



Gitanyow *Fisheries* Authority



September 17, 2024

2024 Kitwanga River Salmon Enumeration Update #9

The Gitanyow Fisheries Authority (GFA) is pleased to announce that the Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration program is operational for 2024. Like in previous years, GFA will be providing regular updates on salmon escapement to the Kitwanga River (middle Skeena index) from July through to September. This year marks the 22nd consecutive year that GFA has implemented the program, which collects important in-season pacific salmon stock assessment and biological information. GFA would like to thank their 2024 funders and supporters, specifically the Gitanyow Chiefs (Gitanyow Huwilt Sustainability Fund), the Pacific Salmon Commission's Northern Endowment Fund and Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. GFA would also like to acknowledge and thank the Gitwagak Wilp Simadeeks for allowing GFA to continue to work within their traditional territory, as set out by our 2002 agreement. Updates will be distributed and posted on our website: www.gitanyowfisheries.com



Upstream view of KSEF on September 17, 2024

GFA staff installed the lower Kitwanga River Adult Salmon Enumeration Facility (KSEF) weir components from July 4-9, 2024 under normal water levels. The weir was fish tight by the morning of July 10. For 2024, we once again will be operating both a manual counting boxes and one digital video camera box with recording capabilities (DVR).

The water levels at the KSEF are currently at 0.51m, approximately 0.16m below the long-term average and water temperatures are higher than normal, currently fluctuating between 9-12°C. For more information on water levels and water temperature at the KSEF by day and compared to previous years, refer to the stage and temperature graphs below.

Like in previous years, the KsF (smolt fence) located at the outlet of Gitanyow Lake will be used again this year to count adult sockeye through an additional DVR camera system. The KsF DVR has been operational since July 4, 2024. Prior to July 4, the KsF was operated as a smolt fence and sockeye adults would have been prevented from swimming upstream undetected.

For 2024, the total sockeye return will be reported through both the KsF and the KSEF for comparison purposes and all other salmon counts will only be reported when they migrate past the KSEF.

Total salmon counts to end of day on September 16, 2024:

KsF

Sockeye= 1,318 (afternoon of September 16)

KSEF

Sockeye= 2,006	Chinook= 468	Pink= 279,742	Chum= 193	Coho= 880
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This year's **sockeye** escapement through the KSEF compares to a previous **maximum** observed to the day of 17,703 in 2010, which resulted in an overall escapement of 20,804 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 79 in 2019, which resulted in an overall escapement of 125. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga sockeye to the day (2003-2019) it is predicted that approximately **78.8%** of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga sockeye salmon abundance through the KSEF by day, refer to the sockeye salmon graph below.

To date we have counted **468 Chinook** (plus 168 jacks) through the KSEF. This year's Chinook escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 3,224 in 2007, which resulted in an overall escapement of 3,225 and the **minimum** observed to the day of 544 in 2021, which resulted in an overall escapement of 544. Based on average run timing for Kitwanga Chinook to the day (2003 - 2019 and 2021 - 2023) it is predicted that **all of the run** should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga Chinook salmon abundance by date, refer to the Chinook graph below.

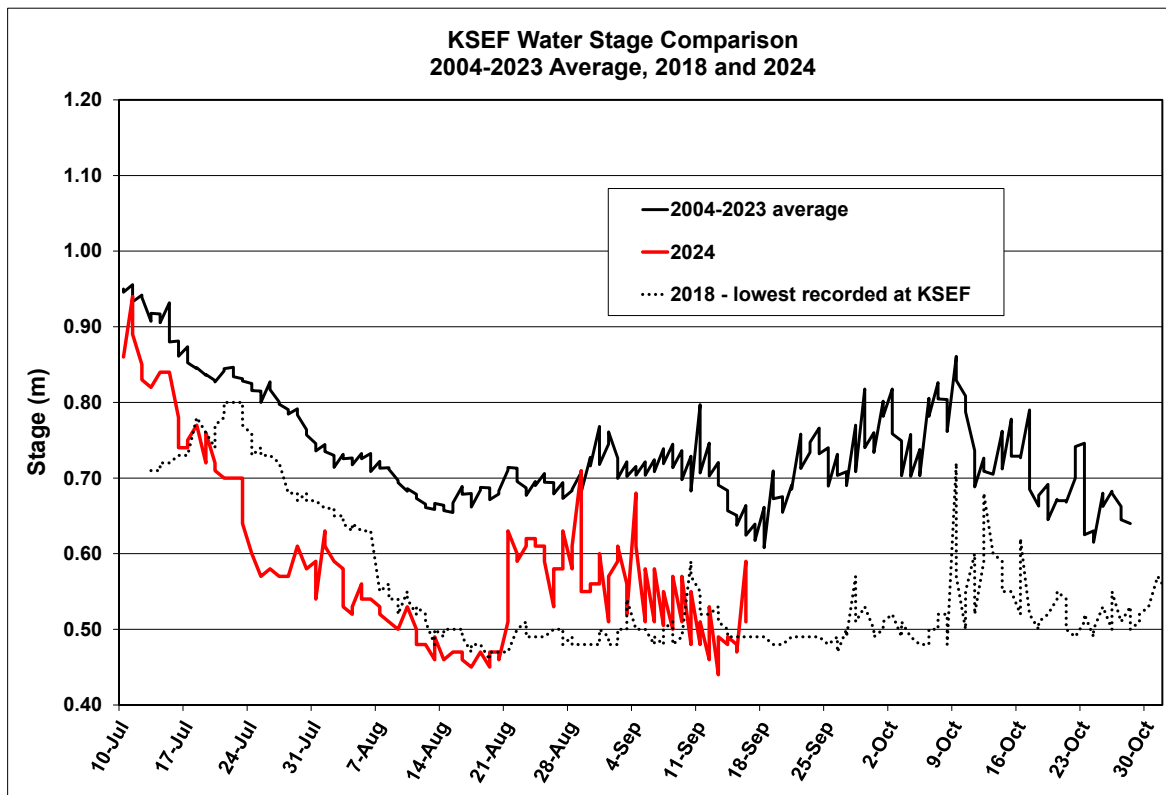


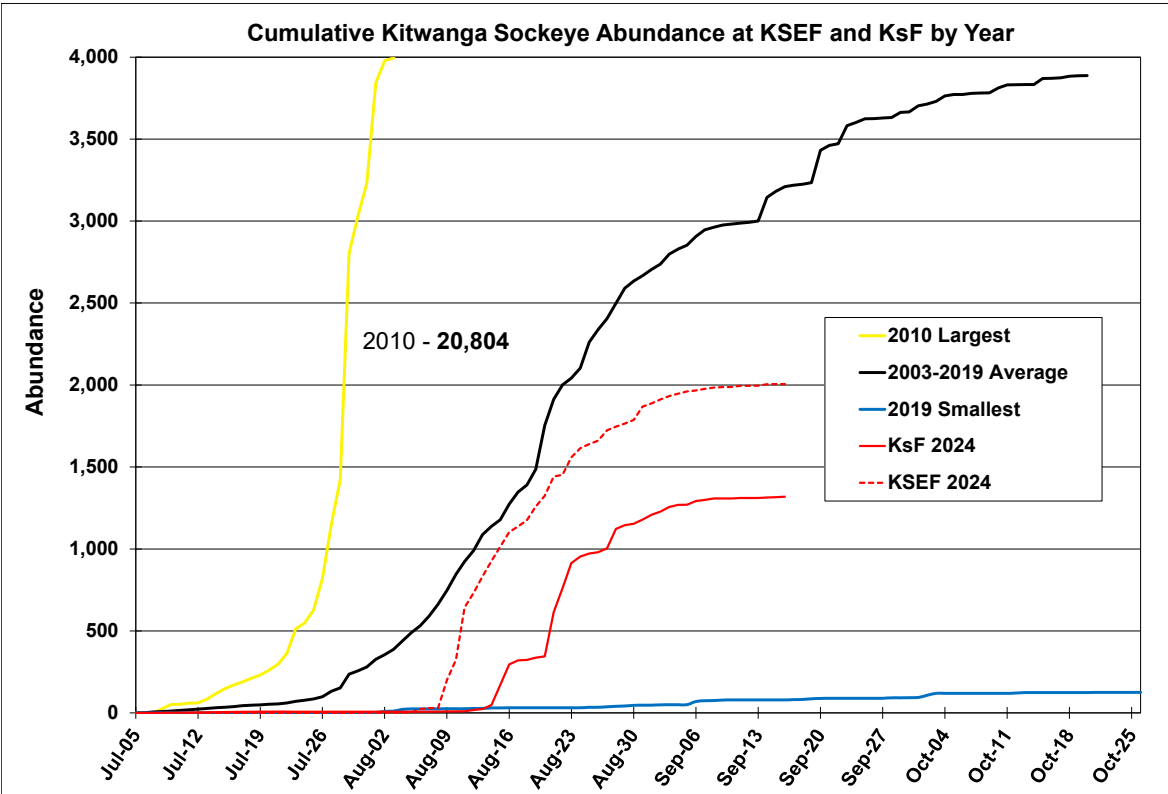
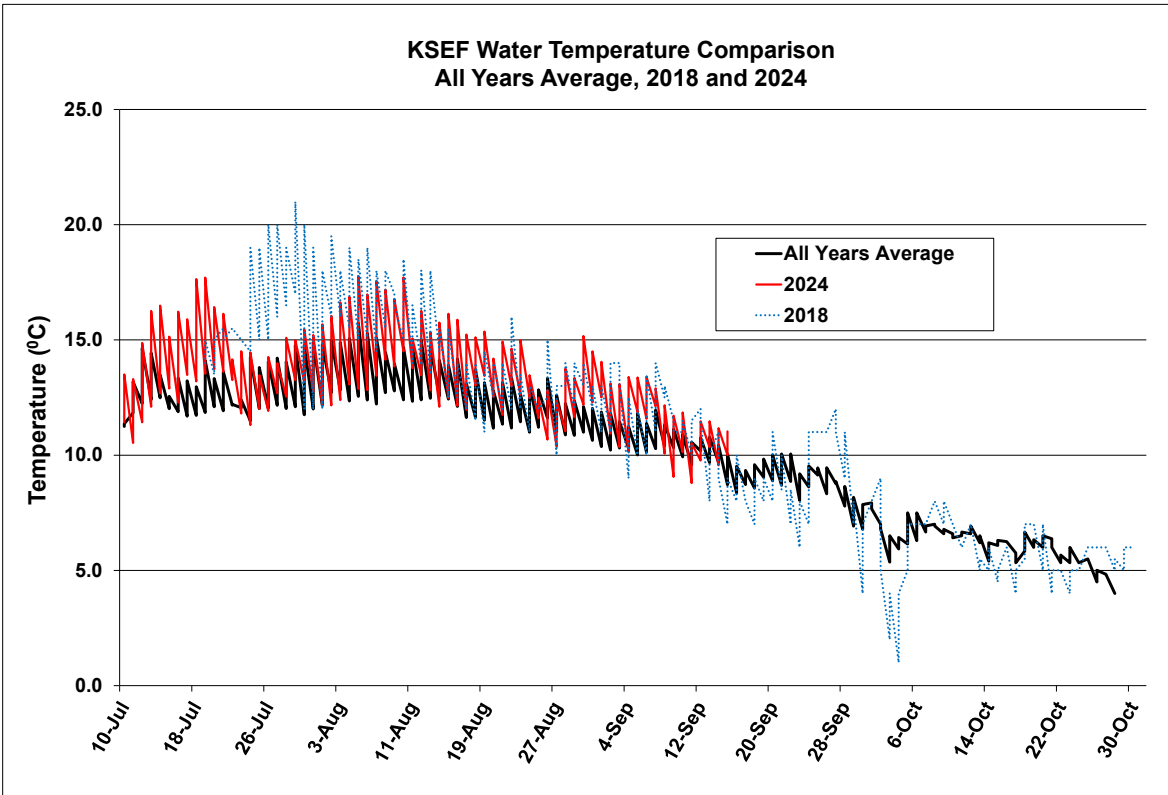
View of Chinook through the camera box at KSEF on July 30, 2024

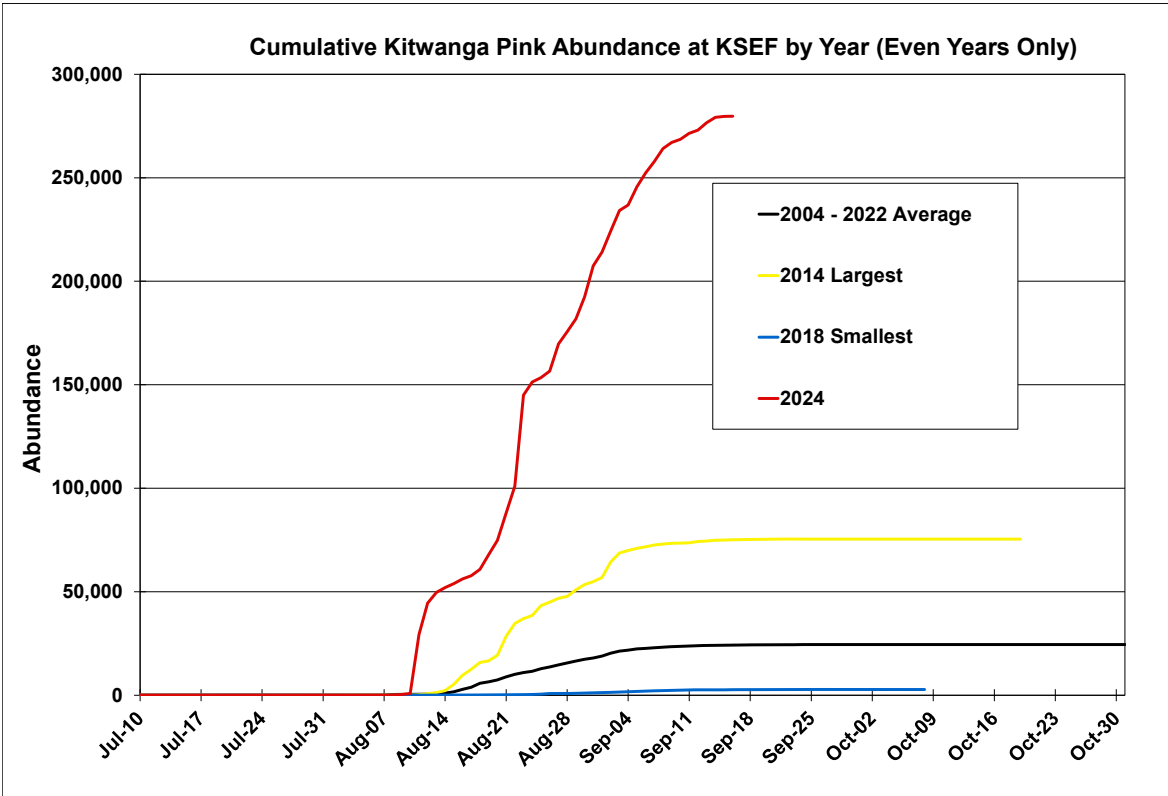
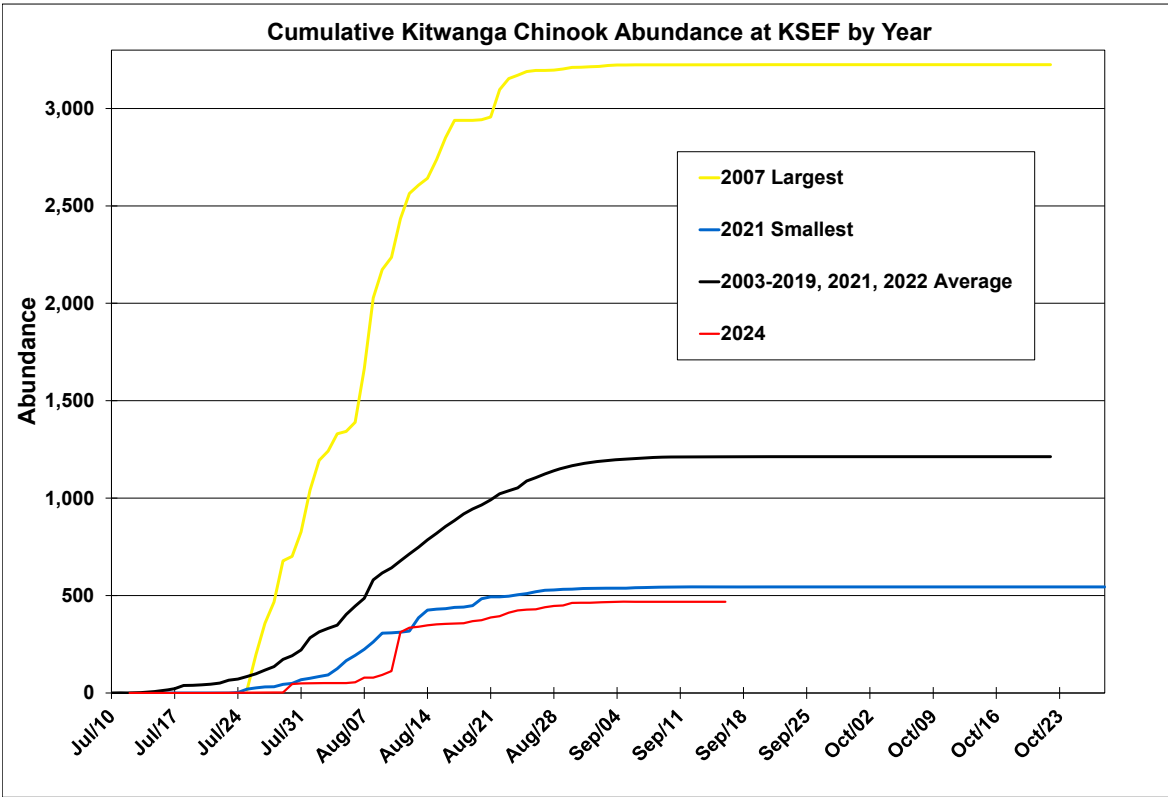
To date we have counted **279,742 pink** salmon through the KSEF. This year's even year pink escapement is the **maximum** observed to the day when compared to previous years and the **minimum** observed to the day of 2,633 in 2018, which resulted in an overall escapement of 2,736 for the year. Based on average run timing for pink salmon to the day (2004-2022) it is predicted that **99%** of the run should have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga even-year pink salmon abundance by date, refer to the pink salmon graph below

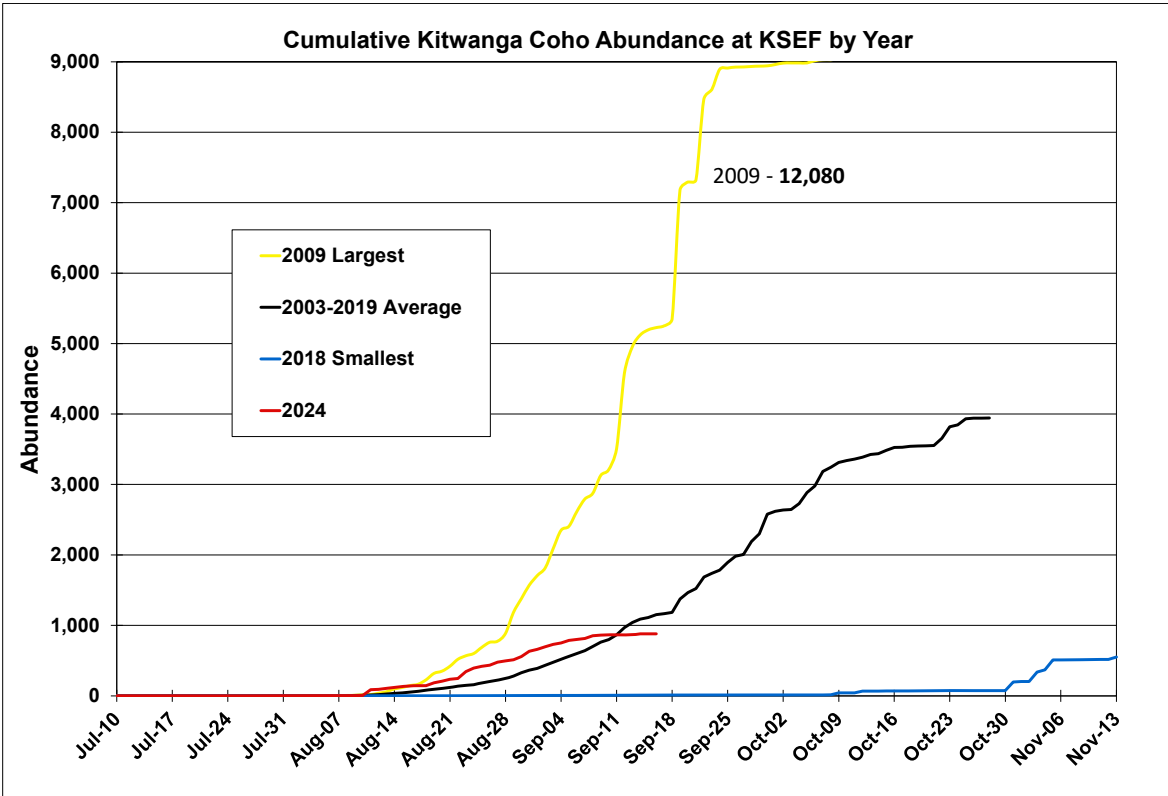
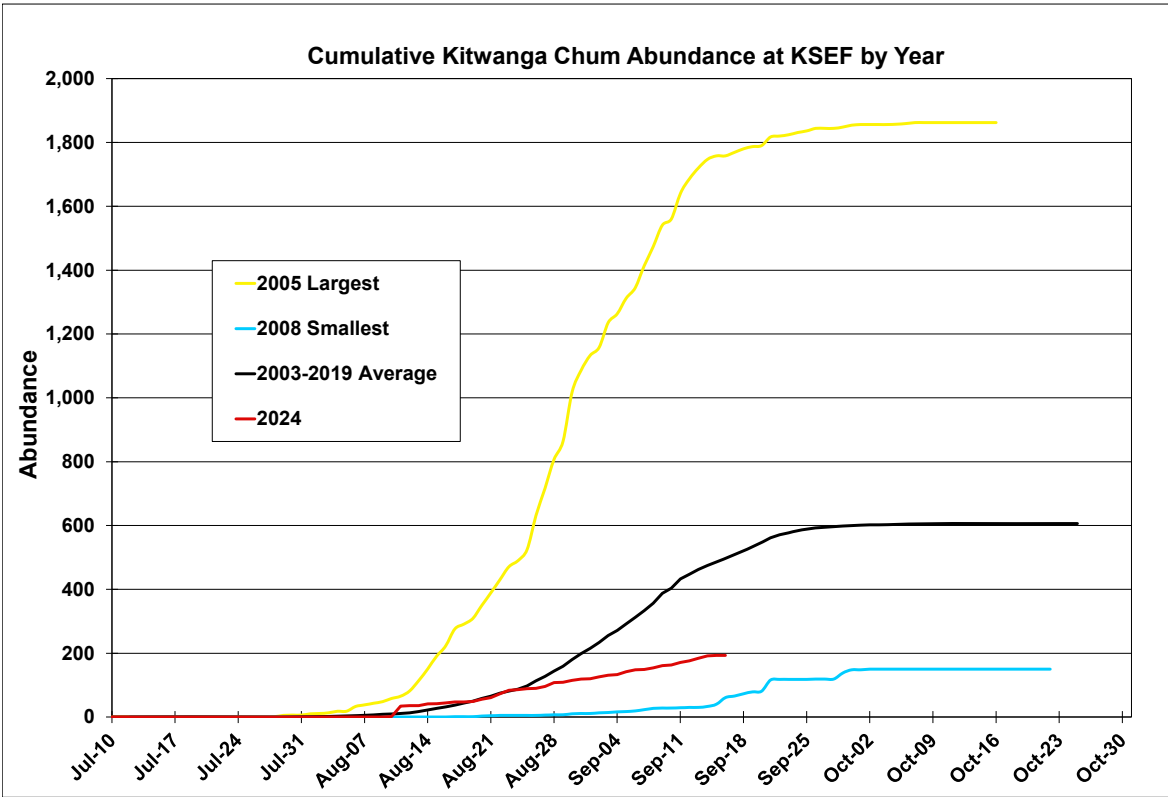
To date we have counted **193 chum** salmon through the KSEF. This year's chum escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 1,758 in 2005, which resulted in an overall escapement of 1,862 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 61 in 2008, which resulted in an overall escapement of 150. Based on average run timing for chum salmon to the day (2003-2019, 2021) it is predicted that **82.1%** of the run should now have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga chum salmon abundance by date, refer to the chum salmon graph below.

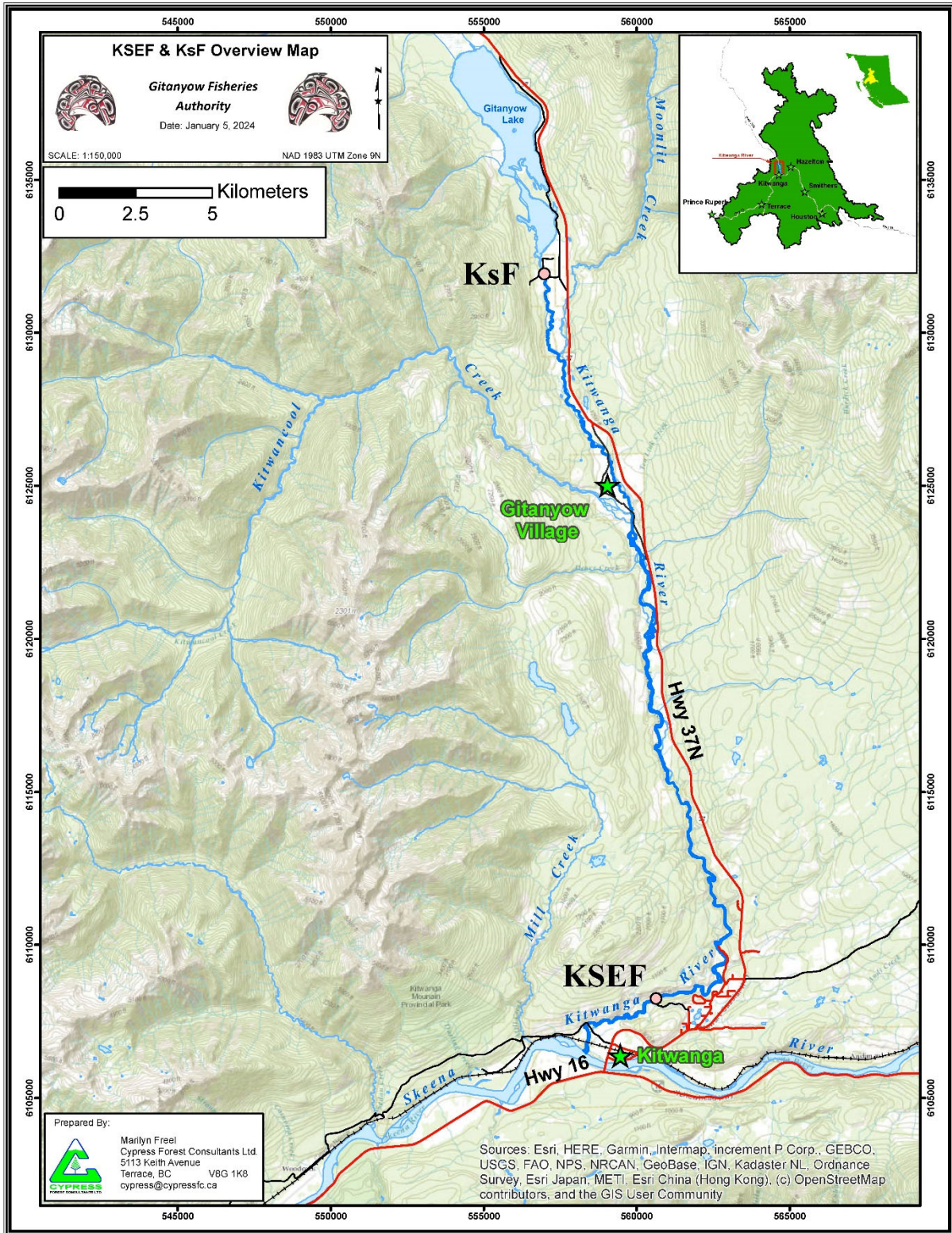
To date we have counted **880 coho** salmon through the KSEF. This year's coho escapement compares to a **maximum** observed to the day of 5,226 in 2009, which resulted in an overall escapement of 12,080 and a **minimum** observed to the day of 10 in 2018, which resulted in an overall escapement of 551. Based on average run timing for coho salmon to the day (2003-2019) it is predicted that **29.2%** of the run should now have passed the KSEF. For more information on cumulative Kitwanga coho salmon abundance by date, refer to the coho salmon graph below.











Map of the Kitwanga River / Watershed highlighting the locations of the KSEF and KsF.