

Fishery Management Report No. 08-42

**Fishery Management Report for Sport Fisheries in the
Yukon Management Area, 2006**

by

John Burr

August 2008

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



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PREFACE

This report provides information for the Yukon Management Area and is one in a series of reports annually updating fisheries management information within Region III. The report is provided for the state Board of Fisheries, Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the general public, and other interested parties. It presents fisheries assessment information and the management strategies that are developed from that information. In addition, this report includes a description of the fisheries regulatory process, the geographic, administrative, and regulatory boundaries, funding sources, and other information concerning Division of Sport Fish management programs within the area.

The goals of the Division of Sport Fish of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game are to protect and improve the state's recreational fisheries resources by managing for sustainable yield of wild stocks of sport fish, providing diverse recreational fishing opportunities, and optimizing social and economic benefits from recreational fisheries. In order to implement these goals the division has in place a fisheries management process.

A regional review is conducted annually during which the status of important area fisheries is considered and research needs are identified. Fisheries stock assessment research projects are developed, scheduled, and implemented to meet information needs identified by fisheries managers. Projects are planned within a formal operational planning process. Biological information gathered from these research projects is combined with effort information and input from user groups to assess the need for and development of fisheries management plans, and to propose regulatory strategies.

Division of Sport Fish management and research activities are funded by State of Alaska Fish and Game (ADF&G) and federal aid in Fisheries Restoration funds. ADF&G funds are derived from the sale of state fishing licenses. Federal aid funds are derived from federal taxes on fishing tackle and equipment established by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (also referred to the Dingell-Johnson Act or D-J Act). The D-J funds are provided to the states at a match of up to three-to-one with the ADF&G funds. Additional funding specified for providing, protecting, and managing access to fish and game is provided through a tax on boat gas and equipment established by the Wallop-Breaux (W-B) Act. Other peripheral funding sources may include contracts with various government agencies and the private sector.

This area management report provides information regarding the Yukon Management Area and its fisheries for 2006, with preliminary information from the 2007 season. This report is organized into two primary sections: a management area overview including a description of the management area and a summary of effort, harvest and catch for the area; and a section on the significant area fisheries including specific harvest and catch by species and drainage.

ABSTRACT

Information specific to the recreational fisheries in the Yukon Management Areas in 2006 and 2007 is presented. Estimates of fishing effort, total catch and effort is summarized up through the 2005 season. This information is provided to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, as well as to the general public and interested parties. Summaries of major fisheries within the area are detailed, including descriptions of the performance of these fisheries, regulatory actions by Alaska Board of Fisheries, social and biological issues, and descriptions of ongoing research and management activities.

Key Words: Yukon, sport fisheries, sport fishery management, fisheries management plan, Anvik River, Nowitna River, Dall River, Innoko River, Dalton Highway, northern pike, Arctic char, Dolly Varden, king salmon, coho salmon, Arctic grayling

INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) divides the state into eighteen regulatory areas to organize the sport fishing regulatory system by drainage and fishery. These areas (different from regional management areas) are described in Title 5 of the Alaska Administrative Code Chapters 47 - 70. Division of Sport Fish of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) divides the state into three administrative Regions with boundaries roughly corresponding to groups of the BOF regulatory areas. Region I covers Southeast Alaska (the Southeast Alaska regulatory area). Region II covers portions of Southcentral and Southwest Alaska (including the Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, Kenai River drainage, Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater, Anchorage Bowl, Knik Arm, Susitna River drainage, West Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Bristol Bay, and the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands regulatory areas). Region III includes Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River area and the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region (including the North Slope, Northwestern, Yukon River, Tanana River, Kuskokwim-Goodnews regulatory areas).

Region III is the largest geographic region, encompassing the majority of the landmass of the state of Alaska (Figure 1). The region contains over 1,146,000 km² (442,500 mi²) of land, some of the state's largest river systems (the Yukon, the Kuskokwim, the Colville, Noatak, Upper Copper and Upper Susitna River drainages), thousands of lakes and thousands of miles of coastline and streams. Regional coastline boundaries extend from Cape Newenham in the southwest, around all of western, northwestern and northern Alaska to the Canadian border on the Arctic Ocean. Region III as a whole is very sparsely populated, with the most densely populated center located in the Tanana River Valley. Fairbanks (population about 30,000) is the largest community.

For administrative purposes the Division of Sport Fish has divided Region III into six fisheries management areas (Figure 1). They are:

The Northwestern/North Slope Management Area (Norton Sound, Seward Peninsula, Kotzebue Sound, and North Slope drainages);

The Yukon Management Area (the Yukon River drainage except for the Tanana River drainage);

The Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area (the Copper River drainage upstream of Canyon Creek and Haley Creek, and the Susitna River drainage above the Oshetna River);

The Upper Tanana River Management Area (the Tanana River drainage upstream from Banner Creek and the Little Delta River);

The Lower Tanana River Management Area (the Tanana River drainage downstream from Banner Creek and the Little Delta River); and,

The Kuskokwim Management Area (the entire Kuskokwim River drainage and Kuskokwim Bay drainages).

Area management biologists for the six areas are located in Nome/Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Glennallen, Delta Junction, Fairbanks, and Bethel/Fairbanks, respectively.

THE ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

The Alaska Board of Fish (BOF) is a seven-member board that sets fishery regulations and harvest levels, allocates fishery resources, and approves or mandates fishery conservation plans for the State of Alaska. Board members are appointed by the governor for three-year terms and must be confirmed by the legislature.

Statewide fisheries issues may be considered at any BOF meeting. Under the current operating schedule, the BOF considers fishery issues for regulatory areas or groups of regulatory areas on a 3-year cycle. Proposals to create new or modify existing regulations and management plans are submitted by ADF&G and the public (any individual can submit a proposal to the BOF) for evaluation by the BOF. During its deliberations the BOF receives input and testimony through oral and written reports from ADF&G staff, members of the general public, representatives of local fish and game advisory committees, and special interest groups such as fishermen's associations and clubs. The public provides their input concerning regulation changes and allocation through submission of written proposals and testifying directly to the BOF, by participating in local fish and game advisory committee meetings, or by becoming members of local fish and game advisory committees.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Local Fish and Game Advisory Committees have been established throughout the state to assist the Boards of Fish and Game in assessing fisheries and wildlife issues and proposed regulation changes. Advisory committee members are nominated from the local public and voted on by all present during an advisory committee meeting. Most active committees in urban areas meet in the fall and winter on a monthly basis. Rural committees generally have only one fall and one spring meeting due to funding constraints. Advisory meetings allow opportunity for direct public interaction with department staff attending the meetings that answer questions and provide clarification concerning proposed regulatory changes regarding resource issues of local and statewide concerns. The Boards Support Section within the Division of Administration provides administrative and logistical support for the BOF and Fish and Game Advisory Committees. During 2007, the department had direct support responsibilities for 81 advisory committees in the state.

Within the Yukon Management Area there are nine advisory committees: Eagle, Upper Tanana/40-Mile, Yukon Flats, Central, Tanana-Rampart-Manley (TRM), Middle Yukon, Koyukuk, Grayling-Anvik-Shageluk-Holy Cross (GASH), and Lower Yukon. In addition, the

Delta and Fairbanks advisory committees often comment on proposals concerning fisheries in the Yukon Management Area.

RECENT BOARD OF FISHERIES ACTIONS

The BOF meets annually, but deliberates on each individual regulatory area on a 3-year cycle. The BOF considered fisheries for the Yukon Management Area most recently in February 2007. During the meeting, the board considered and adopted two proposals affecting sport fisheries in the Yukon Management Area. The bag and possession limit for northern pike in the Nowitna River drainage was reduced from 10 fish to five fish per day and a minimum size limit of 30 inches was implemented. The BOF amended lake trout regulations by adopting a region-wide lake trout management plan. This plan provides a regulatory framework for consistent, conservative management of lake trout populations in the Yukon Area and in the region. Each proposal and the actions taken by the board are listed in Appendix A2. During the 2004 meeting, the BOF considered eight proposals potentially affecting sport fisheries in the Yukon area. Refer to Appendix A4 for the text of the proposals and the board's actions.

ADF&G EMERGENCY ORDER AUTHORITY

ADF&G has emergency order (EO) authority (5 AAC 75.003, 2006) to modify time, area, and bag/possession limit regulations. Emergency orders are implemented to deal with conservation issues that are not adequately controlled by existing regulations. Once implemented, an EO deals with the situation until it is resolved or the BOF can formally take up the issue. Emergency orders are also used as a tool for "inseason" management of fisheries. Inseason management is usually in accordance with a fisheries management plan approved by the BOF. No emergency orders were issued under this authority for the Yukon Management Area during 2006-2007.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) established a priority subsistence use of fish and game for rural residents on lands and waters for which the federal government asserts jurisdiction. The state of Alaska also has established a priority for subsistence use of fish and game by Alaskan residents (AS 16.05.258), but cannot discriminate between residents (Alaska State Constitution Article VIII, sections 3 and 15). Since the state did not amend the Alaska Constitution to conform to federal regulations, the federal government has asserted authority to ensure a priority subsistence use of fish and game for rural residents on federal lands and certain adjacent waters. On October 1, 1999 the federal government asserted management responsibilities for subsistence fisheries on federal public lands (includes non-navigable waters on public lands). Following the "Katie John" decision by the 9th Circuit Court in 1995, the federal government expanded the definition of public land to include waters for which the federal agencies assert reserved water rights. Under current practice, the federal land management agencies assert management to protect the priority subsistence use by qualified rural residents in non-navigable waters within federal public lands (includes BLM lands) and in navigable waters adjacent to or within federal conservation units (generally does not include BLM lands). The state retains all other fish and wildlife management authorities, including management on federal land.

The development of regulations for subsistence fisheries under federal management occurs within the established Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) process. The public provides their input concerning regulation changes by testifying in Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meetings or by becoming council members. Ten Regional Advisory Councils have been established throughout Alaska to assist the FSB in determining local subsistence issues and providing recommendations on proposed fishing and hunting regulations on the fish and game populations under consideration. Each Regional Council meets twice a year, and subsistence users and other members of the public can comment on subsistence issues at these meetings.

Within the Yukon Management Area the subsistence fisheries for which the federal government asserts management responsibility include those in the Gates of the Arctic National Park, Yukon-Charlie Rivers National Reserve, Steese National Conservation Area, White Mountain National Recreation Area, Innoko National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Kanuti NWR, Koyukuk NWR, Nowitna NWR, Yukon Flats NWR, Yukon Delta NWR, Beaver Creek National Wild and Scenic River (NW&SR), Birch Creek NW&SR, and Fortymile NW&SR. Subsistence fisheries within the above listed areas fall under the purview of the Eastern, Western, and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Rural Advisory Committees. The most recent meeting of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC was in Marshall (September 6-7, 2007). The Western Interior RAC met in Galena October 30-31. The last meeting of the Eastern Interior RAC was in Fairbanks (October 19-20, 2007). At these meetings, five federal fishery proposals concerning gill net mesh size and depth restrictions and implementation of special fishing periods for elderly rural residents were addressed and council recommendations were forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board.

REGION III DIVISION OF SPORT FISH RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT STAFFING

The Region III Division of Sport Fish staff biologists are organized into a research group and a management group. The management group consists of a management supervisor, an area biologist for each of the six management areas, one or more assistant area management biologists, and two stocked water biologists. The area biologists evaluate fisheries and propose and implement management strategies through plans and regulation in order to meet divisional goals. A critical part of these positions is interaction with the BOF, advisory committees, and the general public. The stocked waters biologists plan and implement the regional stocking program for recreational fisheries. The regional management biologist assigned to the Region III headquarters office in Fairbanks also administers the regional fishing and boating access program.

The research group consists of a research supervisor, a salmon research supervisor, a resident species supervisor, research biologists, and various field technicians. The research biologists plan and implement fisheries research projects in order to provide information needed by the management group to meet divisional goals. The duties of the management and research biologists augment one another.

STATEWIDE HARVEST SURVEY

Sport fishing effort and harvest of sport fish species in Alaska have been estimated and reported annually since 1977 using a mail survey (Mills 1979-1980, 1981a-b, 1982-1994; Howe et al. 1995-1996, 2001a-d, Walker et al. 2003, Jennings et al. 2004, 2006a-b, 2007, *In prep a, b*). The

survey is designed to provide estimates of effort, harvest, and catch on a site-by-site basis. It is not designed to provide estimates of effort directed towards a single species. Species-specific catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) information can seldom be derived from the report. Two types of questionnaires are mailed to a stratified random sample of households containing at least one individual with a valid fishing license (resident or non-resident). Information gathered from the survey includes participation (number of anglers, trips, and days fished), number of fish caught and number harvested by species and site. These surveys estimate the number of angler-days of fishing effort expended by sport anglers fishing Alaskan waters as well as the sport harvest. Beginning in 1990, the survey was modified to include estimation of catch (release plus harvest) on a site-by-site basis. The survey results for each year are not available until the following year; hence the results for 2006 were not available until fall 2007. Additionally, creel surveys have been selectively used to verify the mail survey for fisheries of interest, or for fisheries that require more detailed information or inseason management.

The utility of statewide survey estimates depends on the number of responses received for a given site (Mills and Howe 1992). In general, estimates from smaller fisheries with low participation are less precise than those of larger fisheries with high participation. Therefore the following guidelines were implemented for evaluating survey data:

1. estimates based on fewer than 12 responses should not be used other than to document that sport fishing occurred;
2. estimates based on 12 to 29 responses can be useful in indicating relative orders of magnitude and for assessing long-term trends; and,
3. estimates based on 30 or more responses are generally representative of levels of fishing effort, catch, and harvest.

SECTION I: MANAGEMENT AREA OVERVIEW

MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION

The Yukon Management Area (YMA) consists of approximately 407,858 km² of extremely varied topography, climate, and zoogeography. The Yukon is the largest river in Alaska and its drainage constitutes the fifth largest in North America. The Yukon Management Area (Figure 2) includes all of the Yukon River drainage in the United States except for the Tanana River drainage. The area as a whole is sparsely populated. The communities within the management area are invariably located near water, because of the importance of fish and/or marine mammals as a food source to native people historically and today.

Access to most of the area is limited to water or air travel. The major river systems provide transportation corridors during winter as well as during open water months. Road access to the Yukon River is provided by the Dalton Highway, by the Steese Highway at Circle and by the Taylor Highway at Eagle. With the exception of the Dalton Highway, these gravel roads are not maintained during winter.

Land ownership and jurisdictions fragment this large area into a complex mosaic. The federal government is the major land manager through its jurisdiction over lands in two National Parks and Preserves (Yukon – Charlie and Gates of the Arctic), five National Wildlife Refuges (Yukon Flats, Kanuti, Koyukuk, Nowitna, and Innoko), the White Mountains National Recreation Area,

the Steese National Conservation Area, and numerous Wild and/or Scenic Rivers, as well as other classifications of federal lands. Lands held by the State of Alaska, Native corporations, and other private landowners comprise the remaining landmass. Arvey et al. (1995) provides a detailed description of the geology of the Yukon Management Area. For purposes of reporting and organizing statistics in the SWHS, the Yukon Management Area is designated as (Y).

FISHERY RESOURCES

Virtually all freshwater and migratory fish species sought by anglers in Alaska are available in the Yukon Management Area. All populations are wild; there is presently no enhancement of fish populations in the management area. Five species of Pacific salmon are available in tributaries of the Yukon River, including king salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, coho salmon *Oncorhynchus kisutch*, chum salmon *Oncorhynchus keta*, sockeye salmon *Oncorhynchus nerka*, and pink salmon *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*.

Unique opportunities to fish for freshwater resident species in remote wilderness settings exist throughout this management area. Exceptionally large northern pike *Esox lucius*, and inconnu (sheefish) *Stenodus leucichthys* are available in the Innoko, Kaiyuh, and Nowitna river drainages. Opportunities to fish for Arctic grayling *Thymallus arcticus*, Dolly Varden *Salvelinus malma*, northern pike *Esox lucius*, burbot *Lota lota*, and lake trout *Salvelinus namaycush* are very wide spread and fishing pressure on these wild stock is very light. The Dalton Highway is a popular destination and provides road access to adjacent lakes and streams which support stocks of Arctic grayling, Dolly Varden, and lake trout. Wild stocks of rainbow trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss* do not occur naturally in drainages north of the Kuskokwim River. Additional species of whitefish that are of importance to fisheries in the Yukon Area include the broad whitefish *Coregonus nasus*, Arctic cisco *Coregonus autumnalis*, and Bering cisco *Coregonus laurettae*.

ESTABLISHED MANAGEMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

Regulations governing fisheries in the Yukon Management Area are found in 5 AAC 70.013 (sport fishing), in 5 AAC 01.200 through 5 AAC 01.249 (subsistence fishing), in 5 AAC 05.001 through 5 AAC 05.380 (commercial fishing) and in 5 AAC 70.040; Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Wild Lake Trout Management Plan), 5 AAC 70.055 Wild Grayling Management Plan)

Fisheries specific management objectives for the management area have been identified in management plans for Arctic grayling, lake trout and northern pike. In addition, a series of general divisional criteria have been prepared to guide the establishment of fishery objectives, and include:

1. **Management and protection of existing fish resources.** Divisional activities should strive to manage and protect Alaska's wild fish stock resources for future generations;
2. **Public use and benefits of existing fish resources.** Alaska's fishery resources should be made available for public use and benefit on a sustained yield basis;
3. **Rehabilitation of depressed stocks and damaged habitat.** Division activities should strive to restore and maintain fish stocks and habitat damaged by man's activities; and,
4. **Enhancement of natural production or creation of new opportunities.** The Division should pursue creation of new sport fishing opportunities through rehabilitation of natural

stocks or creation of new fisheries where these opportunities do not negatively impact other fisheries.

Management plans that have been written for YMA fisheries are listed below. In addition, two region-wide management plans that affect fisheries in the area have been completed. A regional management plan for Arctic grayling was adopted by the AK BOF in January 2004 (5AAC 70.055, 2004). This plan supersedes the previous Yukon drainage management plan. A management plan for lake trout in the AYK region was adopted by the BOF for the UC/US area in December 2005. The lake trout management plan (Burr 2006) adopted for the remainder of the AYK region by the BOF in February 2007. Revision of the existing plans as well as the development of additional fisheries management plans will occur as needed in response to changes in use patterns as new quantitative information becomes available.

- Sport Fishery Management Plan for Northern Pike in the Yukon Drainage (revised 2004; Burr *In prep*)
- A Management Plan and Policies for Arctic Grayling Fisheries within the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region (Swanton and Wuttig *In prep*)
- Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan. (5AAC 70.055)
- Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Wild Lake Trout Management Plan (5 AAC 70. 055)

A cooperative planning effort for the Dall River northern pike fishery provided a management plan for this fishery (Burr 2001). Cooperators include the ADF&G, the Stevens Village Natural Resources Office, the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, and members of the Fairbanks Advisory Committee.

MAJOR ISSUES

1. Dalton Highway recreational fisheries. The opening of the entire length of the Dalton Highway (North Slope Haul Road) to public travel in 1994 provided new access to lakes and streams along the route. Increases in recreational fishing effort and harvest have resulted in reductions in bag limits for northern pike and Arctic grayling and in a no-harvest regulation for lake trout within the highway corridor. The State of Alaska is in the process of paving the Dalton Highway north of the Yukon River. Sport fishing by road construction crews and by increasing numbers of visitors will likely bring greater fishing effort to fish stocks in the highway corridor. Due to the unproductive fisheries habitat in the region, the likelihood of overexploitation of these stocks is considered high.
2. Development of New Sport Fisheries in Rural Alaska. Relatively rapid development of sport fisheries in remote areas has resulted in friction between local residents and the non-local anglers. In many instances, local people have historically enjoyed nearly exclusive use of fishery resources. Sport fishing guides and other anglers seeking less crowded fishing opportunities in wilderness settings continue to “discover” less well known but potentially high quality fisheries. As currently popular fishing destinations in other parts of Alaska become increasingly crowded, anglers and guides are likely to continue to travel farther to participate in Alaska’s fisheries. In addition to the social friction caused by this change in use patterns of remote areas and to some extent because of this friction, the department will increasingly be expected to provide information on the status of stocks for which there is currently only the most rudimentary information. This is likely to be the biggest challenge in

the management of sport fisheries in the Yukon Management Area. Recent experiences at the Dall and Innoko rivers are examples of the type of challenges that we should anticipate (see page 24).

3. Rod and Reel Subsistence. In 2000, the Alaska BOF included rod and reel gear as a legal subsistence fishing method for harvest during the open water season in the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) area of the lower Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. In 2001, rod and reel subsistence fishing was extended upstream in the Kuskokwim by emergency regulation in response to a petition to the BOF from Nikokai Native Village and the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council. Until these actions were taken, rod and reel for subsistence fishing was permitted only through the ice under state regulations. Harvest of fish with rod and reel during open water periods in the remainder of the state is regulated under Sport Fishing regulation. The primary concern with this potential change is how to manage for sustainable fish populations with legalization of rod and reel gear for subsistence fishing. Division of Sport Fish realizes that rural resident use patterns have likely incorporated rod and reel in past subsistence harvests, and legalization of this gear will not greatly affect local use patterns. The greatest concerns relate to changes in urban resident behavior in regard to license sales, visitation to rural fisheries, and harvests of fish populations.
4. Rural resentment of sport fishing and sport anglers. Some rural Alaskans have a cultural bias against the concept of "sport fishing" and feel that people do not have the right to "play" with food resources. The bias is particularly strong towards catch-and-release practices. This conflict of values has led to resentment towards sport anglers who wish to fish on private and public lands within the YMA.
5. Federal Fishery Management for Subsistence in Alaska's navigable waters. In October 1999, Federal fishery managers assumed responsibility for ensuring a rural subsistence priority on navigable waters adjacent to or within the boundaries of Federal Conservation units. There is continued concern that a result of this action will be reduced opportunity for sport fishing throughout the state. Because of the large amount of Federal public land within the YMA and because of the high proportion of subsistence users, this loss of opportunity is of acute concern for sport fishermen in the area. Recent proposals to the Federal Subsistence Board to exclude recreational anglers from popular fisheries have required substantial efforts by department staff to maintain current opportunities.

ACCESS PROGRAM

The Wallop-Breaux amendment to the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (D-J) mandates that at least 15% of the federal funds collected from taxes on boat gas and sport fishing equipment be used by the states for the development and maintenance of motorized boating access facilities. A broad range of access facilities can be approved for funding if they are constructed to achieve a state fishery management objective. These facilities can include boat ramps and lifts, docking and marina facilities, breakwaters, fish cleaning stations, rest rooms, and parking areas.

To date relatively few access projects have been proposed for rural YMA. Access funds were used for construction of a concrete boat launch to the Yukon River in cooperation with the City of Galena. Other projects that are currently under consideration include improved access and

parking at the Yukon River, Dalton Highway bridge boat launch and a boat launch on Birch Creek on the Steese Highway.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Information regarding regulations, publications, fishing reports, news releases and emergency orders for the Yukon Management Area can be found at the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish website (www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/index.cfm). Information on rivers and lakes is also available from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources website (www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/aktrails/index.htm). The federal agencies provide information on waterbodies in National Parks and Preserves, National Wildlife Refuges and Wild and Scenic Rivers. A listing of the addresses and contact numbers for these information sources can be found in Appendix B1.

There are three regional information and education (I&E) staff located in the Fairbanks office. An Information Officer II and a seasonal Fisheries Technician III respond to questions from the public at the office and via phone and e-mail. In addition, I&E staff distribute and update fishery brochures, fishing regulations, the regional webpage, coordinate the Fairbanks Outdoor Show booth and Kid's Fish & Game Fun Day, and the Becoming an Outdoorswoman (BOW) program. An Education Associate II coordinates the sport fishing component of the Alaska Conservation Camp and works with schools in various communities throughout the region to provide a curriculum in sport fishing and aquatic education.

SPORT ANGLING EFFORT

Estimates of angling effort in the Yukon management area averaged approximately 11,500 angler-days during the last five and ten year periods. Angling effort in the Region and Statewide has also on average remained stable or has declined during this period (Table 1).

SPORT FISH HARVEST AND CATCH-AND-RELEASE

The vast majority of the Yukon management area and its fishable waters occur away from highways and motor vehicle roads of any kind. Small communities are scattered along the major river systems of Interior Alaska and along the western coast. The communities are invariably located near water to facilitate transportation and because of the importance of fish as a food source to local people historically and today. Residents of these rural communities harvest a substantial amount of fish and game resources for subsistence use, but fishing is usually conducted with high catch-per-unit-of-effort gear types such as fish wheels and nylon gillnets. Recently, rod and reel fishing gear was added to the types of legal subsistence fishing gear in the lower portion of the Yukon drainage. Recreational or sport fishing with rod and reel is practiced to some extent by rural residents, but often as an extension of subsistence activities and less for recreational purposes. Consequently, harvest estimates of sport caught fish from rural Alaska are generally low because local residents usually fish under subsistence regulations and because the small amount of sport fishing done is usually conducted as a subsistence activity. Since statewide harvest estimates are based upon surveys of licensed sport anglers, the rural harvests are probably not fully documented.

Sport harvest of all species combined from the Yukon Management Area averaged more than 12,000 fish until the early 1990's with the peak harvest of 14,250 in 1989 (Appendix C1). Since

that time annual harvests have declined and have averaged about 8,000 fish (Table 2). The most recent estimate (2006) is 6,088, the lowest estimate since 1977 when the statewide angler survey was initiated. The harvest in the Yukon Management Area has been dominated by freshwater resident species, primarily Arctic grayling, northern pike, and sheefish (Figure 3). Pacific salmon (all species combined) comprise only seven to eight percent of the total sport harvest in the management area (Appendices C1).

Sport catch of all species in the Yukon Management Area has been estimated since 1990 (Table 2). Numbers reported as catch include fish that are caught and kept (harvested) and those that are caught and released. During the most recent 5-year period, more than 85% of all fish caught in the Yukon Management Area were released. The proportion of catch-and-release activity varies by species. For example, only 7% of burbot caught between 2001 and 2005 were released compared with 91% of northern pike, 86% of Arctic grayling, 83% of lake trout and 89% of king salmon.

OTHER USER GROUPS - COMMERCIAL AND SUBSISTENCE FISH HARVESTS

Important subsistence and commercial fisheries exist in the Yukon area and form an economic base for income and employment in many local communities. Commercial and subsistence harvests for all species of salmon are much larger than are sport harvests (Appendices D1 – D3). In contrast to fisheries for salmon, the majority of the harvest of freshwater fish is by subsistence and sport users. Currently there are very limited commercial fisheries for sheefish, burbot, northern pike, whitefish, and lamprey.

In the Yukon River drainage, salmon harvests have historically been dominated by chum salmon (Table 3; Appendices D1 – D3). King salmon, while less abundant, is very important for commercial sale and is preferred for subsistence use in many parts of the area. Between 1998 and 2004 the number of king salmon harvested in the commercial fishery exceeded the combined number of chum salmon (summer and fall). The commercial harvest of coho salmon is primarily incidental to the fall chum salmon fishery. Pink salmon occur throughout the YMA in streams near the coast, but, while numerically dominant in some years, the species is not exploited to a great extent in commercial or subsistence fisheries.

Commercial harvests of all salmon species in the Yukon River averaged more than one million salmon annually from 1977 to 1996. Poorer returns of king, and chum salmon since 1997, particularly through 2002, resulted in much lower than average commercial harvests. In 2001 there was no directed commercial fishery for king or chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage. Recently commercial harvests have increased but have not again reached historical levels (Table 3, Appendices D1-D3).

SECTION II: FISHERIES

Waters within the Yukon Management Area offer some of the most remote and diverse opportunities for anglers available in Alaska. Opportunities to harvest trophy northern pike, sheefish, Dolly Varden, lake trout, and Arctic grayling within wilderness settings are well known. Sport fishing opportunities for salmon are currently not as well known. However, angling for king and coho salmon has increased during recent years in the Yukon area as

pressure on other popular sites outside the Yukon Management Area continued to increase. Marine sport fisheries are not an important component in the area.

This section provides a summary of sport fisheries that were considered significant in the YMA during 2006-2007. The section includes a discussion of the sport fisheries in the area by species. Discussion of each fishery will address 1) historical perspective; 2) recent fishery performance (stock status); 3) fishery objectives and management; 4) current issues; 5) recent actions by Alaska BOF; and, 6) ongoing and recommended management and research activities. Recent fishery performance will focus on data from 2006. Information regarding the 2007 season will be included as available, but estimates of sport effort and harvest are not yet available for the 2007 season. Tables summarizing historic sport fish harvests by species are provided for reference (Table 2; Appendix C1).

YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE SALMON

The king, chum, and coho salmon are important subsistence and commercial species in the Yukon River drainage; however, harvest by sport anglers has, to date, been minimal.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

King salmon spawn throughout the Yukon River drainage. Chum salmon, composed of a summer run and a fall run, are numerically the most abundant species, and are distributed throughout the drainage. Coho salmon are less abundant and spawn in large numbers in only a few identified streams. Pink salmon are locally abundant in some years but are not thought to migrate upstream of the Anvik River. Sockeye salmon occur occasionally, but only a few individuals are taken annually in commercial or subsistence harvests. The locations of spawning sites for sockeye salmon have not been identified.

Annual sport harvests of salmon in the Yukon River drainage have historically been, and continue to be, primarily from streams of the Tanana River drainage. Sport fisheries in the Tanana River drainage are discussed within the Fishery Management Reports for the Tanana Management area (Brase 2008; Parker *In prep*). Sport harvests are reported from other streams and drainages in the Yukon River watershed, primarily from the Andraefsky, Anvik, Porcupine and Koyukuk rivers and their drainages (Tables 4–6). Approximately 12,000 people live along the Yukon River and its tributaries (excluding the Tanana River). Most of these people depend on salmon for livelihood, subsistence, or both. Rural residents customarily use high yield fishing methods such as gillnet and fish wheel, where a larger volume harvest can be taken in the turbid mainstem of Yukon River. Rod and reel fishing for salmon is practiced by some rural residents on occasion and by non-area residents who visit for the purpose of sport fishing. Consequently, the size of reported sport harvest does not reflect the abundance of salmon in the drainage.

RECENT FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

A trend of declining runs of Yukon River king and chum salmon began in 1997 with the 2000 runs the worst on record for both species. In September 2000 the Alaska BOF classified the Yukon king salmon stock as a yield concern, the Yukon summer chum salmon stock as a management concern and most of the Yukon drainage fall chum salmon stock as a yield concern. Fall chum salmon stocks in the Toklat and Fishing Branch rivers were classified as management concerns. The Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy defines a yield concern as an inability to

maintain expected yields or harvestable surpluses above the stock's escapement needs despite the use of specific management measures. A management concern is defined as the chronic inability to meet existing escapement goals for the stock. Between 2001 and 2003 increases in escapements were due primarily to more conservative management. Since that time king and chum salmon runs have continued to improve over the very poor runs of 1999-2000.

Summary of Yukon Salmon Runs 2006-2007

Based on harvest and escapement information, the 2006 king salmon run was below the historic average but somewhat stronger than the run in 2005. All salmon runs were judged sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence needs along with border passage commitments to Canada. King salmon escapements to monitored Alaskan tributaries were within or exceeded escapement goals except for the Andreafsky River which was incomplete. Total spawning escapement for the Canadian portion of the Yukon River drainage was estimated by the border mark-recapture project to be about 36,750 king salmon; the estimate based on the new sonar project (began in 2005) in Alaska was 73,700 king salmon. The border escapement objective is 28,000. The escapement estimate of the mark-recapture experiment appears to be biased low compared with the estimate derived from the new sonar project located near Eagle, Alaska (JTC 2007). Subsistence needs appear to have been met for most areas, although some residents from middle Yukon and Koyukuk River households reported difficulty obtaining needed fish due to high water and debris conditions. The total commercial harvest was estimated to be 45,829 king salmon (46,646 with test fish included). The 2006 commercial king salmon harvest was the second largest since 1999 but well below the historic levels of harvests from the previous century (Appendix D1).

Preliminary assessment of the 2007 king salmon run suggests that the run was below average and 60,000 to 70,000 fish below pre-season projections. Similar short-falls in projected numbers were also observed in the Kuskokwim and Nushagak river systems (approximately 100,000 fewer in each system). However, even with the lower than anticipated run size, escapement goals for king salmon were met or exceeded in all Alaskan tributaries. Spawning escapement for the Canadian portion of the Yukon River drainage was estimated by mark-recapture experiment on the Canadian side of the border and by the new (2005) sonar project near the border on the U.S. side. The Canadian estimate was approximately 23,000 king salmon; the estimate based on the new sonar project in Alaska was about 42,000 king salmon. The rebuilding escapement objective is 28,000. The total commercial harvest was 33,629 king salmon for the Alaska portion of the Yukon River drainage. This harvest was the second lowest in the last five years and substantially below average commercial harvest prior to 1999 (Appendix D1).

In 2006 the summer chum salmon run continued the improvement that began in 2001. The Pilot Station sonar recorded a record passage of 3.8 million summer chum salmon. As in 2005 poor commercial markets for summer chum salmon flesh precluded the commercial harvest of the substantial surplus that was identified. The total commercial harvest was 92,116 for the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage. The 2006 harvest was 22% below the 1996-2005 average of 118,585 fish (Appendix D2).

The summer chum salmon run continued to improve in 2007 but was weaker than in 2006. Since 2002, it appears that production has been poorer for spawning tributaries in the lower portion of the drainage (e.g. Andreafsky and Anvik rivers) than for spawning tributaries upstream of the Anvik River. Biological escapement ranges (BEG) based on spawner recruit analysis have been

established for the Anvik and Andreafsky rivers. Estimated escapement to the East Fork Andreafsky (69,642) was within the lower end of the BEG range (65,000-135,000). Escapement into the Anvik River (459,500) was well within the BEG range (350,000-700,000); the Anvik River accounted for more than 27% of the Pilot Station cumulative passage estimate of 1,726,885 summer chum salmon. In 2002, there was a renewed market interest for summer chum salmon. The 2007 commercial harvest of 198,200 summer chum salmon was nearly 300% above the 1997-2006 average harvest of 53,000 fish (Appendix D2).

The fall chum salmon run in 2006 was strong from the beginning of the season. The total run of fall chum salmon including estimates of harvest and escapements was approximately 1.1 million fish. This was the second time in the history of the run that an even-numbered year run produced a million fish (the first was in 1996). The drainage-wide escapement of 870,000 is well above the drainage-wide escapement goal of 300,000 – 600,000 fall chum salmon. The above average escapement in 2006 followed the 1.8 million fish escapement in 2005, which was the largest in the past 30 years. The commercial harvest of 175,000 fall chum salmon was the second highest since 1995 and the subsistence harvest of approximately 80,000 fish was the second highest since 1999.

The 2007 fall chum salmon run was exceptionally late which contributed to lower than anticipated commercial harvests of both fall chum and coho salmon. Post season assessment indicates that the overall abundance of fall chum salmon may have been about 1 million fish, nearly twice as large as the inseason estimate of 600,000. The run size was sufficient to provide for escapement and for subsistence needs. The fall commercial season was extended once the magnitude and timing of the run was better understood, but market and freezing weather conditions combined to keep commercial harvests down. Still, the commercial harvest in 2007 of fall chum salmon in Alaskan waters was 90,677 fish, approximately double the recent 10-year average (1997-2006) of 44,800 fish

Coho salmon have an overlapping, but somewhat later, run timing with fall chum salmon. The escapement assessment for coho salmon is quite limited and relies heavily on information from commercial and personal use harvests. The Pilot Station sonar is terminated during the coho run as are many of the other assessment projects due to expense and/or icing conditions. The only escapement goal that is presently in place for the Yukon River drainage is the Delta Clearwater River in the Tanana River drainage. The current escapement goal (5,200 – 17,000), was established in 2004, and replaced the previous minimum goal of 9,000 fish. The goal continues to be based on a boat survey during peak spawning.

The available information suggests that in 2006 the Yukon River coho salmon run was approximately average in strength. The Pilot Station Sonar index of 132,000 was about 11% less than the recent 10-year average (1995-2005, no estimate for 1996) of 148,348. The estimated total escapement of coho to the Delta Clearwater River was 15,950 fish. While lower than very recent estimates of escapement, this figure is still near the upper bounds of the escapement goal. The estimate of the commercial harvest of coho salmon in the Alaska portion of the Yukon drainage for 2006 is approximately 65,000 fish.

In contrast to the 2007 fall chum salmon run which was late and stronger than expected, the coho salmon run in 2007 entered the river early, appeared strong initially but dropped off early and ended with an overall run size that was only above average. The Pilot Station Sonar index of 173,000 was above the ten-year average of 147,000 fish. The estimated total escapement of coho

to the Delta Clearwater was 14,650 fish, well within the bounds of the escapement goal. The preliminary estimate of the commercial harvest of coho salmon for 2007 in the Alaska portion of the Yukon drainage is approximately 44,575 fish.

Summary of Catch and Harvests in Yukon Salmon Sport Fisheries in 2006

Estimated sport harvest of king salmon from the entire Yukon subarea (Tanana River excluded) was 101 during 2006 (Table 4). The 2006 estimated harvest is similar to the long term average harvest for the Yukon Management Area and continues to indicate the low level of harvest by sport anglers. Total sport catch (including harvested and released fish) of king salmon in the YMA was estimated to be 438 fish in 2006 (Appendix C1). As in previous years, most of the estimated catch and harvest of king salmon during the 2006 season came from lower Yukon River drainages; the Anvik River has been the most important site in recent years.

Sport fisheries harvested an estimated 268 chum salmon in 2006 (Table 5). All reported harvest of chum salmon was from lower Yukon drainages the Andreafsky and Nulato rivers. Total catch of chum salmon (harvested and released) from the recreational fisheries in 2006 was estimated to be 2,711 fish; most of this catch, but none of the harvest, came from the Anvik River (Appendix C1).

Sport harvest of coho salmon during 2006 was estimated to be 371 fish (Table 6). The recent 5-year average harvest was 327 coho salmon. Total catch from the sport fishery during the reporting period was estimated to be 1,640; the 5-year average is 2,021. As with other salmon sport fisheries in the Yukon drainage outside of the Tanana area, most of the coho fishery occurs downstream of the Koyukuk River and primarily in the Anvik and Andreafsky rivers.

The sport fisheries for these three principal species of salmon have all generally demonstrated modest increases in catch and harvest in recent years (Appendix C1). This modest growth is likely a result of improved run sizes beginning in 2002 and a relaxation of restrictive management. Relative to the size and the productivity of the Yukon River system, the estimated sport harvest is extremely light and is unlikely to impact the runs to a measurable degree.

FISHERY OBJECTIVES AND MANAGEMENT

Yukon River drainage commercial, subsistence, and personal use fisheries are managed by the Commercial Fisheries Division. As with other fish and wildlife populations, subsistence use has been designated as the highest priority among beneficial uses. Management of these fisheries is complex due a wide range of stock specific abundances, overlap of inter- and intra-specific run timing, the immense size of Yukon River drainage, allocation between numerous user groups and international management treaties. The department is generally unable to manage individual stocks in this mixed stock fishery because of inadequate stock specific information.

Guideline harvest ranges have been established for commercial fisheries targeting king salmon, summer chum, and fall chum salmon throughout the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage (Appendix D4). The department attempts to manage the commercial fisheries such that the harvest in each district is proportionally similar to respective guideline harvest ranges. Management plans have been developed and adopted by the BOF for summer and fall chum salmon (Appendices D5 and D6).

Under the current management strategy the commercial fishery for coho salmon is incidental to the commercial fishery directed at fall chum salmon. In November 1998 the BOF adopted the

Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 05.369) and modified the plan in January 2007 (Appendix D7). This plan provides for a directed commercial fishery for coho salmon under specific circumstances. In most years fall chum salmon will continue to be the primary species of management concern during the fall season with only incidental catches of coho salmon. In 2006 and 2007 sufficient numbers of fall chum salmon and coho salmon were present to meet conditions outlined in the Coho Salmon Management Plan for a commercial fishery targeting coho salmon. The commercial harvest of approximately 65,000 and 45,000 coho salmon were the largest in recent years except for 2005 (Appendix D3).

In response to the guidelines established in the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy, the BOF classified the Yukon River king salmon stock as a yield concern in September 2000. This determination was based on an inability, despite the use of specific management measures, to maintain expected yields or harvestable surpluses above the stock's escapement needs since 1998 and the anticipated low return and harvest in 2001. The BOF classified the Yukon River summer chum salmon stock as a management concern. This classification was based on a chronic inability to meet existing escapement goals for the summer salmon stock since 1998.

During the winter of 2000/2001 the BOF developed a rebuilding plan for Yukon king and chum salmon stocks in accordance with the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy for Alaska. This plan emphasizes improving salmon spawning escapements while providing opportunities to maintain subsistence uses, when surpluses are available. The BOF developed a subsistence salmon fishing schedule. The purpose of the schedule was to provide more equitable allocation of fish among subsistence fishers throughout the drainage and to improve the quality of the escapement.

The department has developed a preseason management strategy in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff annually since 2001. This strategy is described and distributed annually in an information sheet (Appendix D8). Since 2004, the preseason strategy has been to begin the season following the subsistence fishing schedule developed by the BOF. In the event of a poor run, the subsistence schedule will be further reduced to meet escapement goals. If the run is strong and surplus fish are available, the subsistence fishery will follow the pre-2001 schedule (open except before and after commercial openings) and commercial fisheries will be permitted.

Stocks of concern were reviewed by the BOF in October 2006. At that time the department recommended that the BOF continue the classification of yield concern for king salmon but discontinue the management concern for summer chum salmon and yield concern for fall chum salmon.

Sport fisheries for salmon in the Yukon Management Area have very limited impact on stocks of salmon, in comparison to commercial, subsistence, and personal use fisheries. There is very little effect that management of the sport fishery can have on the annual status of the various salmon stocks. Therefore the goal of sport fishery management is to maintain a reliable level of opportunity for anglers to participate in the fisheries throughout the season. To this end, emergency actions to restrict harvest and/or inseason regulations for the sport fishery are generally not contemplated unless it becomes apparent that the size of the run is so small that restrictions in the subsistence fishery will be necessary. In the case of summer chum salmon and fall chum salmon management, the BOF has identified the threshold run size at which emergency restrictions in the sport and personal use fisheries will occur (Appendices D5, D6).

No emergency orders were issued concerning the sport fisheries for Yukon River salmon stocks in 2006 or 2007.

CURRENT ISSUES AND FISHERY OUTLOOK

The primary issue concerning salmon fisheries is the uncertain performance of salmon returning to the Yukon River drainage. Another issue affecting all users (including recreational anglers) of stocks of salmon in the Yukon subarea is the claim by federal land management agencies to the right to manage fish and wildlife resources to provide a rural subsistence priority. The state of Alaska also provides for a priority subsistence use of these resources but is unable to discriminate between rural and urban users due to constitutional restraints. There continues to be concern that federal management will result in loss of opportunity for non-subsistence uses of fish resources, particularly recreational uses. This concern was realized in 2001 when the federal managers issued a special action prior to the beginning of the season. The action closed salmon fishing in all federal waters in the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers to all but qualified rural residents. This action precluded all commercial and recreational use of salmon in federal waters.

The unanticipated closure of sport fisheries for king salmon in the Yukon River in 2000 and 2001 placed a severe economic burden on fledgling local businesses without any real biological benefit. Maintaining a constant level of fishing opportunity throughout the season is critical for the local economic benefits that can accrue from these cottage industries. Complete closure of the recreational fishery should be contemplated only when substantial subsistence restrictions are needed.

The outlook for 2008 is for a below average king salmon run similar in size to the 2006 run. King salmon return primarily as age-5 and age-6 fish with smaller proportions of age-4 and age-7 fish. The weak king salmon runs realized in 2000 and 2001 produced below average returns through 2007. With improved run size since 2002 (due largely to conservative management), the king salmon run in 2008 may show greater abundance. However, uncertainty in ocean production and the apparent smaller size of king salmon reported by fishers in recent years, argues for conservative management of this stock. The 5-year-old component is expected to be stronger than in 2008 based on the above average proportion of 4-year olds in 2007. During the last five seasons the king salmon runs have been strong enough to support subsistence needs and a growing commercial fishery. Surplus numbers of both summer and fall chum salmon were available in 2006 and 2007 and continued good runs are anticipated for 2008.

With the apparent improvements in salmon run strength to the Yukon River the department does not anticipate any reduction in daily bag limits for the salmon sport fishery in 2008. However, if a poor run develops the sport fishery will be managed in a manner consistent with run strength. The intent of sport fishery management continues to be to provide a predictable level of opportunity for anglers throughout the season.

RECENT BOARD OF FISHERIES ACTION

In 1987, bag and possession limits were established throughout the drainage for sport fisheries for all salmon species. In 1994, the BOF opened the Ray River and the Yukon River within the Dalton Highway Corridor to king salmon fishing (Burr et al. 1998). The BOF adopted the *Yukon River King Salmon Management Plan* in January 2001 and modified the plan in 2002 (5AAC 05.360, 2004). In this plan the subsistence fishing schedule is described, and guideline

commercial fishing harvest ranges for Yukon River District are established. The *Yukon River Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan* (Appendix D5) was adopted in 1994 and has been subject to numerous modifications; the most recent in 1998. The *Yukon River Summer Chum Salmon Management Plan* (Appendix D6) was adopted in January 2001. A *Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan* (Appendix D7) was adopted in November 1998 and modified in 2007. The plan seeks to provide a directed commercial fishery on coho stocks in the drainage.

CURRENT OR RECOMMENDED RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Currently, there is no active research program concerning the salmon sport fishery in the Yukon River drainage because of the minor nature of the fishery.

The Anvik River is one of very few locations in the Yukon drainage outside of the Tanana basin where catch and harvest of salmon has regularly been reported (Tables 4, 5, and 6). Up to three sport fish guiding businesses are presently using this drainage. These sport fisheries target king and coho salmon primarily for catch-and-release. Resident species including northern pike, Arctic grayling and Dolly Varden are sought as secondary targets. Most anglers participating in the fishery are guided and are non-residents, although local residents do participate in the fishery. Current levels of harvest are low and are reflected in the results from the SWHS. Over-flights of the Anvik River have been conducted periodically during early July to describe the distribution of angling effort during the peak of the king salmon season. Aerial surveys of the Anvik River sport fishery during the king season should be conducted in 2008.

YUKON RIVER NORTHERN PIKE

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Sloughs, interconnected lakes, and the lower sections of large rivers throughout most of the management area are inhabited by northern pike. Many of the lowland areas are particularly noted for large northern pike.

In the Yukon River drainage most fishing for northern pike occurs during the open water season. Northern pike are targeted in early summer immediately following spawning and throughout the summer months. Northern pike are often fished in the fall in combination with hunting activities. Some of the sport and subsistence harvest is taken during winter months through the ice with hook and line gear. Spearing and, bow and arrow techniques are also legal means and account for a small proportion of the total harvest, but most of the sport harvest of northern pike is taken with hook and line.

Historically, fishing for northern pike in the Yukon area has been conducted by Alaska residents near towns or villages or where access is provided by road or by boat. New or recently reestablished sport fish guiding businesses are promoting opportunities to catch trophy northern pike in the Nowitna, Koyukuk, Kaiyuh/Khotol, Anvik and Innoko rivers. In these remote locations where sport fish guiding services have become available, most of the angling effort is by guided anglers and most of the guided fishermen are non-residents.

Within the Yukon Management Area, most catch of northern pike has come from five primary locations: the Porcupine, Dall, Nowitna, Koyukuk, and Innoko rivers. The Porcupine and Koyukuk rivers are the two largest first order tributaries of the Yukon River. Sport fishing

within these drainages is dispersed and site-specific fishing effort is light. The level of effort directed at northern pike in the Dall, Nowitna, and Innoko rivers is relatively larger.

Dall River. Northern pike populations situated near the Dalton Highway bridge on the Yukon River have experienced more angling pressure than have populations in other parts of the drainage. Following construction of the road in the mid-1970s, a summer season sport fishery targeting northern pike developed at the Dall River. Residents of Stevens Village located near the mouth of the Dall River expressed concern over encroachment by outside visitors and by what they perceived as a depletion of resources particularly northern pike.

Because of these concerns and because of the increased use of this fish stock, a series of stock assessment projects and use survey studies were conducted on the population and the fishery between 1987 and 2001 (Arvey and DeCicco 1989; Arvey and Burkholder 1990; Burr and James 1996; Chythlook and Burr 2002). During this period the sport fishing regulations were changed from 10 per day without size limit to 5 per day with only 1 larger than 30 inches (1988). During 1999 and 2000 a management plan was developed by ADF&G, Stevens Village Office of Natural Resources and the USFWS which describes a management area for special management of northern pike (Appendix E1). In 2001 the Alaska BOF adopted a special regulation for the Dall River management area consistent with the recommendations of the management plan. For a more complete description of the issues, study results, planning efforts and management actions taken refer to Burr (2004).

Nowitna River. The Nowitna River enters the Yukon River approximately 130 km downstream from the mouth of the Tanana River. The Nowitna River was designated a Wild and Scenic River in 1980 and most of the main stem of the river and its major tributaries are included within the boundaries of the Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge. The lower 50 miles of the river pass through a large wetland as a single-channel meander with numerous connected oxbow lakes and sloughs.

The Nowitna River offers one of the best opportunities in Alaska for sport anglers to catch large northern pike and sheefish in a wilderness setting. Most (>75%) of the sport fishing effort occurs within the lower 30 miles of the river and connected waters. The fishery occurs almost entirely during the open water season with a substantial portion of the fishing effort and harvest of northern pike occurring during September concurrent with hunting activities. Both guided and unguided anglers participate in the fishery. In recent years up to six sport fishing guides have registered with the Nowitna NWR.

Innoko River. The Innoko River and its tributaries drain a large flat wetland area and the foothills of the Kuskokwim Mountains. The Innoko River enters the Yukon River near the village of Holy Cross. This river system with its extensive wetlands provides excellent habitat for whitefish and northern pike. The lower Innoko and this part of the Yukon River continue to produce some of the largest northern pike in the state. In 1995 a new sport fish guiding business catering to anglers seeking catch-and-release opportunities for trophy sized northern pike began operating in the lower Innoko, using a large house boat as a movable base of operations. Nearby, on the Anvik River, a long-standing sport fishing lodge was renovated and reopened. More recently, additional smaller businesses have begun to provide sport fish guiding services in the Innoko system; two of these businesses are operated by residents of the Holy Cross area.

RECENT FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

Little quantitative information is available concerning the status of northern pike stocks in much of the Arctic-Yukon management area, but because of limited access, fishing effort is light except on those stocks near towns and villages where angling and subsistence gill netting effort may be more intense.

In the most recent five and ten-year periods (2001-2005, 1996-2005) little change was observed in total harvest or catch from the Yukon River reporting area (Tables 7 and 8). Harvest estimates for 1996-2005 averaged 2,164 compared with 2,425 for 2001-2006. Estimated harvest in 2006 was less but similar to the range of observed values in the period. Catch estimates during the most recent 5-year period averaged 26,250 showing a large degree of catch-and-release fishing for this species (Table 8).

Dall River. Recent estimates of fishing effort and harvest in the Dall River sport fishery indicate that this fishery has on average remained stable. During the last 5-year period (2001-2005), fishing effort at the Dall River averaged about 400 angler-days (Table 8). Estimated angler effort in 2006 (347 angler-days) was similar to recent estimates.

Estimated harvests of northern pike from the Dall River have been higher than from other Yukon area locations in recent years. Between 1996 and 2001, this fishery provided on average nearly 20% of all northern pike harvested from the Yukon area. Since 2001 when the sport fishing regulation was adopted, northern pike harvests have in general decreased. In contrast, the estimated harvest in 2004 was higher than recent estimates. Harvests estimated from 2005 and 2006 (270 and 150 northern pike) are similar to other recent estimates.

Catch of northern pike between 1990 and 1999 showed an increasing trend with the estimate for 1999 (3,320) exceeding all previous levels. Since 2003 the total estimated catch has again increased with two of these 3 years (3,600 in 2003 and 12,000 in 2004) higher than all other annual estimates. These results suggest that recent catch rates may be increasing in this fishery; there has been no substantial change in fishing effort. The proportion of the northern pike catch that is released by anglers has increased. Between 1990 and 2000, 79% were released compared with 93% released between 2001 and 2005. In 2006 estimates of harvest and catch of northern pike from the Dall River were less than recent averages but the proportion of released fish remains high (> 85%). This result was expected with the adoption of the regulation in 2001 that requires the release of all northern pike between 30 and 48 inches. The results are also consistent with anecdotal accounts of anglers reporting good catches of fish larger than 30 inches with a few much larger fish.

Nowitna River. Until 2001, the Nowitna River accounted for about 15% of the sport fish harvest and 33% of the total catch of northern pike in the Yukon River survey area (excludes the Tanana area). In the last 5-year period the proportion of the Yukon area catch and harvest of northern pike from the Nowitna River has declined to less than 5% of the harvest and 10% of the total catch. This change is in part the result of increased use of northern pike in the Dall River and Innoko River fisheries. In general, the sport fishery in the Nowitna River has shown only minor change during recent years. The estimated level of sport fishing effort by guided and unguided anglers in the Nowitna River has averaged 443 angler-days during the most recent 5-year period (2001-2005); fishing effort since the mid-1980's has varied between 180 and 2,000 angler-days (Table 8). Estimated annual sport harvest of northern pike during the recent decade has been about 200 fish. The total estimated annual catch of northern pike (fish harvested and released)

has varied between 500 and 9,500 fish in the recent 10-year period and averaged 2,800 fish. Estimates of harvest and total catch of northern pike from the Nowitna River in 2006 were higher than most recent years; approximately 200 fish were harvested from a total catch of 4,100.

A study was conducted in 1997 to assess stock status of northern pike in the Lower Nowitna River. The objectives of the study were to estimate abundance and size composition of northern pike in three sloughs connected to the river during early, mid and late summer (Burr 1998; Burr and Roach 2003). In addition to accruing current information on this northern pike stock, the goal of the study was to formulate a sampling protocol that would facilitate future sampling of this and other similarly situated northern pike stocks. The study found large numbers of northern pike in mature age and size categories. However, although estimates of abundance were obtained, the magnitude of movement of fish in and out of these sloughs and between sloughs was far greater than anticipated and confounded the application of the study findings to future sampling efforts. The movements of individually marked fish indicate that northern pike using the lower 20 miles of the river are part of a single large stock. The study concluded that the population is currently lightly exploited and that current levels of fishing pressure were within sustainable limits. A recommendation of the study was to conduct a radio telemetry experiment in the lower Nowitna in order to describe the timing and magnitude of seasonal movements of this stock (Burr and Roach 2003).

In 2005 a radio telemetry study was initiated in the Lower Nowitna River. The research goal of the study is to obtain understanding of the season movements of northern pike over a 2-year period. Knowledge of seasonal movements would facilitate representative sampling of northern pike in the lower 25 miles of the drainage and assist in the design of future mark recapture experiments within an appropriately sized index area and within an appropriate time period.

Movements of radio tagged northern pike during the first year of this study showed that some fish captured in the study area (lower 25 miles of the river) travel upstream of the Titna River (more than 100 river miles) during late summer and remained there throughout the winter. Other fish remained within the study area while still others traveled fifty or more miles up or downstream in the Yukon River.

The portion of the season during which the radio tagged northern pike remain in the study area should be better understood once the study is completed. It is clear from these preliminary results that northern pike inhabiting the Nowitna River use a very large portion of the Nowitna River drainage during the annual cycle and that the fish must be considered as a single stock for management purposes. The field studies were completed in 2007 and a completion report should be available during 2008.

Innoko River. Estimates of sport fishing effort in the Innoko River have generally increased during the last decade with notably higher estimates in 2001, 2002, and 2004. Current fishing effort is estimated to be about 1,200 angler-days annually (Table 8). During this timeframe, estimates of harvest of northern pike have changed little, averaging about 100 northern pike per year. In contrast, estimates of total catch increased from an average of approximately 3,500 fish between 1995 and 2000 and currently average about 10,000 fish. Most of this increase probably has come from guided anglers taking advantage of the recently developed facilities and services.

In 2000-2001 a need was identified for better information on the status of northern pike stocks in the Innoko drainage and on the patterns and levels of use by sport and subsistence fishers. The absence of current stock status studies was contributing to differing perceptions on the status and

trends of the northern pike population in the area. The local perception was that reduced catch rates, fewer large fish and a growing number of sport anglers indicated a stock at risk. Department biologists believed that the northern pike stock is healthy based on the presence of exceptionally large fish, fish in old age classes and low harvest levels.

A stock assessment project of northern pike inhabiting the Innoko River was conducted in 2002-2004 (Scanlon *In prep*). The project used radiotelemetry to describe the seasonal movements and the geographic area used by this stock. The project also provided information on the age and size composition of northern pike in the area.

A separate but related project was also conducted in 2002–2004 (Brown et al. 2005). The purpose of this project was to describe current subsistence use patterns of freshwater fish including the geographic distribution of subsistence fishing for northern pike during winter and summer. The project also gathered information on the size and sex composition of the winter subsistence catch and tag returns from fish tagged during the summertime sport fishery.

These studies found that northern pike spawning in the Innoko River drainage travel extensively (> 200 miles seasonally) but generally remain within the Innoko drainage during the open water season (do not travel into the Yukon River or neighboring drainages). In contrast during winter these fish were regularly found in the Yukon River near Holy Cross and Paimiut Slough.

Sport fishing effort in the Innoko River drainage is confined to the open water season and occurs within the Innoko River and connected lakes and sloughs. The open water season subsistence fishery primarily occurs in the Yukon or at the mouth of tributaries. The winter subsistence fishery occurs in both the Innoko River and in the Yukon River. Along with residents of the Yukon communities, an additional group of winter season subsistence users was identified during the study. Residents of communities situated on the Kuskokwim River travel across country during spring to harvest northern pike in the lower Innoko/Paimuit slough area. The two fisheries (sport and subsistence) are therefore generally segregated in time and in geographic location. Annual movements of northern pike tracked with radiotelemetry together with tag returns by the subsistence fishery of northern pike marked from the sport fishery demonstrate that the fish targeted by these two user groups are from a single stock migrating seasonally throughout a very large open system.

Several residents of the area expressed the concern that the activities of the emerging guided sport fishery is resulting in declining numbers of large northern pike. Both the sport and subsistence fisheries selectively catch large northern pike. The sport fishery targets large fish because they are highly valued by sport anglers. Fishing mortality is believed to be low since nearly all sport fish guides in the area insist that their clients practice catch-and-release only fishing. The level of incidental mortality from catch-and-release fishing is not known but is believed to be less than 10% based on other studies (e.g., Burkholder 1992). The subsistence fishery also targets large northern pike that are preferred for traditional foods. It is assumed that nearly all northern pike caught in the subsistence fishery are killed. Northern pike sampled from winter subsistence fishery were large (24 to 41 inches) mostly females (62%) and nearly all fish (99%) were in pre-spawning condition. It is expected that with time the proportion of northern pike in larger and older age classes will decrease with both fisheries directing fishing effort at this part of the stock.

FISHERY OBJECTIVES AND MANAGEMENT

The management of northern pike in the Yukon is reviewed in the Fishery Management Plan for the Yukon River Northern Pike Fishery, 2001-2004 (Burr *In prep*). The goal of sport fishery management for northern pike is to maintain naturally reproducing populations of northern pike with characteristics that will provide sport fisheries with qualities that are desired by anglers.

Management of northern pike in most of the Yukon area is structured to encourage participation in the fishery through liberal harvest limits. These regulations reflect the light level of use of northern pike within most of the Yukon area. The liberal regulations also provide harvest opportunity with rod and reel gear for rural residents within the sport fish regulation framework. In areas where northern pike fisheries are more intensive, management seeks to provide consumptive use (harvest) while maintaining northern pike in large size (>30 in TL) groups. As fishing effort increases, management for continued harvests will be structured around a daily bag limit of more than one northern pike, with a size limit structured to limit harvest of northern pike in large size groups.

The department monitors sport fisheries with the SWHS to track levels of harvest and effort at various sites and to detect changes in the distribution of fishing among sites. Selected fisheries are closely monitored with creel surveys and other research projects. Length composition is used as an indicator of stock status for northern pike populations; the presence of large size fish within samples collected is used as an indicator of lightly exploited riverine populations. The department uses this information to remain responsive to changes in these fisheries.

A special regulation was established for the Dall River fishery following a public management planning effort. The department, together with the Stevens Village Natural Resource Office, and interested fish and game advisory committees jointly developed a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for the Dall River northern pike fishery. The goal of this planning process is to maintain a high quality northern pike stock for the benefit of local and non-local users. A summary of the current plan including the shared policies, objectives, and issues/action items is found in Appendix D.

- The current objective for the Dall River northern pike fishery is to maintain the proportion of northern pike 30 inches and larger at 0.3 (30%) in the assessed population¹.

CURRENT ISSUES AND FISHERIES OUTLOOK

At the present time, all available information suggests that northern pike stocks in the Yukon drainage are healthy. Levels of catch and harvest, although low, have remained stable or have increased modestly throughout the area. Where assessments of local stocks have been conducted, the presence of substantial portions of fish sampled in large size and old age categories further suggests light levels of exploitation.

Dall River. New regulations for the Dall River fishery were adopted by the BOF during January 2001 which require the release of all northern pike between 30 and 48 inches. As a result, the opportunity to harvest large northern pike in this fishery was greatly restricted. The current regulations provide for harvest of smaller northern pike and for catch-and-release fishing of large

¹ The assessed population includes the portion of the population that is accessible to the sampling gear used in stock assessment. For the Dall River this includes fish larger than 19 inches TL (450 mm FL).

northern pike. While fishing effort and total harvest have changed little, current estimates suggest that catch rates may be increasing in this fishery. If catch rates of large fish increase, additional angler participation is expected for the fishery. Growth of the fishery will need to be closely monitored. Management efforts should be consistent with the shared goals outlined in the Dall River Management Plan. The intended effect of the current regulation is to increase the survival of large northern pike thereby increasing the size of fish available for catch-and-release. The outlook for fishing at the Dall River is good in terms of the number and size of fish expected to be available.

Nowitna River. The population of northern pike inhabiting the Nowitna River is not believed to be in danger of overexploitation. However the department recognized a need for new sport regulations consistent with other popular northern pike sport fisheries in the Yukon and Tanana areas that would help to control the loss of large adult northern pike. In January 2007, the BOF considered and adopted a proposal to reduce the harvest of large (> 30 inches) northern pike. As with other fisheries where a similar regulation has been established, the intent is to increase the survival of large northern pike and thereby increase the size of fish available for catch-and-release and for limited harvest. With this category of regulation, the outlook for northern pike fishing in the Nowitna River is good with increased proportion of larger fish over time.

Innoko River. Growth of the guided sport fishery for northern pike in the Innoko River is the source of concern for many residents of local GASH communities. Many residents of this area hold traditional beliefs and live traditional subsistence lifestyles. There is limited acceptance of catch-and-release fishing as practiced by many visiting anglers. Local residents report reduced catch rates during winter and summer fishing with rod and reel. The residents also are concerned over increased winter-time use of northern pike stocks by non-local rural residents. They report that groups travel from communities downstream in the Yukon drainage and from the nearby Kuskokwim area to jig for northern pike through the ice.

Low water levels during late summer 2005 concentrated sport and subsistence users in the lower Innoko River. Changing weather patterns may increase the frequency of low water periods and the instances of conflicts between users. A better understanding of differing perceptions between local subsistence users and non-local anglers will be needed to reduce the likelihood of these conflicts. The department will continue to seek the opportunity for all users to participate in the fishery.

The stock of northern pike inhabiting the lower Innoko River is not believed to be in danger of overharvest. Movements of radio-tagged northern pike show that these fish travel extensively throughout a large area of connected rivers, lakes and sloughs. The population size of northern pike in this area, though unknown, is likely to be very large. At present, approximately 3,000 northern pike were tagged with numbered Floy anchor tags between 2001 and 2004; the recapture rate in the sport fishery has been less than 2% annually (Scanlon *In prep*). To date, only six of these tagged fish have been reported captured in the subsistence fishery. A substantial portion of fish in this stock are in old and large size categories as shown in samples collected during tagging (Scanlon *In prep*) and from the subsistence fishery (Brown et al. 2005). The large amount of undisturbed habitat, the large population size, and the presence of many size and age groups, combine to make this stock very resilient to moderate increase in fishing effort and harvest. The abundance of northern pike in the area is not likely to decrease. However, if either the subsistence use by local or non-local residents or the sport use grows substantially, a decrease in the proportion of very large and old fish is anticipated.

RECENT BOARD OF FISHERIES ACTION

Current sport fishing regulations for northern pike in the Yukon Management Area were established in 1987. Prior to 1987, there were no bag, possession, or size limits for northern pike within most of the area. Proposals submitted by ADF&G to and adopted by the Alaska BOF in 1987 established the current background regulation of 10 per day, with no size limit for most of the Yukon Management Area. Because of concern for the maintenance of Yukon River northern pike stocks near the Dalton Highway Bridge, the BOF adopted a more restrictive regulation of five per day, with only one fish over 30 inches for Yukon River tributaries between the Hodzana and the Tanana rivers.

Opening of the entire Dalton Highway to public travel in 1994 caused concern that increases in recreational use would result in localized depletions of freshwater fish populations in waters adjacent to the road way. The BOF addressed this concern in 1994 by adopting new regulations for many of the resident fish species in the highway corridor (Burr et al. 1998). The northern pike bag and possession limit was reduced to five fish with only one over 30 inches.

New sport fishing regulations for the Dall River fishery were adopted by the BOF during January 2001. The regulations established special bag, possession and size limits for northern pike in the Dall and Little Dall River drainages. The regulations are consistent with the recommendations of the Dall River Fisheries Management Plan.

Current regulations are: Season – May 20–September 30. Daily bag and possession limit is four northern pike less than 30 inches and one fish larger than 48 inches. No harvest of northern pike 30–48 inches. No bait allowed.

In 2001 the BOF adopted regulations governing the sport fishery for northern pike in the Innoko River. The bag limit is three northern pike per day of which only one may be 30 inches or larger. The sport fishery regulation adopted for the Innoko fishery is consistent with the regulatory strategy outlined in the Yukon River Northern Pike Fishery Management Plan and recommendations of the GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross) Fish and Game advisory committee.

In 2007 the sport regulation for northern pike in the Nowitna River drainage was reduced from 10 per day without size limit to five fish with only one over 30 inches. The intent of this regulation is to reduce the harvest of large fish (>30 inches) as discussed above.

CURRENT OR RECOMMENDED RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The northern pike sport fishery in the Yukon Management Area has gained a higher profile as a result of better access provided by guiding services and facilities established in recent years. The department will continue to monitor the levels of fishing effort, catch and harvest throughout the Yukon area with the intent of identifying additional sites for stock assessment. To ensure the continued quality of these stocks, continued careful monitoring of sport fishing effort, catch, and harvest is needed with the anticipated growth in both sport and subsistence fisheries.

Dall River. To assess the effectiveness of the new protected slot length limit established in 2001, it will be necessary to monitor the Dall River northern pike stock periodically with the goal of estimating the proportion of northern pike larger than 30 inches (the lower end of the current slot limit). A need for better methodology for assessing length compositions of northern pike stocks in large open riverine systems has been identified. A field project initiated on Birch Creek in

2007 seeks to assess proposed methodology. A report on these efforts should be available in 2008.

Nowitna River. The popular Nowitna River fishery continues to provide a substantial portion of the total catch and harvest of northern pike in the Yukon River area. Field work for the radiotelemetry study of northern pike inhabiting the Lower Nowitna River was completed in 2007. Analysis of these data and completion of the report should provide a clearer understanding of the geographic range, spawning areas and annual movements of this stock. Further assessment of the characteristics of the sport fishery and of the northern pike stock inhabiting the lower portion of the Nowitna River may be recommended.

Innoko River. Given the potential impact by growth in the sport and subsistence fisheries on the proportion of large northern pike present in the lower Innoko River, the department will closely monitor these fisheries for growth in fishing effort or changes in patterns of use. In addition to closely inspecting estimates of catch, effort and harvest in the sport fishery, the department should establish a sampling protocol to monitor changes in proportion of large fish in the sport fish catch.

The seasonal movements and age and size composition of northern pike in the Innoko River upstream of Shageluk should be investigated. According to information recorded by Brown et al. (2005) this area (Holikachuk to several miles upstream of Iditarod) is especially important to residents of Shageluk and Grayling for harvesting freshwater fish. The guided sport fishery also targets northern pike in the area. The northern pike stock in this area is believed to be generally distinct from the Lower Innoko River stock studied by Scanlon (*In prep*) and Brown et al. (2005). To date, no movement of northern pike between these areas has been detected by recapture of tagged fish or by movements of radio-tagged fish.

YUKON RIVER ARCTIC GRAYLING

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Arctic grayling are distributed throughout the entire drainage, from extreme headwaters in Canada to streams that originate in the Yukon Delta. Sport fishing effort is likewise widespread. Historic documentation of harvests (Mills 1979-1994; Howe et al. 1995, 1996, 2001a-d; Walker et al. 2003; Jennings et al. 2004, 2006a-b, 2007, *In prepa-b*) indicates that the heaviest sport utilization has occurred in the middle part of the Yukon drainage, between the Porcupine River downstream to the Koyukuk River. Within this section, most of the catch and harvest comes from the Koyukuk River tributaries, including those that are crossed by the Dalton Highway. Improved road access has also recently been provided to Nome and Beaver creeks, another popular middle Yukon River site. In addition, an important component of the catch (but not harvest) of Arctic grayling comes from the Anvik River in the Lower Yukon River section. Most of this fishing effort is believed to come from a lodge located on the Upper Anvik River. Virtually all other Arctic grayling harvests in the drainage are from streams that have no, or very limited, road access. Historic sport effort and harvests in these systems are estimated to be small relative to road accessible streams (Table 9).

Dalton Highway. The sport fishery for Arctic grayling from Koyukuk River tributaries accessed from the Dalton Highway account for about 30% of the harvest and 45% of the catch of Arctic grayling from the entire Koyukuk drainage (Table 9). Given the relatively small portion of the

Koyukuk drainage that is accessible from the Dalton Highway, Arctic grayling stocks along this road are subjected to the highest level of use by anglers in the drainage.

The Jim River (Dalton Highway) supports the largest regional stock, and in many years the largest harvest by sport anglers (Fish 1997; Table 9). The Jim River is one of the most accessible of the streams crossed by the Dalton Highway because the road parallels the stream for many miles. In contrast, most other streams generally flow perpendicular to the roadbed. Between 1995 and 1997 studies were conducted to obtain baseline abundance and composition data for stocks of Arctic grayling in rivers and streams crossed by the Dalton Highway. Studies concluded that catchability of fish in the Jim River is not affected by accessibility from the highway, and that fishing pressure at easily accessible locations along the river is probably not great enough to cause changes in catchability throughout the summer.

A study of the movement of Arctic grayling captured in the Jim River summer fishery was conducted in 1997 and 1998 using radiotelemetry. The goals of the study were to locate spawning and overwintering habitats of Arctic grayling and to determine the fidelity of Arctic grayling to summer feeding grounds in the Jim River. The study (Fish 1998) found that most fish tagged in the Jim River remain in the Jim River through the winter. A smaller proportion (about 35%) wintered in other locations including the South Fork Koyukuk River, the Middle Fork Koyukuk River and Prospect Creek. During the spawning season, most grayling were located in the Jim River in either the fishery area or in the Lower Jim River. Some fish (< 20%) were located during the spawning season in Fish Creek, Prospect Creek, and the South Fork Koyukuk River. The migration characteristics and patterns of habitat use are very similar to those of other stocks of Arctic grayling inhabiting other clearwater rapid-runoff rivers in Interior Alaska (Tanana Valley). This study suggests that Arctic grayling in the Jim River are probably a distinct stock of fish that may share overwintering and feeding habitat with other related Koyukuk River stocks.

In 2000 and 2001, a study was conducted to estimate maturity schedules for Arctic grayling in the Jim River (Gryska 2003). This study found that Arctic grayling in this system mature at larger size and at an older age than do Arctic grayling in the Chena River; 50% maturity was estimated at 7 years and at about 300 mm FL (13 inches TL) compared with 5 years and 270 mm (12 inches TL) for the Chena River stock. In January 2004, the Alaska BOF adopted new regulations for the Dalton Highway Arctic grayling fishery. The 12 inch minimum length limit was rescinded; the daily bag limit remains at five fish.

Nome/Beaver Creek. Excellent access has been provided to Beaver Creek by way of the improved road to Nome Creek. Beginning in the early 1990s, BLM upgraded the roadbed and initiated construction of multiple campgrounds. In 1999, construction of the campgrounds and the expanded road system leading to Nome Creek and its confluence with Beaver Creek was completed. This road system is located near the Fairbanks population center and has resulted in increased visitor use and an increased catch of Arctic grayling in this area.

Baseline studies conducted by BLM during the late 1980s indicated a very small resident Arctic grayling population in Nome Creek. Concern over increased fishing effort and potentially high levels of exploitation of the Arctic grayling stock in this 3rd order tributary prompted the ADF&G to propose increasingly restrictive regulations for Nome Creek culminating in the current catch-and-release only regulation that was adopted in the winter 1994-95.

During 2000 a mark-recapture experiment was conducted in a 30-mile section of Beaver Creek (excluding Nome Creek) to assess the Arctic grayling population (Fleming and McSweeney 2001). The study found a very high population density (1,325 fish per river mile) of small Arctic grayling (>150 mm FL, most 220 – 250 mm FL) with age classes age-3 and age-4 dominating. The density of Arctic grayling larger than 250 mm FL in the study area was substantially less (200 – 350 fish per river mile) with larger fish in general distributed farther upstream. As a result of this information, a new sport fishing regulation (five per day without size limit) was adopted for Beaver Creek during the 2001 BOF meeting.

RECENT FISHERY PERFORMANCE

Estimated average harvest of Arctic grayling from the Yukon Management Area in the recent 5-year period (2001-2005) was 3,062 fish, which reflects little change over historic levels (3,197 or 3,312, 1996-2005). In 2006, an estimated 2,014 grayling were harvested; this represents the lowest harvest reported to date (Tables, 2 and 9). Catch estimates for the Yukon area have averaged about 22,000 annually since 1996; estimated catch in 2006 was approximately 23,700 Arctic grayling (Table 9). These data reflect a continued low but stable level of use of the species in the Yukon area as a whole.

Dalton Highway. Sport fisheries for Arctic grayling in the Yukon Management Area along the Dalton Highway have harvested an average of 182 fish annually since 2001. In most years, more grayling are harvested from the Jim River than from other streams along the roadway (Table 9). In the last two seasons no grayling harvest was reported from the Jim River. Total estimated catch from waters along the Dalton Highway since 2001 has averaged 1,770 grayling of which about 1,100 came from the Jim River (Table 9). Estimates of catch and harvest for the Dalton Highway grayling fishery were greater in 2005 (harvest 328 fish, total catch 2,184 fish). This modest increase was observed in spite of large forest fires in the area in July and August. In 2006 harvest was less (91 fish) but the estimate of total catch (9,703 fish) was the greatest on record. The results from 2005 and 2006 may reflect the effect of the road improvements and the new regulation adopted for this fishery in January 2004.

Nome/Beaver Creek. The SWHS combines Beaver Creek and Nome Creek data into a single estimate. The estimated annual catch of Arctic grayling from Nome and Beaver creeks averaged approximately 4,200 fish for the most recent 5-year period (Table 9). Estimated catches from 2004 and 2005 (7,400 and 6,700 fish) are the highest on record for this fishery. The harvest of Arctic grayling from Beaver Creek (Nome Creek is closed to harvest) has averaged about 300 fish during the last 10-year period. Harvest estimates for 2004 through 2006 (following the regulation change), while higher than the recent overall average, are within the range of harvests estimated from this fishery prior to the regulation change.

FISHERY OBJECTIVES AND MANAGEMENT

Management strategies for Arctic grayling stocks in the Yukon area are found in the Regional Wild Arctic Grayling Management Plan (5 AAC 70.055, 2004). The goal of management is to maintain naturally reproducing populations of Arctic grayling with characteristics that are sustainable and are desirable to the public.

The “regional management approach” for sport fishery regulation is currently applied to all Arctic grayling fisheries in the Yukon Area except for Nome Creek in the Beaver Creek

drainage. Under the regional regulation, the bag limit is five fish, bait is permitted and the season is open year round. The Nome Creek fishery is regulated under the “special management approach”. In Nome Creek the fishery is open year round but is restricted to catch-and-release. In addition, from April 1 through May 31, only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used. To date, fishery objectives are in place for two fisheries in the Yukon River area: the Dalton Highway and Nome/Beaver Creek.

Dalton Highway. The fishery objective for the Dalton Highway grayling fishery is to maintain total harvest of Arctic grayling from the Jim River below 10% of the estimated abundance of fish larger than 250 mm FL in the assessed area. The most recent applicable estimate of abundance is 12,000 fish (Fish 1998). Catch and harvest estimates from the statewide harvest survey provide the measure of fishing mortality. For the purpose of this management scheme, 10% of all fish released are added to the estimate of harvest to incorporate mortality of released fish. The performance of the Jim River Arctic grayling fishery will serve as a proxy for the Arctic grayling fishery in the Yukon drainage portion of the Dalton Highway.

New regulations for the Dalton Highway Arctic grayling fishery were adopted in January 2004:

- Daily Bag and Possession Limit is 5 grayling, no size limit.

The length limit (12 inch minimum size, adopted in 1994) was rescinded for this fishery because all estimates of effort and harvest and stock status studies indicated that these stocks could sustain greater levels of harvest. Also the 12 inch minimum length limit that had been in place was not large enough to attain the goal of delaying recruitment to the fishery until maturity was attained (Gryska 2003). In order to be effective at protecting pre-spawning fish, the length limit would need to be increased to at least 13 inches. If it becomes necessary to reduce fishing mortality on these stocks, a reduction in bag limit with no length limit is recommended.

Nome/Beaver Creek. The goal of management for Nome Creek is to minimize fishing mortality of Arctic grayling within this small tributary of Beaver Creek with a catch-and-release fishery.

The fishery objective for Beaver Creek is to maintain total harvest of Arctic grayling below 10% of the estimated abundance of fish larger than 250 mm FL in the assessed area. The most recent estimate of abundance of grayling larger than 250 mm FL in the assessed area is 9,900 fish (Fleming and McSweeney 2001). Catch and harvest estimates from the statewide harvest survey provide the measure of fishing mortality. For the purpose of this management scheme, 10% of all fish released are added to the estimate of harvest to incorporate mortality of released fish.

Current sport fishing regulations were adopted by the Alaska BOF for Beaver Creek Arctic grayling fishery in January 2004. The current regulations for Nome Creek and Beaver Creek are:

- Only unbaited, single hook, artificial lures may be used April 1 – May 31;
- Nome Creek – catch-and-release only for the entire year; and,
- Beaver Creek (from its headwaters downstream to its confluence with the Yukon River, except for Nome Creek) – daily bag and possession limit is 5 grayling, no size limit.

CURRENT ISSUES AND FISHERY OUTLOOK

Dalton Highway. Local roadside depletion of fish stocks near crossings of the Koyukuk River tributaries by the Dalton Highway has been a concern because such depletions would reduce

angling opportunity for sport fishers traveling this route. More restrictive sport fishing regulations have been imposed to alleviate harvest pressure in the immediate road crossing areas.

Substantial increases in the levels of angler effort, catch, and harvest have been expected as a result of the large improvements in the road surface (most of the highway north of the Yukon River and south of Wiseman was paved beginning in 2001). However, while modest increases in visitor use have been recorded at the visitor center in Coldfoot (Appendix F1), only the most recent estimate (2006) of angler effort and Arctic grayling catch has reflected any evidence of significant increases in the sport fishery. With better road access and with a somewhat less restrictive sport fishing regulation, the department anticipates that the participation in the road-side fishery for Arctic grayling will increase.

Prior to the 2004 season, the minimum length limit was rescinded from the regulation for the Dalton Highway Arctic grayling sport fishery. A modest increase in the harvest of Arctic grayling from area waters was expected and was realized. However, estimated harvests in 2004 through 2006 have remained substantially below the established harvest threshold. Continued modest increases in angler effort, catch and harvest are expected in this fishery. Management of this fishery will be reviewed prior to the 2009 scheduled BOF meeting for the AYK area.

In addition to changes in the sport fishery, a new gill net subsistence fishery in these streams was authorized by the BOF during winter 2004 (Proposal 164, Appendix A3). To date only two individuals have participated in this new permit fishery and harvests have been insignificant. If this permit fishery grows, the additional subsistence harvest will need to be factored into the estimated annual harvest. In this case adjustments would be needed in the regulation of the sport fishery to ensure that harvest levels remain sustainable.

Nome Creek/Beaver Creek.

Improved access to Beaver and Nome creeks has resulted in a growing sport fishery for Arctic grayling, particularly in Nome Creek (catch-and-release fishery). Only modest increases in visitor use and in angling effort are anticipated as the recreational destination becomes more popular. With the adoption of new regulations in 2001, no changes in the fishery regulations for the Nome and Beaver creeks are anticipated. Current annual harvest levels from Beaver Creek (less than 500 fish) have not yet approached the 1,000 fish threshold level established in the objective for this fishery.

RECENT BOARD OF FISHERIES ACTION

Dalton Highway. In 1994, the BOF reduced the bag and possession limit for grayling within the Dalton Highway Corridor from 10 to 5 fish and added a minimum length limit of 12 inches total. This action was taken in response to increases in recreational use and harvest (Burr et al. 1998). As described above (Fisheries Objectives and Management) the 12 inch minimum size limit was rescinded in 2004.

Nome Creek/Beaver Creek. During 1994, the BOF adopted a catch-and-release only regulation for Arctic grayling in Nome Creek in anticipation of continued increasing recreational use of this small tributary of Beaver Creek. In January 2004 the sport fishery bag limit regulation for Beaver Creek from its headwaters downstream to its confluence with O'Brien Creek, except for Nome Creek, was reduced from 10 to 5 per day.

CURRENT OR RECOMMENDED RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

At present, there is little concern for overharvest of Arctic grayling in streams crossed by the Dalton Highway or in the Nome/Beaver Creek fishery. Conservative annual sustainable harvest levels have been established. As fishing effort and harvests increase and begin to approach threshold use levels, reassessment of the stocks will be needed. In addition, an on-site creel census will be recommended for the Dalton Highway to better describe the sport fishery.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.–Fishing effort (angler-days) for the Yukon Management Area, Region III and Alaska, 1977-2006.

Year	Yukon Angler-Days	Percent of Region	Region III Angler-Days	Percent of State	Statewide Angler-Days
1977	4,729	4%	123,161	10%	1,197,590
1978	6,314	4%	145,492	11%	1,285,063
1979	7,714	6%	126,096	9%	1,364,739
1980	6,849	4%	160,266	11%	1,488,962
1981	6,679	4%	148,886	10%	1,420,172
1982	11,034	6%	198,791	12%	1,623,090
1983	11,070	6%	199,361	12%	1,732,528
1984	6,358	3%	199,041	11%	1,866,837
1985	8,670	5%	186,883	10%	1,943,069
1986	9,381	5%	194,713	9%	2,071,412
1987	7,017	3%	217,109	10%	2,152,886
1988	8,261	4%	233,559	10%	2,311,291
1989	10,712	4%	239,629	11%	2,264,079
1990	15,539	6%	245,629	10%	2,453,284
1991	10,749	5%	219,922	9%	2,456,328
1992	12,831	7%	181,852	7%	2,540,374
1993	14,011	6%	220,972	9%	2,559,408
1994	12,872	6%	209,987	8%	2,719,911
1995	18,677	7%	270,141	10%	2,787,670
1996	10,678	5%	201,166	10%	2,006,528
1997	12,725	5%	238,856	11%	2,079,514
1998	10,127	4%	227,841	12%	1,856,976
1999	12,906	4%	304,522	12%	2,499,152
2000	11,327	5%	241,574	9%	2,627,805
2001	10,531	5%	194,138	9%	2,261,941
2002	15,044	7%	220,276	10%	2,259,091
2003	9,117	4%	206,705	9%	2,219,398
2004	13,109	6%	217,041	9%	2,473,961
2005	8,965	5%	183,535	7%	2,463,929
2006	11,423	7%	175,274	8%	2,298,092
Averages					
1996-2005	11,453	5%	223,565	10%	2,274,830
2001-2005	11,353	6%	204,339	9%	2,335,664

Table 2.—Number of fish harvested and total catch by species by recreational anglers within the Yukon Management Area, 1990-2006.

Year	All Fish	Pacific Salmon					
	Total	Total	King	Coho	Sockeye	Pink	Chum
Harvest							
1990	9,948	750	105	228	0	0	417
1991	14,258	1,202	143	430	180	0	449
1992	11,416	1,567	313	551	58	27	618
1993	8,128	934	122	619	0	0	193
1994	9,445	1,228	410	728	0	0	90
1995	7,311	388	37	162	0	0	189
1996	9,036	656	128	432	0	30	66
1997	7,328	606	221	179	0	0	206
1998	6,969	861	207	154	64	85	351
1999	7,434	272	22	158	11	0	81
2000	6,103	407	99	244	0	0	64
2001	7,308	191	12	126	0	0	53
2002	9,655	639	8	551	3	0	77
2003	6,205	311	99	160	0	24	28
2004	10,432	1,318	194	907	79	33	105
2005	7,954	729	0	360	78	0	291
2006	6,088	794	101	371	0	54	268
Averages							
1991-05	8,732	755	134	384	32	13	191
1996-05	7,778	565	99	327	24	17	132
2001-05	7,941	573	63	421	32	11	111
Catch							
1990	62,327	2,881	199	533	0	0	2,149
1991	48,722	3,296	316	859	205	77	1,839
1992	43,322	4,793	1,242	1,329	107	155	1,960
1993	45,034	2,896	640	1,023	9	0	1,224
1994	36,015	1,979	510	1,109	9	0	351
1995	32,282	1,453	177	542	0	0	734
1996	57,857	5,354	2,785	813	0	964	792
1997	41,491	1,633	673	386	30	28	516
1998	40,070	6,206	456	385	1,019	802	3,544
1999	45,136	1,503	56	804	343	0	300
2000	41,907	1,651	562	684	0	39	366
2001	41,269	1,834	315	822	0	0	697
2002	63,955	1,486	18	1,064	3	38	363
2003	56,760	9,240	850	3,386	21	53	4,930
2004	91,804	10,492	1,088	4,329	678	1,041	3,356
2005	47,429	4,188	455	504	151	848	2,230
2006	64,380	5,486	438	1,640	183	514	2,711
Averages							
1991-05	48,870	2,600	676	1,203	172	270	1,547
1996-05	52,768	4,085	726	1,318	225	381	1,709
2001-05	60,243	4,941	545	2,021	171	396	2,315

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Table 2.–Page 2 of 2.

Year	Non-Salmon						
	Total	Lake Trout	Dolly Varden Arctic Char	Arctic Grayling	Sheefish	Northern Pike	Burbot
Harvest							
1990	9,198	220	391	4,961	323	2,474	507
1991	13,056	434	675	5,570	1,341	4,454	160
1992	9,849	193	672	4,171	553	3,590	422
1993	7,194	101	528	3,330	436	2,347	279
1994	8,217	59	488	4,574	391	1,968	145
1995	6,923	66	122	3,421	476	1,937	216
1996	8,380	9	881	4,000	606	2,502	203
1997	6,722	0	344	3,456	231	1,870	415
1998	6,108	27	205	3,912	258	1,452	133
1999	7,162	545	203	3,164	133	2,418	168
2000	5,696	55	373	3,279	372	1,277	118
2001	7,117	56	368	3,193	492	1,772	50
2002	9,016	147	551	2,832	538	3,291	1,160
2003	5,894	57	358	3,131	238	1,507	594
2004	9,114	98	167	3,271	1,352	3,656	111
2005	7,225	171	130	2,883	1,348	1,899	534
2006	5,294	6	174	2,041	540	1,134	741
Averages							
1991-05	7,976	135	404	3,612	584	2,396	314
1996-05	7,213	117	358	3,312	557	2,164	349
2001-05	7,367	106	315	3,062	794	2,425	490
Catch							
1990	59,446	914	2,842	34,299	2,251	17,717	509
1991	45,426	757	5,202	23,458	1,495	13,895	160
1992	38,529	741	3,744	17,300	1,569	14,801	25
1993	42,138	196	4,249	21,420	2,127	13,502	342
1994	34,036	177	1,779	15,951	1,121	11,694	152
1995	30,829	155	751	11,454	1,335	15,828	288
1996	52,503	60	1,938	21,417	2,915	25,502	212
1997	39,858	70	1,448	23,318	453	13,367	687
1998	33,864	74	1,991	18,318	568	12,349	149
1999	43,633	1,330	2,104	18,432	812	20,213	168
2000	40,256	166	1,678	23,024	1,144	13,589	130
2001	39,435	56	1,619	16,000	1,531	18,788	57
2002	62,469	1,596	2,142	19,194	1,483	35,975	1,217
2003	47,520	296	2,837	24,465	769	18,392	648
2004	81,312	553	2,420	32,455	5,329	39,762	178
2005	43,241	540	407	20,940	1,999	18,332	534
2006	58,894	26	984	23,718	8,298	24,335	766
Averages							
1991-05	41,902	451	2,287	20,476	1,643	19,066	330
1996-05	47,168	474	1,858	21,756	1,700	21,627	398
2001-05	54,198	608	1,885	22,611	2,222	26,250	527

Table 3.—Commercial, subsistence, and sport harvest of salmon (king, chum, and coho) in the US portion of the Yukon River drainage, 1977-2006.

Year	Area								
	Tanana River			Yukon River ^a			All US Yukon River		
	Commercial ^b	Subsistence ^c	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport
1977	25,282	nd	498	903,199	nd	99	928,481	276,187	597
1978	63,697	36,344	560	1,386,621	257,362	716	1,450,318	293,706	1,276
1979	67,300	52,853	759	1,275,483	358,797	173	1,342,783	411,650	932
1980	61,830	63,675	1,491	1,467,065	334,549	15	1,528,895	398,224	1,506
1981	66,743	43,919	1,403	1,872,392	301,868	23	1,939,135	345,787	1,426
1982	39,291	35,771	1,734	1,063,534	277,786	243	1,102,825	313,557	1,977
1983	68,596	62,407	1,844	1,395,765	348,020	401	1,464,361	410,427	2,245
1984	85,759	64,160	1,754	1,212,685	366,413	13	1,298,444	430,573	1,767
1985	123,709	79,177	3,407	1,284,433	354,549	36	1,408,142	433,726	3,443
1986	56,094	56,891	2,848	1,420,000	368,618	378	1,476,094	425,509	3,226
1987	14,398	212,623	2,353	742,903	461,998	287	757,301	635,940	2,640
1988	80,159	85,494	3,581	1,873,341	383,909	820	1,953,500	470,002	4,401
1989	121,254	92,078	3,694	1,802,132	385,842	1,312	1,923,386	477,261	5,006
1990	82,768	73,013	2,213	708,534	313,321	750	793,952	385,153	2,963
1991	79,187	69,614	3,563	1,046,163	278,611	1,022	1,128,393	348,225	4,585
1992	34,982	55,209	1,923	656,768	275,437	1,482	693,379	330,705	3,405
1993	5,150	23,722	2,222	229,076	237,287	934	234,226	261,099	3,156
1994	42,860	69,482	3,296	342,171	258,411	1,228	385,031	327,974	4,524
1995	121,192	83,869	4,589	1,151,344	244,579	388	1,272,536	328,448	4,977
1996	72,053	61,706	6,336	841,984	245,261	626	914,037	306,967	6,962
1997	28,015	39,019	3,638	407,354	234,492	606	435,369	273,511	4,244
1998	1,533	30,217	1,121	70,965	190,611	712	72,498	220,828	1,833
1999	838	30,271	1,926	120,110	203,926	261	120,948	234,197	2,187

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Table 3.–Page 2 of 2.

Year	Area								
	Tanana River			Yukon River			All US Yukon River		
	Commercial ^b	Subsistence ^c	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport
2000	0	7,660	585	15,142	127,205	407	15,142	134,865	992
2001	0	15,733	1,818	0	152,324	191	0	167,555	2,009
2002	4,053	14,604	1,326	34,398	135,479	636	38,451	149,835	1,962
2003	25,488	29,703	5,045	62,672	175,369	287	88,160	205,072	5,799
2004	30,766	24,613	2,133	77,146	182,567	1,206	107,912	207,180	3,339
2005	80,854	46,856	896	231,429	203,572	651	312,283	250,428	1,547
2006	79,201	30,627	1,582	299,547	211,839	740	378,748	242,466	2,322
Averages									
1977-06	51,223	55,739	2,364	820,212	274,334	548	872,359	328,448	2,928
1997-06	24,360	30,038	2,482	189,735	185,081	558	215,041	215,013	3,087
2002-06	28,232	26,302	2,244	81,129	169,862	594	109,361	196,014	2,931

^a Yukon River exclusive of Tanana River.

^b Commercial harvest includes fish harvested by commercial fishery and fish harvested to produce roe sold.

^c Subsistence harvest includes subsistence and personal use.

Table 4.–Sport harvest of king salmon in the Yukon River drainage (1996-2006).

Harvest	Year											Averages	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	1996-05	2001-05
Yukon R. drainages (Ft. Yukon to Canadian Border)													
Sub Total	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fortymile River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charley River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yukon R. drainages (Koyukuk R – Ft. Yukon)													
Sub Total	32	39	0	22	81	12	0	0	35	0	0	20	9
Porcupine River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chandalar River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beaver and Nome Creeks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dall River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Haul Road Streams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nowitna River	32	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	35	0	0	8	7
Melozitna River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Koyukuk River	0	0	0	22	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Yukon R. drainages (downstream from Koyukuk R.)													
Sub Total	96	172	207	0	18	0	0	99	159	0	101	77	52
Nulato River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anvik River	21	12	45	0	0	0	0	60	147	0	48	30	41
Innoko River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Andreafsky River	11	160	6	0	18	0	0	39	11	0	53	27	10
Total	128	221	207	22	99	12	8	99	194	0	101	99	63

Table 5.–Sport harvest of chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage (1996-2006).

Harvest	Year											Averages	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	1996-05	2001-05
Yukon R. drainages (Ft. Yukon to Canadian Border)													
Sub Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fortymile River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charley River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yukon R. drainages (Koyukuk R – Ft. Yukon)													
Sub Total	11	197	0	81	0	21	0	0	0	0	26	31	4
Porcupine River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chandalar River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beaver and Nome Creeks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dall River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Haul Road Streams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nowitna River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Melozitna River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Koyukuk River	0	197	0	81	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	27	4
Yukon R. drainages (downstream from Koyukuk R.)													
Sub Total	55	9	351	0	64	32	77	28	105	291	242	114	107
Nulato River	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	0	0	26	33	10	16
Anvik River	0	0	216	0	64	32	9	28	49	90	0	50	42
Innoko River	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Andreafsky River	56	0	15	0	0	0	15	0	56	175	209	48	49
Total	66	206	351	81	64	53	77	28	105	291	268	145	111

Table 6.–Sport harvest of coho salmon in the Yukon River drainage (1996-2006).

Harvest	Year											Averages	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	1996-	2001-
Yukon R. drainages (Ft. Yukon to Canadian Border)													
Sub Total	28	40	0	7	0								
Fortymile River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charley River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yukon R. drainages (Koyukuk R – Ft. Yukon)													
Sub Total	30	17	0	0	129	0	0	57	52	0	0	29	22
Porcupine River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chandalar River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beaver and Nome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	2	2
Dall River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Haul Road Streams	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Nowitna River	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Melozitna River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Koyukuk River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	0	0	7	10
Yukon R. drainages (downstream from Koyukuk R.)													
Sub Total	315	33	154	85	115	80	551	103	855	360	371	265	390
Nulato River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anvik River	0	11	93	85	53	23	56	69	457	0	136	85	121
Innoko River	0	0	61	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Andreafsky River	220	0	0	0	37	0	412	0	45	360	208	107	163
Total	432	179	154	158	244	126	551	160	907	360	371	327	421

Table 7.–Sport harvest of northern pike in the Yukon River drainage (1996-2006).

	Year											Averages	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	1996-05	2001-05
Yukon R. drainages (Ft. Yukon to Canadian Border)	86	63	39	19	102	0	259	12	60	0	160	73	66
Fortymile River	0	15	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	0	0
Charley River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yukon R. drainages (Koyukuk R – Ft. Yukon)	1,670	1,580	959	2,032	1,108	333	1,899	992	2,428	724	834	1,324	1,275
Porcupine River	138	50	340	9	10	47	774	206	45	0	77	154	214
Chandalar River	0	21	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birch Creek	26	41	32	19	29	28	0	0	15	19	0	19	12
Beaver & Nome Crks	43	7	0	16	38	0	157	28	0	47	0	31	46
Dall River	334	414	182	862	257	13	115	246	1,252	268	146	372	379
Haul Road Streams	108	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	16	0
Nowitna River	651	148	218	286	201	0	114	12	181	0	197	183	61
Melozitna River	11	76	11	8	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	12	3
Koyukuk River	171	701	105	634	204	97	299	111	629	265	241	314	280
Yukon R. drainages (downstream from Koyukuk R.)	646	227	433	358	102	0	1,122	549	1,002	1,127	140	519	760
Nulato River	0	7	0	0	0	10	41	36	0	9	0	10	19
Kaiyuh/Khotol River	0	0	8	28	34	0	103	0	60	0	0	21	33
Anvik River	51	14	34	0	41	0	40	22	13	48	0	24	25
Innoko River	110	56	93	145	10	28	40	120	249	59	0	83	99
Andreafsky River	97	115	42	0	0	1,318	629	11	302	884	44	313	629
Total	2,502	1,870	1,452	2,418	1,277	1,772	3,291	1,507	3,656	1,899	1,134	2,164	2,425

Table 8.—Total fishing effort, and northern pike catch and harvest from principal fisheries in the Yukon River area, 1988-2006.

Year	Yukon	Dall River			Nowitna River			Innoko River		
	Total ^a	Effort	Number	Percent ^b	Effort	Number	Percent	Effort	Number	Percent
Harvest										
1988	3,526	217	418	12%	946	982	28%	164	18	1%
1989	3,516	438	125	4%	773	548	16%	206	368	8%
1990	2,474	273	372	15%	652	118	5%	415	118	5%
1991	4,454	359	559	13%	1,238	1,617	36%	520	118	3%
1992	3,590	224	342	10%	491	196	6%	53	43	1%
1993	2,347	845	352	15%	446	63	3%	637	151	6%
1994	1,968	455	215	11%	733	161	8%	93	9	1%
1995	1,937	1,018	350	18%	1,977	302	16%	430	90	5%
1996	2,502	341	334	13%	834	651	26%	654	110	4%
1997	1,870	694	414	22%	605	148	8%	445	56	3%
1998	1,452	360	182	13%	645	218	15%	847	93	6%
1999	2,418	687	862	36%	862	286	12%	551	145	6%
2000	1,277	316	257	20%	843	201	16%	327	10	1%
2001	1,772	300	13	1%	434	0	0%	1,458	28	2%
2002	3,291	165	115	3%	525	114	3%	2,533	40	1%
2003	1,507	360	246	16%	180	12	0%	310	120	8%
2004	3,656	686	1,252	34%	664	181	5%	1,522	249	7%
2005	1,899	423	268	14%	414	0	0%	355	59	3%
2006	1,134	347	146	13%	1,078	197	0%	581	0	0%
Averages										
1996-05	2,164	433	394	17%	601	181	9%	900	91	4%
2001-05	2,425	387	379	14%	443	61	2%	1,236	99	4%
Catch										
1990	17,717	273	1,810	10%	652	694	4%	415	964	5%
1991	13,895	359	1,029	7%	1,238	2,749	20%	520	1,544	11%
1992	14,801	224	1,042	7%	491	1,426	10%	53	171	1%
1993	13,502	845	2,645	20%	446	1,362	10%	637	1,661	12%
1994	11,694	455	1,308	11%	733	2,868	25%	93	18	0%
1995	15,828	1,018	2,463	15%	1,977	3,049	19%	430	1,039	7%
1996	25,502	341	1,358	5%	834	9,493	37%	654	4,090	16%
1997	13,349	694	1,961	15%	605	1,154	9%	445	3,024	23%
1998	12,349	360	1,304	11%	645	1,290	10%	847	4,433	36%
1999	20,213	687	3,320	16%	862	1,357	7%	551	3,770	19%
2000	13,589	316	1,740	13%	843	4,509	33%	327	1,912	14%
2001	18,788	300	1,550	8%	434	478	3%	1,458	12,866	68%
2002	35,975	165	1,356	4%	525	5,488	15%	2,533	17,551	49%
2003	18,392	360	3,599	20%	180	1,309	7%	310	1,763	10%
2004	39,762	686	11,900	30%	664	2,429	6%	1,522	10,572	27%
2005	18,332	423	2,944	16%	414	348	2%	355	9,271	51%
2006	24,335	347	908	4%	1,078	4,040	17%	581	5,833	24%
Averages										
1996-05	21,627	433	3,103	14%	601	2,786	13%	900	6,925	31%
2001-05	26,250	387	4,270	16%	443	2,010	7%	1,236	10,405	41%

^a Harvest or total catch of northern pike in the Yukon area.

^b Percent of harvest or total catch of northern pike in the Yukon area.

Table 9.-Sport harvest and catch of Arctic grayling in the Yukon River drainage (1996-2006).

Harvest	Year											Averages	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	1996-05	2001-05
Yukon R. drainages (Canadian Border to Ft. Yukon)													
Sub Total	205	1,207	677	833	569	318	308	916	371	129	235	553	408
Fortymile River	54	90	497	178	0	0	39	690	0	0	86	155	146
Charley River	49	489	149	289	20	65	61	70	272	0	121	146	94
Kandik River	0	0	0	34	239	172	0	128	0	0	0	57	60
Other	0	628	0	332	310	81	208	28	99	129	127	127	109
Yukon R. drainages (Ft. Yukon to Koyukuk R)													
Sub Total	3,140	1,883	2,398	2,085	2,078	2,006	1,483	1,420	2,571	1,777	1,296	2,084	1,851
Porcupine River	309	99	270	83	0	601	251	141	227	226	91	221	289
Birch Creek	0	54	169	61	178	500	75	47	178	109	110	137	182
Beaver and Nome Cr	665	122	371	311	672	0	156	324	568	432	699	362	296
Haul Road Streams	235	143	230	497	88	249	75	70	188	328	91	210	182
Jim River	235	86	184	321	10	163	75	70	104	0	0	125	82
Koyukuk River	1,535	1,118	800	863	735	571	577	490	1,035	415	54	814	618
Other	631	490	788	767	493	334	424	418	563	595	342	550	467
Yukon R. drainages (downstream from Koyukuk R)													
Sub Total	594	252	837	77	307	677	1,041	739	253	881	510	566	718
Nulato River	146	98	48	0	0	0	492	0	0	78	0	96	114
Anvik River	217	0	422	27	174	67	154	310	146	0	10	152	135
Innoko River	158	41	0	0	42	112	0	141	16	0	72	64	57
Andreafsky River	61	27	84	0	11	463	365	141	0	803	414	217	354
Other	12	86	283	50	80	35	30	147	91	0	14	81	61
Total Yukon Harvest	4,000	3,456	3,912	3,164	3,279	3,193	2,832	3,131	3,271	2,883	2,041	3,312	3,062

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Table 9.--Page 2 of 2.

Catch	Year											Averages	
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	1996-05	2001-05
Yukon R. drainages (Canadian Border to Ft. Yukon)													
Sub Total	1,426	3,826	1,335	2,883	2,428	1,869	2,026	3,815	981	452	745	2,104	1,829
Fortymile River	449	280	510	490	0	0	103	2,461	65	0	313	436	526
Charley River	243	1,079	615	1,151	249	377	61	256	692	0	259	472	277
Kandik River	0	1,014	0	373	1,167	601	0	618	0	0	35	377	244
Other	734	1,453	210	869	1,012	891	1,862	480	224	452	138	819	782
Yukon R. drainages (Ft. Yukon to Koyukuk R)													
Sub Total	16,822	17,116	10,494	13,786	14,453	10,500	9,454	11,163	20,256	18,730	16,804	14,277	14,021
Porcupine River	1,332	513	1,094	1,327	1,626	3,521	607	197	707	705	472	1,163	1,147
Birch Creek	850	874	254	331	1,089	1,455	1,163	967	246	508	1,126	774	868
Beaver and Nome Cr	4,030	4,065	1,747	1,427	2,405	1,517	1,971	3,379	7,424	6,661	2,417	3,463	4,190
Haul Road Streams	936	2,776	1,656	5,293	756	919	705	1,786	3,258	2,184	9,703	2,027	1,770
Jim River	924	2,749	1,229	5,075	517	566	666	1,139	2,687	437	4,265	1,599	1,099
Koyukuk River	8,354	7,061	4,630	4,630	7,964	1,761	3,920	3,438	6,242	4,505	671	5,251	3,973
Other	2,256	4,603	2,769	6,071	1,369	2,246	1,793	3,182	5,637	6,351	12,118	3,628	3,842
Yukon R. drainages (downstream from Koyukuk R)													
Sub Total	2,810	1,441	6,489	1,215	4,191	3,381	7,490	8,783	10,723	1,340	6,169	5,531	6,343
Nulato River	364	166	48	0	38	35	796	493	0	78	20	202	280
Anvik River	1,342	599	2,748	945	3,670	2,575	4,857	6,925	7,197	368	3,513	3,123	4,384
Innoko River	0	81	0	0	67	129	0	423	3,352	11	1,104	479	783
Andreafsky River	408	54	1,151	0	49	584	1,712	457	0	803	1,518	522	711
Other	696	541	2,542	270	367	58	125	485	174	80	14	543	184
Total Catch	21,417	23,318	18,318	18,432	23,024	16,000	19,194	24,465	32,455	20,940	23,718	21,756	22,611

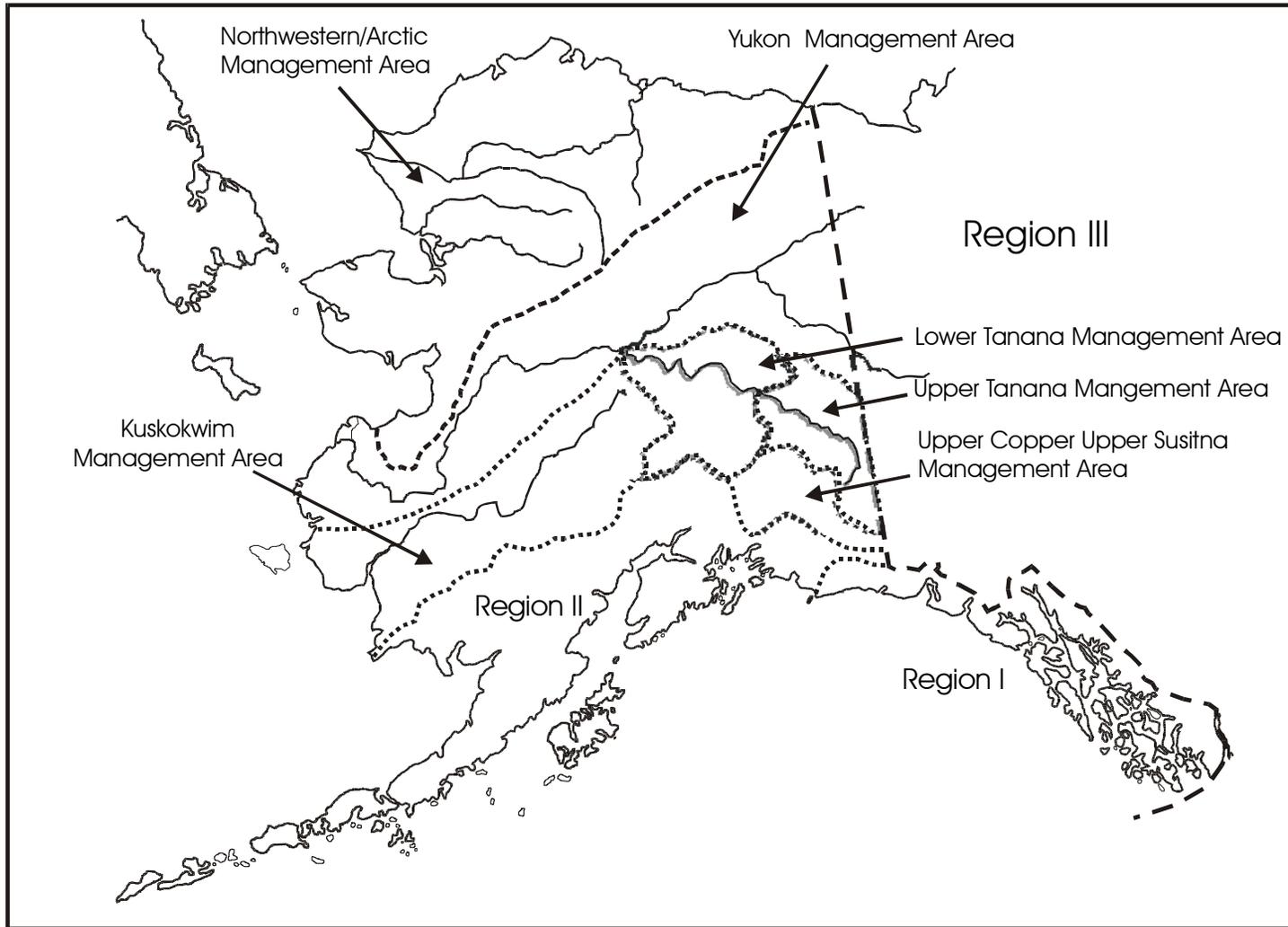


Figure 1.—Map of the sport fish regions in Alaska and the six management areas in Region III.

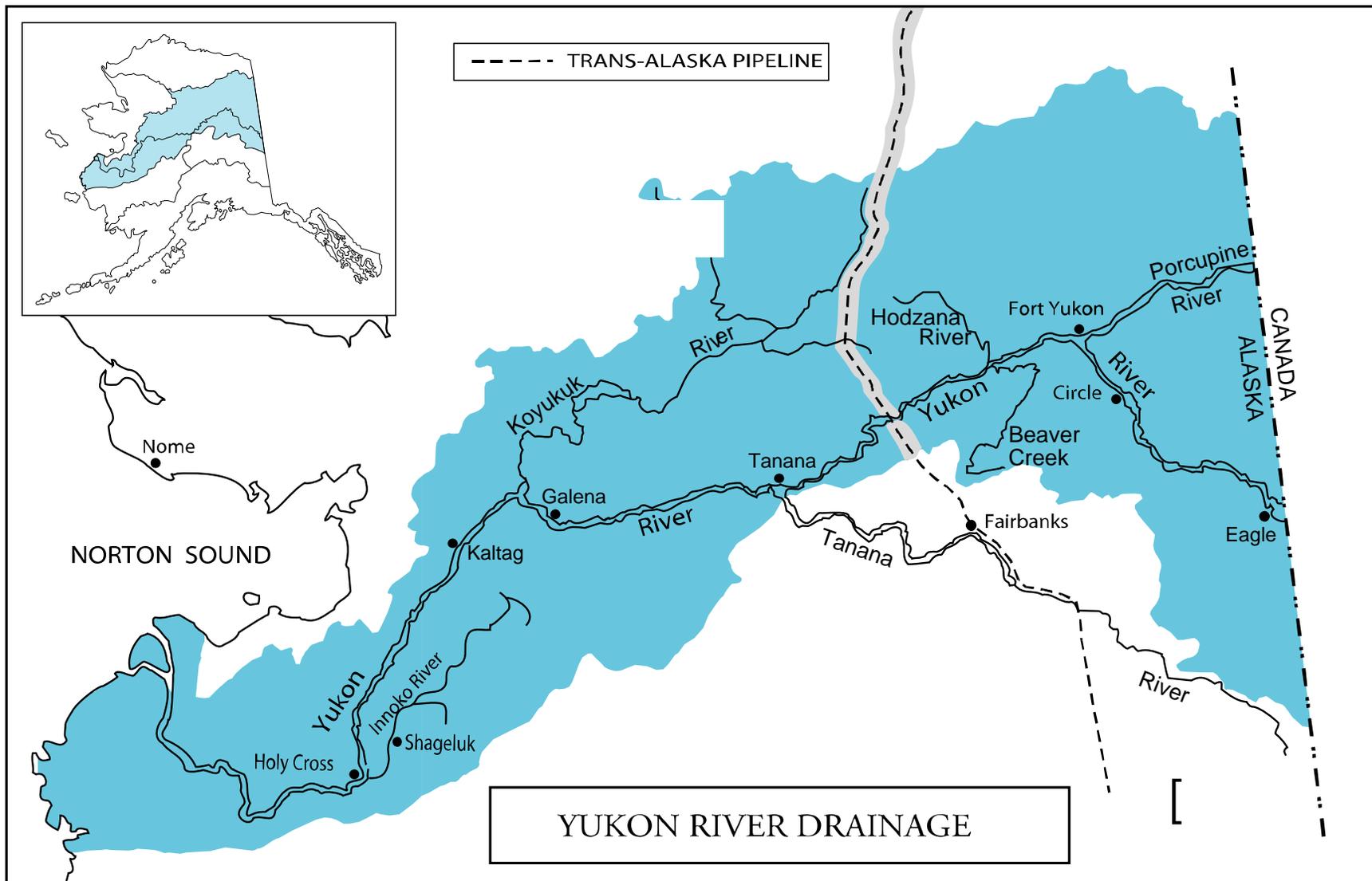


Figure 2.—Yukon subarea, Tanana River drainage is excluded from the AYKMA.

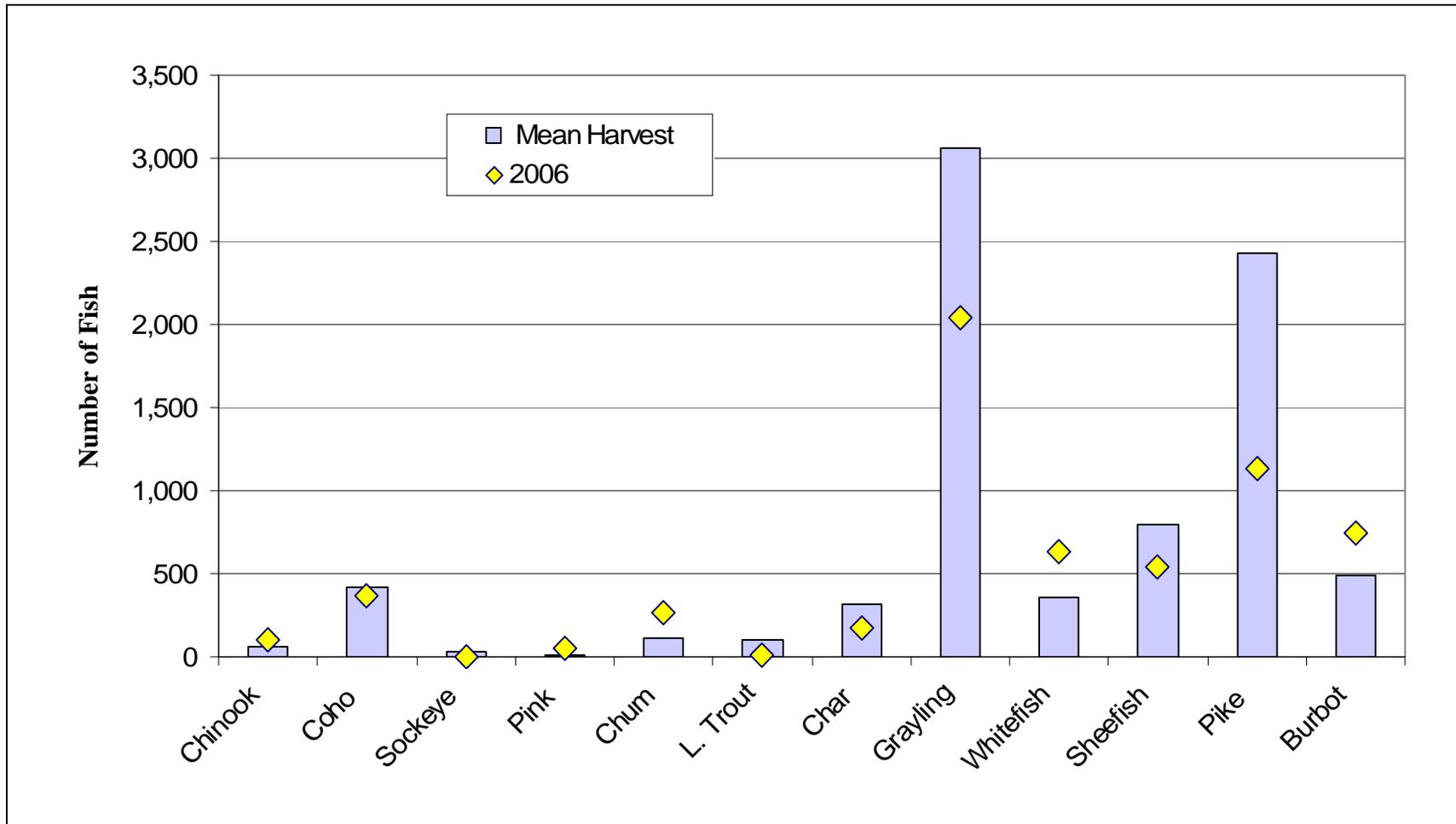


Figure 3.—Sport fishery harvests in Yukon Management Area, 2001-2005 and 2006.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A1.–Changes to sport fishing regulations in the Yukon Management Area by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in 2007.

During the January 2007 meeting of the Board of Fisheries in Fairbanks, two proposals were considered that would potentially change sport fishing regulations in the Yukon Management Area. The Board adopted both of these proposals, resulting in changes to some sport fishing regulations in the area. These regulations became effective about April 15, 2007 with the release of the 2007-2008 Regulation Summary. All changes in sport fishing regulations in the Yukon management Area following the adoption of these regulations are listed below.

Lake trout – bag, possession, and length limits – Region-wide.

The Board adopted a Regional Lake Trout Management Plan. The plan established a conservative management regime with the goal of maintaining harvest well below maximum sustained yield levels. The plan established a background bag limit of two lake trout. When needed for conservation purposes, the plan prescribes appropriate application of bag limits, length limits, seasonal closures and gear restrictions. The plan also recognizes special management waters to meet other management objectives if sustained yield is also maintained.

In the Yukon Management Area, all lake trout waters remain under the background daily bag limit of two fish without size limit.

Water	Previous Regulation	New Regulation
Yukon River Drainage	2/day, no size limit	2/day, no size limit

Northern Pike – bag, possession and size limits – Nowitna River Drainage

Species	Previous Regulation/Lakes	New Regulation/Lakes
Northern Pike	10/day, no size limit	5/day, only one over 30” in length.

Text of proposals and action taken by the Board of Fisheries is given in Appendix A2.

Appendix A2.–List of regulatory proposals considered in 2006-2007 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries concerning Yukon Management Area Sport Fisheries.

PROPOSAL NO. 123, PAGE. 88, - 5 AAC 70.013. Seasons; bag; possession, and size limits in the Yukon River Management Area. Amend this regulation to include the following:

(c)(#) in all wates of the Nowitna River drainage, the bag and possession limit for northern pike is 5 fish, of which only one fish may be 30 inches of greater in length.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?

The proposal if adopted would reduce the bag and possession limit for northern pike from ten fish to five fish per day. In addition only one of the fish harvested could be larger than 30 inches in length.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF adopted the proposal as written.

PROPOSAL NO. 137, PAGE 98, - 5 AAC 70.XXX. Lake Trout Management Plan. Amend this regulation to include the following:

- (a) Notwithstanding the other provisions in this chapter regarding lake trout, the department shall manage wild lake trout populations in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region by employing a conservative harvest regime and by maintaining harvests below the maximum sustained yield level. Following sustained yield principles, the department may manage wild lake trout fisheries to provide or maintain fishery qualities that are desired by sport anglers.
- (b) In a sport fishery covered by this management plan, the commissioner, by emergency order, may take one or more of the management actions specified in this subsection if there is a conservation or biological concern for the sustainability of the fishery or for a stock harvested by that fishery. The concern must arise from harvest, effort, or catch data for that fishery which has been derived from statewide harvest survey data, on-site creel survey data, stock status data, stock exploitation rates, or from inferential comparisons with other fisheries. The management actions are as follows:
 - (1) reduce the bag and possession limits;
 - (2) reduce fishing time;
 - (3) allow only a catch-and-release fishery;
 - (4) modify methods and means of harvest.
- (c) If the harvest level in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region exceeds sustained yield for a two-year time period, the commissioner by emergency order, may close the fishery and immediately reopen a fishery during which one or more of the following restrictions apply:

-continued-

- (1) set lines are prohibited;
- (2) bag and possession limit of one lake trout;
- (3) a minimum size limit applies, the size limit shall be established based on the following considerations:
 - (A) length of maturity, with two years of protection from harvest for spawning fish before recruitment to the fishery;
 - (B) lake size, with no size limits for a trout population in a lake with a surface area less than 250 acres;
 - (C) uniformity of size limits, with the minimum size limit 24 inches unless the department determines that there is a biological justification for an alternate size limit;
- (4) if the reduced bag limit or size limits do not keep harvest below maximum sustained yield levels the commissioner may further restrict harvest opportunity, through
 - (A) seasonal closures;
 - (B) spawning closures, winter closures, or both;
 - (C) allowing single-hook, artificial lures only or no bait, or both;
 - (D) allowing catch-and-release fishing only;
 - (E) a complete closure of the fishery.
- (d) Special management waters are waters designated by regulation of the Board of Fisheries, where harvests are within sustained yield levels and where the management objectives include higher stock abundance or a need for a higher percentage of trophy-sized fish. Within special management areas, if the department determines that management objectives will not be met under existing regulatory provisions, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the fishery and immediately reopen a fishery during which one or more of the following management measures apply:
 - (1) reduced fishing season;
 - (2) special gear restrictions;
 - (3) alternative size limits;
 - (4) catch-and-release fishing only.
- (e) The department shall minimize potential conflicts with a subsistence fishery, or other fisheries that overlap the sport fishery, that harvest other fish within the same body of water.

-continued-

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?

If adopted, this proposal will provide regulatory guidelines to manage lake trout populations in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) sport fish management areas. These guidelines are the same as adopted in 2005 for the Upper Copper Upper Susitna Management Area (UCUSMA). The plan would provide the Board of Fisheries with a consistent means to address proposals submitted by the public and Department. The management plan would set bag, possession, size limits, seasons, and methods and means for lake trout waters based upon current harvest levels and population data.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF adopted the proposal as written.

Appendix A3.–Changes to sport fishing regulations in the Arctic-Yukon Management Area by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in 2004.

During the January 2004 meeting of the Board of Fisheries in Fairbanks, eight proposals were considered that would potentially change sport fishing regulations in the Yukon Management Area. The Board adopted five of these proposals, resulting in changes to some sport fishing regulations in the area. These regulations became effective about April 15, 2004 with the release of the 2004-2005 Regulation Summary. Changes are listed below by area, and then by species.

Arctic grayling – bag, possession, and length limits – Region-wide.

The Board adopted a Regional Arctic Grayling Management Plan. The plan created three management categories with associated regulatory options; Background Regulations, Conservative Harvest Regulations, and Special Management Regulations.

The plan categorized the following waters as Conservative Harvest management with a bag and possession limit of two fish, with size limits specific to the water bodies: Snake River (Nome), Pilgrim River (Nome); 5-mile Clearwater (Fairbanks), Mendeltna Creek (Glennallen); Aniak, Holitna, Kanektok and Goodnews Rivers (Kuskokwim).

Wild Arctic grayling waters classified as Special Management are: Nome and Solomon Rivers (Nome); Nome Creek (Yukon), Chena River (Fairbanks); Piledriver Slough (Fairbanks); and the Delta Clearwater River (Delta Junction).

The regulations adopted under the plan as Background Regulations changed the general Arctic grayling regulations in the Yukon area. The Board also adopted proposals removing the length limit in the Dalton Highway Corridor. Specific changes from previous regulations are listed in the table below.

Water	Previous Regulation	New Regulation
Yukon River Drainage	10/day, no size limit	5/day, no size limit
Dalton Hwy Corridor/Yukon	5/day, 12 inch minimum	5/day, no size limit
Nome Creek (Beaver Creek drainage)	Catch-and-Release only	Catch-and-Release only

Wild Lake Trout and Arctic char/Dolly Varden – bag and possession limits.

The general bag and possession limit for these species changed for all lakes in the Yukon Area

Species	Previous Regulation/Lakes	New Regulation/Lakes
Lake trout	4/day, no size limit	2/day in combination, no size limit.
Arctic char/Dolly Varden	2/day, no size limit	

Appendix A4.–List of regulatory proposals considered by the Alaska Board of Fisheries concerning Yukon Management Area Sport Fisheries during the January 2004 meeting.

PROPOSAL 108, PAGE. 112, - 5 AAC 70.022(a-c) and (e). Waters; seasons; bag; possession, and size limits in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area. Amend this regulation as follows:

Lake trout and Arctic char/Dolly Varden in all lakes: the bag and possession limit is two fish in combination, with no size limit.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would reduce the background sport fishery bag and possession limit for lake trout from four to two and combine this limit with the existing two fish limit for lake resident Arctic char/Dolly Varden. This regulation would apply to lakes in the North Slope, Northwest Alaska, Kuskokwim and Yukon portions of AYK. This regulation would not apply to the Tanana portion of the Yukon drainage.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF adopted the proposal as written.

PROPOSAL 109, PAGE. 113, - 5 AAC 70.XXX. Management Plan for Arctic Grayling for the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area. Create a new regulation as follows:

Management Plan for Arctic grayling for the A-Y-K Area.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would create a Regional Arctic grayling Management Plan that would provide a framework for setting regulations for all Arctic grayling fisheries in the AYK and UC/US regulatory areas.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF adopted the Management Plan. The effect of the action for the AYKMA was to reduce the background bag limit from 10 to 5 Arctic grayling per day. Regulations for Nome Creek (catch-and-release), and Holitna River (2 per day) were not affected by adoption of the plan

PROPOSAL 111, PAGE. 115, - 5 AAC 70.022(c)(10)(D)(iii). Waters; seasons; bag; possession, and size limits in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area. Amend this regulation as follows:

In the Dalton Highway corridor (Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor) within the Yukon River portion of the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area...the bag and possession limit for Arctic grayling is five fish, no size limit

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would remove the 12 inch minimum size limit from the regulation for Arctic grayling in waters within the Dalton Highway corridor in the Yukon River drainage.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF adopted the proposal as written.

-continued-

PROPOSAL 115, PAGE. 119, - 5 AAC 70.022(c). Waters; seasons; bag; possession, and size limits in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area. Amend this regulation to provide the following:

A ten fish bag limit with one fish greater than 20 inches allowed on Bray Lakes and Beaver Lake

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would change the daily bag and possession limit for lake trout in Bray and Beaver Lakes from 4 fish, no size limit to 10 fish with only one greater than 20 inches.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF failed to adopt the proposal.

PROPOSAL 159, PAGE 160. 5 AAC 01.220. Lawful gear and gear specifications. Amend this regulation as follows:

Increase the mesh size regulation for Birch Creek

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?

The proposal if adopted would allow the use of gill nets with mesh size larger than three inches in the Birch Creek drainage.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF failed to adopt the proposal.

PROPOSAL 164, PAGE 164. 5 AAC 01.220(f). Lawful gear and gear specifications. Amend this regulation as follows:

In the middle fork and south fork of the Koyukuk River, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 3 ½ inches.

Legal subsistence methods and means may be used year round except gill net fishing is closed July 1 – October 31 on the middle fork and south fork drainages to protect spawning salmon.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal if adopted would allow the use of gillnets with mesh size 3 ½ inches or less in the portions of Koyukuk River tributaries within the Dalton Highway corridor except when salmon are traditionally present (July 1 – October 31).

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The proposal was amended to allow only gill nets with mesh size not to exceed 3 inches and to require a permit for participation in the subsistence fishery. This fishery will be open only from November 1 to June 30. The BOF adopted the proposal as amended.

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PROPOSAL 165, PAGE 164. 5 AAC 01.225. Waters closed to subsistence fishing; 5 AAC 05.350. Closed waters; and 5 AAC 70.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession and size limits in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area. Amend this regulation as follows:

All spawning streams will be closed to any fishing ½ mile downstream from the mouth and ¼ mile upstream. No fishing until the department by emergency order opens when they have reached the escapement goal and the department makes sure they monitor these spawning streams.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal, if adopted, would close all fishing in the Yukon River and its tributaries ½ mile down stream of tributary confluence and the lower ¼ mile of each tributary. All Yukon River tributaries would also be closed near their confluence with higher order tributaries that provide salmon spawning habitat.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF failed to adopt the proposal.

PROPOSAL 174, PAGE 171. 5AAC 05.360 (f). Yukon River King Salmon Management Plan. Amend this regulation as follows:

The sport fishery in the Yukon River drainage will be managed in accordance with the subsistence salmon net and fish wheel openings and closure set forth in 5 AAC 05.360(d)(1)-(5). Sport fishing restrictions necessary for conservation proposes will correspond to the level of abundance of king salmon.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal, if adopted, would align the opening and closing of the sport fishery with the gill net and fish wheel subsistence fisheries.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOF: The BOF failed to adopt the proposal.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B1.—Contact information for agencies providing information concerning fishing sites within the Yukon Management Area.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

<http://www.nps.gov/gaar/>

P.O. Box 30
Bettles, AK 99726
(907) 692-5494

Wild and Scenic Rivers Associated with Gates of the Arctic NP&P

<http://www.nps.gov/gaar/wildandscenicrivers.htm>

Alatna River, <http://www.nps.gov/gaar/alatna.htm>

John River, <http://www.nps.gov/gaar/johnriver.htm>

North Fork Koyukuk River, <http://www.nps.gov/gaar/koyukukriver.htm>

Tinayguk River, <http://www.nps.gov/gaar/tinaygukriver.htm>

Yukon-Charlie Rivers National Reserve

<http://www.nps.gov/yuch/>

Eagle Visitor Center
P.O. Box 167
Eagle, AK 99738
(907) 547-2233

Steese National Conservation Area

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/steese_conserv.html

Bureau of Land Management
Fairbanks District Office
1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844
(907) 474-2200 or 1-800-437-7021

Birch Creek National Wild River

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/beavercrk_nwsr.html

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White Mountain National Recreation Area

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/white_mtns.html

Bureau of Land Management
Fairbanks District Office
1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
(907) 474-2200 or 1-800-437-7021

Beaver Creek National Wild River

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/beavercrk_nwsr.html

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

<http://arctic.fws.gov/>

101 12th Avenue, Room 236
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Tel: (907)456-0250 or (800)362-4546

Wild and Scenic Rivers Associated with Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Sheenjek National Wild and Scenic River, <http://arctic.fws.gov/>
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/aktrails/ats/ne/sheenjek.htm>

Wind National Wild and Scenic River, <http://arctic.fws.gov/>

Innoko National Wildlife Refuge

<http://innoko.fws.gov>

Tonzona Avenue
P.O. Box 69
McGrath, AK 99627
E-mail: Innoko@fws.gov
Tel: (907) 524-3251

Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge

<http://kanuti.fws.gov/>

101 12th Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99701
E-mail: kanuti_refuge@fws.gov
Tel: (907) 456-0329

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Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge

<http://koyukuk.fws.gov/>

101 Front Street

P.O. Box 287 MS 525

Galena, Alaska 99741-0287

Tel: (907) 656-1231 or 800-656-1231

E-Mail: r7kynwr@fws.gov

Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge

<http://nowitna.fws.gov/>

101 Front Street

P.O. Box 287 MS 525

Galena, Alaska 99741-0287

Tel: (907)656-1231 or 800-656-1231

E-Mail: r7kynwr@fws.gov

Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge

<http://yukonflats.fws.gov/>

101 12th Avenue, Room 264 MS 575

Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Tel: (907) 456-0440 or 800-531-0676

E-Mail: yukonflats_refuge@fws.gov

Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

<http://yukondelta.fws.gov/>

807 Chief Eddie Hoffman Road

P. O. Box 346 MS 535

Bethel, Alaska 99559

Tel: (907) 543-3151

E-Mail: yukondelta@fws.gov

APPENDIX C

Appendix C1.—Sport harvest and catch from the Yukon Management Area (SWHS Area Y), 1980-2006.

	All Fish	Salmon					Non-Salmon								
		Lake	AC/DV	Northern	Other										
		Harvest													
1980	13,291	15	0	0	19	0	293	506	9,640	9	251	2,498	60	0	
1981	10,173	6	0	0	11	17	302	197	6,176	18	509	2,718	219	0	
1982	13,580	22	139	0	41	82	720	470	7,171	568	372	3,551	444	0	
1983	13,225	0	52	0	0	349	305	856	8,014	52	259	3,318	10	10	
1984	10,531	13	0	0	78	0	143	143	6,856	182	104	2,960	52	0	
1985	7,985	12	12	0	0	12	485	382	4,180	315	245	2,132	210	0	
1986	10,775	15	161	0	98	202	508	91	5,566	328	214	3,470	122	0	
1987	12,740	0	61	0	0	226	0	541	9,054	206	128	2,492	32	0	
1988	12,363	91	183	0	0	546	0	618	6,115	610	656	3,526	18	0	
1989	14,720	100	215	0	0	997	272	726	7,491	245	757	3,516	367	34	
1990	9,948	105	228	0	0	417	220	391	4,961	322	323	2,474	507	0	
1991	14,258	143	430	180	0	449	434	675	5,570	422	1,341	4,454	160	0	
1992	11,416	313	551	58	27	618	193	672	4,171	248	553	3,590	422	0	
1993	8,128	122	619	0	0	193	101	528	3,330	173	436	2,347	279	0	
1994	9,445	410	728	0	0	90	59	488	4,574	89	391	1,968	145	503	
1995	7,311	37	162	0	0	189	66	122	3,421	82	476	1,937	216	603	
1996	9,036	128	432	0	30	66	9	881	4,000	160	606	2,502	203	19	
1997	7,328	221	179	0	0	206	0	344	3,456	398	231	1,870	415	8	
1998	6,969	207	154	64	85	351	27	205	3,912	121	258	1,452	133	0	
1999	7,434	22	158	11	0	81	545	203	3,164	511	133	2,418	168	0	
2000	6,103	99	244	0	0	64	55	373	3,279	222	372	1,277	118	0	
2001	7,308	12	126	0	0	53	56	368	3,193	928	492	1,772	50	258	
2002	9,655	8	551	3	0	77	147	551	2,832	497	538	3,291	1,160	0	
2003	6,205	99	160	0	24	28	57	358	3,131	0	238	1,507	594	9	
2004	10,432	194	907	79	33	105	98	167	3,271	284	1,352	3,656	111	147	
2005	7,954	0	360	78	0	291	171	130	2,883	79	1,348	1,899	534	181	
2006	6,088	101	371	0	54	268	6	174	2,041	631	540	1,134	741	27	
Averages^a															
1991-05	8,599	134	384	32	13	191	135	404	3,612	281	584	2,396	314	115	
1996-05	7,842	99	327	24	17	132	117	358	3,312	320	557	2,164	349	62	
2001-05	8,311	63	421	32	11	111	106	315	3,062	358	794	2,425	490	119	

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Year	All Fish Total	Salmon					Non-Salmon							
		King	Coho	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Lake Trout	AC/DV	Grayling	Whitefish	Sheefish	Northern Pike	Burbot	Other Fish
Catch														
1990	62,327	199	533	0	0	2,149	914	2,842	34,299	914	2,251	17,717	509	0
1991	48,722	316	859	205	77	1,839	757	5,202	23,458	459	1,495	13,895	160	0
1992	43,322	1,242	1,329	107	155	1,960	741	3,744	17,300	349	1,569	14,801	25	0
1993	45,034	640	1,023	9	0	1,224	196	4,249	21,420	302	2,127	13,502	342	0
1994	36,015	510	1,109	9	0	351	177	1,779	15,951	301	1,121	11,694	152	2,861
1995	32,282	177	542	0	0	734	155	751	11,454	109	1,335	15,828	288	909
1996	57,857	2,785	813	0	964	792	60	1,938	21,417	434	2,915	25,502	212	25
1997	41,491	673	386	30	28	516	70	1,448	23,318	430	453	13,367	687	85
1998	40,070	456	385	1,019	802	3,544	74	1,991	18,318	415	568	12,349	149	0
1999	45,136	56	804	343	0	300	1,330	2,104	18,432	554	812	20,213	168	0
2000	41,907	562	684	0	39	366	166	1,678	23,024	524	1,144	13,589	130	0
2001	41,269	315	822	0	0	697	56	1,619	16,000	1,037	1,531	18,788	57	347
2002	63,955	18	1,064	3	38	363	1,596	2,142	19,194	862	1,483	35,975	1,217	0
2003	56,760	850	3,386	21	53	4,930	296	2,837	24,465	45	769	18,392	648	68
2004	91,804	1,088	4,329	678	1,041	3,356	553	2,420	32,455	371	5,329	39,762	178	187
2005	47,429	455	504	151	848	2,230	540	407	20,940	260	1,999	18,332	534	229
2006	64,380	438	1,640	183	514	2,711	26	984	23,718	631	8,298	24,335	766	136
Averages^a														
1991-05	48,870	676	1,203	172	270	1,547	451	2,287	20,476	430	1,643	19,066	330	314
		(1.4)	(2.5)	(0.4)	(0.6)	(3.2)	(0.9)	(4.7)	(41.9)	(0.9)	(3.4)	(39.0)	(0.7)	(0.6)
1996-05	52,768	726	1,318	225	381	1,709	474	1,858	21,756	493	1,700	21,627	398	94
		(1.4)	(2.5)	(0.4)	(0.7)	(3.2)	(0.9)	(3.5)	(41.2)	(0.9)	(3.2)	(41.0)	(0.8)	(0.2)
2001-05	60,243	545	2,021	171	396	2,315	608	1,885	22,611	515	2,222	26,250	527	166
		(0.9)	(3.4)	(0.3)	(0.7)	(3.8)	(1.0)	(3.1)	(37.5)	(0.9)	(3.7)	(43.6)	(0.9)	(0.3)

^a Percentage of all fish from Yukon Area are within parenthesis.

APPENDIX D

Appendix D1.–Commercial, subsistence and sport harvest of king salmon in the Yukon River drainage.

Year	Tanana River			Yukon River without Tanana			All Yukon River		
	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport
1980	1,947	1,826	941	152,038	40,898	15	153,985	42,724	956
1981	987	2,085	763	157,031	27,605	6	158,018	29,690	769
1982	981	2,443	984	122,663	25,715	22	123,644	28,158	1,006
1983	911	2,706	1,048	146,999	46,772	0	147,910	49,478	1,048
1984	867	3,599	338	119,037	38,829	13	119,904	42,428	351
1985	1,142	7,375	1,356	145,046	32,396	12	146,188	39,771	1,368
1986	950	3,701	781	99,020	41,537	15	99,970	45,238	796
1987	3,338	4,096	502	131,422	49,028	0	134,760	53,124	502
1988	762	5,507	853	99,602	40,525	91	101,445	46,032	944
1989	1,741	2,999	963	102,457	48,063	100	105,491	51,062	1,063
1990	2,156	3,069	439	93,504	48,112	105	97,708	51,181	544
1991	1,072	2,515	630	105,344	44,258	143	107,105	46,773	773
1992	753	2,438	118	120,419	43,188	313	122,134	45,626	431
1993	1,445	2,098	1,573	92,665	60,814	122	95,682	65,701	1,695
1994	2,606	2,370	1,871	111,234	50,707	410	115,471	54,563	2,281
1995	2,747	2,178	2,488	121,305	46,756	37	126,204	48,934	2,525
1996	447	1,392	3,102	89,745	42,435	128	91,890	43,521	3,230
1997	2,728	3,025	1,953	110,882	53,266	221	116,421	56,291	2,174
1998	963	2,276	447	42,736	51,814	207	44,625	54,090	654
1999	690	1,955	1,001	68,873	50,570	22	70,767	52,525	1,023
2000	0	1,058	178	8,518	34,858	99	9,115	35,916	277
2001	0	2,449	667	0	50,610	12	0	53,059	679
2002	836	1,193	478	23,820	41,553	8	24,656	42,746	486
2003	1,813	2,349	2,153	39,305	52,964	99	41,118	55,313	2,719
2004	2,057	1,589	1,319	54,886	52,287	194	56,943	53,876	1,513
2005	453	1,966	485	31,872	50,733	0	32,325	52,699	485
2006	84	1,229	638	46,562	46,570	101	46,646	47,799	739
					Average				
1977-06	1,230	2,553	965	91,939	43,853	95	93,791	45,577	1,075
1997-06	962	1,909	932	42,745	48,535	96	44,262	50,444	1,075
2002-06	1,049	1,665	1,015	39,289	48,821	80	40,338	50,487	1,188

Appendix D2.–Commercial, subsistence, and sport harvest of summer and fall chum salmon in the Yukon River.

Year	Tanana River			Yukon River without Tanana			All Yukon River		
	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport
1980	58,657	56,686	483	1,307,508	278,656	0	1,366,165	335,342	483
1981	63,472	32,573	595	1,693,965	262,296	17	1,757,437	294,869	612
1982	30,530	25,910	698	911,475	223,595	82	942,005	249,505	780
1983	61,517	52,769	649	1,241,614	284,275	349	1,303,131	337,044	998
1984	77,204	45,776	585	1,019,396	293,349	0	1,096,600	339,125	585
1985	110,805	60,041	1,255	1,093,477	301,650	12	1,204,282	361,691	1,267
1986	54,703	39,869	693	1,274,166	305,934	202	1,328,869	345,803	895
1987	11,060	153,056	620	611,481	383,547	226	622,541	536,603	846
1988	65,425	48,639	491	1,687,804	305,652	546	1,753,229	354,291	1,037
1989	103,429	69,507	1,135	1,630,266	315,768	997	1,733,695	385,275	2,132
1990	65,808	51,176	55	585,547	239,336	417	651,355	290,512	472
1991	68,340	45,538	588	843,980	218,526	449	912,320	264,064	1,037
1992	26,250	35,217	690	536,349	197,882	618	562,599	233,099	1,308
1993	3,705	17,320	371	136,411	165,055	193	140,116	182,375	564
1994	35,803	40,623	260	230,937	192,499	90	266,740	233,122	350
1995	111,545	62,472	985	997,120	188,400	189	1,108,665	250,872	1,174
1996	64,464	45,223	1,880	732,425	187,407	66	767,889	232,630	1,946
1997	25,287	24,049	456	264,609	168,876	206	286,896	192,925	662
1998	570	20,460	70	31,247	128,497	351	318,917	148,957	421
1999	148	18,769	474	49,635	141,934	81	49,783	160,703	555
2000	0	1,452	97	7,272	82,780	64	7,272	84,232	161
2001	0	4,094	29	0	89,445	53	0	93,539	82
2002	3217	3,892	307	10,587	87,936	77	13,785	91,828	384
2003	8,556	16,442	63	13,125	109,188	1,575	21,681	125,630	1,603
2004	10,060	11,207	98	20,079	121,132	105	30,139	132,339	203
2005	58,623	25,245	144	161,921	159,833	291	220,385	185,078	435
2006	67,980	18,530	315	199,180	156,487	268	266,658		
					Average				
1977-06	44,463	38,069	492	683,682	211,960	265	728,145	249,771	757
1997-06	17,444	14,430	205	75,947	123,067	307	93,391	137,497	512
2002-06	29,687	15,063	185	81,341	124,030	463	111,028	139,093	649

Appendix D3.–Commercial, subsistence and sport harvest of coho salmon in the Yukon River drainage.

Year	Tanana River			Yukon River without Tanana			All Yukon River		
	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport	Commercial	Subsistence	Sport
1980	1,226	5,163	67	7,519	14,995	0	8,745	20,158	67
1981	2,284	9,261	45	21,396	11,967	0	23,680	21,228	45
1982	7,780	7,418	52	29,396	28,476	139	37,176	35,894	191
1983	6,168	6,932	147	7,152	16,973	52	13,320	23,905	199
1984	7,688	14,785	831	74,252	34,235	0	81,940	49,020	831
1985	11,762	11,761	796	45,910	20,503	12	57,672	32,264	808
1986	441	13,321	1,374	46,814	21,147	161	47,255	34,468	1,535
1987	0	55,471	1,231	0	29,423	61	0	46,213	1,292
1988	13,972	31,348	2,237	85,935	37,732	183	99,907	69,679	2,420
1989	16,084	19,572	1,596	69,409	22,011	215	85,493	40,924	1,811
1990	14,804	18,768	1,719	29,483	25,873	228	46,937	43,460	1,947
1991	9,775	21,561	2,345	96,839	15,827	430	109,657	37,388	2,775
1992	7,979	17,554	1,115	0	34,367	551	9,608	51,980	1,666
1993	0	4,304	278	0	11,418	619	0	15,812	897
1994	4,451	26,489	1,165	0	15,205	728	4,451	41,775	1,893
1995	6,900	19,219	1,116	40,113	9,423	162	47,013	28,642	1,278
1996	7,142	15,091	1,354	48,840	15,419	432	55,982	30,510	1,786
1997	0	11,945	1,229	35,320	12,350	179	35,320	24,295	1,408
1998	0	7,481	604	1	10,300	154	1	17,781	758
1999	0	9,547	451	1,601	11,423	158	1,601	20,970	609
2000	0	5,150	310	0	9,567	244	0	14,717	554
2001	0	9,000	1,122	0	13,156	126	0	21,688	1,248
2002	0	9,519	541	0	5,990	551	0	15,261	1,092
2003	15,119	10,912	1,317	10,124	13,217	160	25,243	24,129	1,477
2004	18,649	11,817	716	1,583	9,148	907	20,232	20,965	1,623
2005	21,831	19,667	267	36,533	7,433	360	58,311	27,078	627
2006	11,137	10,868	629	53,805	8,782	371	64,942	19,650	1,000
					Average				
1977-06	6,464	14,250	830	27,235	16,366	247	33,970	30,234	1,077
1997-06	6,668	10,592	719	13,897	10,137	321	20,615	20,653	1,040
2001-06	13,337	12,552	694	20,409	8,914	470	33,746	21,417	1,164

Appendix D4.—Guideline harvest ranges and mid-points for commercial harvest of king, summer chum and fall chum salmon, Yukon area, Alaska.

King Salmon						
District or Subdistrict	Guideline Harvest Range ^a					
	Lower		Mid-Point		Upper	
	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent
1 and 2	0 to 60,000	89.1	90,000	91.6	120,000	92.9
3	0 to 1,800	2.7	2,000	2.0	2,200	1.7
4	0 to 2,250	3.3	2,550	2.6	2,850	2.2
5B and C	0 to 2,400	3.6	2,600	2.6	2,800	2.2
5D	0 to 300	0.4	400	0.4	500	0.4
6	0 to 600	0.9	700	0.7	800	0.6
Total	67,350	100.0	98,250	100.0	129,150	100.0

Summer Chum Salmon						
District or Subdistrict	Guideline Harvest Range ^b					
	Lower		Mid-Point		Upper	
	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent
1 and 2	0 to 251,000	62.8	503,000	62.9	755,000	62.9
3	0 to 6,000	1.5	12,500	1.6	19,000	1.6
4A ^c	0 to 113,000	28.3	225,500	28.2	338,000	28.2
4B, C	0 to 16,000	4.0	31,500	3.9	47,000	3.9
5B, C, D	0 to 1,000	0.3	2,000	0.3	3,000	0.3
6	0 to 13,000	3.3	25,500	3.2	38,000	3.2
Total	400,000	100.0	800,000	100.0	1,200,000	100.0

^d Anvik River Management Area roe cap of 100,000 pounds.

Fall Chum Salmon						
District or Subdistrict	Guideline Harvest Range ^e					
	Lower		Mid-Point		Upper	
	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent
1, 2 and 3	0 to 60,000	82.5	140,000	71.2	220,000	68.6
4B, C	0 to 5,000	6.9	22,500	11.4	40,000	12.5
5B, C	0 to 4,000	5.5	20,000	10.2	36,000	11.2
5D	0 to 1,000	1.4	2,500	1.3	4,000	1.2
6	0 to 2,750	3.8	11,625	5.9	20,500	6.4
Total	72,750	100.0	196,625	100.0	320,500	100.0

^f Subdistrict 5A range of 0 to 4,000 pounds of roe

^a The king salmon guideline harvest ranges have been in effect since 1981 (5 AAC 05.360).

^b Summer chum salmon guideline harvest ranges were established in February 1990 based on the average harvest shares from 1975-1989 (5 AAC 05.362).

^c Or the equivalent roe poundage of 61,000 to 183,000 pounds or some combination of fish and pounds of roe.

^d The current Anvik River Management Area roe cap was established in March 1996.

^e The current fall chum salmon guideline harvest ranges were established in 1990 (5 AAC 05.365).

^f Subdistrict 5A was removed from the guideline harvest ranges for king and summer chum and a separate guideline harvest range of 0-4,000 pounds of fall chum salmon roe was established in November 1998.

Appendix D5.–The Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan.

Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan Overview					
Projected Run Size ^a	Recommended Management Action				Targeted Drainage-wide Escapement
	Commercial	Personal Use	Sport	Subsistence	
300,000 or less	Closure	Closure	Closure	Closure ^b	
300,000 to 500,000	Closure	Closure ^b	Closure ^b	Possible Restrictions ^{b, c}	
500,000 to 600,000	Restrictions ^b	Open	Open	Pre-2001 Fishing Schedules	300,000 to 600,000
Greater than 600,000	Open ^d	Open	Open	Pre-2001 Fishing Schedules	

^a PROJECTED RUN SIZES use the best available data (including preseason projections, mainstem river sonar passage estimates, test fisheries indices, subsistence and commercial fishing reports, and passage estimates from escapement monitoring projects)

^b The fishery may be opened or less restrictive in areas that indicator(s) suggest the escapement goal(s) in that area will be achieved.

^c Subsistence fishing will be managed to achieve a minimum drainage-wide escapement goal of 300,000.

^d DRAINAGE-WIDE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES may be open and the harvestable surplus above 600,000 will be distributed by district or subdistrict (in proportion to the guidelines harvest levels established in 5 AAC 05.365 and 5 AAC 05.367).

Appendix D6.–Yukon River Summer Chum Salmon Management Plan overview.

Summer Chum Salmon Management Plan Overview					
Projected Run Size ^a	Recommended Management Action				Targeted Drainage-wide Escapement
	Commercial	Personal Use	Sport	Subsistence	
600,000 or less	Closure	Closure	Closure	Closure ^b	≤600,000
600,001 to 700,000	Closure	Closure	Closure	Possible Restrictions ^b	
700,001 to 1,000,000	Restrictions ^b	Restrictions ^b	Restrictions ^b	Normal Fishing Schedules	
Greater than 1,000,000	Open ^c	Open	Open	Normal Fishing Schedules	≥800,000

^a PROJECTED RUN SIZE: Mainstem river sonar passage estimate plus the estimated harvests below the sonar site and the Andraefsky River escapement.

^b The fishery may be opened or less restrictive in areas that indicator(s) suggest the escapement goal(s) in that area will be achieved.

^c DRAINAGE-WIDE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES: The harvestable surplus will be distributed by district or subdistrict in proportion to the guidelines harvest levels established in 5 AAC 05.362 (f) and (g) and 5 AAC 05.365 if buying capacity allows.

5 AAC 05.369. YUKON RIVER COHO SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN.

- (a) The goal of this plan is to provide for the management of directed commercial coho salmon fishing in the Yukon River. The majority of Yukon River coho salmon spawn in tributaries that flow into the Yukon River from the mouth of the Yukon River up to and including the Tanana River drainage. The management of directed coho salmon fishing during the fall season is complicated by an overlapping run of more abundant fall chum salmon stocks.
- (b) For the purpose of (c) of this section, the department shall use the best available information to assess coho salmon abundance including mainstem river sonar passage estimates, test fisheries indices, subsistence and commercial fishing reports, and estimates from escapement monitoring projects.
- (c) The department may allow a directed coho salmon fishery under this section in years when
- (1) the return of coho salmon measured under (b) of this section is projected to provide for a harvestable surplus;
 - (2) the fall chum salmon return is assessed by the department to be more than 550,000 fish.
- (d) Fall chum salmon harvested during a directed commercial coho salmon fishery under this section will be considered incidental any may only occur on the harvestable surplus of fall chum salmon above 550,000 fish.
- (e) In a year when a directed commercial coho salmon fishery is opened under this section in
- (1) Districts 1, 2, and 3, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the coho salmon fall season no later than September 10;
 - (2) Subdistricts 5-A, and District 4 and 6, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the coho salmon fall season no later than October 5; and,
- (f) In Subdistrict 5-B, 5-C, and 5-D there will be no directed commercial coho salmon fishery unless the department determines that there will be a harvestable surplus of coho salmon.
- (g) The department shall distribute, to the extent practicable, the harvest opportunity in the directed coho salmon fishery between districts and subdistricts as follows:

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- (1) 24 hours of combined fishing time in Districts 1, 2, and 3 will be considered equal to 32 hours of fishing time in:
 - (A) Subdistrict 4-A;
 - (B) Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C combined;
 - (C) Subdistrict 5-A; and,
 - (D) District 6;
 - (2) to ensure an orderly and conservative fishery, coho salmon fishing will be managed as follows:
 - (A) in Districts 1, 2, and 3 combined, fishing time shall not exceed 24 hours in a seven-day period;
 - (B) in District 4-A, fishing time shall not exceed 32 hours in a seven-day period;
 - (C) in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C combined, fishing time shall not exceed 32 hours in a seven-day period;
 - (D) in Subdistrict 5-A, fishing time shall not exceed 32 hours in a seven day period; and,
 - (E) in District 6, fishing time shall not exceed 32 hours in a seven-day period.
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2007 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook



This information sheet describes the anticipated management of the 2007 season. State and Federal fishery managers will coordinate management of the Yukon River subsistence salmon fishery.

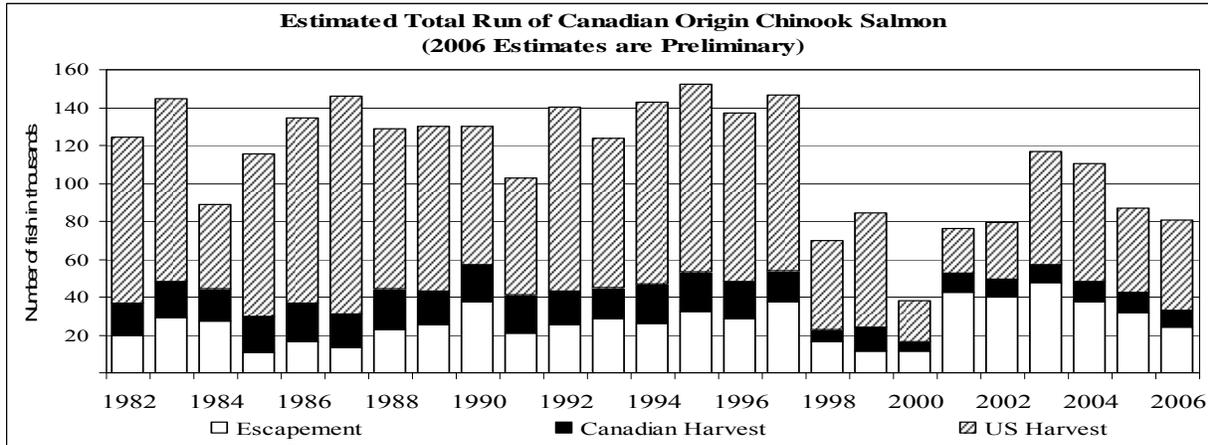
RUN AND HARVEST OUTLOOK

Chinook Salmon	Chum Salmon	Coho Salmon
Average to below average run is projected to provide for escapement and subsistence uses.	Average run is projected to provide for escapement and subsistence uses.	Average to above average run is projected to provide for escapement and subsistence uses.
2007 Chinook salmon run is anticipated to be similar to 2006.	Runs have been increasing due to improved production.	Runs have been increasing due to improved production.
Commercial harvest is anticipated to be between 30,000 and 60,000 fish.	Summer chum commercial harvest is anticipated to be between 500,000 and 900,000 fish.	Commercial harvest is anticipated to be between 50,000 and 70,000 fish.
	Fall chum commercial harvest is anticipated to be between 50,000 and 400,000 fish.	

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Initial management will be based on preseason projections and shifted to inseason project information as the runs develop. The department may schedule a commercial salmon fishing period near the first quarter point (historically, June 15) in District 1 or 2, which may be of short duration. Additional commercial periods will be spread over the middle 50% of the run. Fishing periods after the third quarter point will depend on information from assessment projects and available markets.
- The US/Canada Yukon River Panel agreed to a Canadian escapement goal range of 33,000 to 43,000 Chinook salmon for 2007. This is the rebuilt escapement goal range agreed to in the Yukon River Treaty Agreement.
- The Yukon Panel also agreed to a Canadian Yukon River fall chum salmon mainstem escapement objective of >80,000 fish. The Yukon Panel set an interim rebuilding escapement objective for the Fishing Branch River of >33,667 fall chum salmon. This interim goal is to allow subsistence and aboriginal harvest by Alaska and Canadian fishermen.

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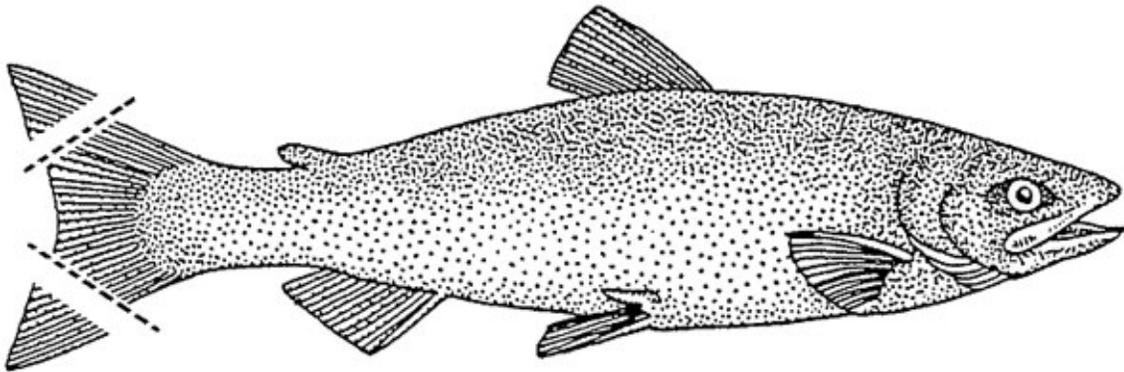
The subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be used early in the season until the salmon run size is projected to be of sufficient strength to warrant discontinuing the schedule. The schedule is intended to reduce harvest impacts during years of low salmon runs on any particular run component and to spread subsistence harvest opportunity among users. The schedule is based on current, or past, fishing schedules and should provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence users to meet their needs. The goal of the schedule is to provide periods during which salmon fishing is closed. Please Note: this schedule is subject to change depending on run strength.

Area	Regulatory Subsistence Fishing Periods	Schedule to Begin	Days of the Week
Coastal District	7 days/week	By Regulation	M/T/W/TH/F/SA/SU – 24 hours
District 1	Two 36-hour periods/week	May 28, 2007	Mon. 8 pm to Wed. 8 am /Thu. 8 pm to Sat. 8 am
District 2	Two 36-hour periods/week	May 30, 2007	Wed. 8 pm to Fri. 8 am / Sun. 8 pm to Tue. 8 am
District 3	Two 36-hour periods/week	June 1, 2007	Fri. 8 am to Sat. 8 pm / Tue. 8 am to Wed. 8 pm
District 4	Two 48-hour periods/week	June 10, 2007	Sun. 6 pm to Tue. 6 pm / Wed. 6 pm to Fri. 6 pm
Koyukuk River	7 days/week	By Regulation	M/T/W/TH/F/SA/SU – 24 hours
Subdistricts 5-A, B, C	Two 48-hour periods/week	June 19, 2007	Tue. 6 pm to Thu. 6 pm /Fri. 6 pm to Sun. 6 pm
Subdistrict 5-D	7 days/week	By Regulation	M/T/W/TH/F/SA/SU – 24 hours
District 6	Two 42-hour periods/week	By Regulation	Mon. 6 pm to Wed. Noon /Fri. 6 pm to Sun. Noon
Old Minto Area	5 days/week	By Regulation	Friday 6 pm to Wednesday 6 pm

All subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets and fish wheels must be stopped during subsistence salmon fishing closures.

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Effective June 1, 2007, the subsistence fishing marking requirements will change. In **Districts 1-3**, from **June 1 to July 15** a person may not possess king salmon taken for subsistence uses unless **both tips (lobes) of the tail fin** have been removed. Marking must be done before the person conceals the salmon from plain view or transfers the salmon from the fishing site. A person may not sell or purchase salmon from which both lobes of the tail fin have been removed.



For additional information:

ADF&G Steve Hayes in Anchorage 907-267-2383; Fred Bue, Fairbanks 907-459-7274; or Emmonak 907-949-1320

Subsistence Fishing Schedule-1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call 459-7387

USFWS: Russ Holder in Fairbanks 907-455-1849 or 1-800-801-5108; or in Emmonak 907-949-1798

APPENDIX E

DALL RIVER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Purpose of Plan

- To provide the public, state and federal agencies, the Stevens Village Natural Resource agency and the Alaska BOF with a clear understanding of the underlying principles by which northern pike inhabiting the Dall River Area will be managed and provide guidance in developing future regulations.

Philosophy of Plan

- Conservative Wild Stock Management.
- Protect biological integrity of the wild stock while maximizing the benefits to various users of the stock consistent with the subsistence priority.

Goal

- Ensure the long term quality of the northern pike fishery in Dall River Area.

Principles/Policies

- Native northern pike population(s) to be managed for maintenance of historic age and size composition (avoid enhancement or supplementing the wild stocks).
- Maintain opportunities for traditional (subsistence) and recreational use of the northern pike stock.

Objective

- Proportion of northern pike 30 inches and longer to be greater than 0.30 in the assessed population.

Issues / Action Items

- Establish a special management area for the protection of large size northern pike.
- Evaluate the effective size of the special management area.
- Control fishing mortality within special management area; minimize fishing mortality for northern pike > 30 inches.
- Evaluate and establish sport fishing regulations that will promote survival of large size northern pike.
- Encourage local efforts to minimize mortality of large size northern pike in the subsistence fishery.
- Educate prospective anglers concerning proper fish handling techniques.
- Educate prospective anglers concerning proper fishing gear.
- Reduce friction between local traditional users and non-local recreational users.
- Educate non-locals on the extent of private/public land.
- Incorporate local knowledge with scientific information to a greater degree in management decisions.
- Encourage greater local acceptance of non-local recreational angling as a legitimate use of the Dall River northern pike resource.
- Encourage local economic opportunities associated with recreational use.

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Definitions

Dall River Area The Dall River Area includes the Dall and Little Dall River drainages.

Benefits The concept of benefit varies with users. Traditional subsistence users seek fish resources for traditional purposes including human food. Village residents have recognized the potential for economic opportunities in providing services to recreational users of the fish and land resources. Urban anglers seek continued opportunity to participate in the fishery; both consumptive and non-consumptive uses are desired.

Quality All groups stress the importance of a quality fishery. In the present context quality is defined as a stock with historic size and age composition. The presence of fish in large size and old age categories is recognized by all groups as an appropriate indicator of stock health.

Assessed Population The assessed population includes the portion of the population that is accessible to the sampling gear used in stock assessment efforts. For northern pike in the Dall River area, this includes fish larger than 450 mm FL (19 inches Total Length).

APPENDIX F

Appendix F1.—Number of visitors registered at the Coldfoot Visitor’s Center^a, estimated fishing effort (all species) and total catch of Arctic grayling for the Dalton Highway corridor (Yukon River to Atigun Pass)..

Year	Visitors	Fishing Effort	Grayling Catch
1996	4,742	423	936
1997	5,399	843	3,025
1998	5,124	617	1,656
1999	5,248	577	5,293
2000	5,002	363	759
2001	4,629	445	919
2002	4,714	152	705
2003	7,067	396	1,786
2004	8,597	503	3,258
2005	8,051	270	2,184
2006	8,378	2,590	9,703
2007	9,439	ND	ND

^a Multi-agency visitor center operated by the US Department of Interior: Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service.