



Gitksan Watershed Authorities

In-Season Update

JULY 31, 2018

Food Fishery Update

Sockeye:

→Gitksan Catch Update:

As of this week, the Gitksan have jointly caught 8,816 Sockeye in the Drift net and Set net fisheries. This catch is the result of a total effort of 1,605 recorded sets.

→Updated Forecast:

As of July 29th, the Tye Test Fishery has caught 885,190 Sockeye near the mouth of the Skeena. Based on average run timing, over 61% of the fish have come through the Tye and the forecast for Total Return to Canada (TRTC) is now listed as **1.34 million Sockeye** based on recent average timing (+/- approximately 300K to account for uncertainty in the estimate). According to the Integrate Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) and TRTC forecasts, both the Recreational and Commercial openings have been triggered to open. Last week there was a commercial 2-day opening on Sockeye, yielding an approximate total catch of 17,400. This week there is another opening beginning July 29, with a one day extension so far, for which catch numbers have not yet been reported.

Chinook:

→Gitksan Catch Update:

To date, The Gitksan have caught 4,325 Chinook, and 1,268 Jack Chinook in the Set net fishery alone. On July 26th, GWA did our first of a series of Chinook spawner counts by helicopter of the Kispiox River. We counted approximately 825 Chinook; mostly holding. Recent declines and added pressure on Skeena Chinook make this information critical for informed management. Our most recent full counts were in 2010 which had approximately 2000 Chinook in early August.

Fishery Recommendations / Notice

With commercial openings on the coast, there is now potential for a very small in-river economic fishery. Allocations for this economic fishery are based off of Commercial catch on the coast, which have been very low due to a drastic reduction in number of Commercial fishing boats.

For the Recreational sector, DFO has proposed opening the Skeena River mainstem to retention of Coho and Pink salmon as of August 7, 2018. They claim this opening is based upon high Coho abundances in recent years, however we have argued that there is no legitimate data supporting such an opening. **The GWA does not support this recreational opening** on either species, and are especially concerned over a recognized absence in numbers and data for Coho. Although the trigger level for a recreational opening on Sockeye has been surpassed, we have yet to receive consultation from DFO on such an opening.

Our Gitksan Food Fishery for Sockeye is remaining to look healthy, with good opportunities for fishing this week. According to high catch numbers at Tye Test Fishery 8-12 days ago, the peak of the Sockeye run should be swimming through our territories in abundance this week.

We will continue to update on the forecast estimate as well as discussions with DFO regarding openings in the Recreational and Commercial sectors.

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