in fishery. We will continue to update the estimate with new information each week.
- TNG Fisheries and DFO completed installation of the Chilko SONAR last week, which will provide more information about how many **Chilko Ts'eman** are returning to the Chilko system.

Ja̓ (Chinook) Update

- Ja̓ passage has been very good throughout the Fraser, including at Hell's Gate and Big Bar.
- Our TNG-led SONAR assessments at the Fraser/Chilcotin junction and in the Lower Chilcotin have confirmed presence of **highly vulnerable early-timed Chilcotin Ja̓** in the Chilcotin system. This is great news, as we have extreme conservation concerns about these fish — because of general declines in Fraser Ja̓ populations (particularly early-timed stocks), and Big Bar impacts.
- Starting tomorrow (Thursday) the TNG Fisheries team will conduct aerial assessments (helicopter surveys) in the Chilcotin system, which will provide more information about how many **Chilcotin Ja̓** have returned.
- We are now set up for our third year of emergency enhancement for endangered **Upper Chilcotin Ja̓**. Brood stock collection is scheduled to conclude by August 10.
- Our TNG-led Chilko SONAR has also confirmed that later-timed **Chilko Ja̓** are now present in the Chilko system. Our mark and recapture program also begins this week, which will provide more information on the status of Chilko Ja̓.

Photo: Brood stock collection fence for emergency conservation (hatchery) enhancement of endangered Upper Chilcotin Ja̓.



Environmental Conditions

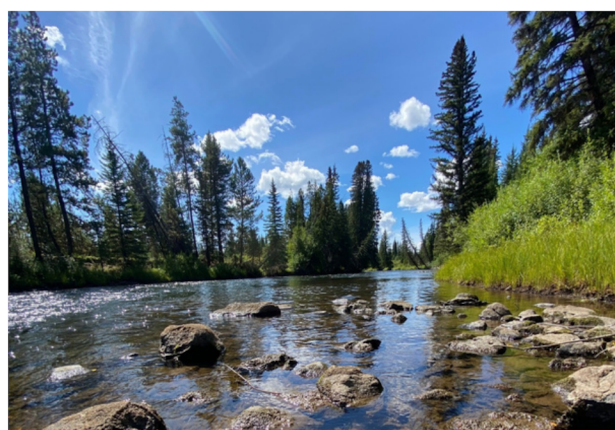
- We continue to closely monitor water temperature and water levels/flow conditions within and outside T̄silhqot̄in Territory.
- Temperatures in the Fraser River are only slightly above average, which can be slightly (but not extremely) stressful migration conditions for salmon in the Fraser.
- Despite high temperatures experienced throughout BC earlier in the season, our TNG's Territory-wide water monitoring program shows that temperatures and flows in key nursery/spawning areas within T̄silhqot̄in Territory remain within normal range, and are below the threshold that creates stress for salmon (particularly Ts'eman). This is good news, as salmon returning to T̄silhqot̄in Territory will get a break from the higher temperatures on the Fraser once they enter the Chilcotin system en route to their spawning grounds.
- We are now reaching peak temperatures for the season, which are forecast to begin decreasing as the days get shorter.
- Flow levels in the Fraser remain well below average. Jās and Ts'eman have been migrating very quickly through the Fraser, and there have been no migration/passage barriers (including at Big Bar). This is good news for the highly vulnerable early-timed Taseko Ts'eman and Chilcotin Jās populations that spawn in T̄silhqot̄in Territory.
- Elsewhere in the Fraser watershed, very low flow conditions are raising concerns for nursery/spawning systems (e.g., extreme drought conditions in the Thompson, record low water levels in Shuswap Lake).



TNG Fisheries Technician Winston Bambrick with UFFCA technicians Carl Siwallace and Brendan Wright installing the brood collection fence for emergency enhancement of Upper Chilcotin Jās.



The Upper Chilcotin brood collection fence viewed from the air.



The Upper Chilcotin River.

TNG FISHERIES WEEKLY UPDATES

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

For questions please contact TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy:

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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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