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**Food Fish Discussion June 28, 2023, Meeting Summary**

Due to minimal attendance, Wet'suwet'en Fisheries would like to ask all Wet'suwet'en Nation members to review the information provided and vote on the Food Fish Discussion.

During the meeting on June 28, those in attendance voted 12 to 11 with a No for the commercial fisheries trade.

Although there are many concerns around the issue of allowing commercial fisheries to open early, the Babine run is expected to be very large, Gillnet Fleets would like to open early and harvest the mixed stock return. The mixed stock includes the tail end of the Wedzin Kwah / Nanika return.

Some of the comments heard from attending members today are as follows:

- The risk may be too great for our salmon to be over harvested by commercial fisherman. The estimated return does not differentiate between the Babine and Wedzin Kwah / Nanika runs. There is no way to tell how much of the return will be impacted by this early harvest of the first run.
- The number of fish being offered is not enough. There needs to be fair compensation to our nation, who's traditional food harvest is directly impacted by commercial fisherman.
- Better distribution is needed.
- On and off reserve members would like better notice of fish deliveries
- The issue of on and off reserve food fish needs, need to be addressed.
- Members would like to see the catch data that fisheries have for the canyon.

Pro's

- There would be a guaranteed amount of Sockeye to distribute, by household at a first come first served basis. Limits to be determined.
- The Sockeye harvest from the Commercial Fisherman will be done near the end of July, when the main Babine Run will be in the river.
- This will allow the Sockeye that do pass through the canyon to return to their spawning grounds.
- Sockeye Tagging and Radio Tagging will be uninterrupted and continue to help the Wet'suwet'en to monitor the return and help with projections for the following runs.
- This will not affect the Chinook and Coho food harvest in the canyon.

Con's

- There is no way to know how many fish from Wedzin Kwah/Nanika will be affected, although our return is expected to be low this year, the peak of our run will have passed before commercial harvesting will start.
- The Wet'suwet'en Nation members will **agree** and be asked **not** to harvest Sockeye this year to allow for a stronger return to spawn.

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Considerations:

The expected run for the Wedzin Kwah/Nanika may be too low to harvest sockeye this season.

- Harvesting Sockeye in the canyon by Wet'suwet'en Fisheries is usually around 2,000 a season, only if the return is 10,000 or more. Any less than a projected 10,000 sockeye with a 2,000 harvest puts our stock at great risk for depleting the returning stock in the future.
- The Wet'suwet'en can only make a recommendation to DFO to decline the early opening, this does not guarantee that they will not allow it. If it is allowed, without this agreement in place, we will not have a secured amount of Sockeye for Food Fish.
- There is no guarantee that canyon fisheries will be able to harvest the sockeye that is needed to fill nation needs.
- **If there is an agreement, members must know that when the fish is delivered that it must be distributed as quickly as possible, distribution will be by Household and first come first served.**

We ask that all nation members share this and discuss this with your family, chiefs and matriarchs.

A decision must be made, in a timely manner. There is a short window of time to decide.

Those that need assistance with the Survey Monkey please feel free to contact James Gallant at

[Reception@wetsuweten.com](mailto:Reception@wetsuweten.com) or 250-847-3630 or Samantha Vincent at [Samantha.vincent@wetsuweten.com](mailto:Samantha.vincent@wetsuweten.com), or [walter.joseph@wetsuweten.com](mailto:walter.joseph@wetsuweten.com).

If there are further questions, please send them to Walter Joseph at [walter.joseph@wetsuweten.com](mailto:walter.joseph@wetsuweten.com)

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