



330,000 Sockeye Fry to be Released throughout Syilx Okanagan Nation Territory

stqa?tkwtniwł, Westbank, Syilx Okanagan Nation Territory: The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) continues the work of restoring salmon throughout our territory - releasing hundreds of thousands of sockeye fry into the Okanagan and Columbia basin creeks, rivers, and lakes.

Unfortunately, extreme environmental conditions last year created thermal barriers in the Okanagan River systems, delaying Okanagan-bound salmon in the Columbia River as they sought cooler, deeper waters. These conditions impacted their migration and access to spawning grounds.

“In previous years, we were releasing up to 4 million fry,” stated Shayla Lawrence, ONA Fisheries Biologist, “but due to unfavourable water temperatures and fishing in the U.S., only 9,000 spawners returned this past fall compared to the expected return of under 72,000. More fish were harvested in the U.S. than returned to spawn.”

We are set to release around 330,000 sockeye fry throughout the territory this year, with some fry coming from the 40 schools in the Okanagan and 38 schools in the Columbia region participating in the ONA Fish in Schools (FinS) program. More than 310,000 of these fry will return to the tributaries of the Okanagan basin. Ceremonial releases will occur over the next several weeks, involving FinS students, members of the Syilx Okanagan Nation, and the public:

- April 30 at 10 am – [snpintktn \(Penticton\), Skaha Lake – Skaha Lake East Marina](#)
- May 6 at 10 am – [nłəłtəpmuscin \(Vernon\), Lower Vernon Creek – Marshall Fields Dog Park](#)
- May 7 at 10 am – [ki?lawnna? \(Kelowna\), Mission Creek – Rotary Beach Park](#)
- May 8 at 10 am – [sənłuxuxtan \(Six Mile\), Equisis Creek – OKIB Territorial Stewardship Office](#)
- May 12 at 10 am – [snłuxwqnm \(Castlegar\), Columbia River – Millenium Park](#)
- May 12 at 2 pm – [takli?aickst \(Slocan\), Slocan Lake – Village of Slocan Boat Ramp](#)
- May 13 at 10 am – [snkxykntn \(Revelstoke\), Columbia River – Centennial Park Boat Ramp](#)

These ceremonial releases mark another important step in the Syilx Okanagan Nation’s ongoing kt cpəlK stim’ initiative — the work dedicated to our ancestors to return salmon to their natural habitats and historic ranges.

This summer, we are expecting around 270,000 sockeye to pass Bonneville dam as they migrate into the Okanagan River system. As we continue to face low snowpacks, drought, extreme environmental conditions, and a high recreational harvest in the US, we may see even less salmon returning to the Okanagan basin.

As Syilx Elder calyx (Richard Armstrong) states:

“Salmon will give their lives trying to come back to us... even if the dam is 10 miles high, they will fight that dam to come home to us. It’s a reminder to us that we’re responsible for making sure that the salmon that come up from the ocean have good, clean water to lay their eggs.”

About the kł cp'əl'k' stim' (cause to come back) Initiative:

Under the kł cp'əl'k' stim' (cause to come back) initiative, the ONA collects eggs and milt from adult sockeye and chinook salmon from the Okanagan River for fertilization and rearing in the ONA's kł cp'əl'k' stim' Hatchery. From there, the eggs are raised to the fry stage in either the kł cp'əl'k' stim' Hatchery or in classrooms through the Okanagan and Columbia as part of our Fish in Schools (FinS) program, which provides students a hands-on opportunity to learn about their lifecycle and the importance of their ecosystems.

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For the Syilx people, salmon are far more than a food source. As one of the Four Food Chiefs and central to many captik^w (oral histories), salmon are relatives and an essential part of the health and resilience of tmix^w (all living things). The ONA continues the work of its ancestors by caring for the lands, waters, and living things of the territory. Through salmon restoration, stewardship, and Nation-led conservation, the Syilx Okanagan Nation remains strong in protecting its rights, title, and responsibilities to future generations.