



VUNTUT GWITCHIN GOVERNMENT
Government of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

CHIEF AND COUNCIL

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VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION

COUNCIL RESOLUTION 08-24-2023 – #47

RE: 2023 Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Porcupine River chum Salmon Fishery

WHEREAS:

- A. VGFN has the right to self-determination, including:
- (1) the inherent right to self-government;
 - (2) the right to be secure in our enjoyment of our means of subsistence and development;
 - (3) the right to maintain and strengthen our distinct physical, spiritual, cultural and economic relationship to the Traditional Territory, and to uphold our responsibilities to future generations in this regard;
 - (4) the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of the Traditional Territory; and
 - (5) the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of VGFN's inherent and treaty rights and responsibilities recognized and protected under the Final Agreement and Self-Government Agreement.
- B. VGFN's inherent and treaty rights and responsibilities include:
- (1) VGFN's inherent self-government authority recognized under Article 13 of the Self-Government Agreement in relation the protection of fish, including Porcupine River chum salmon (also known as Fishing Branch chum); and
 - (2) VGFN's treaty right to manage, administer, and regulate the exercise of harvesting rights of VGFN citizens recognized under Section 16.5.1.1 of the Final Agreement.
 - (3) VGFN's treaty right to harvest salmon and co-manage the salmon fishery in the Porcupine River watershed basin recognized under Chapter 16 of the Final Agreement including an exclusive needs-based allocation for Porcupine River chum salmon with priority over all other fisheries.
- C. The 2023 fall chum salmon run appears similar to 2022, when only 3,804 chum passed Old Crow and 2,934 made it to Fishing Branch where the escapement goal is set at 22,000 to 49,000 chum.

- D. Over the last two seasons VGFN fishers were asked to voluntarily avoid taking chum.
- E. Over the last two seasons, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)'s Communal Fishing Licence to VGFN was for 0 chum and it is likely that the 2023 licence will be the same.
- F. In the State of Alaska, the Fall chum subsistence fishery on the Yukon will be closed unless counts improve. Selective gear types, in particular 4-inch mesh gillnets, up to 60 feet in length, will be allowed for freshwater fish.
- G. The Constitution provides that the fundamental objectives of VGFN include:
 - (1) to have authority in respect of communities and lands of VGFN;
 - (2) to promote and enhance the general welfare of VGFN;
 - (3) to promote, enhance and protect the history, culture, values, traditions and rights of VGFN;
 - (4) to promote respect for the ancestral homeland of VGFN including the natural resources; and
 - (5) to use, manage, administer and regulate the lands of VGFN including the natural resources.
- H. Council has the duty and power under the Constitution to do such things as may be necessary to fulfill the fundamental objectives of the VGFN.
- I. The Gwich'in Niintsyaa 2022 Resolution to Protect the Relationship between Gwich'in and Lùk Choo and The Ni'inlii Declaration, proclaimed by the Gwich'in Nation at the 2022 and 2016 Gwich'in Gatherings respectively, call on Gwich'in from Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories to stand in solidarity and ensure the restoration and conservation of all salmon in the Yukon River watershed.
- J. VGFN must take all measures necessary for future generations of VGFN citizens:
 - (1) to protect and uphold VGFN's inherent and treaty rights and responsibilities in relation to Porcupine River chum salmon; and
 - (2) to maintain and strengthen VGFN's distinct physical, spiritual, cultural and economic relationship to Porcupine River chum salmon.
- K. Council has carefully considered the potential risks, costs and benefits of establishing VGFN measures to regulate the 2023 VGFN Porcupine River chum salmon fishery, including past VGFN practices.

THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION RESOLVES THAT:

- 1. No VGFN Citizen shall harvest chum salmon in the Porcupine River watershed.
- 2. The Porcupine River and its tributaries within the VGFN Traditional Territory are closed to all gill net fishing.

3. These measures shall come into effect September 1, 2023 at 12:01AM and remain in effect until September 23 , 2023 at 11:59 PM. They shall be reviewed weekly by NR staff as new in-season information becomes available.
4. The NR Department will bring forward any recommended changes to the measures, based on in-season information, for immediate consideration by Council.
5. VGG shall provide dog food to VGFN families to reduce the hardship of this closure.

THIS RESOLUTION being duly approved by a quorum of the Council at a meeting duly convened on August 24, 2023 at Old Crow, Yukon.




Chief Pauline Frost



Deputy Chief Debra-Leigh Reti



Councillor Crystal Linklater



Councillor Harold Frost Jr.