

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



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**2019 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 36
Fall Update # 6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2019 fall chum salmon inseason projection, based on assessment projects is a range of 750,000-850,000 fish. Run sizes within this range are expected to provide for escapement, subsistence needs, and a limited commercial fishery. Adjusting for the overlap of summer chum salmon into the fall season, the fall chum salmon run is estimated to be 591,000 through August 25 which is near the historical median. The fall chum salmon that entered the Yukon River on August 1 are expected to be near Fort Yukon August 30, and the Canadian border around September 9. Fall chum salmon from this group would be in the Tanana River near Manley around September 1 and Fairbanks September 5. The second pulse of primarily fall chum salmon that peaked in the lower river projects on August 15 are expected to be near Galena August 29, Tanana/Huslia September 3, Rampart September 5, Fort Yukon September 13, and the Canadian border around September 23. Fall chum salmon from this group would be in the Tanana River near Manley around September 15 and Fairbanks September 20. A third group of fall chum salmon peaked in the lower river on August 23 and are expected to be near Anvik August 31, Nulato September 4, Galena September 6, Tanana/Huslia September 11, Rampart September 13, Fort Yukon September 21, and the Canadian border around October 1. Fall chum salmon from this group would be in the Tanana River near Manley around September 23 and Nenana September 25.

The primary parent year for this year's coho salmon run is 2015. The coho salmon outlook was for an average return of 217,000 fish. Currently inseason assessment using late run timing the overall indicates the overall run is projecting to be around 160,000 fish, which is below average.

Fall Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing / ADF&G, YDFDA

The cumulative CPUE through August 25 was 1,361.25 for chum salmon, which is below the

historical median of 1,428.90 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon as of August 25 was 110.12 which is well below the median of 335.09.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE through August 25 was 2,342.97 for chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 1,709.42 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 241.90 which is well below the historical median of 688.71 as of August 25.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through August 25 was 670,000 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 646,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage was 50,000 fish, which is below the median of 104,000 through August 25.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) River Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began operations on August 8 and through August 25 has cumulative passage of 4,200 fall chum salmon which is below the median passage of 20,614 for this date. This level of passage is not unexpected due to the late arrival of fall chum salmon based on genetic analysis.

Age Composition Fall Season / ADF&G

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run is dominated by age-4 fish. The 2019 preliminary proportions of age-4 is 77%, above the average of 66% and age-5 is 22% which is below average (33%), as of August 18. Females represent 52% of the fish sampled (n=864), which is below the average of 58%, as of August 24.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) of fall chum salmon that passed the sonar near Pilot Station from July 27 through August 8, contained 53% Canadian, 30% Border/US (Teedriinjik/Sheenjok/Draanjik) and 17% Tanana stocks. The next pulse that was sampled from August 10-20, contained approximately 11% summer chum and 89% fall chum salmon. The proportions of only fall chum salmon in this group were 24% Canada, 41% Border/US and 35% Tanana stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Yukon River Districts 1-6 are under fall season management. Subsistence fishing on the mainstem Yukon River is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in Districts 1-6 where it is targeting the available surplus above 550,00 in accordance with the Yukon River Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan.

The abundance of fall chum salmon in the upper Porcupine River has been low in recent years when compared to other stocks in the Yukon River drainage. Fall chum salmon escapements into the Canadian Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River, have frequently fallen short of meeting the interim management escapement goal (IMEG) of 22,000 to 49,000 fish agreed upon by U.S. and Canadian representatives despite strong escapements in neighboring tributaries. Based on the drainage-wide inseason projection of 750,000-850,000 fall chum salmon, it is unlikely the lower end of the Fishing Branch River IMEG will be achieved in 2019. Similar as in recent years, to improve fall chum salmon escapement to the Porcupine River spawning grounds in Canada, subsistence salmon fishing in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River is closed.

As a reminder to subsistence fishermen, dip nets are a legal gear type for subsistence salmon fishing. Subsistence salmon fishermen may continue using gillnets, dip nets, and fish wheels. Personal use fishermen in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River may only use set gillnets and fish wheels.

Summer Assessment Projects

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of August 25, is estimated to be 47,575 fish, which is below the season ending historical cumulative average of 57,701 fish. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500–55,000 fish. The goal is assessed post-season using the Eagle sonar count minus the estimated U.S. and Canadian harvest of Chinook salmon above the sonar.

The age composition of 185 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Eagle sonar test fishery, through July 24, was 10% age-4, 52% age-5, 36% age-6, and 1% age-7 fish. The proportions of Chinook salmon that were age-4 and age-5 were above average, while the proportion of fish that were age-6 was slightly below average. The proportion of fish that were female, 45%, was above average.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:

Coastal District (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River, including the marine waters near Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

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

District 1 (Black River, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik and Emmonak):

Subsistence fishing is open for the fall season 24 hours a day, 7 days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Due to a commercial period, subsistence salmon fishing, including all gillnets in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers, will close at 2:00 a.m. Monday, August 26, and reopen at 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 27.

Subsistence fishermen must remove both tips of the tail fin of Chinook salmon before concealing from plain view or leaving the fishing site.

District 2 (Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station and Marshall):

Subsistence fishing is open for the fall season 24 hours a day, 7 days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Subsistence fishermen must remove both tips of the tail fin of Chinook salmon before concealing from plain view or leaving the fishing site.

District 3 (Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

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

District 4 (Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

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

As a reminder, fishermen in District 4 may drift gillnet for all salmon; there are no longer dates when drifting is discontinued, and there is no longer a gillnet mesh depth restriction in state or federal waters.

District 5 (including the Porcupine River, other adjacent tributaries, and communities of Tanana, Rampart Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

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

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Porcupine River:

Subsistence salmon fishing in the Porcupine River, including those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3 mouths of the Porcupine River, is closed until further notice. During the closures, fishermen may fish for non-salmon species using gillnet gear with a mesh size of 4 inches or less. Subsistence salmon fishing in tributaries such as the Sheenjek, Black, Coleen, and Salmon Trout rivers will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

Innoko, Koyukuk and Kantishna rivers:

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

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, including Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

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

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

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of five days per week from:

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

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

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

Subdistrict 6-C Personal Use Salmon (from the Wood River upstream to the Salcha River, including Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

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

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

Fishermen may only use set gillnets and fish wheels in the Personal Use salmon fishery.

In the Tanana River up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A and 6-B), and in the Upper Tanana River Area, a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use permit is required to fish for salmon and other species from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Salcha River (Subdistrict 6-C).

A subsistence permit is required for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats. Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Commercial Fishing:

In the Lower Yukon Area, commercial fishing is occurring in Districts 1 and 2. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 25 in District 1 is 120,890 fall chum salmon and 27,198 coho salmon; District 2 is 81,937 fall chum salmon and 8,201 coho salmon. Chinook salmon may be sold or retained for personal use. All fish caught during commercial periods must be recorded on a fish ticket.

In the Upper Yukon Area, commercial fishing for is open concurrent with subsistence fishing in Subdistricts 5-B, 5-C, and 6-B. Commercial fishermen should coordinate with their buyer. Chinook salmon may only be retained for personal use.

Commercial Fishing Periods:

District 1:

Period 10: 6-hours from 2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Monday, August 26. Fishermen may use 6 inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 2:

Fishermen should standby for announcements regarding further commercial openings.

Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C:

Commercial fishing is open from 6:00 p.m. Thursday, August 22 until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 28. Fishermen may use fish wheels or set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 6-B:

Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays**

This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks call 456-0406.

News releases, test fish catches, and sonar counts are also available on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

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