



Gitanyow *Fisheries* Authority



August 21, 2026

2026 Kitwanga River Salmon Enumeration Update #4

The Gitanyow Fisheries Authority (GFA) is pleased to announce that the Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration program is operational for 2026. 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 24th 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 2026 funders and supporters, specifically the Gitanyow Chiefs (Gitanyow Huwilt Sustainability Fund), the Pacific Salmon Commission's Northern Endowment Fund and Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. GFA would also like to acknowledge and thank the Gitwankak Wilt 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



View towards the right bank with the underwater camera box in the foreground at the KSEF on August 20, 2026

Due to high water levels, GFA could not install the lower Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration Facility (KSEF) weir components until July 20-21, 2026, approximately ten days later than normal. The weir was fish tight by the afternoon of July 21. For 2026, 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 0.68m, which is right in line with the long-term average and water temperatures are slightly 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 3, 2026. Prior to July 3, the KsF was operated as a smolt fence and sockeye adults would have been prevented from swimming upstream undetected.

For 2026, 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 August 20, 2026:

KsF (~28km upstream from KSEF)

Sockeye= 83 (by noon on August 21)

KSEF

Sockeye= 75 Chinook= 691* Pink= 7,145 Chum= 240 Coho= 213

This year's **sockeye** escapement through the KSEF compares to a previous maximum observed to the day of 7,792 in 2010, which resulted in an overall escapement of 20,804 and the minimum observed to the day of 30 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 **35%** 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 **691 Chinook** (plus 144 jacks) through the KSEF. *The fence was not installed, due to high water, until July 22; therefore, we have extrapolated back to our usual installation date of July 10. Based on previous years run timing and average daily totals from July 10 to July 21, an estimated 42 Chinook would have passed the KSEF during this period. The total extrapolated estimate through the fence as of August 13 is **733 Chinook**. This year's Chinook escapement compares to a maximum observed to the day of 2,943 in 2007, which resulted in an overall escapement of 3,225 and the minimum observed to the day of 147 in 2010, which resulted in an overall escapement of 852. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga Chinook to the day (2003 - 2019 and 2021 - 2024) it is predicted that approximately **80%** 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 **7,145 pink** salmon through the KSEF. This year's even year pink escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 74,812 in 2024, which resulted in an overall escapement of 279,890 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 4 in 2018, which resulted

in an overall escapement of 2,736. Based on average run timing for pink salmon to the day (2004-2024) it is predicted that **28%** of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga even-year pink salmon abundance by date, refer to the pink salmon graph below.

To date we have counted **240 chum** salmon through the KSEF. This year's chum compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 350 in 2005, which resulted in an overall escapement of 1,862 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 0 in 2006, which resulted in an overall escapement of 685. Based on average run timing for chum salmon to the day (2003-2019, 2021-2025) it is predicted that **10%** 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 **213 coho** salmon through the KSEF. This year's coho escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 358 in 2005, which resulted in an overall escapement of 7,933 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 0 in 2006, which resulted in an overall escapement of 2,572. Based on average run timing for coho salmon to the day (2003-2019) it is predicted that **3%** 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.









