



MEDIA RELEASE | October 31, 2022

Sockeye Run Makes Historic Returns to Tributaries on klusxnitkw (Okanagan Lake)

tkwəniwt (Westbank), Syilx Territory: The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) are honoured to announce the return of sc'win (Sockeye Salmon) back to many of the tributaries that feed into klusxnitkw over the 2022 season. Since 2019 ONA has worked to achieve salmon passage at Okanagan Dam in Penticton. The importance of returning sc'win to klusxnitkw is heightened due to the cooler waters of the lake, that provide the species a haven in the face of climate change and warming waters, which can prevent salmon from returning and laying their eggs.

sc'win have now been observed spawning in Penticton Creek, Trout Creek, Peachland Creek, Trepanier Creek, Powers Creek, Mission Creek, Whiteman Creek and Equis Creek, with individual counts ranging from just a few to over 1,000. One location where the success of these returns has been recently recorded is on Trout Creek, near Summerland. This creek has seen over 400 Sockeye return to lay their eggs. The success of this return is the result of a multi-pronged effort by ONA to ensure the tributary was prepared to have fish come back, and has included marine nutrient loading, which involves placing salmon carcasses from our broodstock work [[click here to learn more](#)] back into waterways to encourage salmon to locate the waterway in the future. ONA has also recently reinstalled riffles (shallow rapids) in the channelized creek to oxygenate the water and provide spawning habitat, while engaging traditional knowledge keepers to provide ceremony and cultural protocols to the work. This has been done alongside consistent salmon fry releases into the creeks in the spring that allow the salmon to imprint on the location and know where to return.

“The return of sc'win back to these creeks and streams on klusxnitkw are not simply a success story of salmon returning, but year of our Syilx advocacy and persistence and resistance to assert our leadership and responsibilities to govern, manage and stewards our lands and resources including our sacred food chief sc'win (nytikxw). So this return is illustrative of a much broader picture of ensuring Syilx title and rights but our responsibilities to indigenous food sovereignty, our economy this region of Syilx Territory. Further, the cultural revitalization for Syilx people throughout the territory is imperative. By enacting our inherent responsibilities to the water and the timx^w, we are ensuring that salmon will continue to return to feed our peoples and lands for generations to come,” Chief Clarence Louie, ONA Tribal Chair, stated.

The ONA are asking residents throughout the territory to please not walk through the rivers, or allow their dogs to go into these waterways, as they run the chance of destroying the salmon eggs that are located in their gravel nests in the water.

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The kl cpəlk'stim' Hatchery is a testament to the perseverance of the Syilx people to realize their dream of restoring the n'tix^w (Salmon) – one of our Four Food Chiefs – to their original habitat and rightful place in our territory. Opened in 2014, the 25,000 square foot hatchery has the capacity to rear 8 million eggs. It is currently equipped to handle all fish culture aspects required for 5 million eggs from brood stock management until fry release.

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