Gitanyow Fisheries Authority

September 9, 2025

2025 Kitwanga River Salmon Enumeration Update #7

The Gitanyow Fisheries Authority (GFA) is pleased to announce that the Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration program is operational for 2025. Like in previous years, GFA will be providing regular updates on salmon escapement to the Kitwanga River (middle Skeena index) from July through to September. This year marks the 23rd consecutive year that GFA has implemented the program, which collects important in-season pacific salmon stock assessment and biological information. GFA would like to thank their 2025 funders and supporters, specifically the Gitanyow Chiefs (Gitanyow Huwilp Sustainability Fund), the Pacific Salmon Commission's Northern Endowment Fund and Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. GFA would also like to acknowledge and thank the Kitwanga Wilp Simadeeks for allowing GFA to continue to work within their traditional territory, as set out by our 2002 agreement. Updates will be distributed and posted on our website: www.gitanyowfisheries.com

Downstream view of KSEF on September 9, 2025

GFA staff installed the lower Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration Facility (KSEF) weir components from July 10-11, 2025 under slightly higher than normal water levels. The weir was fish tight by the afternoon of July 11. For 2025, we once again will be operating both a manual counting boxes and one digital video camera box with recording capabilities (DVR).

The water levels at the KSEF are currently at 0.61m (approximately 0.10m lower than the long-term average)[1] and water temperatures are higher than normal, currently fluctuating between 11-15°C. For more information on water levels and water temperature at the KSEF by day and compared to previous years, refer to the stage and temperature graphs below.

Like in previous years, the KsF (smolt fence) located at the outlet of Gitanyow Lake (~28km upstream from the KSEF) will be used again this year to count adult sockeye through an additional DVR camera system. The KsF DVR has been operational since July 2, 2025. Prior to July 2, the KsF was operated as a smolt fence and sockeye adults would have been prevented from swimming upstream undetected.

For 2025, the total sockeye return will be reported through both the KsF and the KSEF for comparison purposes and all other salmon counts will only be reported when they migrate past the KSEF.

Total salmon counts to the end of September 8, 2025:

KsF (~28km upstream from KSEF – in place before the KSEF was installed)

Sockeye= 1,027

KSEF

Sockeye= 1,159 Chinook= 904 Pink= 427,589 Chum= 215 Coho= 386

This year's **sockeye** escapement through the KSEF compares to a previous **maximum** observed to the day of 17,635 in 2010, which resulted in an overall escapement of 20,804 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 50 in 2019, which resulted in an overall escapement of 125. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga sockeye to the day (2003-2019) it is predicted that approximately **71%** of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga sockeye salmon abundance through the KSEF by day, refer to the sockeye salmon graph below.

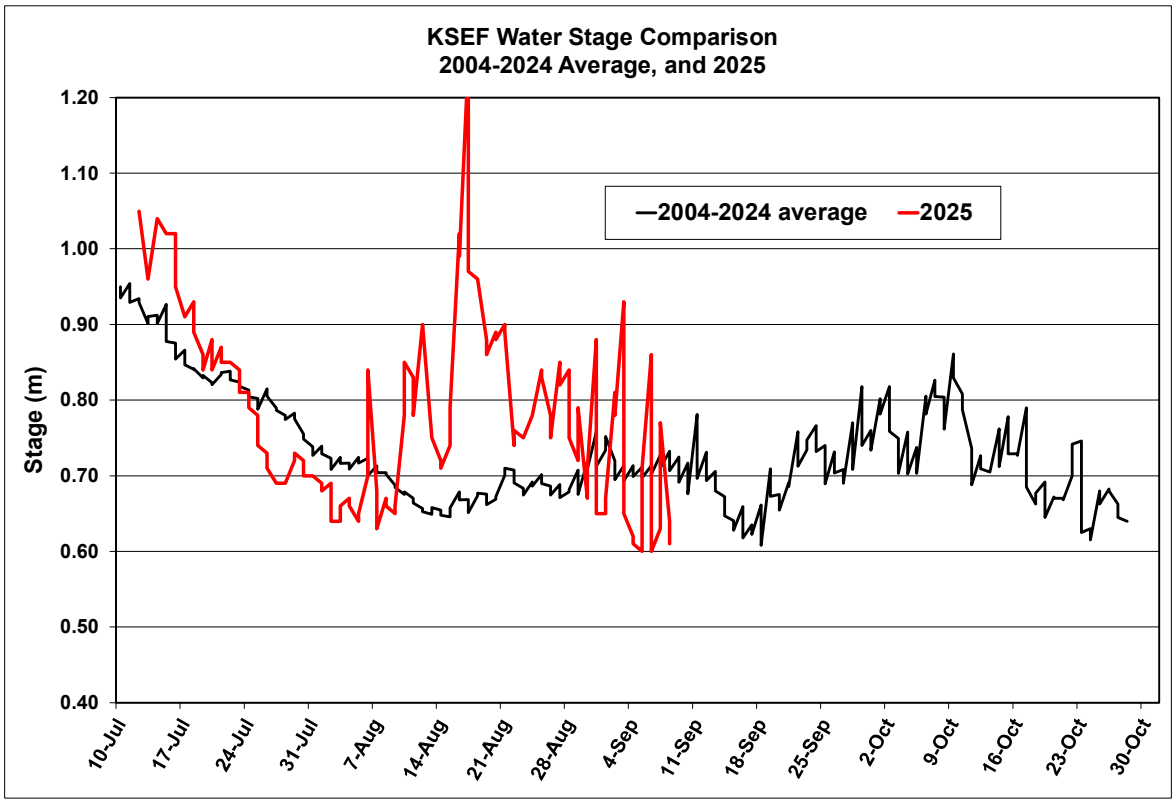
To date we have counted **904 Chinook** (plus 93 jacks) through the KSEF. This year's Chinook escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 3,224 in 2007, which resulted in an overall escapement of 3,225 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 468 in 2024, which resulted in an overall escapement of 468. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga Chinook to the day (2003 - 2019 and 2021 - 2024) it is predicted that **all** of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga Chinook salmon abundance by date, refer to the Chinook graph below.

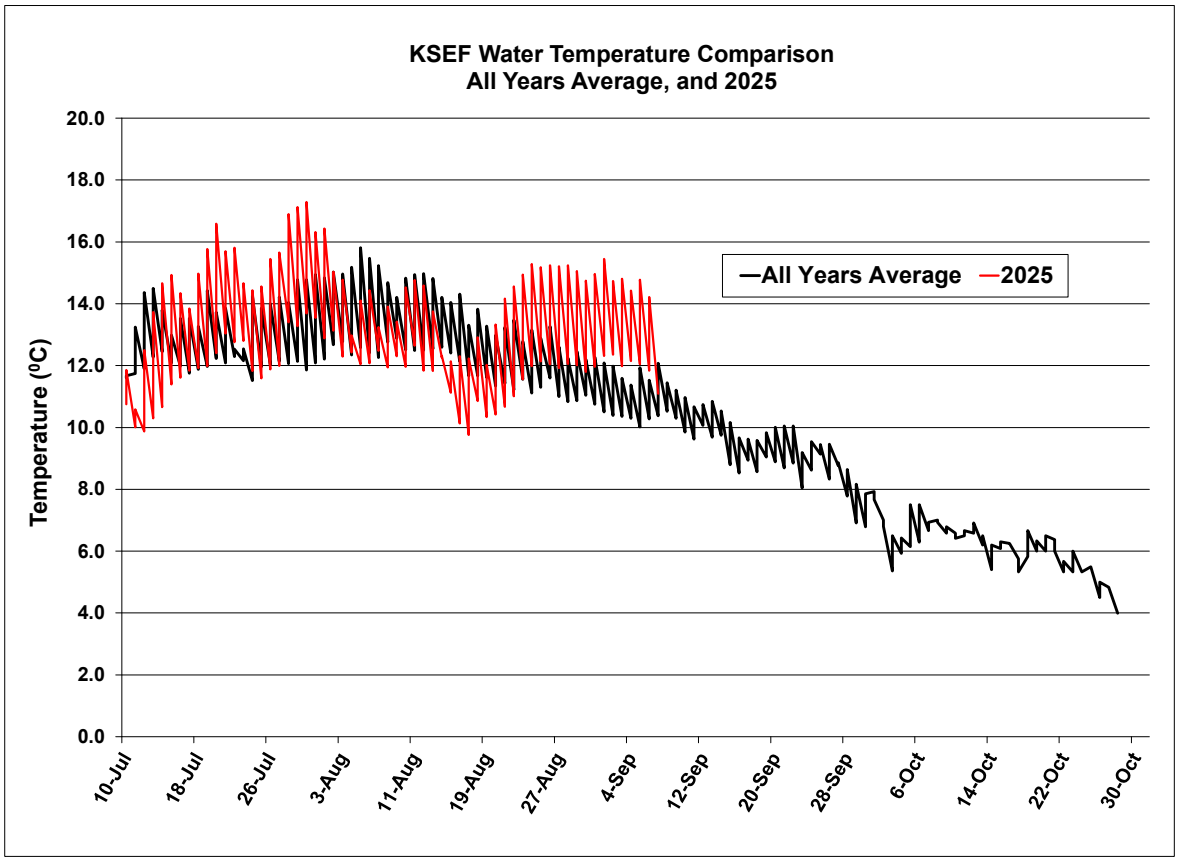
To date we have counted **427,589 pink** salmon through the KSEF. This year's odd-year pink compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 608,009 in 2023, which resulted in an overall, escapement of 653,985, and a **minimum** observed to the day of 50,007 in 2019, which resulted in an overall escapement of 52,644. Based on average run timing for pink salmon to the day (2003-2023) it is predicted that **92**% of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga odd-year pink salmon abundance by date, refer to the pink salmon graph below.

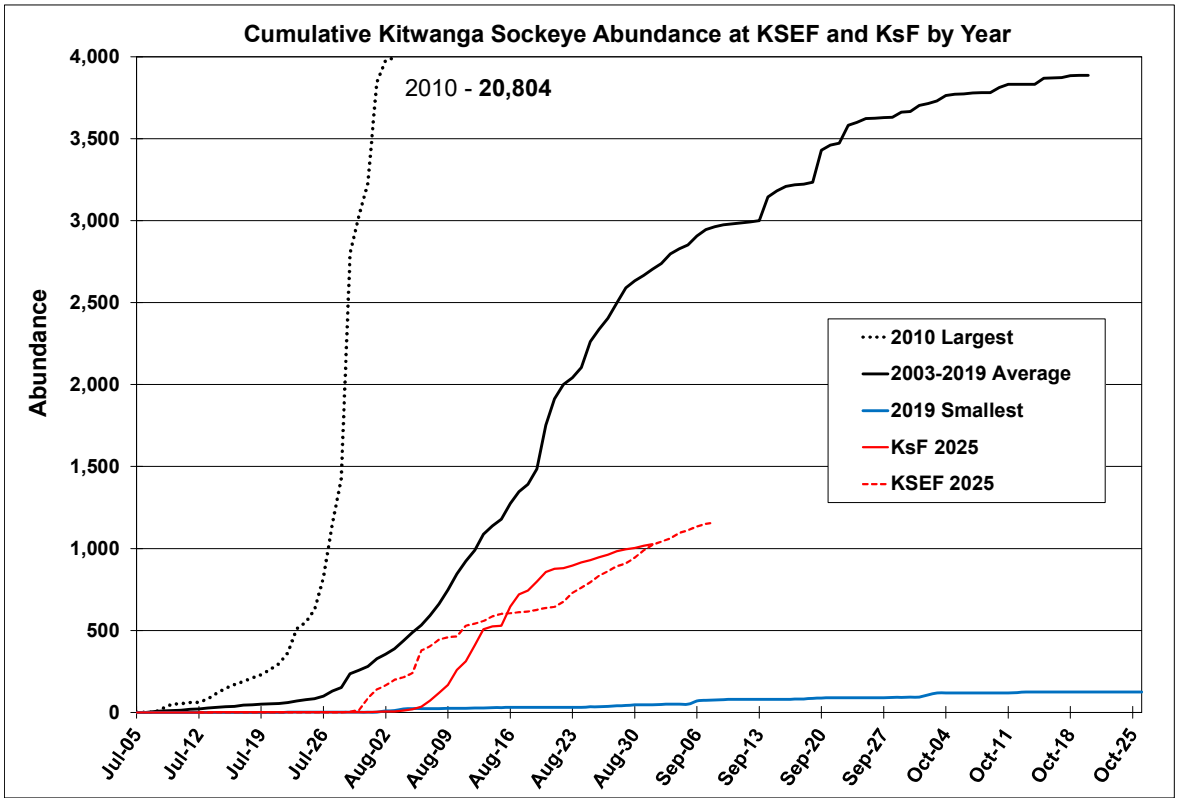
[1] Most of the large fluctuations in water levels in 2025 are due to the fence being cleared of high numbers of dead pinks.

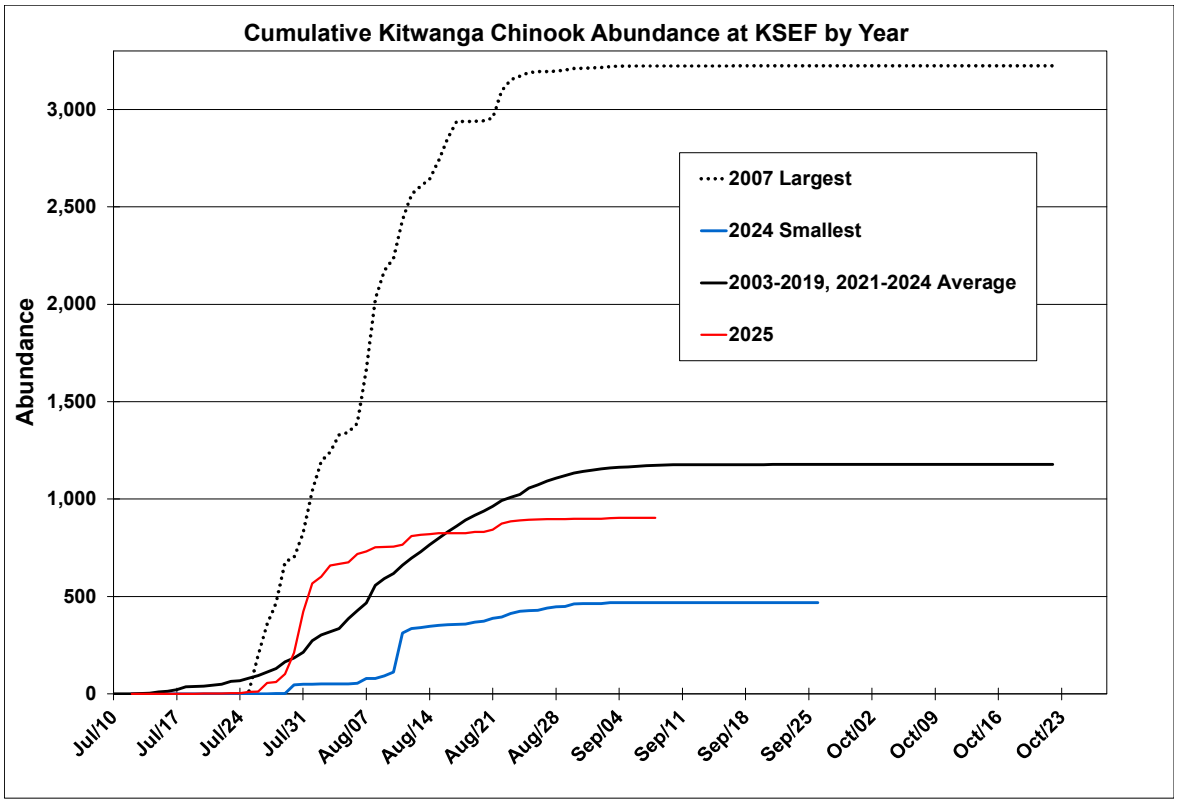
To date we have counted **215 chum** salmon through the KSEF. This year's chum escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 1,474 in 2005, which resulted in an overall escapement of 1,862 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 27 in 2008, which resulted in an overall escapement of 150. Based on average run timing for chum salmon to the day (2003-2019, 2021, 2023, 2024) it is predicted that **58%** of the run should now have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga chum salmon abundance by date, refer to the chum salmon graph below.

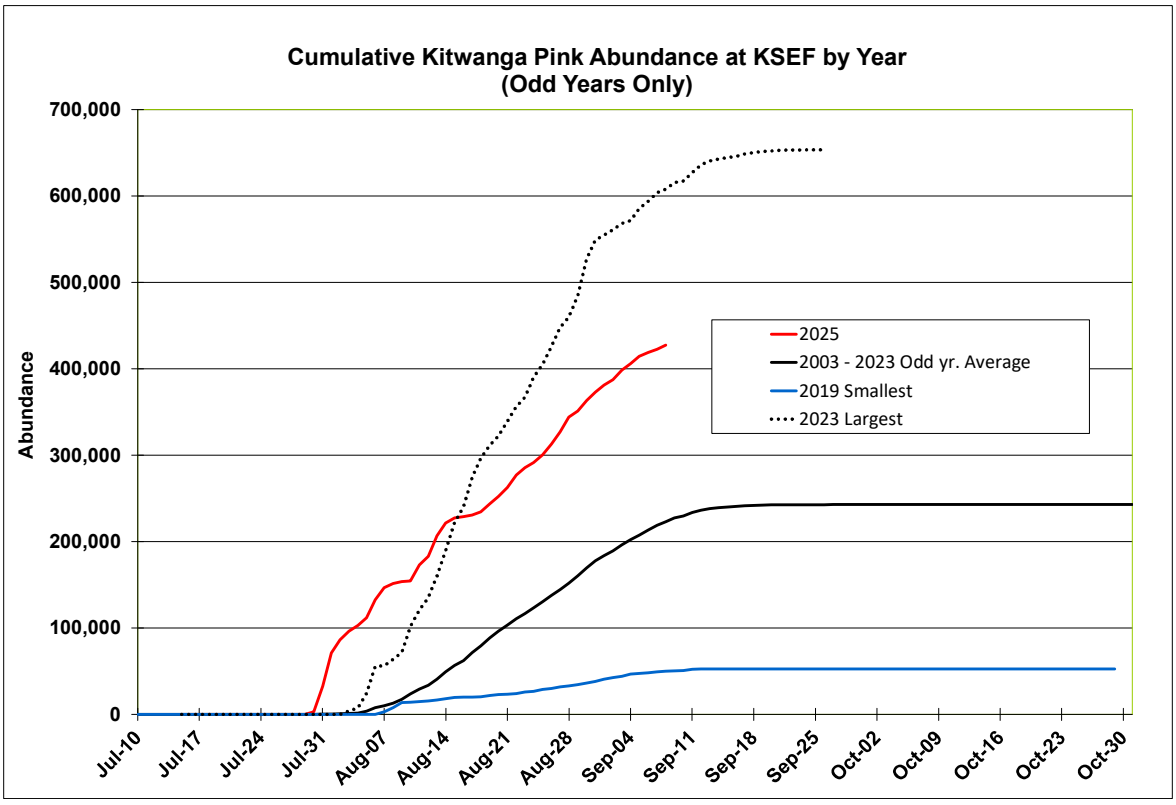
To date we have counted **386 coho** salmon through the KSEF. This year's coho escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 2.873 in 2009, which resulted in an overall escapement of 12,080 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 6 in 2018, which resulted in an overall escapement of 551. Based on average run timing for coho salmon to the day (2003-2019) it is predicted that **18**% of the run should now have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga coho salmon abundance by date, refer to the coho salmon graph below.

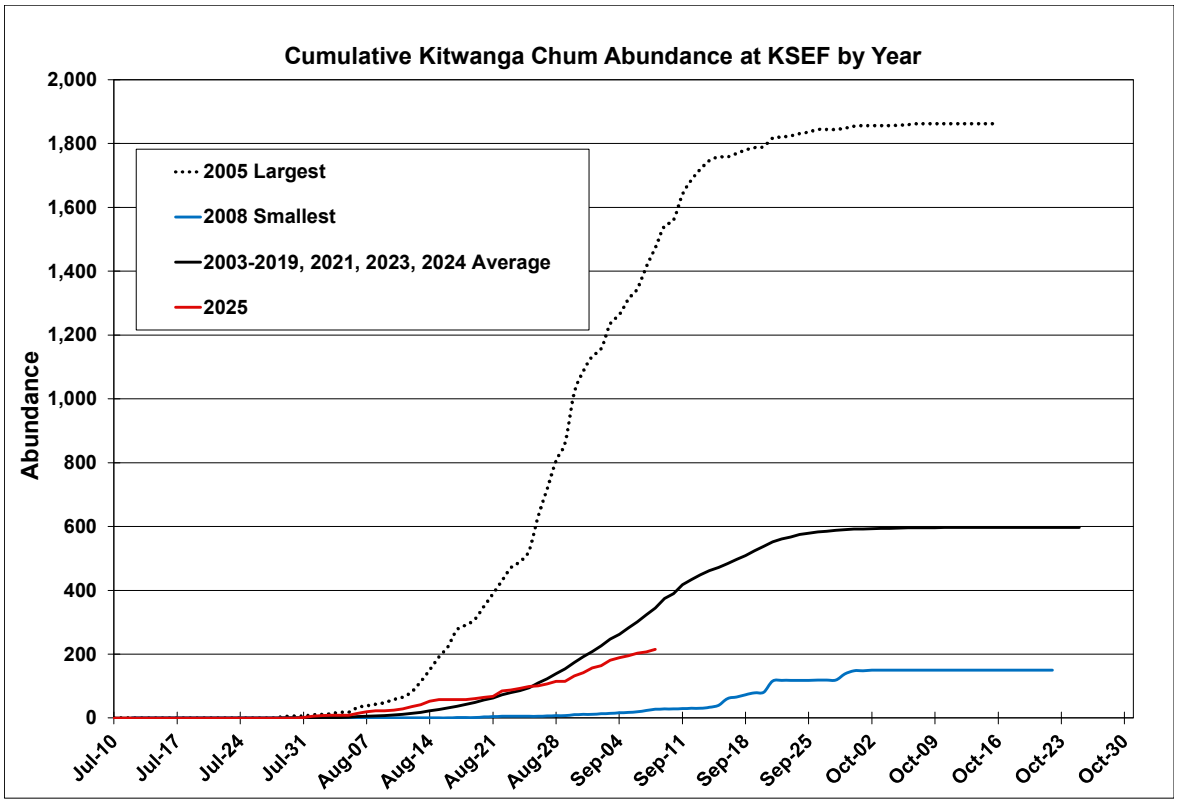


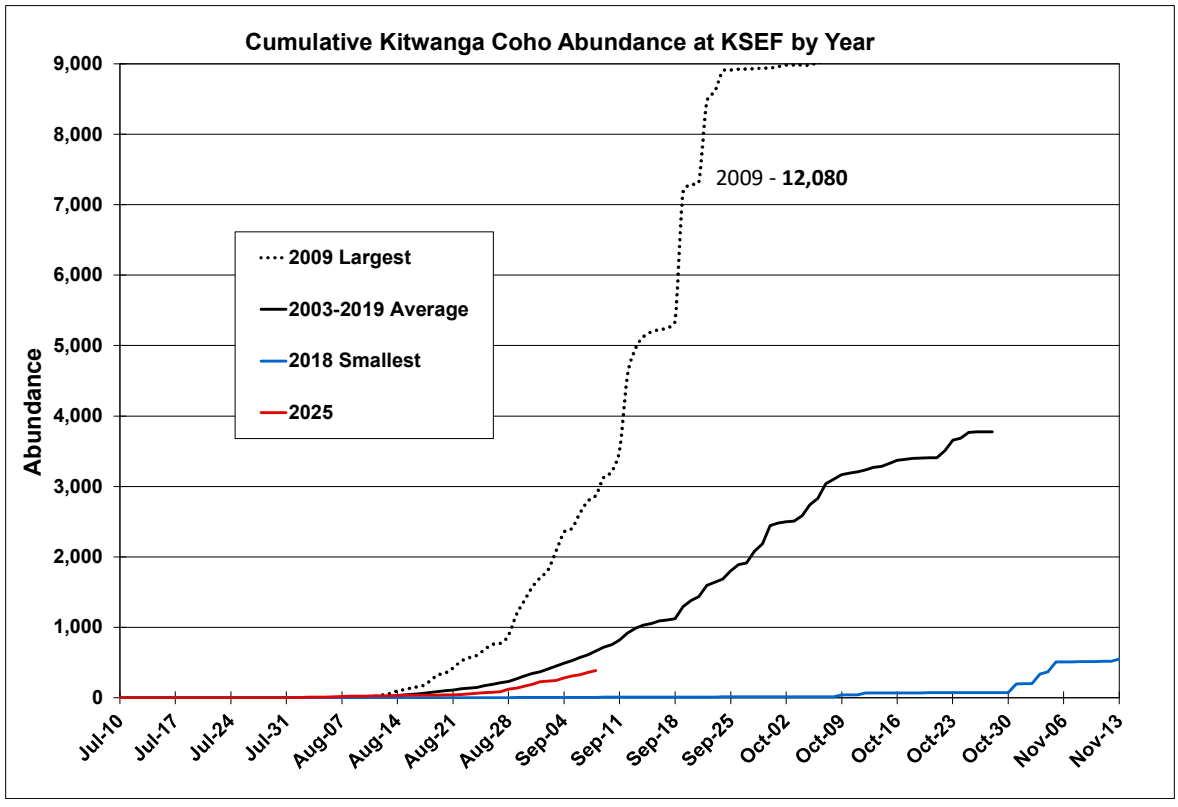

KSEF Water Temperature Comparison
All Years Average, and 2025
Temperature (°C)
20.0
18.0
16.0
14.0
12.0
10.0
8.0
6.0
4.0
2.0
0.0
All Years Average
2025
10-Jul
18-Jul
26-Jul
3-Aug
11-Aug
19-Aug
27-Aug
4-Sep
12-Sep
20-Sep
28-Sep
6-Oct
14-Oct
22-Oct
30-Oct

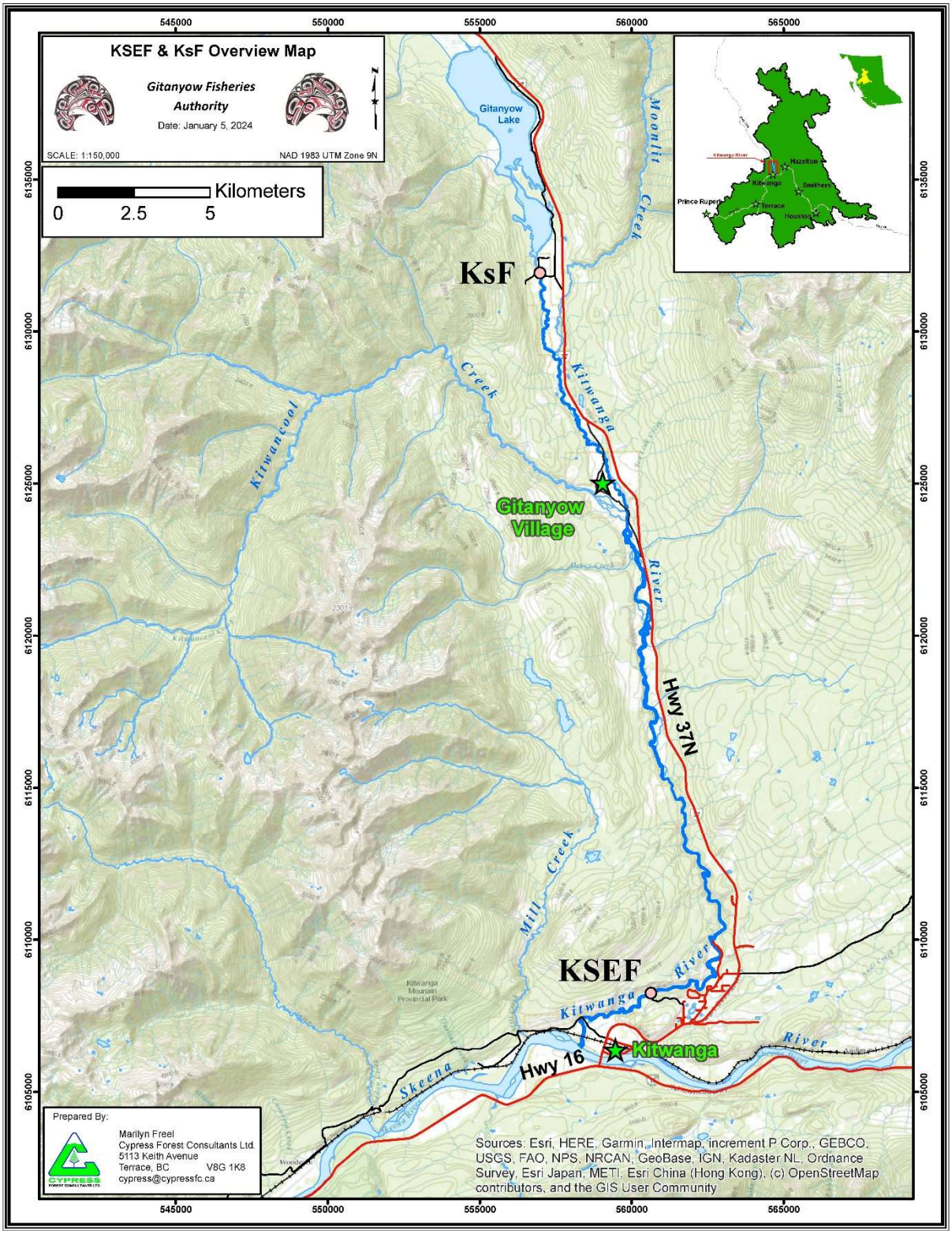

Cumulative Kitwanga Sockeye Abundance at KSEF and KsF by Year
Abundance
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
2010 - 20,804
2010 Largest
2003-2019 Average
2019 Smallest
KsF 2025
KSEF 2025
Jul-05
Jul-12
Jul-19
Jul-26
Aug-02
Aug-09
Aug-16
Aug-23
Aug-30
Sep-06
Sep-13
Sep-20
Sep-27
Oct-04
Oct-11
Oct-18
Oct-25


Cumulative Kitwanga Chinook Abundance at KSEF by Year
Abundance
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
2007 Largest
2024 Smallest
2003-2019, 2021-2024 Average
2025
Jul/10
Jul/17
Jul/24
Jul/31
Aug/07
Aug/14
Aug/21
Aug/28
Sep/04
Sep/11
Sep/18
Sep/25
Oct/02
Oct/09
Oct/16
Oct/23


Cumulative Kitwanga Pink Abundance at KSEF by Year
(Odd Years Only)
Abundance
700,000
600,000
500,000
400,000
300,000
200,000
100,000
0
2025
2003 - 2023 Odd yr. Average
2019 Smallest
2023 Largest
Jul-10
Jul-17
Jul-24
Jul-31
Aug-07
Aug-14
Aug-21
Aug-28
Sep-04
Sep-11
Sep-18
Sep-25
Oct-02
Oct-09
Oct-16
Oct-23
Oct-30


Cumulative Kitwanga Chum Abundance at KSEF by Year
Abundance
2,000
1,800
1,600
1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0
2005 Largest
2008 Smallest
2003-2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 Average
2025
Jul-10
Jul-17
Jul-24
Jul-31
Aug-07
Aug-14
Aug-21
Aug-28
Sep-04
Sep-11
Sep-18
Sep-25
Oct-02
Oct-09
Oct-16
Oct-23
Oct-30


Cumulative Kitwanga Coho Abundance at KSEF by Year
Abundance
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
2009 - 12,080
2009 Largest
2003-2019 Average
2018 Smallest
2025
Jul-10
Jul-17
Jul-24
Jul-31
Aug-07
Aug-14
Aug-21
Aug-28
Sep-04
Sep-11
Sep-18
Sep-25
Oct-02
Oct-09
Oct-16
Oct-23
Oct-30
Nov-06
Nov-13



Map of the Kitwanga River / Watershed highlighting the locations of the KSEF and KsF.