

TCG Fisheries Department – Notification Regarding Recent Net Seizure

Alaska and Canada have taken drastic measures to avoid directly capturing Chinook salmon, by implementing area, timing and gear restrictions. There is no direct commercial fishery on either side of the US/Canada border on the Stikine River. The only directed targeting of Chinook has come from Tahltan members in the past few years. We have a responsibility to be stewards of this land and its resources. To ensure chinook for future generations, it is essential for all of us to contribute by reducing our take. This temporary sacrifice will yield significant benefits for generations to come.

On June 14, 2024, TCG received a report that a Tahltan member had set a net in the Stikine River down at Six Mile for the purpose of targeting Chinook Salmon. The net presence was confirmed via a picture on June 17th.

Stikine Chinook salmon have seen a consistent decline in population since 2008. The TCG Fisheries Department has dedicated significant efforts over the past fifteen years to conserve and protect these dwindling stocks. Extensive measures have been implemented to raise awareness among our members about the critical state of the Chinook salmon and the need for our support amidst climate change challenges. While most members have adjusted their fishing practices to align with conservation goals – which the TCG Fisheries Department applauds – the actions of a minority who continue to harvest Chinook undermine these efforts, which is unacceptable.

Despite historical harvest claims, with Stikine Chinook in decline, it is critical for everyone to work together on protecting and potentially revitalizing these stocks for future generations. Some individuals have adamantly disregarded TCG Fisheries Department's conservation directives for Chinook. Despite direct conversations, warning letters, and involvement of the Elders Council, these efforts were rebuffed. TCG has exhausted all means to resolve this internally, but the persistent defiance has necessitated involving DFO-Conservation and Protection unit. Following discussions, engaging DFO officers to address the situation and seize the net and related gear was deemed the most prudent course of action.

On June 19, 2024, a DFO officer, accompanied by 2 RCMP members, reached Telegraph Creek at Six Mile where they discovered a net deployed in the water. The officer proceeded to remove the net and associated gear, releasing one live Chinook in the process, with the net and gear being confiscated. Reports from concerned community members and witnesses indicated that the net had been in place since May of this year, well ahead of the permitted fishing opening in July. It has been requested that the net and gear be returned.

Chinook population estimates are the third lowest value on record. In a year where we are at about 50-60% of our average snowpack, conserving any chinook we can this year is critical.

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