

UFAWU-Unifor Report:

2018 DRAFT NORTH / CENTRAL COAST FISHING PLAN

This report is from the DRAFT fishing plan. I have picked out the relevant things. If you want the full draft plans – both the South and North Coast go to :

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9sfkgh4s3tdpr3b/AAB9gJMy-OPClGgX0Az2RkTya?dl=0>

In short:

- There will be a gillnet sockeye fishery on the Nass – DFO is predicting the same as last year. Late start. In this draft plan – only a 3 week fishery.
- There will be a pink fishery in Area 3
- Area 4 will be closed unless DFO is wrong in their pre-season predictions. The fishery will be managed off the Tye test net as normal.
- Area 6 will have Kitimat hatchery chum fishery – no predictions on run strength
- Area 6,7, 8 will have pink fisheries
- Areas 7 and 8 will have chum fisheries
- Area 8 will have a Bella Coola Chinook fishery

We have proposed Area C 'demo' fishing plans for
QCI chum,
Area 5 sockeye
Smith Inlet sockeye.

Area F has a demo proposal for Central Coast coho (3rd year)

First Nations are proposing PICFI demo proposals for:
Haida Gwaii coho
Area 3 pinks
Inland fishery on Morice coho (ESSR)
Trout Creek and McLaughlin Bay Chum
Bella Coola springs and chum

We have recommended to DFO names of commercial fishermen to sit on local committees to 'oversee' the demo proposals. If you want to be on a local committee, please let us know.

I apologize if I have made any errors or omissions.

Thanks, Joy

Haida Gwaii Areas 1, 2E and 2W

Pinks: pink years are even years on H-G

There are no formal pre-season forecasts for Haida Gwaii pinks. Pre-season predictions for pink salmon surpluses are not reliable and opportunities for pink salmon fisheries are managed in-season.

But the Outlook prediction for Haida Gwaii even year pinks is poor based on poor brood year escapements in 2016.

Chum: Pre-season

Chum outlook for 2018 is “poor” for Area 2E and “average” for Area 2W. Chum salmon harvesting opportunities are expected to be limited in 2018.

In-Season

Demo fishery: Area C has put in a demo fishery but it has not yet been accepted by DFO. It is based on a lower effort to determine run size then, if there is a fishable surplus, to open it to a fleet - on a per boat quota (NOT ITQ) if DFO feels that there is too much effort.

Monitoring to determine incoming runs throughout the season will be concentrated on the east coast of Haida Gwaii between Skidegate Inlet and Darwin Sound, and on the west coast between Dawson Inlet and Tasu Sound.

Terminal net fishery openings are based on fish observed to be schooling in front of the various systems. Fisheries will only be considered if the estimated return of salmon is sufficient to meet escapement goals. The size of the return will be estimated by charter patrolmen using visual assessments.

For Area F troll, there will be non-retention of chum in effect in Dixon Entrance and Hecate Strait to protect northern and eastern Haida Gwaii chum stocks as well as northern mainland BC chum stocks. Retention of chum may be allowed along the west coast of Haida Gwaii during August and September as west Haida Gwaii stocks are considered healthy.

Coho: Non-retention of coho in all net fisheries in Areas 1 and 2.

Area F Troll

- **July 1** - Open to coho in Subareas 101-3 north of 54 degrees 24 minutes north latitude, 101-4, 101-5, 101-8 and 101-9.
- **July 10** - Coho open in more and expanded areas
- Haida troll coho Demo fishery may take place

Chinook: ongoing discussion with trollers. Basically, fishing will start later in the season on a reduced TAC.

Area 3

Nass: Sockeye Pre-season 2018 Run Size Forecast:

Nass River sockeye returns are forecasted to be average to below average

DFO predicts a total return to Canada (RTC) between 343,000 - 415,000 with a **377,000** sockeye return as a 50% probability. Escapement requirements are 200,000.

Last year (2017) the gillnet fleet caught 34,940 out of a run of 331,000. The rest of the catch was Nisga'a Treaty sales (11,773) and Nisga'a and Gitanyow FSC (56,000).

Kwinageese closure: sockeye are coming off of very poor 2013 and 2014 brood years. Consequently, the Kwinageese closure for 2018 will be a two week closure. Gill nets will be closed and seines will be non-retention sockeye from approximately July 9 to July 22 in all of Area 3.

Areas: Request from the Skeen First Nations Technical Committee to limit sockeye fisheries in the outside portions of Area 3 (3-1, 3-3 and 3-7) during July, when Skeena sockeye are prevalent.

Nass: In-season Sockeye Decisions

Weekly decisions are made from **inseason Sockeye** run size predictions based on:

- Catch and effort data from the Area 3 and Alaskan Tree Point commercial net fisheries;
- Escapement information from the Nisga'a Fishwheel Program conducted at test fishing sites near Gitwinksihlkw on the Nass River and fish counts at the Meziadin fishway, and later from individual stream inspections;

Chinook: Poor chinook returns in 2017 have meant restricted There will be Management actions to reduce incidental mortality on Nass chinook. Mandatory non-retention in all net fisheries as well as area closures and reduced opportunities in June.

Coho: Net fleet retention to start – then depending on stock strength.

- Opportunities for Area F troll in Area 3 and in the Central Coast will depend on in-season expectations of abundance being greater than spawning requirements for upper Nass coho for Area 3, as indicated by in-season abundance past the Nass fishwheels.
- Directed commercial net fisheries in Area 3 may also be considered provided incidental impacts to other stocks of concern, such as chum are mitigated.

Pinks: There are no formal pre-season forecasts for pinks in the Nass. Nass pinks usually see greater returns in odd years, with smaller returns in even years. Historically pink returns have been highly variable and expectations are highly uncertain.

The 2018 Salmon Outlook prediction for Nass pinks is abundant based on the strength of the brood year. However, returns are known to be highly variable. Fishing opportunities in Areas 3 will be based on in-season indications of abundance with sockeye and chum constraints for seines.

Nass Pink Fisheries

Fishing opportunities may be considered if stocks appear to be returning in sufficient abundance. Commercial harvest opportunities are dependent on run timing, but typically occur between mid-July and mid-August. The areas typically fished are outlined below and may be updated in-season.

Area C Gill Net

- **Area 3: June 23** – First anticipated gill net fishery, but may vary depending on run size. Maximum mesh size is 137 mm (5.39 inches). The first 3 weeks of June will be avoided to reduce incidental mortality on chinook.

Area A Seine

- **Area 3: July 2** – First anticipated seine fishery opening will be determined in-season based on sockeye and pink abundance. Minimum bunt mesh size 70 mm (2.76 inches). Earlier fishery possible if stocks are abundant.

Chum: Chum salmon are the least abundant salmon species in Areas 3 to 5 and return to the fewest number of streams.

Even so, Nass and Skeena River-destined chum are considered depressed and thus directed-effort by commercial fisheries on wild stocks is restricted ; except for some limited opportunities as by-catch in Area 3 when enhanced chum are present.

Areas 4 and 5

Skeena: Sockeye Pre-season Run Size Forecast:

Skeena River Sockeye: The total Skeena sockeye return is expected to be poor – less than spawning requirements

DFO predicts a total return to Canada (RTC) between 280,000 million - 1.47 million with 650,000 return as a 50% probability.

Last year (2017) there were no commercial fisheries on the Skeena. There were no FSC fisheries until the Skeena Sockeye escapement was predicted to 625,000 sockeye.

Skeena: In-season Sockeye Decisions

The Tyee test fishery is the main in-season stock assessment tool for estimating the relative abundance of Skeena River salmon.

- There will be no FSC Fishery until the Sockeye run size exceeds 625,000 on or after July 26, 2018.

- If the Tye test net estimates a run over 1,050,000 there should be a Skeena sockeye commercial fishery.
- If the pre-season run size forecast is below 1.05 million, commercial fisheries will not take place until the in-season run size prediction is greater than 1.05 million.
- The allowable commercial exploitation rate will be 0% for returns to Canada less than 1,050,000. The allowable exploitation rate will increase in a linear fashion from 0% at 1,050,000 to 20% at a run size of 2.0 million, 30% at 3.0 million, and up to a maximum of 40% at a return of 4.0 million or greater.
- Gillnet fisheries will have 75% of the North Coast Sockeye allocation and Seines 25%. Gillnets will have a regular competitive fishery on the Skeena or Nass while seines will have an ITQ fishery on Skeena sockeye.
- ESSR fisheries are not expected.

General: if there are sockeye fisheries:

- 90 mesh nets: Beckets will be measured (as in prior years) from corkline to first fishable web
- PICFI - around 15% of the Nass and Skeena sockeye runs are 'PICFI fish'. The commercial allocation will be less by 15% and the Nass and Skeena First Nations will have 15% total for First Nations' only fisheries. Some PICFI sockeye will be taken in marine commercial fisheries and some in inland fisheries.
- Any gill net fisheries on or after August 1 will be short-net, short-set.

Area 5 Sockeye: Area C has submitted to the Gitxaala Fisheries department and DFO a plan to fish on Area 5 systems in conjunction with openings in Area 3, - if Gitxaala identifies any surplus to FSC sockeye in Area 5 systems. However, Gitxaala does not expect any surplus fish to FSC needs in 2018.

Chinook: No Chinook fishery on the Skeena in 2018

Coho: retention to start (if there is a fishery)

Pinks: There are no formal pre-season forecasts for pinks in the Skeena. Skeena pinks usually see greater returns in odd years, with smaller returns in even years. Historically pink returns have been highly variable and expectations are highly uncertain.

The 2018 Salmon Outlook prediction for Skeena pinks is abundant based on the strength of the brood year. However, returns are known to be highly variable. Fishing opportunities in Areas 4 will be based on in-season indications of abundance with sockeye and chum constraints for seines.

Area A Seine:

- **Areas 4 and 5:** Pinks: Openings will be based on Skeena salmon returns and the target annual exploitation rate and will be similar to previous years subject to ongoing discussions with First Nations and commercial fishing interests.

Area C Gill Net

- **Areas 4 and 5:** Pinks: Openings will be based on Skeena salmon returns and the target annual exploitation rate and will be similar to previous years subject to ongoing discussions with First Nations and commercial fishing interests.

All pink ESSR fisheries will be by selective means with live release of all non-target species. If a local surplus of pinks is identified, an ESSR opportunity may be available at the Kitwanga weir (Gitanyow First Nation) and Moricetown fishway (Wet'suwet'en First Nation)

Chum There are no directed fisheries for chum in Areas 4 and 5

- Retention of chum and steelhead is prohibited in all fisheries.
- Gill nets have a 137 mm (5.39 inch) maximum mesh restriction during the sockeye fishery.
- Skeena chum remain a stock of concern and Canadian harvest impacts will be limited to a maximum exploitation rate of 10%

AREA 6

Chum Wild chum stocks in Area 6 to 10 have been below target but stable in recent years.. Area 6 wild chum for 2018 is for modest expectations due to modest brood year escapement.

Commercial fisheries target hatchery enhanced chum stocks in Area 6 (Kitimat Hatchery). Opportunities for a directed terminal gill net fishery in Kitimat Arm are based on Kitimat Hatchery chum production, assessment fisheries and in-season escapement estimates. An otolith study will be piloted in 2018.

• **Area C:** Gill net openings will be dependent upon in-season assessments of hatchery chum returns to the Kitimat River.

- Gill net chum fisheries will be restricted to 6-1 & 6-2 unless surplus stocks are identified elsewhere in-season.
- **Area A:** Seine openings will be targeting pink salmon populations in the Area. Bycatch of chum is not permitted. Opportunities for targeting hatchery chum will be assessed in-season.
- Mandatory brailing for all seine sets and non-retention of chinook and steelhead in all fisheries and non-retention of chum at the Gil Island seine fishery.

Pinks

Pre-season There are no formal pre-season forecasts for pinks in the Central Coast. Area 6 usually sees greater returns in odd years. 2018 preseason prediction for Area 6 is abundant based on the strength of the brood year.

In-season Catch and spawning escapement data are used as indicators of stock abundance for Central Coast pink stocks. Catch per unit effort in the commercial fishery is monitored as an indicator of overall pink abundance, and can be used as an indicator as to whether or not escapement targets will be met. Each area contains key streams whose escapements are actively monitored in-season to determine run timing and size.

- **Area A seines: July 10:** First anticipated seine opening; areas open will be determined in-season. Minimum bunt mesh size 70mm. Catch rates in this fishery will be used as an indicator of returning abundances of pink salmon to Area 6.
- Seine fisheries will target pink stocks returning to numerous streams near Gil Island with the Quaal and Kemano Rivers being the main producers in this area.
- Seine fisheries targeting large pink returns will be managed with consideration of impacts to non-target species such as wild chum.
- Mandatory brailing for all seine sets and non-retention of chinook and steelhead in all fisheries and non-retention of chum at the Gil Island seine fishery.

Coho: Continuation of the Central Coast Limited Effort Coho demonstration fishery for the Area F troll fishery may occur in 2018.

- Seine and gillnet opportunities to retain incidental catches of coho may be considered based on in-season information on stock strength.

Areas 7 and 8

Chinook There is no formal pre-season forecast for Central Coast ISBM chinook.

Returns for the Bella Coola/Atnarko system have been good over the last several years with the exception of 2017 which was below average. Should the stocks remain productive the 2018 returns should be average.

Area 8: Area C June 04 – First anticipated gill net opening in the Bella Coola gillnet area. This will be a directed chinook fishery. Minimum mesh size 203 mm (7.99 inches).

Chum: The qualitative Salmon Outlook for chum stocks in Areas 7 to 10 is “good” based on generally good brood year escapements. Returns of enhanced stocks to Area 7 to 10 are dependent upon ocean survival which has been highly variable in recent years.

- In Areas 7 and 8, harvest opportunities will be based on brood year escapements, in-stream escapement assessments and the success of assessment fisheries that will be run to gauge run strength. Decisions are made in consultation with local First Nations, the Central Coast First Nations Salmon Coordinating Committee, and Central Coast advisors, for the management of fisheries in these areas.
- Opportunities for one-day gillnet and seine assessment fisheries in the last week of July or first week of August are determined pre-season based on recent trends in brood year escapement and in-season information.
- Given the recent trend of poor returns, one-day assessment fisheries for lower Finlayson, lower Mathieson, Sheep Pass and the eastern portion of Seaforth Channel may be curtailed unless in-river assessment suggest improved returns.

Area 7 general:

July and First Week of August: One additional day of fishing during daylight hours is considered if the run appears strong. The assessment of run strength is based on a review of catch data and salmon escapements to the Mussel and Kainet Rivers to-date.

Second Week of August until Mid-October: The results of the past week’s fisheries, status of target stocks and their implications for any potential by-catch are reviewed with the local advisory group. If stock strength permits, fishing opportunities are considered each week until mid-October. Announcements for the next week’s opportunities are made on the Thursday at 1600 hours or Friday of the week preceding the proposed fishery.

Lama Pass (McLoughlin Bay) may be opened in mid-August and the fishing time may be spread over more than one day each week, depending on observed chum abundance and processing capacity. Seines and gill nets will alternate fishing opportunities each week with the gill net fleet going first in 2018.

Klemtu Pass area may be opened to harvest surplus chum returning to the Kitsoo Creek Hatchery. Openings targeting Kitsoo Creek Hatchery stocks and surplus chum in terminal areas would follow the pattern of gill nets fishing first day and seines the second day.

Subject to in-season assessment, portions of Spiller Channel may be opened to seines and gill nets in late August. Openings in that area will depend on chum returns to Neekas Creek.

Subject to in-season assessment, portions of Johnson Channel and Roscoe Inlet may be opened to seines and gill nets in late August. Openings in that area will depend on chum returns to the Roscoe, Quartcha, and Clatse systems.

Area 7 fishing plan:

- **Area F:** No troll opportunities for chum fisheries in this area in 2018.
- **Area A & C: July 30** – First potential gill net and seine opening in 7-5, portion of 7-6 (Finlayson), portions of 7-9 (Mathieson) and 7-29 (Sheep), dependent on in-season assessment. Minimum mesh size 149 mm.

- **Mid-late August** – Consideration for net openings in 7-17 (McLoughlin Bay hatchery chum). Gear types will alternate each week; Subarea 7-5 terminal chum harvest on Kitasoo Creek Hatchery stocks with gill nets first and seines second. Net opening in Spiller Channell to harvest Neekas Creek chum.

- **Late August to early September** – Considerations for net openings in 7-30 (Johnson Channel), 7-15 (Roscoe Inlet) and 7-13 (Spiller Channel).

- Net fisheries will initially be non-retention coho. Easing of restrictions in-season could occur if abundance is high.

- During periods of high salmon catches in Areas 7 or 8, fisheries will most likely be managed so that there is a maximum of two consecutive days of fishing

- Where possible, openings in Areas 6 through 10 will be coordinated to distribute effort appropriately.

- Additional fishing time: A large fleet size could adversely affect small mixed-stock runs in the area. Extra fishing time may depend on openings in other areas in the North Coast.

Area 8 general:

First two weeks of July: Opportunities for two-day gill net assessment fisheries to get an early assessment of run strength to provide information to better manage the fishery later in the season.

Second Week of July: The assessment openings may be extended if the runs appear strong based on a review of catches to-date. Opportunities for a gill net and seine opening on Monday in the third week of July are considered, based on the results of the assessment fisheries:

- If Atnarko pink stocks are weak but Bella Coola and Kimsquit chum stocks are strong, Subareas 8- 3 and a portion of Subarea 8-4 south of a line from Walker Point to Hergest Point may be closed. This is not anticipated for the 2018 season.

- If Kimsquit chum are weak but Bella Coola chum are strong, Subarea 8-5 may be closed.

- If Kimsquit chum are very weak but Bella Coola chum are strong, Subareas 8-5 and 8-4 north of Walker Point may be closed.

Area 8 fishing plan:

Area C: July 2 – Anticipated chum gill net opening in the Bella Coola gillnet area and Fisher Channel/Fitz Hugh Sound. Minimum mesh size 158 mm (6.22 inches).

- Net fisheries will begin with a non-retention of coho restriction in place. Easing of restrictions in-season could occur if abundance is high.

- Gill net fisheries have a 158mm minimum mesh restriction until the beginning of August to protect weak sockeye stocks. Gill nets with 149mm mesh will be allowed for the remainder of the season. Gill net fishermen are requested to release all live sockeye to the water with the least possible harm, all season long.

- If salmon stocks surplus to escapement requirements are identified, fisheries could occur in areas where incidental catch or by-catch concerns do not preclude harvest activities.

- The seine opening date is usually coordinated with other seine openings on the North Coast.

Area A: July 16 – First anticipated seine opening in Fisher Channel/Fitz Hugh Sound.

- Minimum bunt mesh size 70 mm (2.76 inches)
- July 8 to August 12: Weedlines are in effect in upper 8-5 (Fisher Channel) and 8-8 (Upper Dean Channel)

Area F: No troll opportunities for chum fisheries in this area in 2018.

Pinks: For Areas 7 and 8 in-season decisions are made in consultation with local First Nations, the Central Coast First Nations Salmon Coordinating Committee and Central Coast Advisors for the management of fisheries in these areas.

Areas 7 and 8 historically saw larger runs in even years. Pink returns have been highly variable and expectations are highly uncertain.

Average returns are expected for Areas 7 and 8. The even-year Bella Coola / Atnarko stock appears to have recovered from the 2010 flood event that negatively impacted this stock. However, returns are known to be highly variable. Fishing opportunities will be based on in-season indications of abundance.

Area 7:

- Net fisheries will begin with non-retention of coho. Easing of restrictions in-season could occur if coho abundance is high. In McLoughlin Bay and Kitsoo hatchery chum targeted fisheries, coho retention will likely be allowed due to the terminal nature of these fisheries and the hatchery origin of the stocks.
- Harvesting opportunities for pink salmon will be coincidental to chum-directed harvests.
- Seines are required to brail their catch and release sockeye, coho, chinook and steelhead. Gill nets are required to release steelhead and coho.
- During periods of high salmon catches in Area 7 fisheries will be managed so that there is a maximum of two consecutive days of fishing. This action has been recommended by fishers and processors to maximize the value of the salmon harvested.

Area 8:

- Net fisheries will begin with non-retention of coho. Easing of restrictions in-season could occur if coho abundance is high.
- Seines are required to brail their catch and release sockeye, coho, chinook and steelhead. Gill nets are required to release steelhead and coho.
- Between July 8 and August 12, weedlines are required for all gill nets in Subareas 8-5 north of Bold Point and 8-8 to reduce steelhead interceptions.
- During periods of high salmon catches in Area 8, fisheries will be managed so that there is a maximum of two consecutive days of fishing. This action has been recommended by fishers and processors to maximize the value of the salmon harvested.

Coho: Central Coast troll openings could be provided based on coho abundance determined in- season. Continuation of the Central Coast Limited Effort Coho demonstration fishery for the Area F troll fishery may occur in 2018.

Areas 9 and 10

Sockeye:

Rivers Inlet: There is no sockeye fishery in Rivers Inlet. DFO and the Wuikinuxv are evaluating the new Didson counter and will come up with a escapement requirement report by December 2018. Then a fishery plan will have to be agreed to for future years.

Smith Inlet: There is no sockeye fishery scheduled for Smith Inlet. The Union has been in contact with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw (First Nation in Smith Inlet) and we may still be able to work something out.

Pinks Chum Coho - there are no directed fisheries.