



## **Advisory Announcement**

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### **2022 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #3** **Fall Update #1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The fall chum season started in the Lower Yukon Area beginning on July 16, and Lower Yukon assessment projects have transitioned to fall season counts. As upriver districts transition to fall management, fishing for chum and Chinook salmon will remain closed, but fishing will open to manned fish wheels for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon.

The 2022 fall chum salmon run size is anticipated to be critically low, based on this season's summer chum salmon that was the second lowest on record. The fall chum salmon preseason projection, based on the relationship between summer chum and fall chum salmon, is for a run size less than 300,000 fish. According to the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, the preseason projection does not meet the threshold of 300,000 fish needed to allow subsistence fishing. In addition, the projection is unlikely to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, tributary escapement goals and Canadian treaty objectives. Therefore, subsistence fishing for fall chum salmon will be closed to begin the fall season, except for the use of selective gear to target salmon other than Chinook and chum salmon. Western Alaska returns of chum salmon stocks are continuing to be some of the lowest on record within the Yukon and Kuskokwim drainages.

Coho salmon typically enter the Yukon River in mid-August with the bulk of the run passing the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) between August 13 and 24. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2018. This year's coho run size is anticipated to be below average to average (average is 233,000 fish).

Fishing for nonsalmon, coho salmon, pink and sockeye salmon remains open, with gillnets restricted to 4-inch or smaller mesh and 60 feet or shorter length. We thank and appreciate the people along the river for your continued conservation and stewardship in these difficult times.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) are held Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. The calls focus on relaying assessment and management updates and local concerns. There is important fisheries research being done and the YRDFA teleconference is a great way to discuss all aspects of Yukon River fisheries and to connect with other communities, research projects, and managers all the way up the Yukon River. To participate, call 800-315-6338 and enter code: YUKON# (98566#).

### **Fall Assessment Projects**

All projects that handle fish (fall season LYTF, Mt. Village Test Fishery, Pilot Station, and Eagle sonar) are making efforts to reduce salmon mortality and distribute test fish catches to community members. Healthy salmon

are released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities are distributed to community members by Tribal councils or on a first come first-served basis from a public dock.

Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed in this section can be accessed online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts).

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

Fall season operations began on July 16 using 6-inch mesh gear to target fall chum and coho salmon. As of July 25, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 22.42 which is below the average of 215.34 for this date.

#### Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

Fall season operations began on July 18 and as of July 24, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 66.00 which is below the average of 282.37 for that date.

#### Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season counts on July 19. As of July 25, the cumulative passage is approximately 66,000 fall chum salmon. This compares to a median cumulative passage of 107,000 fall chum salmon for this date.

#### Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

This sonar project typically begins August 8 to count fall chum salmon.

#### Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

This sonar project typically begins counting fall chum salmon the second week of August. The project on the Sheenjek River is being reinstated and has historical escapement counts from 1974 through 2012.

#### Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

This project will transition from counting Chinook to fall chum salmon in August.

#### Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will transition from counting Chinook to fall chum salmon in August.

#### Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will count fall chum salmon sometime in late August to early September.

### **Fall Season Management Strategy:**

The 2022 fall chum salmon projection is critically low and below the 300,000 threshold in the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan to allow any subsistence fishing at this time. Subsistence fishermen should plan for continued fishing closures to conserve fall chum salmon. The Lower Yukon Area districts have transitioned to fall season management. Subsistence salmon fishing is closed, except for the use of selective gear to target salmon other than Chinook and chum. Based on fishermen's reports, pink salmon are the main salmon being caught in the Lower Yukon Area at this time. District 4 will be transitioning to fall management on July 28. The remaining upriver districts and subdistricts will transition to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration reaches those areas.

### **Summer Season Assessment**

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are complete in the lower river and management has transitioned to fall season in the lower river districts. Assuming late run timing, the midpoint of the Chinook salmon run is projected to reach Eagle sonar on July 28. The cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar is below average and the smallest since 2005. Current projections indicate that the lower end of the Canadian IMEG of

42,500 Chinook salmon will not be met. Additionally, the stock composition of samples from Pilot Station sonar indicate U.S. stocks may be lower in abundance drainage wide. Passage of Chinook salmon at all U.S. assessment projects are well below average and escapement goals are unlikely to be met.

The 2022 summer chum salmon run was the second weakest on record and failed to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million fish. The summer chum salmon escapement past the Anvik assessment project is very low and will not meet escapement goals. To protect the spawning escapements of Chinook and summer chum salmon, fishing will remain closed.

### **Summer Assessment Projects**

#### East Fork Andreafsky Weir / USFWS

This project was not operated due to forest fires early in the season and high water that delayed installation.

#### Anvik River Sonar Project / ADF&G

As of July 24, cumulative passage is 44,353 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 444,075 fish for this date.

#### Gisasa Weir / USFWS

As of July 24, cumulative passage is 428 Chinook salmon which is below the average cumulative passage of 1,864 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon cumulative counts are 2,524 fish, which is below the median cumulative passage of 40,109 fish for this date.

#### Henshaw Weir / Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)

This project was not operated this year due to necessary repairs.

#### Chena River Tower / ADF&G

Counts began on July 2. As of July 24, cumulative passage is 271 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 4,948 fish for this date; and 171 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 1,891 fish for this date. Counts are visual due to issues with the sonar unit.

#### Salcha Tower / ADF&G

Counts began on July 2. As of July 24, cumulative passage is 211 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 6,263 fish for this date; and 94 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 2,018 fish for this date. Counts are visual due to issues with the sonar unit.

#### Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

As of July 24, cumulative passage is 3,240 Chinook salmon, which is below the average cumulative passage of 28,997 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canada-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 site. It is not expected that border passage objectives will be achieved.

### **Stock Identification**

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon (Stratum 1, sampled from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery June 7 to June 27) indicated that  $64\% \pm 6\%$  (90% Credible Interval) of this group of fish were of Canada-origin. Samples from June 28 to July 5 (Stratum 2) indicated that  $34\% \pm 7\%$  (90% Credible Interval) were of Canada-origin.

The second stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery (from June 29 through July 9) consisted of nearly 99% summer chum salmon, of which, 76% were lower river stocks, 23% were

bound for the middle Yukon River, and less than 1% were bound for the Tanana River. The Tanana River component was below average, while the middle river stock proportion was above average, and the lower summer stock proportions were average, for this time period.

### **Age, Sex, and Length Composition**

The age composition of 289 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 6 was 11% age-4, 36% age-5, 47% age-6 and 7% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 and age-7 fish and the percentage of females (54%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than the recent 10-year average and the average length of 721 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 737 mm.

The age composition of 98 Chinook salmon sampled from the set and drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 15 was 5% age-4, 26% age-5, 63% age-6 and 5% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 and age-7 fish and the percentage of females (59%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than average, with the exception of age-4 and age-7 fish. The average length of 770 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 792 mm.

The age composition of 383 summer chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 15 was 57% age-4, 43% age-5, and less than 1% age-6 fish. This compares to a recent ten-year average of 51% age-4 and 46% age-5 summer chum salmon. The age-4 fish average length of 537 mm and the age-5 average length of 549 mm are both record small when compared to average (1981–2021). The percentage of female summer chum salmon are also low at 47% compared to a historical average (1983–2021) of 57%.

### **Current Subsistence Management Actions**

Subsistence salmon fishing has been closed to protect Chinook, summer chum, and fall chum salmon as they migrate upriver. The opportunity to harvest nonsalmon 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. Fishermen should fish this nonsalmon gear in areas where resident species are more likely to be encountered.

Due to the low run sizes, we are encouraging fishermen to target nonsalmon and to release Chinook and chum salmon alive from nonsalmon gear types to protect future salmon runs. Pink and sockeye salmon may be retained. As districts transition to fall season management, coho salmon may be retained and manned fish wheels may be used while releasing chum and Chinook salmon alive. Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole, up to and including the Nulato River. All Yukon River districts may also use hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, and spear. The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has concurrently issued Emergency Special Action 2-FC-01-22 and 2-FC-02-22 to close Federal public waters to the harvest of fall chum in the Coastal District, District 1, 2, 3, and 4 (for the same effective dates as this announcement). Fishermen must be Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest coho salmon in Federal public waters. The Federal Emergency Special Action can be found online at <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/fsa-02-fc-01-22-coast-y1-2-3-fall-chum-close.pdf>.

**Coastal District, District 1, District 2, District 3, and the Innoko River** (including Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, and Shageluk):

**The transition to fall season management is complete, and fishing for chum and Chinook salmon is closed.** Gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels, dip nets, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox.

**District 4 and Koyukuk River** (including Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Ruby, Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

**The transition to fall season management begins at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, July 28. Chum and Chinook salmon subsistence fishing will remain closed.** Gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive. Hook and line gear may be used up to and including the Nulato River. **Once fall season management begins, manned fish wheels may also be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox.**

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles including the community of Wiseman. By regulation, gillnet gear in the permit area is closed for all species from July 1 to August 19. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

**District 5** (from Illinois Creek to the U.S./Canada border and all other adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, and Fort Yukon):

**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 nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence permit is also required to fish for all species in portions of District 5; in Subdistrict 5-C from the westernmost tip of Garnet Island upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area); in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of Dall River; and in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Upper from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. In Birch Creek, and the subsistence area of Beaver Creek below Moose Creek, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 3 inches.

**Subdistrict 6-A and Kantishna River** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Kantishna River, including the Kantishna River drainage, Lake Minchumina, and Manley):

**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 nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive. Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon within Lake Minchumina is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

**Subdistrict 6-B and Old Minto Area** (from eastern edge of the Kantishna River upstream to the Wood River, including Minto and Nenana):

**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 nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats. Note, a subsistence pike permit is required, see details below.

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

**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 nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

A reminder to fishermen that a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing in the Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and Kantishna River drainage). A subsistence salmon permit is not required in Lake Minchumina. A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats and for all fish species in the Upper Tanana Area.

Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office 907-459-7274 or online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/).

### **Personal Use Management Actions**

**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 closed, and periods are cancelled until further notice.**

### **Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing**

**Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area** (a portion of the Tanana River drainage from the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank, which includes Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction):

**Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels follows the Subdistrict 6-C Personal Use salmon fishing schedule and is closed until further notice.**

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

A reminder to personal use fishermen that a personal use whitefish and sucker permit and current sport fishing license are required to fish for these species in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/).

### **Federal Special Action**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this advisory announcement. Fishermen must be Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest coho salmon in Federal public waters. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS.

Federal Special Actions will be posted on [www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions) and shared on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska](https://www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

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