



Slamgeesh Salmon Program

For twenty years (2000-2019) GWA monitored environmental and biological data on Slamgeesh salmon stocks. A Mark Recapture program using two velocity barrier fykes operates from late April till the beginning of July each year estimating the smolt population, with the exception of years 2006-2008. An adult salmon fence operated from the end of July to the end of October to enumerate sockeye and coho escapements. Environmental data is also collected, including stream water levels and temperature for the spawning grounds and outlet stream, lake temperatures by depth, air temperature, and rainfall.

Enumeration by the Slamgeesh project provides the only reliable counts of adult and smolt coho and sockeye numbers from the Skeena watershed above the Babine River. This area was the most affected by the decline in coho abundance of the 1990s (Holtby, Finnegan, Chen & Peacock, 1999) and has since shown strong recovery. Application of coded wire tags to this wild coho population is still important for the analysis of exploitation rates in Canadian and Alaskan fisheries however it has been challenging to consistently capture and tag enough coho smolts. Over the past decade the program has gained more value for its upper Skeena sockeye information. Slamgeesh Lake is representative of about twelve small upper Skeena sockeye lakes and is an important indicator. The sockeye adult and smolt numbers represent the single wild upper Skeena population for determining smolt productivity and smolt to adult survival. The research station also provides a platform for further ecological studies linked to long term data sets. Currently we are working with wilp Gwininitwx to leave current infrastructure and DFO reporting, and assist to ensure sockeye spawner creek walks and environmental data collection are maintained. The wilp is planning to continue with the fence program and other initiatives in the territory.