



Goldstream Nature House news

Fall 2019

What's Inside:

Salmon Colouring
Page.....pg 2

Goldstream 5K
Salmon Run.....pg 3

You Can Count on
the Salmon.....pg 3

Thank You Chums
.....pg 4

Teacher's
Corner.....pg 4



The bald eagle: Goldstream's distinguished salmon scavenger
Photo by Jared Hobbs.

A Pulse of Water, a Flash of Silver; It's Salmon Run Time!

As Labour Day weekend fades into a distant memory, staff and volunteers hear the most frequently asked question "When will there be salmon in the river?" The staff and volunteers always feel both excited and relieved after seeing the first fish when they can finally provide a definitive answer.



Spawned-out Chum Salmon— Photo by Jared Hobbs

Typically we point out that Goldstream has one of the latest salmon runs on Vancouver Island. We mostly see Chum salmon, who are late spawners in our river. Coho and Chinook arrive in the river a bit earlier but they are in such low numbers that most visitors will never see them. The Chum return in mid to late October and usually continue into the first week of December. Typically, the height of the run is around Remembrance

Day and often the November long weekend is when we see the largest crowds of people viewing salmon with as many as 2,000 people per day visiting the Nature House.

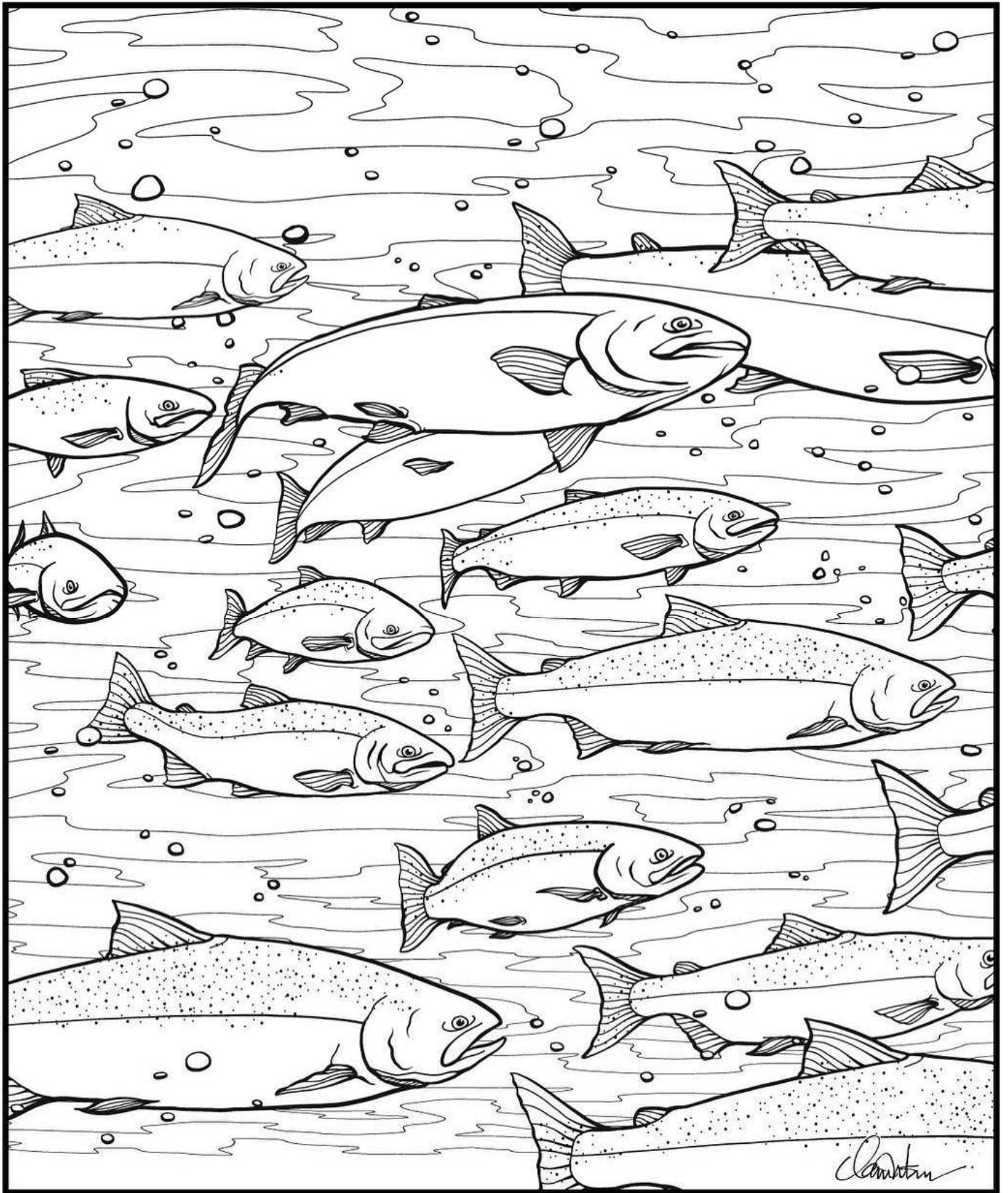
Now that the salmon have returned to the river, we also hear the question "Is there enough water in the river for the salmon?" Understandably, every year there is a variable amount of rain and heat in the summer that can lead to seemingly low river flows. What some visitors may not know is that the water in the Goldstream River comes from the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area. The Goldstream Watershed has a series of 10 dams and 4 reservoirs upstream from Goldstream Park. When water levels in the river are low in the fall due to drought-like conditions in the summer, up to 45 million litres of water a day can be released from the dams into the river in what we call a "pulse" release. This October, pulses of water were released for 7 days to encourage salmon to enter the river.

The salmon returning to the Goldstream River have made a giant oceanic journey, travelling thousands of kilometres from the north to head into Saanich Inlet and up Finlayson Arm to the river. However, if they detect low water flow, they will hold in the ocean, waiting for more water to enter the river. Their numbers increase as more salmon arrive and they become vulnerable to predators such as harbour seals as they wait to enter the river. It's important to keep them on track and when necessary, increase the water release into the system.

The underwater camera that is viewable in the Nature House is showing new fish entering the river daily. Now we eagerly anticipate the answer to the other question we are hearing "How many salmon returned this year?". Come for a visit and find out!

Did You Know?: Female Chum Salmon on average will release 3,000 eggs! Only 1 or 2 of the salmon that develop from those eggs will return as spawning salmon in 4 years! Those are not very good odds and it's a very difficult journey. So you can help by trying not to disturb the salmon while you are viewing them. Be a salmon supporter not a stressor and we all win!

Can You Colour These Salmon in Spawning Colours?



Goldstream 5Km Salmon Run...So Should You!

There were many smiles and high fives during the 16th Annual Goldstream 5K Race on Saturday, October 19th!

2019 Goldstream 5K Winners

Top Male:
Aaron Holmgren

Top Female:
Isabelle McNeil

Top Youth:
Cohen Coles

Annually, this event serves as the kick-off to the salmon season on the first weekend after Thanksgiving. The breathtaking beauty of the golden maple leaves and the towering green giant fir and cedar trees in the park make this one of the most picturesque fall fun-draising runs in the region!

16 years and counting! The first 5k event in 2002 was held as a fundraiser for the Goldstream Nature House just after funding for interpretive programs and nature centres in BC Parks was cancelled. If you do the math you may catch that we've had to cancel the run 2 times since it's inception but otherwise we have laced up our shoes and toed the start line consistently each year. This year was a moderately sized but hardy line-up of runners with a great turnout from Sooke Elementary School. The liquid sunshine mostly held off and food put on by staff and volunteers after the race was delicious! Thank you to everybody who came out to support the Nature House. We look forward to a record-breaking year in 2020! Join us on Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 10:00am for the 17th Annual Goldstream 5K Salmon Run!

You can Count on the Salmon!

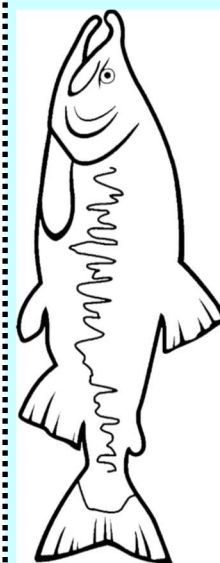
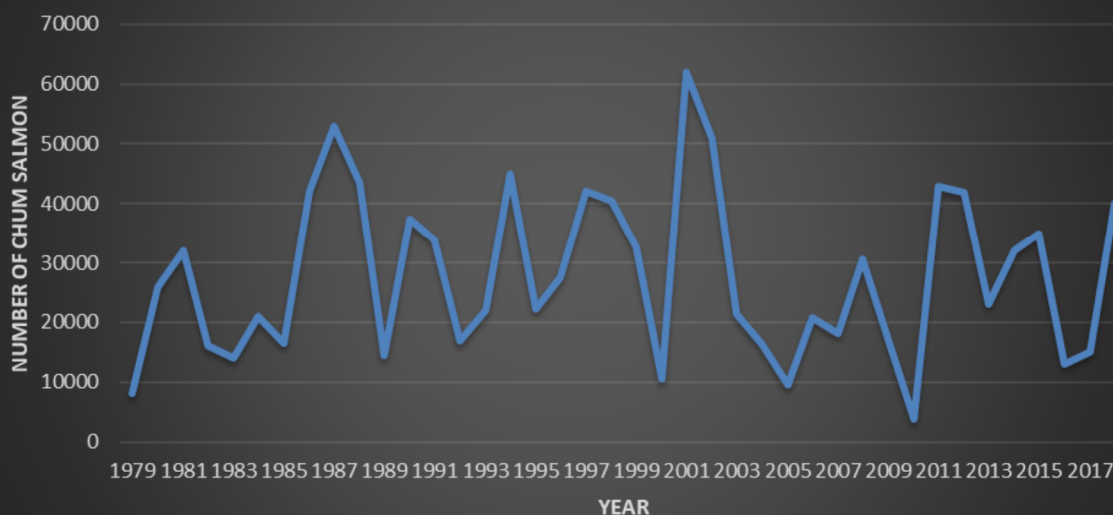
But how exactly are the salmon counted in the Goldstream River? The *River Walkers* are volunteers from the Goldstream Hatchery and members of the Malahat First Nation. They walk from the furthest point upstream that the salmon can reach down to the mouth of the river and count each individual fish they see (both alive and dead).

The weekly counts show approximate snapshots of the salmon in the river at each count. These numbers are then entered into a database and through the magic of mathematical formulas and calculations, the overall size of the run is determined after the run is finished. It's a pretty in-depth process and it's interesting to see how much the salmon return varies year-to-year.

Visit us at the Nature House to find out more!

	Chum Weekly Counts				
	Oct week 3	Oct week 4	Nov week 1	Nov week 2	Nov week 3
2014	48	873	15,973	11,722	9,723
2015	835	6,057	12,137	16,039	10,421
2016	93	977	4,920	7,154	3,410
2017	276	1,021	2,066	6,380	1,462
2018	502	2,347	8,035	23,494	38,880
2019	1667	6,663	9,882	11,762	

Chum Returns 1979-2018



2019 Goldstream Chums

Legacy \$5000+



Vision \$1000-\$4999



Leaders \$500-\$999

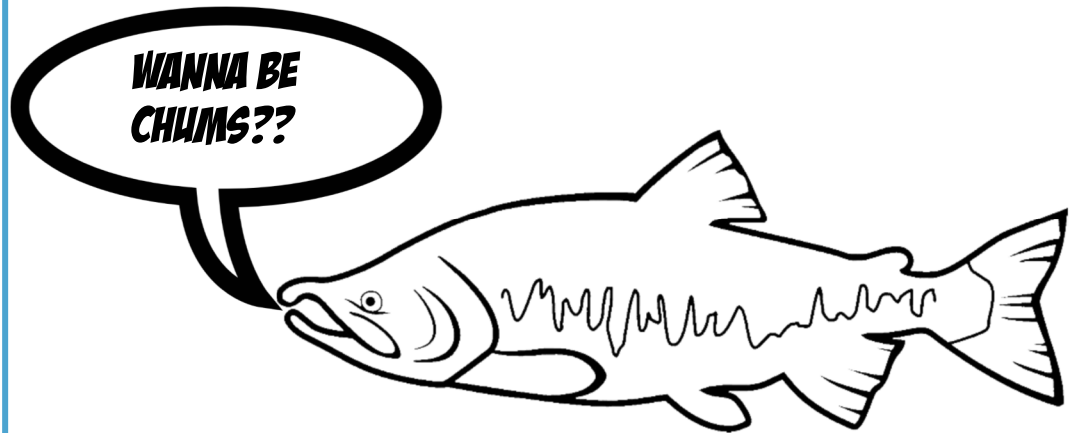


Builders \$250-499

Genevieve Singleton & Dave Polster
David G. McIntosh Chartered Acct.
Westside Instaprint

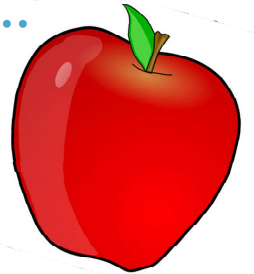
Thank You to our Goldstream Chums

250+ classes of children will make their way through the Goldstream Nature House and spend time learning about the Chum Salmon Life Cycle in Goldstream Park this fall. This would not be possible without the tremendous support of our Goldstream Chums! The impact of direct learning experiences where students are immersed in their subject matter is profound. We thank our loyal Goldstream Chums for continuing to ensure no child misses out on this opportunity. Every year we return, like the salmon, and ask for their continued support. We are so grateful! You too can help to ensure that the salmon run experience is available to all children in our community by becoming a Goldstream Chum.



Teacher's Corner

With the school year well underway— how about planning something special for your class? Give them an unforgettable experience in nature!



For a limited time in December, we will be offering our Eagle Extravaganza programs where your class will learn all about the eagle lifecycle and adaptations at the Nature House. Then view the eagles in their natural habitat right outside!

Can't afford a bus or get enough drivers for a field trip to the park? Consider bringing nature into your school during February and March with one of our fabulous in-school program days! A naturalist will come to your school with fantastic props such as a chocolate cake to teach about life in a log, a life-sized inflatable blue whale to teach about marine mammals or owl pellets to teach about amazing birds of the night!

Thinking about making history? Join Prospector Penny in Goldstream Park for our Gold Rush programs. There's even an option to cook bannock with your class!

And, before you know it, you will be swinging into Spring with our huge line-up of spring programs including forests, bugs, frogs, geology and more!

Finally, for the most adventurous classes we offer our amazingly popular "Night Eyes" or Survivors Sleepover Programs.!

To see a full list of the programs we offer or to register your class please visit
www.naturehouse.ca or call 250-478-9414.

