

## **SEHAB 20250608: Sunshine Coast Roundtable Report (Region 9)**

Representative: Angela Kroning

Alternate: Dianne Sanford

Community Advisor: Jim Wilson

**Summary** – This past spring, as reported by many of the groups, has seen much interest in wild salmon. The Ministry of Transportation & Transit (MoTT) locally and regionally has become more engaged in improving fish passage in partnership with the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association and with the Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers Society. All groups report that volunteers remain keen. Interest by the general public seems to be on the upswing as well as evidenced by the successful Fish Release Festival hosted by the Sunshine Coast Salmon Enhancement Society on May 17<sup>th</sup> with 1,000 visitors attending. The Pacific Salmon Foundation continues to be much appreciated with supplying funding grants to support the various projects.

Finally, as noted in recent SC Roundtable Reports, our CA Jim Wilson is always there for all groups and so appreciated for his local presence.

### **Group Reports –**

#### **Sunshine Coast Salmon Enhancement Society:**

- Fish recently released
  - Coho, 2023 brood juveniles – 18,140, released on May 17 and 29, 2025
  - Chum, 2024 brood juveniles, Chapman Creek – 1,767, released May 22, 2025
  - Chum, 2024 brood juveniles, Angus Cr. – 2,365, released May 21, 2025 to Angus Cr,
- Rearing numbers, currently on hand
  - Coho, 2024 brood juveniles – 45,536, to be released in May or June 2026
  - Chinook, 2024 brood juveniles - 66,263, to be released in the next week or two
- Board, staff and volunteers have been busy with the planning, organizing then hosting of our *Fish Release Festival* on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> – This event was a great success with over 1,000 visitors attending on the day, we had 14 or more community and government organizations attending with information tables
- Salmon in the Classroom school groups released their Coho fry to the creek between May 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, a total of 364 kids, teachers and adults were involved
- Projects,
  - Education building upgrades are pending on a potential incoming grant, no word as of yet
  - Fence replacement around our settling pond is in the works
  - We are in the early stages of our community garden project
- Volunteer hours were fairly high this reporting period, Release Festival planning meetings saw very good turnouts
- Visitor numbers were high through this reporting period, boosted by the Salmon in the Classroom fry releases and our Fish Release Festival

- Bill Krause, Manager, Chapman Creek Hatchery, Sunshine Coast Salmonid Enhancement Society

#### **Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers Society:**

- PSF Grant Approved for Roberts Creek Salmon Habitat Assessment - We are very happy to announce that our grant request from Pacific Salmon Foundation was approved for a complete salmon habitat assessment on Roberts Creek. We have awarded the project to LGL Environmental, the work is scheduled to happen this summer. This is the first step in our efforts to improve the spawning grounds from the estuary to the Roberts Creek falls. If there are inadequacies, we will investigate the best way to remedy them. Roberts Creek had high salmon returns the last two years (2024: 4,492 - pink, chum, and coho) and the potential spawning grounds is only 500m. If the returns continue at the same rate or increase, we need to maximize the areas that can be used both for spawning and for nursery areas for the fry.
- Honorary Scholarship for our Streamkeeper Youth - We are awarding the Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers Society Youth Scholarship to a hardworking student that has volunteered with us for 7 years who graduates this month. This will enable him to pursue future goals upon graduation. The student is Kalum Neufeld. Kalum has been an invaluable member of our group in both spawning counts in the fall, removing invasive plants and helping at our booths at community events.
- Malcolm Creek Culvert Replacement Update: - The decision to replace the Malcolm Creek culvert at Metcalfe Road @ Roy Road, Roberts Creek, BC has been made! It will be replaced in the summer of 2026! The culvert bottom is totally rusted out and it is also a barrier to fish passage due to bedrock at the entrance of culvert. We recently had a site visit attended by representatives of MoTT to assess how the culvert performs with extreme weather events such as the atmospheric river on November 15, 2021. We have been able to supply pictures to MoTT staff showing the water did not go over the road, but barely!  
We performed fry trapping in Malcolm Creek above the existing damaged culvert in April 2025 and caught 19 fish (6 coho, 11 cutthroat and 1 sculpin) and saw another 30+ tiny coho fry. We are looking forward to seeing what the results will be after the culvert is replaced and is no longer a barrier to fish passage. We are grateful to MoTT for their interest and work in getting this project complete for the wild salmon of our little creek.  
In the interim, we also discussed the option of a culvert liner to enable safe passage by both spawning coho and their smolts after spending time in the upper reaches above the culvert but not sure if this is a viable option.
- Invasive Plant Removal and Native Plant Planting: We have had three Invasive Plant Removal and Native Planting events in March, April and May. We removed bags of ivy and blackberries and had many community members come out to join us. We also planted sword ferns, Oregon grape, cedar trees, and red twig dogwoods in the areas that we had removed the invasives. This was made possible from a Community Salmon Program grant from Pacific Salmon Foundation.
- Update on SCSS Campaign to stop logging in the xwesam/stelk'aya watershed: We launched the "Stop the cut blocks in the Roberts Creek Watershed/Save Roberts Creek Salmon;" postcard

campaign on Earth Day. We want to stop the logging by BCTS cut blocks located in the headwaters of Roberts Creek. We believe that removing large areas of forest will change the natural hydrology of the upper Roberts Creek tributaries. It is just too great a risk to salmon and their habitat in the lower reaches that includes the spawning grounds of three species of salmon, pink, chum and coho. We have already distributed almost 2,000 postcards to the people at community events. We have put in a second order as we plan to distribute them throughout the summer. Already we have seen good results from our campaign, the Directors of SCSS had a lunch appointment with our local MP, Patrick Weiler last week when he was on the Sunshine Coast. We were able to articulate our concerns, and we plan to keep our communication open to see if the federal government may be able to help with a review of policy that enables corporations to potentially destroy salmon habitat. The artwork for the postcards is an original watercolour done by a SCSS Director.

- Shirley Samples, President, Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers Society

#### **The Loon Foundation:**

Invasive Species – We have commenced surveys for European Green Crab in the Pender Harbour Region. We will be expanding to conduct surveys in Tla'amin territory (Powell River) again this year. We hope to expand further south into ch'atlich (Sechelt) area too. DFO will be increasing our supply of gear to train other groups in the upper Sunshine Coast.

Juvenile Salmon – We have enumerated and assessed over 14,000 chum thus far in 2025. This is more chum salmon than we have counted in any previous year of monitoring. Also, for the first time, we have had a few pink in our sets this year. The pinks in the past have been restricted to even years.

Salmon Escapement - We have recently purchased a new multi meter and are planning on conducting water quality readings monthly in Anderson Creek. This will complement an intensive study that is done twice a year in partnership with the Raincoast Foundation's Healthy Waters program.

The log jam upstream of the Sunshine Coast Hwy was modified to allow fish passage by our Community Advisor. No further flooding has been noted.

Larval Crab Monitoring – We continue monitoring larval Dungeness crabs using a light trap designed by the Pacific Northwest Crab Research Group and the Hakai Institute's Sentinels of Change. Larval Dungeness have just appeared in our area. There have been lots of other crab larvae, zooplankton and amphipods.

Forage Fish - Lots of young herring (this year's hatch and up to 1 year old) are in Pender Harbour currently. We have seen them at the surface in the evening high tides and caught approximately 2000 in one of our seines. Quite a few adult Pacific sand lance have been noted recently.

- Jenn Blancard, Field Research Supervisor, Loon Foundation

#### **Sunshine Coast Friends of Forage Fish -**

The Sunshine Coast Friends of Forage Fish volunteer group is sampling on the lower Sunshine Coast this spring and summer. We are sampling in Gibsons, at Armours Beach. Trail Bay in Sechelt is still being sampled, at this time we are hoping to find eggs from the Surf Smelt, which are noted to be summer spawners on the Sunshine Coast. Data collection is done using MABRRI data pages, (version: October 2020) with protocols set by Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute and Vancouver Island University.

- Dianne Sanford, Coordinator, SC Friends of Forage Fish

### **The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association:**

#### **Ch'kw'elhp/Gibson & Malcolm Creeks Salmon Passage & Habitat Restoration Project**

SCCA continues to coordinate a multi-partner working group focused on fish passage and habitat restoration for Ch'kw'elhp/Gibson and Malcolm Creeks. This group includes representatives from Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers Society (SCSS), and the Town of Gibsons.

Earlier this year, a Senior Project Manager from MoTT joined our monthly working group meetings, taking on a key leadership role in the project. Further analysis of the culvert on Ch'kw'elhp/Gibson Creek revealed that it would not be replaced at Marine Drive. This decision was made because the culvert's lifespan has been extended due to a concrete patch installed by DFO over a decade ago. DFO has confirmed that the temporary half-culvert fish ladder will not be trialed at this location. The team is now considering the following steps and seeking funding to address fish passage at CGC in the short term. MoTT is now exploring the best methods to enhance fish passage through the existing culvert.

In late May, we conducted field visits to both Ch'kw'elhp/Gibson Creek and Malcolm Creek, accompanied by representatives from the Squamish Nation, Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) staff, and consultants. These visits aimed to assess current conditions and help inform our planning for fish passage improvements through the existing culverts. The Squamish Nation representatives are also discussing potential restoration opportunities for the reserve lands with their leadership.

**Forage Fish and Eelgrass Monitoring** SCCA continues to partner with the Sunshine Coast Friends of Forage Fish and Moonstone Enterprises to deliver forage fish egg sampling and eelgrass mapping projects. These citizen science initiatives contribute valuable data to support marine habitat conservation and planning.

**Life-History Studies Project** On the upper Sunshine Coast, SCCA is partnering with Pat Demeester, Dr. Samuel Rocha (UBC), and engaging with the Tla'amin Nation to advance a research project on the Life Histories of fish in the Toqwanan (Theodosia) River.

**Sunshine Coast Ocean Festival (June 1–8, 2025)** SCCA hosted its 6th annual Sunshine Coast Ocean Festival, which included daily NEMO Talks, live film screenings, citizen science activities, and a large World Oceans Day community celebration. NEMO Talk topics included deep-sea protection, sponge reef

and rockfish recovery, eelgrass and forage fish habitat, and BC's new Coastal Marine Strategy — generating strong public engagement and momentum for ongoing action [sunshinecoastcoastfestival.ca](https://sunshinecoastcoastfestival.ca)

**Participation in shíshálh Nation–BC Land Use Planning Tables** SCCA is participating in the MLUP Planning Tables, including the Foreshore and Coastal Planning Table. We contribute science and conservation expertise to support biodiversity protection, ecosystem resilience, and integrated land-sea planning across the Sunshine Coast portion of the swiya.

**Challenging Woodfibre LNG & FortisBC Pipeline** SCCA, together with My Sea to Sky and other allies, is engaged in a legal challenge against the Woodfibre LNG project and FortisBC pipeline expansion, which threaten marine ecosystems, climate, and community health. Last week, our coalition was in court seeking to hold the province and project proponents accountable for cumulative environmental and community impacts.

- Suzanne Senger, ED, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association

**Sargeant Bay Society:** It has been relatively quiet this spring. There has been some park cleaning and coho fry have been observed in Colvin Lake. We recently participated in the very successful Fish Release Festival hosted by the Sunshine Coast Salmon Enhancement Society on May 17<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to hosting SEHAB on a tour of the fish ladder replacement on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

- Dave Spicer, Director, Sargeant Bay Society

**Eelgrass Mapping:** Mapping of eelgrass in Sechelt, Narrows and Salmon Inlets has now been completed and the final report is done. Please email me at the address below if you would like a copy of the report. Eelgrass polygon data will be submitted to the PSF Marine Data Centre - <https://marinedata.psf.ca/> <https://marinedata.psf.ca/sogmrg/> . The data is already viewable on the local Sunshine Coast Regional District open portal - <https://data-myscrd.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/> Click on map layers, then under the environment and then eelgrass.

- Dianne Sanford, [diannesanford@gmail.com](mailto:diannesanford@gmail.com), Moonstone Enterprises

Submitted by A. Kroning,  
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