

The Tzoonie River reaches salt water at the head of Narrows Inlet about 25 kilometers due north of Sechelt. The Strategic Land Use Plan for the shishalh Nation (Draft 2007) notes that the lower portion of Tzoonie River and all of Narrows Inlet form the largest cultural emphasis area within their territory. The Sechelts consider the river to be the largest salmon and anadromous Cutthroat Trout producing system in Sechelt Inlet.

The Tzoonie River once supported five species of salmon, Steelhead, Cutthroat and Dolly Varden. By 1970 the Sockeye, Chinook and Steelhead runs were all but lost. A set of falls 5km from the mouth was blasted in 1975; however these stocks continued to decline. Between 1948 and 1988, Chum returns numbering more than 30,000 occurred eleven times. In 1947, 75,000 Pink were estimated to have arrived to spawn; that number has not been repeated. The maximum Pink escapement from 1986-1994 was 1500. The maximum return for Coho (1989-98) was 250. Within the Jervis Inlet Management Area, specifically Statistical Area 16, the Tzoonie is still considered to be one of the three most important systems for Chum and one of 11 for Pink.

Logging has a long history in the Tzoonie watershed. Large scale mechanized clearcut logging has been underway here since the early 60s. Currently there is very little old growth remaining in the Tzoonie watershed, especially so in the lower elevations. Other activities are now influencing conditions in this watershed; a private run-of-the-river hydro-electric facility on Tyson Creek polluted the main stem of river with heavy sediments and glacial rock flour in February 2010. More run-of-the-river diversions have been proposed and are undergoing a provincial environmental assessment.

A Fish Habitat Assessment Procedure was conducted in 1998 that focused on damage to fish habitat in the main stem and major tributaries. This was followed in 1999 with detailed reach assessments, prescriptions and an examination of barriers to fish passage at culvert-bearing road crossings. That report noted that the watershed was still home to small populations of all 5 species of salmon, Steelhead, Bull Trout, Cutthroat Trout, Rainbow Trout and Dolly Varden. In 2005, Cutthroat trout still existed in Tzoonie Lake. In 2002, the summer run of Steelhead was identified as a special concern and logging was identified as having had a high impact on the species.

Chum returns for the Tzoonie over the last 5 years have been disappointing.

TZOONIE River Watershed

	sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Chinook	TOTALS	Steelhead
1947	1,500	3,500	75,000	15,000	75	95,075	75
1948	1,500	3,500	200	35,000	75	40,275	75
1949	1,500	3,500	7,500	35,000	75	47,575	25
1950	750	3,500	25	35,000	75	39,350	25
1951	3,500	1,500	400	35,000	75	40,475	75
1952	200	750	25	7,500	25	8,500	75
1953	400	200	400	3,500	75	4,575	25
1954	750	75	25	15,000	75	15,925	25
1955	750	3,500	200	7,500	75	12,025	-
1956	3,500	3,500	25	1,500	400	8,925	-
1957	3,500	3,500	3,500	15,000	75	25,575	-
1958	3,500	7,500	25	15,000	25	26,050	-
1959	7,500	3,500	200	35,000	25	46,225	-
1960	750	3,500	-	35,000	N/O	39,250	-
1961	1,500	3,500	7,500	15,000	-	27,500	750
1962	1,500	7,500	75	15,000	N/O	24,075	75
1963	3,500	7,500	3,500	7,500	25	22,025	75
1964	3,500	7,500	N/O	15,000	25	26,025	200
1965	1,500	3,500	750	3,500	N/O	9,250	200
1966	3,500	7,500	N/O	7,500	N/O	18,500	200
1967	4,000	3,000	1,500	5,000	N/O	13,500	200
1968	6,000	10,000	N/O	20,000	50	36,050	300
1969	2,500	5,000	2,500	21,000	50	31,050	200
1970	-	2,500	-	1,200	-	3,700	-
1971	-	3,000	1,500	11,000	-	15,500	-
1972	-	1,000	-	12,000	-	13,000	-
1973	-	2,000	30	11,000	-	13,030	-
1974	N/O	5,000	-	25,000	N/O	30,000	-
1975	0	N/O	50	11,000	0	11,050	N/O
1976	0	1,000	0	18,500	0	19,500	N/O
1977	0	1,000	250	18,000	0	19,250	UNK
1978	0	200	0	15,000	0	15,200	UNK
1979	0	N/O	400	6,000	0	6,400	UNK
1980	0	N/O	N/O	23,000	0	23,000	UNK
1981	0	N/O	N/O	23,000	0	23,000	UNK
1982	0	2	0	19,500	0	19,500	UNK
1983	0	0	0	12,000	0	12,000	UNK
1984	N/O	50	N/O	20,000	N/O	20,050	UNK
1985	N/O	UNK	N/O	30,000	N/O	30,000	UNK
1986	0	1	UNK	10,150	UNK	10,151	UNK
1887	0	0	600	25,000	0	25,600	UNK
1988	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000	UNK
1989	UNK	UNK	50	15,000	UNK	15,050	UNK

Tzoonie River

Last Updated: Thursday, 30 August 2012 01:01



(If you have Google Earth installed on your computer,
you can click the link above to open a placemaker for this watershed.)



Tzoonie watershed circa 1990