

Kitsumkalum Fishing Plan

- Kitsumkalum members targeting Chinook at the mouth of the Skeena will be using 7" or 8" mesh gillnets.
- Minimum mesh restriction is 7"
- Sockeye caught as bycatch in these fisheries may be retained, although should be released if in good condition.
- Kitsumkalum will be targeting Chinook, Pink, Coho, and Steelhead in-river using fish wheel, rod and reel and gillnet.
 - **No Sockeye bycatch will be allowed in these fisheries.** Chum will not be targeted, and released alive where possible.

Kitsumkalum is proposing Area and Time closures of the recreational fishery in order to facilitate First Nation harvest opportunities and minimize conflict with recreational fishermen.

Kitsumkalum has met with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) and representatives from the sports fishing sector to inform all groups and agencies and work together for conservation of Sockeye and enforcement of **section 35(1)**, the Constitution Act, 1982.



2017

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SOCKEYE FISHING PLAN ON THE SKEENA RIVER

Questions? Please Contact:

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KITSUMKALUM FISH & WILDLIFE



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The Skeena First Nations Technical Committee has proposed significant changes for the 2017 Skeena Sockeye Fishing Plan, due to the expected low Sockeye returns for the season.

Quick Facts:

- The 2017 fishing season will start with a closure for fisheries targeting Sockeye from the Skeena River.
- The Sockeye fisheries closure is expected to last until stocks reach 600,000 determined by the Tye Test.
- It is unlikely that any decision to open the Sockeye fishery would be made before **July 26, 2017**.
- This closure for fisheries targeting Sockeye is in effect for all fisheries on the Skeena.
- First Nations along the Skeena will develop fishing plans for the harvest of non-Sockeye salmon as part of the Food Fish for their communities.

What about Aboriginal Rights?

Aboriginal rights, like treaty rights, are recognized and affirmed by **Section 35** of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Supreme Court of Canada has held that this

provision protects a spectrum of different kinds of rights, including legal recognition of customary practices such as marriage, and the site-specific exercise of food harvesting and other rights.

The trigger level for First Nations **Section 35(1)** fisheries closure will be increased from 400,000 to 600,000. This number has been decided upon by the Skeena First Nations Technical Committee with a goal of protecting future Sockeye returns in the Skeena.

- Sockeye fisheries may re-open with a specific recommended catch ceiling that may be less than required to fully meet First Nation needs.
- If a catch ceiling is recommended, First Nations will consider historical catch proportions in their fishery management recommendations.
- First Nations will provide advice to DFO on the appropriate in-season management measures for First Nations **s 35(1)** food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries based on the available in-season indications of run size and timing.

The Skeena First Nations Technical Committee may want to open First Nations **s 35(1)** FSC Sockeye fisheries if the in-season Total Return to Canada (TRTC) estimate exceeds 600,000 on or after **July 26, 2017**.

Area & Time Closures on the Skeena River

- **Area 4:** Closed to all Sockeye directed fisheries.
- **Area 3:** Open for harvests directed on Nass Sockeye until **June 30**.
- Starting **JULY 1, 2017**: Outside portions of **Area 3 (3A, 3B and 3C)** where Skeena Sockeye are prevalent will be closed.
- Portions of **Area 5:** (sub area 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-10 and 5-11) are proposed to be closed for directed Sockeye fisheries.
- Fishing closures to protect Sockeye end **Sept. 1, 2017** for ocean and Skeena mainstream fisheries.
- Gillnet fisheries targeting species other than Sockeye may occur after this date, with no mesh restrictions.

