



Advisory Announcement

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Released: June 22, 2021

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2021 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #11

Summer Update # 3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2021 Chinook salmon run size is forecasted to be smaller than the 2020 run and may not be strong enough to meet escapement objectives. In accordance with the preseason management strategy to take a conservative approach this season, subsistence salmon fishing closures have been announced throughout the river. This is intended to protect the trickle and first pulse of Chinook salmon while more information about the timing and strength of the run is collected.

Chinook salmon observed to date in the lower portion of the Yukon River are part of an early trickle of fish and possibly a weak first pulse, which is passing the sonar now. LYTF catches observed yesterday and this morning may indicate that a second pulse of Chinook salmon has entered the lower river. The average first quarter point for Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar with normal run timing is June 19 and the midpoint is June 24. However, it is too early to tell if this run is late, or weak, or both. The first Chinook salmon are making their way upriver and should be approaching Fort Yukon.

At this time, few summer chum salmon have entered the Yukon River and the run appears to be late similar to 2019 and 2020. As of June 21, the cumulative Pilot Station sonar counts for summer chum salmon are the lowest on record for this date. The run abundance is too low to project whether escapement goals will be met. Selective gear openings to target summer chum will be considered when summer chum salmon are more abundant and projected to meet the drainagewide escapement goal.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association are held every Tuesday, at 1:00 p.m. To participate, call (800) 315-6338, and enter code: YUKON# (98566#).

Assessment Projects

All information is current through June 21.

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ ADF&G and YDFDA

Operations for 2021 have been altered compared to prior years. The Middle Mouth set gillnet site is not being operated, in order to reduce Chinook salmon mortalities. However, drift gillnet operations using 8.25-inch mesh have been added this season to obtain Chinook salmon catch per unit effort (CPUE) data from that location. In the South Mouth at Big Eddy, set gillnet operations for Chinook salmon and drift gillnet operations for summer chum and Chinook salmon are being operated the same as they were in past years. The Big Eddy Chinook salmon drift CPUE values can be compared to historical averages. The set net data from Big Eddy should not be compared to historical data because it does not include any Middle Mouth set net data this season; however, comparison of day-to-day CPUE data from this site should still give an indication of large groups of fish entering the river.

Chinook salmon test fish operations began early enough to evaluate the beginning part of the run, and the project has been running smoothly. The Big Eddy Chinook salmon set gillnet site began operations on June 3, and the cumulative CPUE is 14.78.

Chinook salmon drift gillnet sites at Big Eddy and Middle Mouth were operational on May 22 and June 5, respectively. The Big Eddy cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 32.45, which is below the historic average of 215.09. The Middle Mouth cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 20.32, and the combined Chinook drift CPUE is 33.61. LYTF data indicates Chinook salmon have been entering the lower river mostly in the South Mouth, with just a few fish starting to enter the Middle Mouth.

Summer chum salmon drift gillnet sites at Big Eddy and Middle Mouth were operational on May 25 and June 5, respectively. The cumulative CPUE is 51.54, which is below the historical median of 2,376.05. While a few summer chum salmon are continuing to be caught in LYTF, no large groups have been detected.

Efforts are being made to reduce Chinook salmon mortality in the LYTF and distribute test fish catches to community members. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to community members by Tribal councils or on a first come first-served basis from a public dock.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The Pilot Station sonar began with a partial count on May 31 and full operations on June 1. Sonar and test fishing operations have been proceeding as planned. Water levels are slowly increasing with minimal debris. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be $42,278 \pm 5,425$ fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative average of 73,213 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be $17,521 \pm 4,766$ fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is well below the historical cumulative median of 405,191 fish based on normal run timing years, and 210,980 fish based on late run timing years.

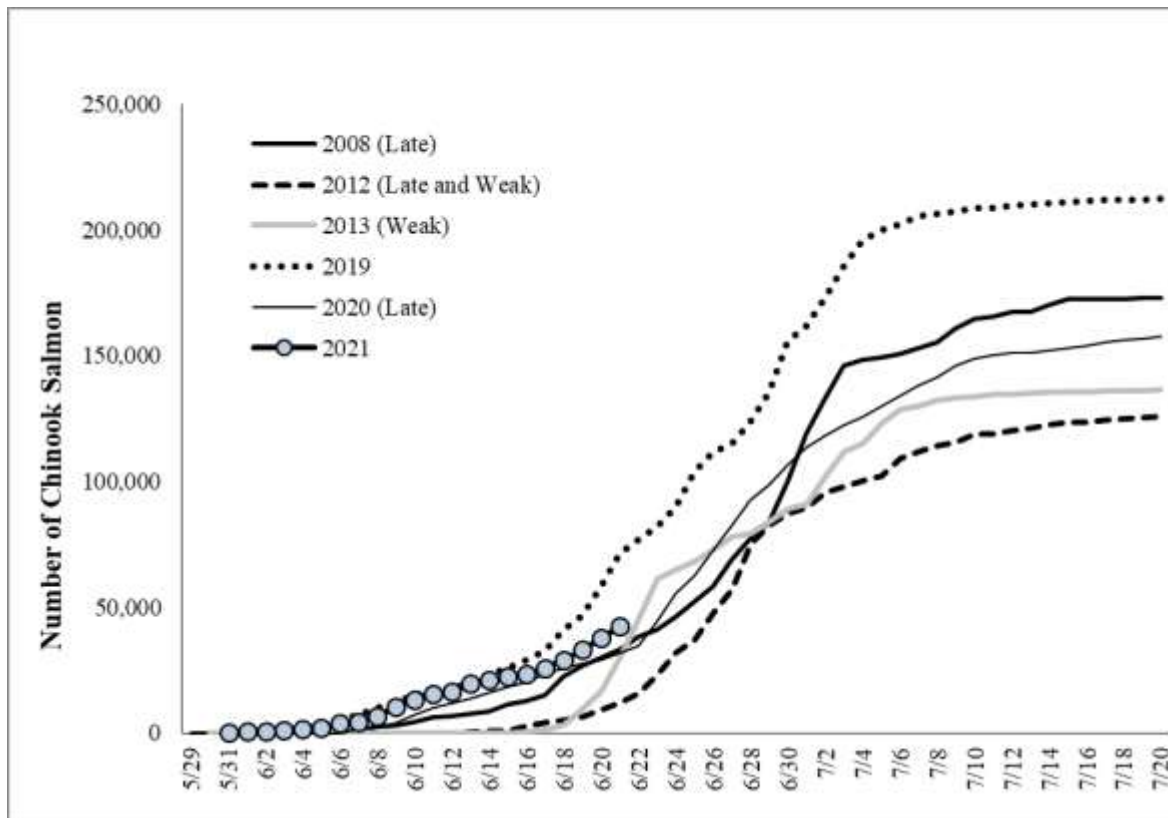


Figure 1. 2021 Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

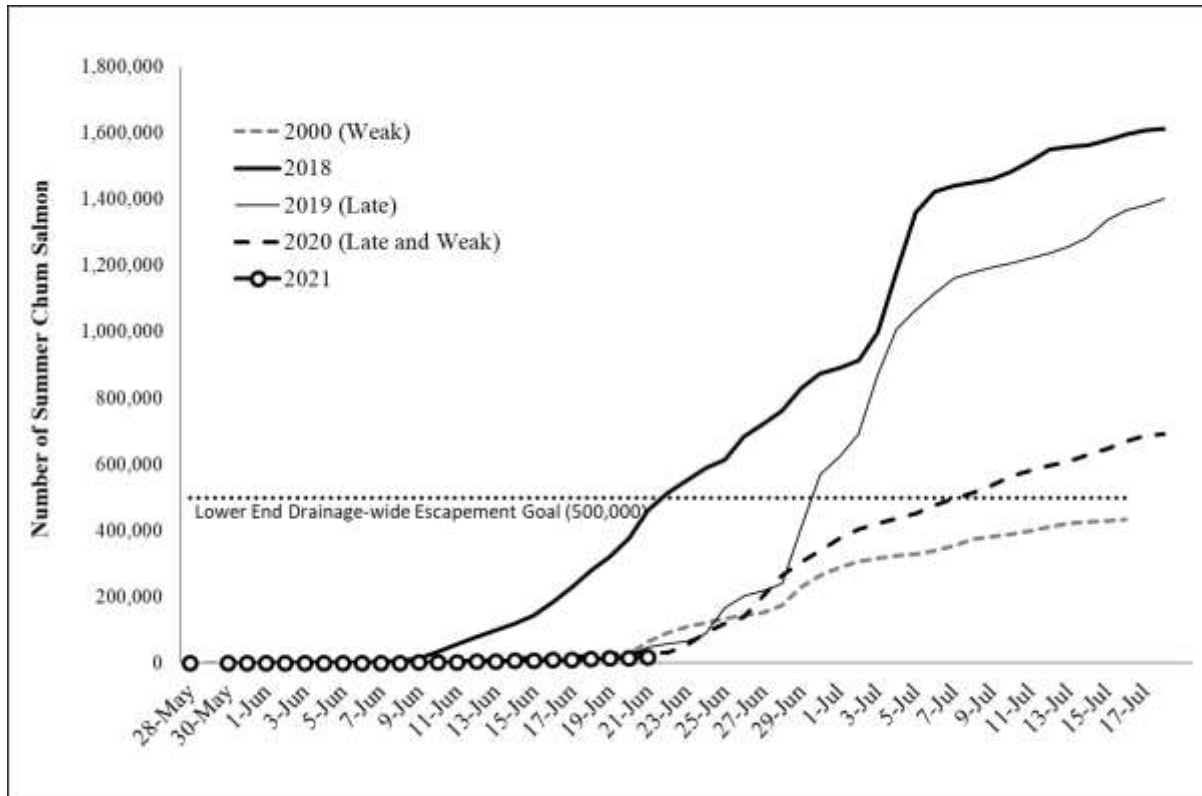


Figure 2. 2021 Cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to 2018, and late and weak years. The horizontal dotted line represents the lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal for summer chum salmon.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began counting on June 18. Cumulative passage is 0 Chinook salmon, which is the average for this date; and 13 summer chum salmon, which is slightly below the median of 16 fish for this date.

Anvik River Sonar Project / ADF&G

The sonar began counting on June 15. Cumulative passage is 819 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 1,860 for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

Crew is on site and setting up weir but experiencing issues with high water that may delay installation.

ADF&G and USFWS projects that will begin operations later this season when fish arrive in the area:

Eagle Sonar, Salcha and Chena River Tower /Sonar (ADF&G); Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar (USFWS).

Due to staffing and COVID mitigation concerns, USFWS will not operate Gisasa Weir this year.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Subsistence salmon fishing is being closed to protect Chinook salmon as they migrate upriver. The opportunity to harvest non-salmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is available during salmon closures; however, 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

North Coastal Area, District 1 and District 2 (from 62 degrees North latitude north to Point Romanof, including the Black River, and District 1 and 2 communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, and Marshall):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

District 3 (including Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Innoko River (community of Shageluk):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Koyukuk River (including Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the Koyukuk River above Bettles including the community of Wiseman.

District 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (including Tanana and Rampart):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of Subdistricts 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area).

Subdistrict 5-D Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and all other adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver):

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

Effective 8 p.m., Wednesday, June 23, salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Subdistrict 5-D Middle (from the Hadweenzic River upstream to 22 Mile Slough, including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

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

Effective 8 p.m., Saturday, June 26, salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Circle and Eagle):

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

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

Effective 8 p.m., Monday, June 28, salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Old Minto Area and Kantishna River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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

Personal Use salmon fishing is currently closed.

Subdistrict 6-C Whitefish and Sucker Personal Use Fishing

Fishing for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, subject to permit stipulations.

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). Fishermen may only use set gillnets and fishwheels in the Personal Use salmon fishery.

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 (459-7274) or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Commercial fishing

Commercial fishing will open in the Lower Yukon with selective gear types when the summer chum salmon run is projected to provide a harvestable surplus above the drainagewide escapement goal, and subsistence fishing opportunity has been provided.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Emmonak USFWS office is not open. To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager call 351-3029.



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

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, subsistence and commercial fishing is considered essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.