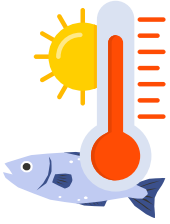


SKEENA REGION

Fish and Drought Interactions at-a-glance



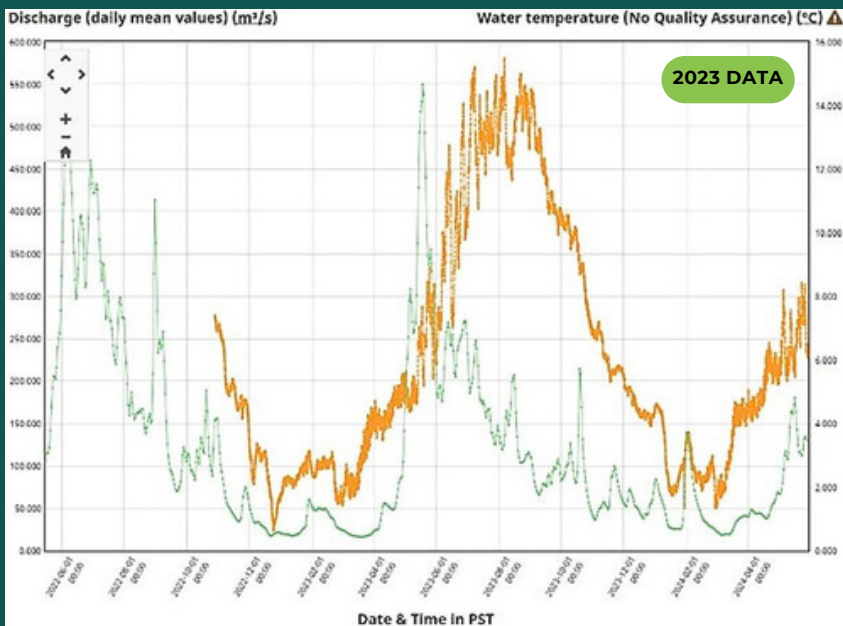
Photo: Skeena River



Stream temperatures during drought that average above **20** degrees Celsius for a week can be harmful to salmonids.

FISH LIFE STAGES IMPACTED BY DROUGHT

- **Juvenile rearing** for fish may be affected by low stream flows, high water temperatures in late summer, decrease in available habitat (e.g. pools, riffles), a decrease in invertebrate drift and food production, lack of groundwater input to maintain cold water refuge habitat, changes in water quality (e.g. dissolved oxygen and nutrients), and potential stranding in isolated pools, side channels and tributary streams.
- Salmon species (coho, chinook, chum, pink, sockeye) arriving during low flows in mid-late summer may experience barriers to migration blocking access to spawning habitat in rivers and streams with low flows. During upstream **migration** and **spawning**, fish may be subject to stresses from increased water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen.



→ **HYDROGRAPH**
 Kitsumkalum River below Alice Creek (08EG019) Water Survey of Canada hydrometric station 2023 data showing stream flow (**green line**) and water temperature (**orange line**).

- Stream flow peaks in May during spring freshet due to snow melt and rain runoff with lower flows during late summer and winter months.
- Maximum water temperatures during summer 2023 did not exceed 16 degrees Celsius.

REGIONAL STREAM HIGHLIGHTS

Streams are prioritized for monitoring during drought for water management and ecosystem values.

- Skeena Region staff monitors 16 streams in their hydrometric monitoring network. Monitoring includes Water Survey of Canada and BC government hydrometric monitoring station data, stream flow and temperature monitoring.
- Streams monitored include: Richfield Creek, McQuarrie Creek, Deep Creek, Owens Creek, Bulkley River, Cranberry River, Kispiox River, Lakelse River, Lower Skeena River, Telkwa River, Suskwa River, Zymoetz River, Meziadin River, Morice River, Nadina River, and Kitwanga River.
- The Bulkley Basin Ecosession exhibits flow sensitivity due to limited summer base flows.

REGIONAL FISH HIGHLIGHTS

- Skeena region contains all five salmon species (chinook, coho, chum, pink, sockeye), rainbow trout/steelhead, dolly varden char, bull trout, and cutthroat trout.
- Summer-run steelhead adults typically enter the Skeena River starting early July into September, migrate upstream to overwintering habitat, and spawn in many rivers and streams in the spring.