



# Lho Dustl'us

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www.cstc.bc.ca

## 2009 Year in review

The past year has come and gone in a flash. As of July, Bill Shepert left the Tribal Council to pursue a career on the West Coast (Prince Rupert). Christina Ciesielski was hired as the new Fisheries Program Manager. A new Senior Fisheries Technician (to fill Christina's old position) will be hired after March 31, 2010. In July, Jonathan Shearer was selected as the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance (UFFCA) "Regional fisheries representative" or RFL. He will be working in the office until March 2010. The usual projects were funded and completed, with the exception of the Pilot Sturgeon Hatchery (Conservation Fish Culture). In May a NWSRI crew went

on the Nechako River to collect sturgeon brood stock, breeding took place at the start of June, and by mid month the larvae were released.

As this was a dominant Early Stuart year, a fish fence was installed at Dust Creek. Two crews counted Early Stuart sockeye, took samples and walked streams from mid July-mid to mid-August. Endako Chinook were enumerated in August and Nadina Sockeye were counted from helicopter and on the ground, during September. Sturgeon outreach meetings were held in Saik'uz, Nak'azdli, and Tl'azten. A display booth was set up at BC Rivers Day in Fort George Park.



Early Stuart sockeye.

Photo: C. Pharness

## Catch Monitoring

This year catch monitors were hired for Saik'uz, Nadleh Whut'en, Nak'azdli, and Takla Lake. Although the sockeye run was predicted to be a "dominant" run with around 10 million fish returning, only around 2 million returned to the entire Fraser. The table below

shows the numbers that CSTC received from the catch monitors. Fishing began late this year. Many families stayed out of the river, in order to preserve as much of the run as possible. Phone conferences regarding in-season updates of the salmon returning, and caught in test fisheries (in the ocean and at river

mouth) were held every other day between First nations, DFO, and the Fraser River Panel. Total estimated returns of spawners to the Nechako were as follows:

- Early Stuart 45,327
- Nadina 9,993
- Stellako 28,862
- Late Stuart 86,935

Table 1. Total number of Sockeye reported in food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries.



Jeano Nooski and Steve Ratko, DFO.

Catch Monitoring	Saik'uz	Takla	Nadleh	Nak'azdli	Total
2007	298	6	2677	1455	4436
2008	324	34	5960	1856	8174
2009	153	23	2675	1650	4501



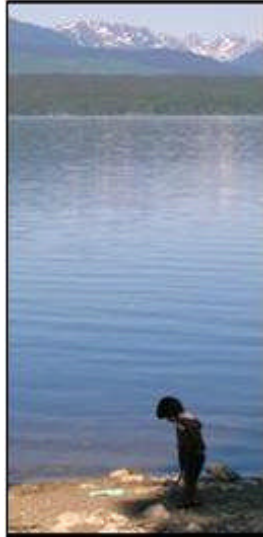
Counting early Stuart sockeye at Dust Creek (NW arm of Takla Lake) Photo: Chris Pharness



Dust Creek camp Photo: Chris Pharness

## Endako Chinook

A total of 125 Chinook were counted in Shovell Creek and the Endako River this past September (Aug 30-Sept 8, 2009). As in past years Dennis Ableson, Biologist led the project. Scott McIntosh was hired as the fisheries technician for the 10 day field project. **The Endako Chinook is still at risk of going extinct.** The total count was lower than 2008 (195), and higher than 2007 (36). Weather conditions were good. No kokanee were seen in the River. Only one dead kokanee was found in 2008 and none in 2007. This year there was no water outflow from Burns Lake. There's a direct link between the absence of flow and the lack of spawning kokanee sightings.



Rowan Zatorski-Teegee at Takla Lake, for the CSTC Annual General Assem-

Photo: CSTC

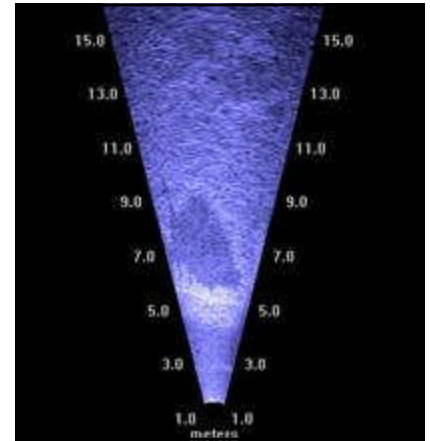
## Didson trial project -underwater video

The DIDSON system produces a video-like image similar to an underwater camera, but can also record fish movement and behaviour in murky and dark water. From May 26 – 29, 2009, three CSTC fisheries technicians worked with Pete Nicklin from the UFFCA to determine how well the Didson might work for locating Sturgeon and their spawning sites in the Nechako River. Staff performed boat operations and radio te-



lemetry for the Stoney Creek with the Nechako River. Based on observation throughout the project, sturgeon could be "spooked" by the boat and leave the CSTC fisheries area. Generally this occurred during the downstream drift. Future DIDSON work will depend on the coordination of radio-telemetry results in order to focus the project locations (both boat based and aerial telemetry). To date, several spawning events have been confirmed via visual observations and egg mats, at the Burrard Street Bridge, Vanderhoof.

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Didson image of a sturgeon shadow



Nechako river sunset. Photo: CSTC



# SOS: Save Our Sturgeon - Fall Event, October 7



Future scientists? Photo: C Mushumanski



Students measuring stream velocity Photo: C Mushumanski



Photo: CSTC

Turbidity wedge, used to evaluate how 'muddy' the water is.



Students showing how well their kites fly Photo: CSTC



New sturgeon model, handcrafted from wood Photo: CSTC

## Limited sturgeon release-funding cut

Enough funding was available to breed and raise sturgeon until they were 15 days old. They were then released and studied as part of research on gravel types.



**NEW:** Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI) T-shirts. Cost: **\$20 All proceeds go to further the research and work of the NWSRI.**

Several sturgeon were kept over the winter from the 2008 spawning. These fish had grown to an average weight of *50grams* allowing 30 of them to be surgically implanted with sonic transmitters. These fish were then tracked by boat. They were found to distribute to various locations throughout the Nechako River, primarily the largest, deepest holes.

If a hatchery facility is not funded very soon, this ancient fish is headed to extinction. Several community sessions were held to help get input on developing a communications strategy and how to best engage all the First Nations communities in the preservation of the white sturgeon.



Operating to insert a sonic transmitter.

Photo: CSTC

Juvenile raised in a fish culture facility (hatchery)

Photo: CSTC





## Events calendar

### January 21 - 22, 2010

Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon (FRAWG), Abbotsford. See [www.uffca.ca](http://www.uffca.ca).

### January 26, 2010

UFFCA Regional fisheries liaison (RFL) meeting. [www.uffca.ca](http://www.uffca.ca).

### January 27-28, 2010

FRISSI workshop meeting in Prince George.

### February 3-4, 2010

"Roadmap" fisheries management, Kamloops. [www.frafs.ca](http://www.frafs.ca)

### February 22, 2010

CSTC Chiefs Meeting, Nadleh Whut'en hosting. [www.cstc.bc.ca](http://www.cstc.bc.ca)

## Fisheries Meetings; Come and be heard...

Numerous First Nations groups and DFO meet throughout the year. The First Nations along the Fraser River watershed (Vancouver island) have been making headway on a joint management plan. The status quo from DFO is clearly not working. The only way to see results seems to be to work together, and make DFO hear us and recognize our knowledge (Traditional and Science) and contributions to fisheries management plans.

There is a need for more Upper Fraser First Nations to bring

their voice and knowledge to these meetings. There are positions open for a Community Fish Liason (CFR) in Nak'azdli, Takla Lake and Burns Lake. The position pays an honorarium of \$500/month. Travel to monthly meetings is reimbursed by the UFFCA.



Brian Toth, Sharmayne Owen and Pete Nicklin, UFFCA



Fisheries technicians; Frank Williams Jr., Alex Robbins and Lonni Williams

Finished mural of local fish species, created by children at BC Rivers Day, September 27, 2009. See it outside the Ministry of Environment office, at Ospika and 18th Avenue.

Photo: J. Merrick, FBC



### JOBS AVAILABLE MAY- CTOBER:

There will be several **seasonal fisheries technician** positions available this year.

A full time **Senior fisheries technician** position will also be available after April 1, 2010.

A job posting will soon be distributed. Check the CSTC website or your Band office job board.



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