



Carrier Sekani Lho Dustl'us

Carrier Sekani
Tribal Council

Lho Dustl'us June
2007

Carrier Sekani Fisheries Program: Fish News

The CSTC's fisheries program is preparing for another busy field season, which is already in full swing. Activities related to the 2nd year of the Pilot Nechako white sturgeon Conservation Hatchery began in early May. The collection of brood stock for the hatchery went well (see below) and eggs are presently hatching into larva (June 12). The CSTC will continue to be heavily involved in hatchery operations and other Nechako sturgeon recovery activities throughout the year. Planned activities include

continued assessment of hatchery-reared and wild juvenile sturgeon survival rates, and additional adult sampling in the Stuart system and Fraser Lake. Other activities planned by the program include a continuation of the white sturgeon harm reduction and community reporting protocol, and the completion of a selective sockeye harvest to assist in the meeting of CSTC member community's food needs. Assessment programs will include the enumeration of the Early Stuart and Nadina sockeye stocks, and the Endako chi-

nook stock. Monitoring of stream temperature conditions in select streams will also continue. The CSTC will also continue to support the collection of member community's food fishing information. A variety of training and capacity development opportunities are planned for all the program's staff. Some have already begun. The CSTC will also be seeking out some new seasonal personnel this year. Please let us know if you may be interested (see back for contact info).

Inside this issue:

- ⇒ **Community meetings**
- ⇒ **2007 Field crew training**
- ⇒ **Nechako sturgeon recovery and hatchery activities**
- ⇒ **Summer schedules**
- ⇒ **Staff updates**



Left: The female sturgeon is sutured together following the insertion of a PIT tag. All sturgeon utilized for brood stock were successfully spawned and released back to the Nechako River. Right: "Anna is returned to the Nechako River, June 1,



Calendar of Events

June 19-20: Nak'azdli AGA

June 21: Aboriginal Day, CSTC office closed

June 27: Meet with Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative, Technical working group (NWSRI,

TWG).

July: Community meetings

July 6-17: CSTC AGA in Nadleh Whut'en

July: Early Stuart sockeye enumeration (Middle River, Takla Lake)

August: -Nadina sockeye enumeration

Late August: Endako

River Chinook enumeration

September: Media event; Fall release of juvenile sturgeon in Vanderhoof

September 30: BC Rivers Day at Ft. George Park, Prince George.

October: Lho Dustl'us Fall issue comes out

October: Report writing



A Description of Projects for 2007; Ongoing and Planned

Sturgeon Brood Collection, Juvenile Incubation and Rearing; and Juvenile Monitoring.

The collection of sturgeon for breeding went extremely well this year. Eight adults were transported to the Prince George hatchery in May. four females and four males were bred by removing the eggs and milt and combining them (see page 1 for photos). The fertilized eggs were transported to Vanderhoof, where incubation took place. As of June 11 eggs started hatching and larvae emerged. CSTC technicians are on a 24 hr watch, feeding and tending to these larvae. They will be reared at the Vanderhoof facility until they are ready to be released in the Fall. The only glitch might be a move required to cope with the Nechako's flood stage flows. A 300lb female was released in to the Nechako River on June 1 with a large crowd of school children, government officials, hatchery volunteers and interested community members. A video clip of the events can be seen at www.pgtv.com under news archives May 29th. Ongoing is the monitoring of radio tagged stur-

geon using telemetry via helicopter and boat. Monitoring of the wild spawning activity in the Nechako River is also ongoing. Monitoring of the hatchery-reared Juvenile sturgeon released last year has already commenced and will continue through the summer and fall. The CSTC also plans on sampling more adult sturgeon from the Stuart watershed and Fraser Lake in 2007.



Early Stuart Sockeye Enumeration

The CSTC will again operate a system of fences, stream walks and river drifts in the Takla watershed to obtain a count of the number Early Stuart sockeye returning to spawn. This work will commence in mid-late July.

Nadina Sockeye Enumeration

The CSTC will also assist DFO with a count of adult sockeye returning to the Nadina River system. This is completed via helicopter flights, stream walks and drifts.

Endako Chinook

As it has since 1994, the CSTC will enumerate the Endako River's unique Chinook run in late Au-

gust. This is completed through a series of stream walks and boat surveys over a 10day period.



Left: Fish fence at Dust Creek 2006. Middle: Jako tending to sturgeon eggs in Vanderhoof. Bottom: A sturgeon is measured.

Sturgeon By-Catch & Harm Reduction

As in 2004, 2005, and 2006, in 2007 the CSTC will continue to promote mechanisms for white sturgeon harm reduction within CSTC member First Nation's food fisheries for sockeye. Posters will be distributed describing what to do if you catch a Sturgeon in your fishing net, as well as the people to contact. We will also be attending each community several times to talk about the Nechako white sturgeon and setup reporting protocols with each community.



Selective Fishery

The CSTC will again be conducting a selective fishery for sockeye. The intent is to document the utility of this technique as a means of meeting CSTC community's food needs. Look for more information about this soon.

Other Activities

The fisheries program will be conducting a number of other activities in support of the CSTC's community's interests. This includes participation in various watershed forums and various meetings and workshops. Fisheries program staff also assist other CSTC programs with the achievement of their mandates, and review various referrals and other materials.



Sockeye Run-Size Forecasts for 2007 and Food Fishing Opportunities

The CSTC sent a letter to the Fisheries Minister in April outlining the CSTC's concerns regarding the diminishing number of sockeye returning to the CSTC member nation's territories (and the related difficulties CSTC members are encountering attempting to meet their food needs). This letter was in response to a 2007 fishing plan DFO circulated that would see similar numbers of sockeye (as seen in 2006) returning to the area.

DFO staff met with the CSTC Tribal Chief and program staff in early May. Various views were expressed. In short, DFO recognized some conservation issues that are occurring (Stuart Sockeye)

and described their approach to addressing these issues. It was also suggested that the CSTC members need to improve the efficiency of their food fisheries. The CSTC fisheries program will therefore be working with communities to better coordinate and assist with the meeting of food fish needs.

2007 run-size forecasts for the sockeye stocks returning the Nechako are as follows:

Early Stuart	45,000
Nadina	18,000
Late Stuart	159,000
Stellako	255,000

Remember that these are total run-sizes, and do not include the commercial, First Nations and sport-angler harvesting

impacts that the stocks will encounter during their migration. Target spawner escapement levels are as follows, and these targets generally better reflect the numbers of sockeye returning to this area.

Early Stuart	45,000
Nadina	7,200
Late Stuart	63,700
Stellako	102,500

There will likely be a closure throughout the Fraser watershed and marine areas early in the season to protect Early Stuart sockeye. Locally dependent communities (i.e. Nad'azdli, Tl'azten and Takla) can request Ceremonial Licenses to harvest a small number of sockeye from this stock. The CSTC fisheries program's personnel will be contacting these

community's leaders to discuss this issue. The CSTC will be continuing to assist with the collection of information and materials for joint reviews of the status of Stuart Sockeye, which are presently being conducted by DFO and the UFFCA.

Owing to the small number of sockeye that will be returning to the CSTC area, the program will be assisting with the meeting of community's food-fish needs by coordinating and funding a selective fishery, and in other manners. Please feel free to contact the program manager to discuss.



Left: View from the air of Francois Lake. Lower left, Albert heading home after a long day in the field. Lower right: Juvenile sturgeon being released in to the Nechako River, 2006.



Community information

The fisheries program is planning to come out to meet with the communities of Nadleh Whut'en, Saik'uz and Nak'azdli within the next month. All other CSTC member communities will be visited shortly as well. Christina will coordinating these meetings so feel free to contact her for more information. Fisheries program staff will be present at the Nak'azdli Annual General Meeting June 19-20. We will have displays set up, and other

information available. The other community meetings planned are for the purposes of informing the communities about the program's activities and projects that are occurring this year, get feedback from the community level on fisheries issues of concern, and provide updates on the Sturgeon program including the planned release of over 1000 juvenile sturgeon in the Fall in Vanderhoof.



Photo journal of Sturgeon brood collection, egg fertilization, and adult release



Above: Measurements are taken with the sturgeon lying in a sling on the boat.



Left: Sturgeon eggs from one female. **Centre:** Eggs are gently combined with milt. **Right:** Jako assists with collecting the eggs from a mature female. Approx 3 kg (6.6lbs) is collected if possible.



Crowd of onlookers gathered in Vanderhoof for the release of "Anna" a 300lb female white sturgeon.



"Anna" gets ready to be released into the Nechako River.



Updated website

Christina has been updating and adding to the CSTC website since she started about a month ago. We will continue to incorporate more fisheries information into the site, which will be regularly updated. There are plenty of photos of recent sturgeon work. We would love to have any fisheries-related historical photos from the various communities - that people may wish to share. If you have any you would like to see posted on the website please contact us.

CSTC Website:
www.cstc.bc.ca

Fisheries Program Manager Bill Shepert

Phone: 250-562-6279 ext.228
Cell: 250-612-1908
Fax: 250-562-8206
Email: bshepert@cstc.bc.ca

Program Staffing Updates

James (Jako) Prince (Nak'azdli), Albert Raphael (Saik'uz), Cora McIntosh (Saik'uz), and Jeano Nooski (Nadleh Whut'en) have been hired as seasonal field technicians by the CSTC Fisheries program. They will be spending time in the next couple of months in the field, working on a variety of salmon and sturgeon projects. All four have worked with the CSTC in previous years, and are an example of the capacity building the Fisheries program has provided, while hiring local community members. Numerous training opportunities are expected this year. Cora McIntosh was accepted to take part in a five week technician training program in Sai'kuz from May 15-June 15, 2007. A 5week Aboriginal Environmental Technician Certification program is scheduled for later this summer (via the Land Use Program.)

On May 8, Christina Ciesielski was hired as the Senior Fisheries Program Technician. She will be assisting Bill Shepert and

Brian Toth with data entry, report writing, and Improving communication with keeping communities up to date. From 1992-1995 Christina attended the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), where she obtained a co-op diploma in Fish, Wildlife and Recreation. She has since worked on numerous Fish and Wildlife research projects all over the province including Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Takla, Masset and Kitimaat. She came to Prince George in 1998, to pursue a degree in Wildlife Biology at UNBC. She graduated in 2004. Christina is a member of the Buffalo River Dene Nation in Dillon, Sk. Her heritage is Cree/Dene. Christina looks forward to working with all of the member communities and learning more about their traditional and current fisheries methods. She will be visiting communities giving updates on projects planned for this year as well as Sturgeon harm reduction presentations.



Left to right: Bill Shepert, Cora McIntosh, Albert Raphael, Jako Prince

Senior Program Technician Christina Ciesielski

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Suite 200-1460 6th Avenue
Prince George, BC
V2L 3N2

Phone: 250-562-6279 ext.238
Toll free: 1-800-280-8722
Fax: 250-562-8206
Email: cciesielski@cstc.bc.ca