



Gitanyow *Fisheries* Authority



September 18, 2026

2026 Kitwanga River Salmon Enumeration Update #8

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 SepEndowment Fund and Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. GFA would also like to acknowledge and thank the Gitwangak 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 downstream at the KSEF on September 17, 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 0.66m, which is about 0.02m higher than the long-term average and water temperatures are slightly higher than normal, currently fluctuating between 9-12°C. For more information on water levels and water temperature at the KSEF by is about 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, but the final escapement number will be the total through the KsF. All other salmon counts will only be reported when they migrate past the KSEF.

Total salmon counts to the end of September 17, 2026:

KsF (~28km upstream from KSEF)

Sockeye= 233 (to 3:00pm on September 16)

KSEF

Sockeye= 363* Chinook= 833** Pink= 85,190 Chum= 2,087 Coho= 1,364

*Note, due to high water delaying the fence installation by approximately 10 days, **41** sockeye had already passed by the KSEF before it was installed and were counted at the KsF. These 41 are included in the KSEF total. This year's **sockeye** escapement through the KSEF compares to a previous maximum observed to the day of 17,711 in 2010, which resulted in an overall escapement of 20,804 and the minimum observed to the day of 79 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 **79%** 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.



View of sockeye salmon passing through camera box on August 20, 2026

To date we have counted **833 Chinook** (plus 163 jacks) through the KSEF. **The fence was not installed, due to high water, until July 21; 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 **875 Chinook**. This year's Chinook escapement compares to a maximum observed to the day of 3,225 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.



View of Chinook salmon passing through camera box on August 20, 2026

To date we have counted **85,190 pink** salmon through the KSEF. This year's even year pink escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 279,890 in 2024, which resulted in an overall escapement of 279,890 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 2,642 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 **99%** 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.



View of pink salmon passing through camera box on August 20, 2026

To date we have counted **2,087 chum** salmon through the KSEF. This year's chum count is the **highest recorded at the KSEF**, with a previous high of 1,862, and compares to a **minimum** observed to the day of 66 in 2008, which resulted in an overall escapement of 150. Based on average run timing for chum salmon to the day (2003-2019, 2021-2025) it is predicted that **83%** 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.



View of chum salmon passing through camera box on August 20, 2026

To date we have counted **1,364 coho** salmon through the KSEF. This year's coho escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 5,251 in 2009, which resulted in an overall escapement of 12,080 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 10 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 **29%** 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.



View of coho salmon passing through camera box on August 20, 2026









