

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director*



Contact:
Holly Carroll, Area Management Biologist
Deena Jallen, Assistant Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 267-2324
Fax: (907) 267-2442

Anchorage Regional Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518

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**2017 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 30
Summer Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar, the drainage-wide Chinook salmon run has exceeded the upper end of the preseason outlook of 195,000 fish and is projected to be between 225,000 and 285,000 fish. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be almost 90% complete at the Pilot Station sonar as of July 2. The summer chum salmon run has exceeded the upper end of the preseason outlook range of 2.5 million fish and is projected to be between 3.0 and 3.4 million fish.

Preliminary run timing dates suggest the 2017 Chinook salmon run is tracking similar to historical early run timing. If the run size materializes as current run projections indicate, this year's run would be the largest since 2005 and 25% to 30% larger than 2016. As of July 3, based on passage at Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), the Canadian proportion of the run is estimated to be above the upper end of the preseason outlook of 97,000 fish. An expected Chinook salmon run size of this magnitude would meet escapement goals, provide an increased subsistence harvest over 2016, and meet the harvest sharing objectives outlined in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

As of July 3, four Chinook and three summer chum salmon pulses have been identified at the sonar project near Pilot Station and their upriver travel has been tracked using average swimming speed. The first pulse of approximately 21,000 Chinook salmon lasted 5 days at the sonar project and should be between Circle and Eagle. A second pulse, lasting seven days, of approximately 80,000 Chinook salmon, should be approaching Beaver. A third pulse, lasting five days, of approximately 70,000 Chinook salmon, should be passing Ruby. The fourth pulse of Chinook salmon is still being assessed at Pilot Station sonar and the start of that group should be near Kaltag.

The first pulse of approximately 820,000 summer chum salmon lasted seven days at the sonar project near Pilot Station and should be passing Ruby. A second pulse, lasting seven days, of approximately 950,000 summer chum salmon, should be approaching Kaltag. The third pulse of

summer chum salmon is still being assessed at Pilot Station sonar and the start of this group should be near Anvik. Based on recent Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) catches, daily passage estimates at the Pilot Station sonar are expected to remain steady over the next several days for both Chinook and summer chum salmon. The third quarter point for early Chinook and chum salmon runs is June 26 and July 1, respectively.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first strata (including the early fish and the first pulse) of Chinook salmon sampled at the sonar project near Pilot Station (May 31 to June 13) estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second strata (including most of the second pulse) of Chinook salmon (June 14-18) estimated 56% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the third strata (third pulse) of Chinook salmon (June 19-25) estimated 40% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. The age composition of 355 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 25 was 7% age-4, 55% age-5, 35% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. Age composition estimates are similar to what was forecasted with age-5 and age-6 fish dominating the run.

The Yukon River Inseason Salmon Management Teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Alaska time. Dial (800) 315-6338, and enter participant code: YUKON #.

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery/ ADF&G and YDFDA

The combined cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnets at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites, as of July 2, is 25.66, which is above the historical average of 19.96. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE of the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site, as of July 2 is 573.64, which is above the historical average of 371.96. As of July 2, the combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gill net at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 27,031.03, which is well above the historical median of 6,376.46 for this date.

Operations at the LYTF for both Chinook and summer chum salmon have been altered from previous years so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. Efforts have been made to reduce Chinook salmon mortality in the test fishery. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets and any dead or injured salmon are distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1. The project is operating well and has not experienced any issues from debris or equipment malfunction. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 225,005 fish, which is above the historical average of 189,706 fish for years with early run timing. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 2,559,255 fish, which is well above the historical median of 1,234,127 fish for this date.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 650 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 426 Chinook salmon for this date. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative summer

chum salmon passage is 27,021 fish, which is above the historical median of 13,440 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goals (SEG) are 2,100-4,900 Chinook salmon and greater than 40,000 summer chum past the weir project.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 184,378 fish, which is above the historical cumulative median of 97,082 for this date. The biological escapement goal (BEG) for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations on June 18. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 2, is estimated to be 89 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 74 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 2, is estimated to be 20,904 fish, which is above the historical median of 5,000 summer chum salmon for this date.

Henshaw River Weir / USFWS

The Henshaw River weir began operations on June 26. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 2, is estimated to be 9 fish, which is equal the historical cumulative average of 9 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 2, is estimated to be 7,050 fish, which is above the historical median of 16 summer chum salmon for this date.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 26. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 123, which is above the average of 106 for this date. An estimated 54 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 26. As of July 2, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 125, which is above the average of 123 for this date. An estimated 11 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar project began operations on July 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since the project began in 2005. As of July 2, 213 Chinook salmon have been counted. The Interim management escapement goal (IMEG) for Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000.

Management Strategy

Because the 2017 Chinook salmon run is indicating the Canadian-origin run size is above the upper end of the preseason forecast and likely to achieve escapement goals and harvest sharing goals in both U.S. and Canada, subsistence fishing has been fully relaxed to fishing on the regulatory schedule in Districts 3-6 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Current Management

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude including the communities of Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 1 (including the Black River and North Coastal District and the communities of Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, and Kotlik):

Subsistence fishing with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week. **Subsistence fishing will close 2 hours before, during, and 2 hours after commercial periods.**

District 2 (including the communities of Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, Saint Marys, Pilot Station, and Marshall):

Subsistence fishing with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week. **Subsistence fishing will close 2 hours before, during, and 2 hours after commercial periods.**

District 3 (including the communities of Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory schedule of two 36-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays**
- **8 p.m. Sundays to 8 a.m. Tuesdays**

Innoko River:

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, including the Anvik River, which includes the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**
- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**

Koyukuk River:

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point upstream along the north bank of the river to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes the communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**
- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**

Federally qualified subsistence fishermen may fish with drift gillnets in Federal public waters of Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh during open fishing periods.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C (from Illinois Creek upstream to regulatory markers two miles downstream of Waldron Creek which includes the communities of Tanana and Rampart):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Thursdays**
- **6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Sundays**

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Kantishna River:

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is on the regulatory subsistence fishing schedule of 5 days per week from 6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistricts 6-C (Personal use fishery from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Commercial Fishing

The Lower Yukon summer chum salmon-directed commercial fishery began on June 10 in

District 1 and June 21 in District 2 with beach seine and dip net gear only. Beginning June 23 fishermen in District 1 have had 4 periods with 5.5-inch mesh gillnets limited to 30 meshes deep and one period with 6-inch gillnets to harvest summer chum salmon. District 2 fishermen remain on selective gear to target summer chum salmon due to processor capacity. The preliminary commercial harvest in District 1 through July 2 is approximately 227,357 summer chum salmon with a reported 3,746 Chinook caught and released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 3,631 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use from gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvest in District 2 through June 24 is approximately 39,951 summer chum salmon with a reported 594 Chinook salmon released alive from dip nets and beach seines.

Commercial fishing in Subdistrict 4-A began on June 25 with live-release fish wheels. As of July 1, 35,108 summer chum salmon have been harvested. No Chinook salmon have been reported on fish tickets as caught and released.

Commercial openings will be announced based on buyer capacity. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening.

District 1 (including Black River) Commercial:

Commercial fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will open for three 8-hour periods:

- **5 p.m. Monday, July 3 until 1 a.m. Tuesday, July 4**
- **5 p.m. Wednesday, July 5 until 1 a.m. Thursday, July 6**
- **5 p.m. Friday, July 7 until 1 a.m. Saturday, July 8**

Any Chinook salmon caught in gillnets during the commercial gillnet openings may be kept for subsistence use and must be recorded on a fish ticket as “kept but not sold”. Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use during the commercial gillnet openings must be marked by removing both tips of the tail fin before concealing the Chinook salmon from plain view or before transferring the salmon from the fishing site.

District 2 Commercial:

Commercial fishing with dip nets and beach seines only will open for two 8-hour periods to target summer chum salmon:

- **4 p.m. Tuesday, July 4 until midnight Tuesday, July 4**
- **4 p.m. Thursday, July 6 until midnight Thursday, July 6**

All Chinook salmon must be released alive from commercial dip nets and beach seines and recorded on a fish ticket.

Subdistrict 4-A Commercial (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point):

Commercial fishing is open for 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Fishermen must use commercial fish wheels that are manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in commercial fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive.

Commercial fishermen should confirm their market before they fish. A commercial fishing period will consist of 24 hours from midnight to 11:59 p.m. each day.

All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. Chinook salmon caught and released must be recorded on a fish ticket as “kept but not sold”.

Fishing schedules, test fish catches and sonar counts are available 24 hours a day at (866) 479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387.

If you have any questions, please call ADF&G in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320, the ADF&G office in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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