

Salmon, being a joint responsibility of VGFN and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, are not covered in this plan. Freshwater fish management was taken over by the Yukon government in 1989. Scientific information on freshwater fish in VGFN traditional territory is limited to inventories of species for certain areas. The first survey was done in the 1970s related to the pipeline. Low levels of contaminants in grayling, burbot, whitefish, and salmon mean they are safe to eat. A stocking assessment was done in 1993 for pothole lakes (this consisted of looking for lakes that are deep and big enough, with no outlets, good oxygen levels and no other fish) but none were found to be suitable for a number of reasons. Traditional knowledge stresses the importance of fish in the past as a mainstay as well as a fallback when caribou and other game were scarce.

Concern

Freshwater fish lakes.

The current status of freshwater fish is not available from elders since they do not go out on the land as much anymore. Formerly, fishing was extensive, e.g. 5,000 fish were taken from Johnson Creek one year and fish traps were operated along the entire Whitestone River. Some of the present concern is related to the drying out of Old Crow Flats where some of the most important fish lakes are. Although fish lakes in general may not be utilized as much as before, the community still views fish as a vital resource, particularly if hard times ever come again and people need to go back to the land more than they do now. Low salmon numbers could also increase this reliance on freshwater fish.

Solution: Check out fish species and lakes.

Without ongoing information arising from traditional pursuits there is a need for some other means of keeping track of fresh water species and populations for management purposes.

Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

YG/VGFN
2001/02

Check out fish species and lakes.

This will be a joint undertaking between the Yukon government and VGFN to be initiated by the Yukon government. It will include sampling of a number of lakes identified by VGFN by the Environment Yukon fisheries technician and VGFN staff. [2001-NY-AI-26]