



Gitanyow *Fisheries* Authority



September 16, 2019

2019 Kitwanga River Salmon Enumeration Facility Update #9

The Gitanyow Fisheries Authority (GFA) is pleased to announce that the Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration Facility (KSEF) is operational for 2019. Like in other years GFA will be providing weekly updates on salmon escapement to the Kitwanga River (middle Skeena index) from July through to October. This year marks the 17th 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 2019 funders and supporters, specifically the Gitanyow Chiefs (Gitanyow Huwilp Sustainability Fund), the Pacific Salmon Commission and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. GFA would also like to acknowledge and thank the Gitwangak Wilp Simadeeks for allowing GFA to continue to work within their traditional territory, as set out by our 2002 agreement.

As in other years, weekly updates will be distributed and posted on our website:
www.gitanyowfisheries.com



View towards right bank of KSEF on September 16, 2019

GFA staff installed the in-river KSEF components from July 8-11, 2019 under normal water level conditions. The fence was operational (diverting fish through sample boxes) on the afternoon of July 11, which is within our usual starting time for the project.

The water level at the KSEF is currently at 0.63m, approximately 0.09m lower than the long-term average (using 2004-2017, see KSEF water stage graph below for more detail). Water temperatures in the Kitwanga River are slightly warmer for this time of year when compared with 2004-2017 averages, and are currently fluctuating between 10-13 °C. Total salmon counts to the end of **September 15, 2019** are as follows:

Sockeye = 79 Chinook = 654 Pink = 52,595 Chum = 426 Coho = 292

To date we have counted **79 sockeye** through the KSEF. This year's sockeye escapement compares to a previous **maximum** observed to the day of 17,700 in 2010, which resulted in an overall escapement of 20,804 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 228 in 2007, which resulted in an overall escapement of 240. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga sockeye to the day (2003-2018) it is predicted that approximately **72%** of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga sockeye salmon abundance by day, refer to the sockeye salmon graph below.

To date we have counted **654 Chinook** 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 585 in 2017, which resulted in an overall escapement of 585 for the year. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga Chinook to the day (2003-2018) 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.

For 2019, we once again have installed and have operational, a digital video camera recorder (DVR). The DVR camera box has been in place and operational since July 17, 2019 and has been passing Chinook successfully. As was the case last season, fish seem more comfortable moving through the camera box than through our regular sample box areas and to date approximately 80% of the Chinook and over half of the pinks enumerated through the KSEF, have been counted through the DVR camera box. A second camera box has been added to the right bank side of our fence and was providing excellent viewing for counting fish. We will continue to tweak this setup in the coming weeks. Note water clarity has improved over the last week, so we have been passing fish through the camera box once again.



View of Chinook and pink salmon through new camera box on right bank of KSEF

To date we have counted **52,595 pink** salmon through the KSEF. This year's odd year pink escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 552,182 in 2009, which resulted in an overall escapement of 559,865 and the **minimum** observed to the day of

67,555 in 2011, which resulted in overall escapements of 68,410. Based on average run timing for pink salmon to the day (2003-2017) it is predicted that approximately **99%** 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.

To date we have counted **426 chum salmon** through the KSEF. This year's chum escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 1,758 in 2005, which resulted in an overall escapement of 1,862 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 40 in 2008, which resulted in an overall escapement of 150 for the year. Based on average run timing for chum salmon to the day (2003-2018) it is predicted that approximately **80%** 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 **292 coho salmon** through the KSEF. This year's coho escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 5,195 in 2009, which resulted in an overall escapement of 12,080 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 10 in 2018, which resulted in an overall escapement of 551 for the year. Based on average run timing for coho salmon to the day (2003-2018) it is predicted that approximately **28%** 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.







