



Advisory Announcement

CONTACT:

Deena Jallen and Christy Gleason
Summer and Fall Yukon Area Management Biologists
Fairbanks: 907-459-7274
Toll free fishing schedule and counts: 866-479-7387

Released: May 13, 2024

2024 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #1
Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook
 Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) research and management staff have worked closely with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff to develop this year’s management strategy. Feedback has been sought from stakeholders, agency staff and leadership, and this strategy has been discussed in depth at the Yukon River Drainage Fishermen’s Association (YRDFA) public preseason fishermen’s meeting, and at the Yukon River Panel April meeting.

The drainagewide Chinook salmon outlook is for a run size of 45,000 to 68,000 fish, and the Canada-origin Chinook salmon run size outlook is for a run of 19,000 to 28,000 fish. Taking into account recent trends of fewer Canadian-origin Chinook salmon making it upriver, border passage is projected to be as low as 9,000 to 19,000 fish. These run sizes are well below average, and it is likely no escapement goals will be met this year for Chinook salmon in Alaska or Canada. Fishing for Chinook salmon will be closed to help conserve all the fish in these low runs.

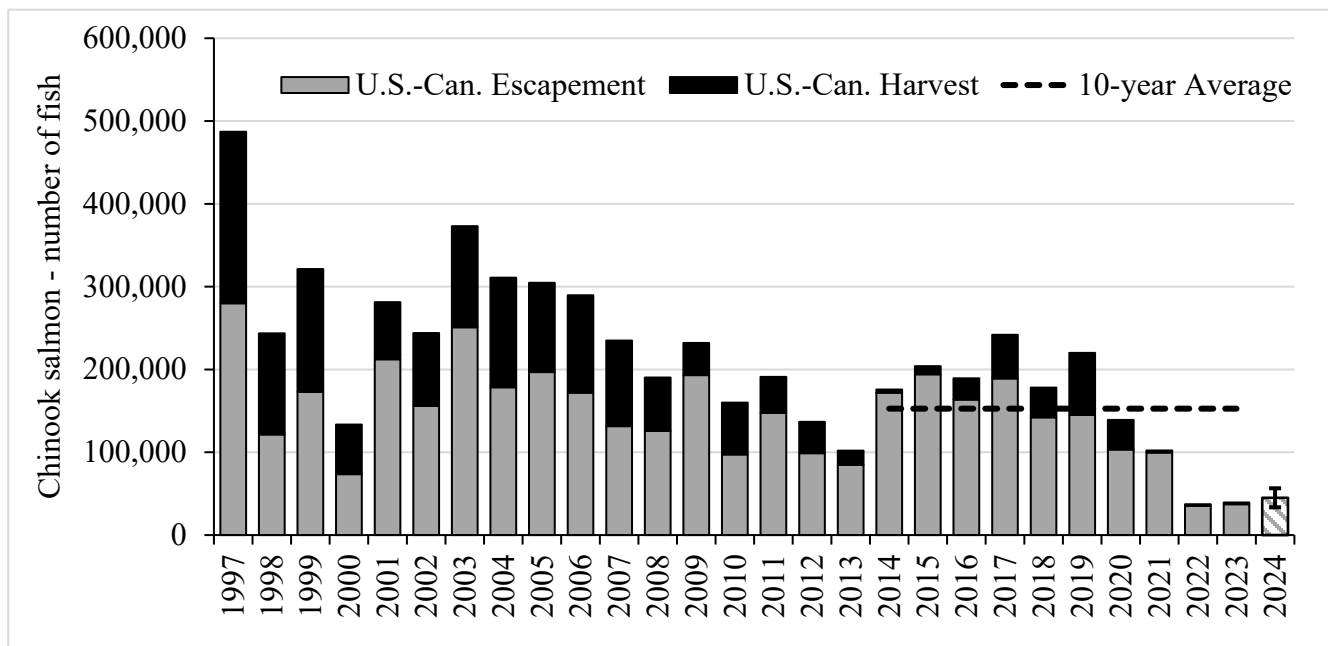


Figure 1. Chinook salmon total run. The dashed line is the recent 10-year average run size of ~153,000 Chinook salmon. The 2024 striped bar represents the approximate midpoint of the drainagewide outlook range (56,500 fish). At run sizes below 150,000 fish escapement goals tend to not be met.

The drainagewide summer chum salmon outlook is for a run size with a range of 550,000 to 1,800,000 fish as shown in Figure 2 on the next page. Last year the summer chum salmon run came in near the upper end of the preseason forecast, with a run near 900,000 fish. We anticipate meeting or exceeding the drainagewide summer chum salmon goal again this year. Fishing for summer chum salmon will likely occur with selective gear types, and all Chinook salmon must be released alive.

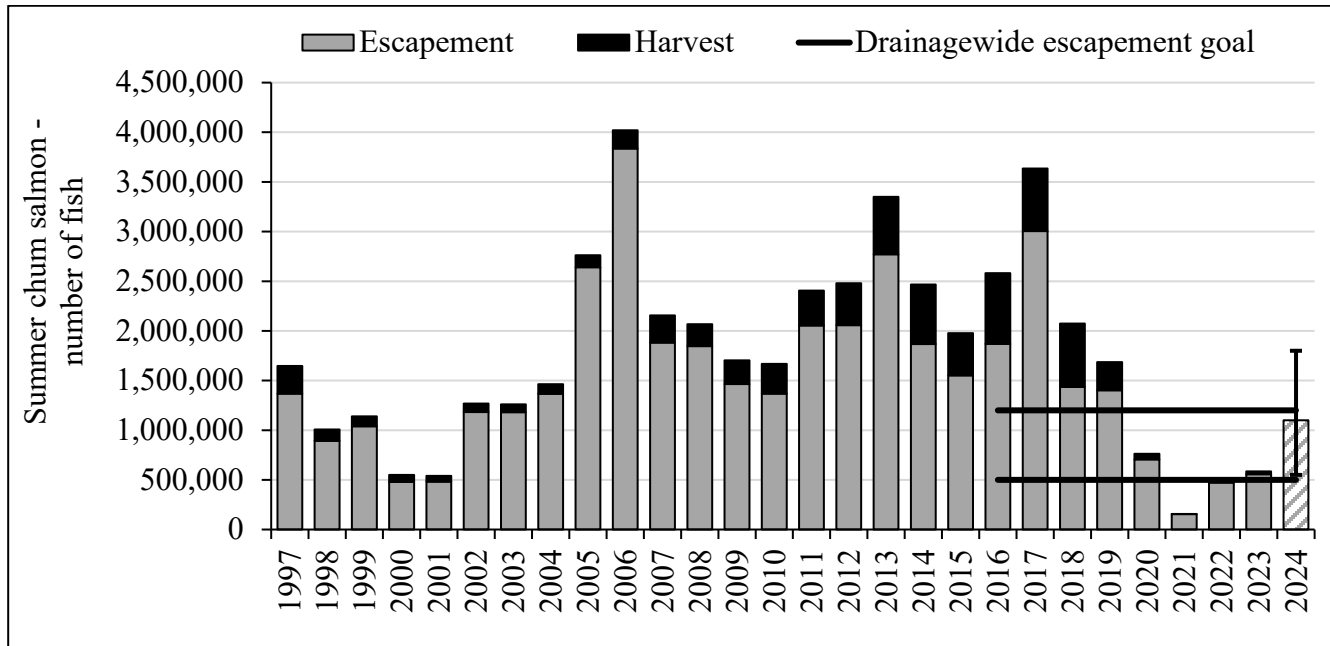


Figure 2. Summer chum salmon total run with drainagewide escapement goal range shown in the solid black lines. The 2024 striped bar represents the approximate midpoint of the outlook range (1,100,000 fish).

The drainagewide fall chum salmon outlook is for a run size of 369,000 fish, with a range of 263,000 to 474,000 fish (Figure 3).

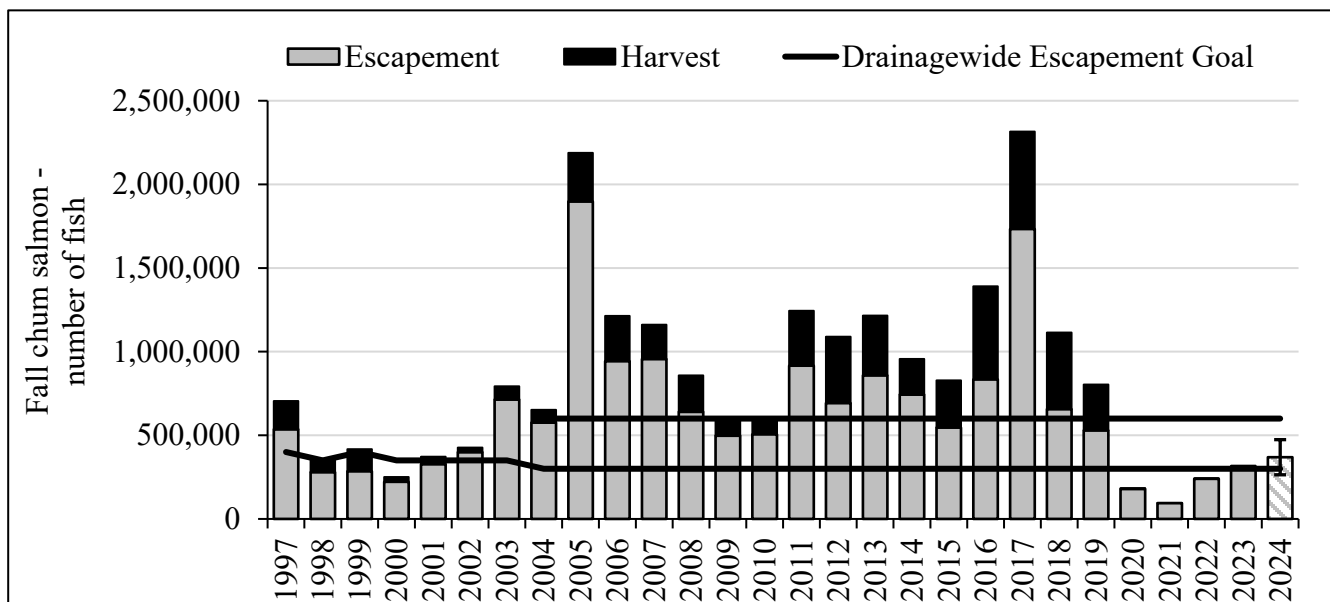


Figure 3. Fall chum salmon total run with drainagewide escapement goal ranges shown in the solid black lines. The 2024 striped bar represents the approximate midpoint of the outlook range.

Management Strategies based on the preseason outlooks and inseason assessment:

- Starting in early June in District 1 and the Coastal District, subsistence salmon fishing will close. Closures in upriver districts will be announced based on salmon travel time.
- These closures are expected to be weeks long until the midpoint of the summer chum salmon run is assessed at Pilot Station sonar. Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon will remain closed until the run is projected to meet the drainagewide goal. Fishing for Chinook salmon is expected to remain closed all season.
- If confidence is high that the summer chum salmon run is projected to meet the drainagewide escapement goal, subsistence fishing opportunities with selective gear (dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels) will be allowed.
- Pink and sockeye salmon may be targeted by hook and line gear. Hook and line gear may be used for subsistence for salmon and nonsalmon throughout the Yukon River drainage, except for the Tanana River (sport fish license required) and closed waters near the road system. If a conservation concern exists, salmon species may be specified to be released alive. This is an even year, and a large run of pink salmon is anticipated.
- Fishing for nonsalmon species with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will be allowed during salmon fishing closures; however, net length will be reduced to a maximum of 60 feet at the start of the season. To conserve Chinook salmon, this gear may be closed in the mainstem river during the peak of the Chinook salmon run. We anticipate this closure lasting 7-14 days, depending on run timing.
- Other nonsalmon gear types, including hook and line, longline, jigging gear, hand line, beach seine, fyke net, spear, or lead may be used to fish for nonsalmon species all year, even during salmon fishing closures. Chinook salmon should be avoided and released alive if incidentally caught.
- The sport fishery for Chinook salmon is closed throughout the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage (Sport Fishery Emergency Orders published March 19 and March 26, 2024).
- In mid to late July, there may be a subsistence salmon fishing opportunity with selective gear or limited 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet and fish wheel openings for chum salmon, in districts where summer chum salmon is present. This depends on if the summer chum and fall chum salmon runs are projected to meet escapement goals, if there is a harvestable surplus to allow fishing, and only after the majority of the Chinook salmon run has passed each area.
- During the fall season, it is likely the Canadian-origin fall chum salmon run will be below the escapement objectives into Canada. Historically, Canadian fall chum salmon stocks enter the Lower Yukon in August. Subsistence salmon closures are expected in the mainstem Yukon and Porcupine rivers to protect Canadian fall chum salmon, including a 100-yard setback from the mainstem. If U.S. fall chum salmon escapement goals are projected to be achieved and there is a harvestable surplus, subsistence salmon fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels may be opened in the side rivers and lakes within the Alaska portion of the drainage.
- If the coho salmon run is very poor, subsistence salmon fishing may be limited or closed for this species.
- Subsistence fishing restrictions may be relaxed earlier than October 1 in the Lower Yukon. This date will be transitioned upriver to fishing districts based on salmon migration timing.

The management team recognizes the severe hardship of another anticipated season of closures for Chinook salmon and Canadian-origin fall chum salmon. The outlooks show that improvements in the chum salmon runs may be occurring, and we are confident that the sacrifices we're making now will help them to recover. We encourage fishermen to harvest more abundant salmon and nonsalmon species when and where available.

Nonsalmon harvest information

We have heard some concerns about the abundance and harvests of nonsalmon species for subsistence. Estimated harvests of nonsalmon species, particularly whitefish, have been below average in recent years. This may be due to numerous factors, including lack of gear, reduced fishing due to salmon closures, high gas prices, etc. However, the estimated harvests of pike and sheefish have remained near average. Pilot Station sonar estimates of nonsalmon passage have remained consistent and have not shown the same declines as the salmon runs. For more information about nonsalmon, please contact the Fairbanks or Emmonak office.

Contact Information, Updates, and Outreach

Announcements and daily test fishery counts will be posted on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

Toll-free Fishing Schedule and Fish Counts hotline: 1-866-479-7387

Assessment project and management updates will be shared during the **YR DFA weekly teleconferences** and we would like to hear about local conditions on the river from participants. **Starting June 6, join us on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. (Alaska time).**

Call in number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#

The ADF&G Emmonak office will be open regular hours beginning on June 3; Mondays to Fridays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Sundays). **ADF&G Emmonak office: 1-907-949-1320.**

ADF&G: Summer Season Area Manager, Deena Jallen; Fall Season Area Manager, Christy Gleason. **ADF&G Fairbanks office: 1-907-459-7274.**

Up to 500 Chinook salmon will be tagged near Emmonak this year with a pink spaghetti tag on the back behind the dorsal fin and a radio tag in the stomach. If you find a tagged Chinook salmon, or have questions about the project, please contact Josh Clark (joshua.clark@alaska.gov) or call: **1-877-467-2104**

If you see something odd in your salmon or nonsalmon, like a disease or parasite, please contact the **Fish Pathology** lab. Pictures are helpful. Please contact Jayde Ferguson (jayde.ferguson@alaska.gov) or call: 907-267-2244

USFWS: Yukon River Subsistence manager, Holly Carroll, 1-907-351-3029.

For commercial fishery permit questions please see the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission website here: www.cfec.state.ak.us/



This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Announcements will be shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG

