



# Williams Lake First Nation 2025 Fishing Plan



**Williams Lake**  
FIRST NATION





Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) respectfully asks that all Members follow the 2025 WLFN Fishing Plan outlined below. Voluntary participation in this plan supports responsible harvesting practices that protect Sqélten (salmon) resources and reflect our traditional values.

Your cooperation is vital to the protection of Sqélten, the exercise of constitutionally protected fishing rights, and collective responsibility as stewards of the land and water. By adhering to the opening and closure dates outlined below, Members help ensure the sustainability of Sqélten populations for the well-being of our community today and for generations to come.

While WLFN Members have a protected right to fish for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, that right can be regulated for legitimate reasons such as conservation. Fishing outside of openings may be treated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) as unauthorized, and individuals could face enforcement action or legal consequences.

## Pacific salmon

Chinook salmon



Chum salmon



Coho salmon



Pink salmon



Sockeye salmon



*The five species of Pacific Sqélten (salmon)* (© DFO <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/identify-identifier-eng.html>)

# Scheduled Fishing Openings

In 2025, WLFN has designated specific fishing windows to support conservation and responsible harvesting. On the Fraser River, fishing for Ntytyix (Chinook) is permitted from July 18 to July 30, with closures in effect from July 30, 2025, to July 17, 2026. If returns allow, Sqlelten7úwi (Sockeye) and čaapi (Pink) may be fished between August 15 and September 5. Sxeyqs (Coho) are closed to all fishing throughout the 2025 season. At Snhaxalaus (Farwell Canyon), **fishing will only be permitted upstream of the Farwell Bridge**. This is due to the ongoing risk to human health & safety resulting from the Chilcotin Slide, including further landslide and rockfall hazard. Chinook fishing is open from July 18 to July 30, and Sockeye and Pink are anticipated to be open from August 15 to September 5, depending on in-season assessments. Coho remain closed in the Chilcotin as well.

WLFN strongly urges Members not to fish for Sxeyqs (Coho) anywhere within WLFN territory. These threatened Interior Fraser stocks are at high risk of local extinction and protecting their return to spawning grounds is critical to ensuring their survival. Your cooperation in respecting these closures is essential to safeguarding the long-term health of our fisheries.

## FRASER RIVER

SPECIES	Fishing Open Dates in 2025
NTYTYIX (CHINOOK)	July 18 <sup>th</sup> – July 30 <sup>th</sup>
SQLELTEN7ÚWI (SOCKEYE)	August 15 <sup>th</sup> – September 5 <sup>th</sup>
ČAAPI (PINK)	August 15 <sup>th</sup> – September 5 <sup>th</sup>
SXEYQS (COHO)	Not open to fishing in 2025

## CHILCOTIN RIVER

SPECIES	Fishing Open Dates in 2025
NTYTYIX (CHINOOK)	July 18 <sup>th</sup> – July 30 <sup>th</sup> *
SQLELTEN7ÚWI (SOCKEYE)	August 15 <sup>th</sup> – September 5 <sup>th</sup>
ČAAPI (PINK)	August 15 <sup>th</sup> – September 5 <sup>th</sup>
SXEYQS (COHO)	Not open to fishing in 2025

Please note: Opening dates are subject to change based on in-season assessments. In extreme cases, emergency conservation measures may be implemented without prior notice. Moreover, please be aware that WLFN has closed the area around Snhaxalaus (the Farwell Canyon bridge) to fishing this season due to safety concerns.

# Fishing Closures for Conservation

WLFN encourages Members to consider harvesting other resident fish species such as rainbow trout, bull trout, whitefish, suckers, kokanee, and especially the significant Pink salmon run expected this season outside of the scheduled fishing openings.

## A SPECIAL REMINDER:

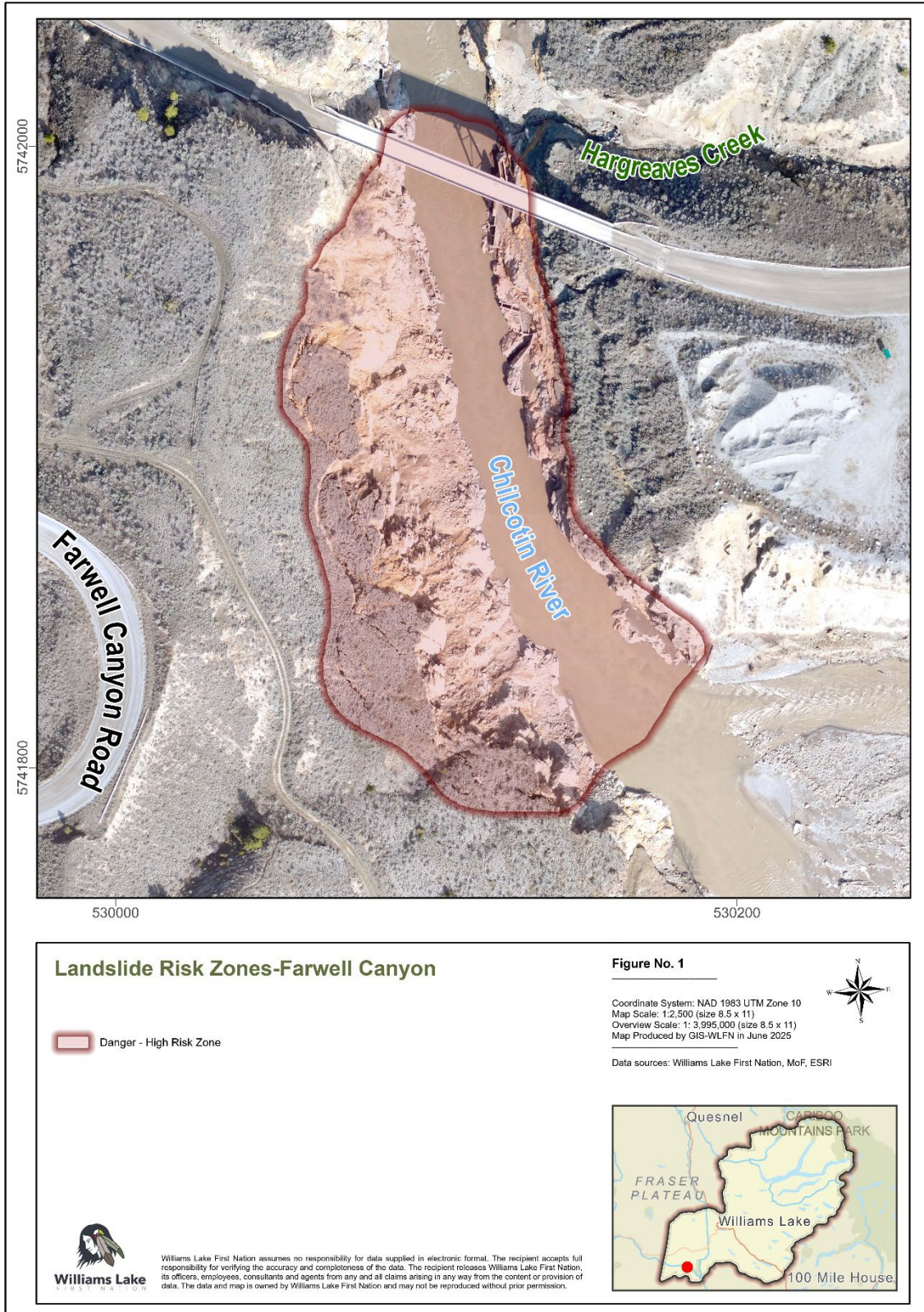
WLFN urges all Members not to fish for Sxeyqs (Coho) anywhere in the territory. These Interior Fraser Coho are at high risk of becoming locally extinct, and their protection is critical to the future of this species. By respecting these closures, we collectively uphold our responsibilities as stewards and ensure our future generations have the opportunity to fish as we do today.

# Fishing Closures for Human Safety

**DANGER:** The area around Snhaxalaus (the Farwell Canyon bridge) is closed to fishing this season due to safety concerns. The Chilcotin slide has destabilized the banks and slopes above fishing sites downstream of the bridge.

- Rock falls and sluffs will be more common
- There remains a significant danger of a land slide in several locations in the canyon, particularly above the main fishing site just downstream of the bridge (see map on next page).





Please do not enter the **High Risk Zone** as there is a high safety risk.

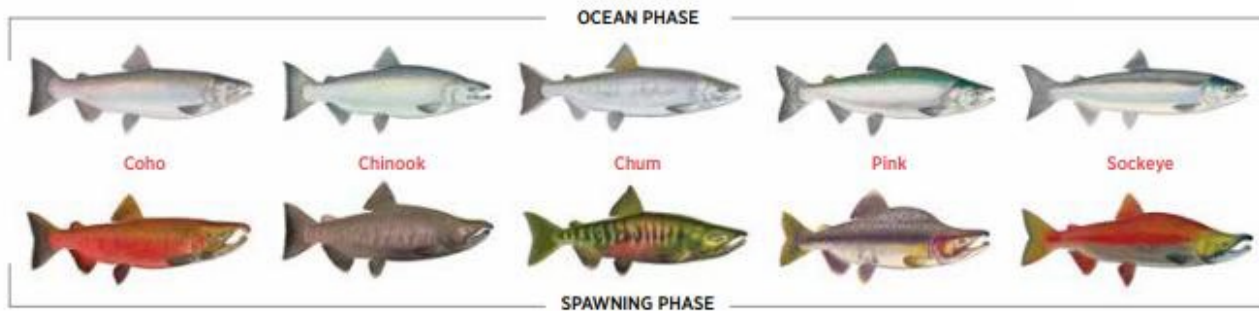


# Monitoring and Enforcement

During the 2025 fishing season, catch monitors from WLFN, and Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC) will be present at designated sites on both the Fraser River mainstem and the Chilcotin River (upstream of the Farwell Canyon Bridge) to record First Nations harvest data for ongoing research and stock assessment. In addition, DFO staff and enforcement officers may be present at various fishing locations. We kindly ask all Members to show respect and patience toward monitoring personnel as they carry out this important work in support of sustainable fisheries management.



# Overview of the 2025 Sq̓l̓t̓en (Salmon) Runs



*The five species of Pacific Sq̓l̓t̓en (salmon) in their ocean/migration phase vs their spawning phase* (© DFO <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/salmon-saumon/wsp-pss/ip-pmo/index-eng.html>)



*Sq̓l̓t̓en7úw̓i (Sockeye) during its ocean/migration phase.*  
(© NOAA Fisheries <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/sockeye-salmon>)

## Sq̓l̓t̓en7úw̓i (Sockeye)

The 2025 Upper Fraser Sq̓l̓t̓en7úw̓i (Sockeye) run is expected to be significantly stronger than in recent years, with a forecasted return of approximately 3 million fish, supported by a strong 2021 brood year. Key spawning systems include the Willow, Cariboo, Quesnel, Horsefly, Stuart, Stellako, and Nadina Rivers. Importantly, an estimated 40–60% of these Sockeye (roughly 900,000 fish) are expected to migrate up the Chilcotin River, which lies within WLFN territory and remains a key focus for conservation.

To support the long-term sustainability of this important run, Members are encouraged to avoid harvesting Sq̓l̓t̓en7úw̓i before the official opening dates. Avoiding early harvest, especially of early-timed Sq̓l̓t̓en7úw̓i bound for sensitive systems like Stuart and Nadina, gives these fish the opportunity to reach their spawning grounds. Protecting these early returns now will help support stronger Sq̓l̓t̓en7úw̓i populations in the future and preserve this vital food source for the next generations.



*Sqlelten7úwi (Sockeye) during its ocean/migration phase.*

(© NOAA Fisheries <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/sockeye-salmon>)

## Ntytyix (Chinook)

The forecast for Upper Fraser Ntytyix (Chinook) in 2025 remains deeply concerning, with projected returns among the lowest on record for all major populations in the region. While forecasts for Ntytyix across other parts of B.C. are generally positive this year, the stocks relied upon by WLFN are facing severe challenges. These include long-term impacts from the Big Bar and Chilcotin slides, ongoing drought conditions, and broader climate-related stressors.

The anticipated return range is between 24,000 and 85,000 Ntytyix (median estimate of 45,280 fish), which is well below historical levels. To support recovery efforts, Members are strongly encouraged to wait until the opening date before harvesting Ntytyix, particularly those migrating through WLFN territory. Stewarding these vulnerable runs is critical to ensuring they are available for the community in the future



*čaapi (Pink) during its ocean/migration phase.*

(© Alaska Seafood <https://www.alaskaseafood.org/species/pink-salmon/>)

## čaapi (Pink)

The 2025 Upper Fraser čaapi (Pink) salmon run is forecasted to be exceptionally strong, with a median estimate of 27 million fish, potentially the largest return on record. While this forecast carries a high degree of uncertainty, it presents a unique opportunity for sustainable harvesting.



WLFN encourages Members to actively harvest čaapi salmon this season, both to support community food needs and to help reduce harvesting pressure on more vulnerable species.



*Sxeyqs (Coho) during its ocean/migration phase.*

(© NOAA Fisheries <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/coho-salmon>)

## Sxeyqs (Coho)

For the first time in decades, Fraser River Sxeyqs (Coho) salmon are showing signs of recovery, with several organizations, including the Pacific Salmon Foundation, projecting above-average returns in 2025. This trend is likely due to a combination of favorable ocean conditions, strong fry-out survival, and effective past management.

However, despite these promising indicators, Sxeyqs populations that spawn within WLFN territory remain critically low, and their numbers are still too low to support harvesting. As such, WLFN asks all Members to refrain from harvesting Sxeyqs this year to ensure this fragile recovery continues and strengthens into future seasons.

