



Advisory Announcement

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2022 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #5 **Fall Update #2, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

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. Selective gear can be used to target nonsalmon and salmon other than Chinook and chum salmon in most districts. 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).

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.

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 31, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 29.61 which is below the average of 377.36 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

Fall season operations began on July 18. As of July 31, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 102.00 which is below the average of 554.23 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 31, the cumulative passage is approximately 88,000 fall chum salmon. This compares to a median cumulative passage of 164,000 chum salmon for this date. Once the genetic data has been analyzed, the adjusted estimate of fall chum salmon will be presented.

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. Yukon River Districts 1-4 and Coastal District have transitioned to fall season management. Subsistence salmon fishing is closed, except for the use of selective gear to target nonsalmon and salmon other than chum and Chinook salmon. Based on fishermen's reports, pink salmon are the main salmon being caught in the Lower Yukon Area at this time. Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will be transitioning to fall management on August 5. 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 third quarter point of the Chinook salmon run is projected to reach Eagle sonar on August 3. 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. 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 was very low and did not meet escapement goals. To protect the spawning escapements of Chinook and summer chum salmon, fishing will remain closed for the remainder of the summer season.

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

Operations ended on July 26. Cumulative passage was 45,580 summer chum salmon, which was below the median cumulative passage of 455,876 fish, and well below the escapement goal of 350,000–700,000.

Gisasa Weir / USFWS

Operations ended on July 29. Cumulative passage was 503 Chinook salmon, which was below the average cumulative passage of 2,017 fish, and 3,300 summer chum salmon, which was well below the median cumulative passage of 44,061 fish.

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 31, cumulative passage is 344 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 5,793 fish for this date; and 461 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 4,773 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 31, cumulative passage is 630 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 7,791 fish for this date; and 401 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 8,330 fish for this date. Counts are visual due to issues with the sonar unit.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

As of July 31, cumulative passage is 7,880 Chinook salmon, which is below the average cumulative passage of 42,972 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 third stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery (from July 10 through July 18) consisted of nearly 99% summer chum salmon, of which, 70% were lower river stocks, 27% were bound for the middle Yukon River, and 1% were bound for the Tanana River. The Tanana River component remains below average, while the middle river stock proportion are above average, and the lower summer stock proportions are average, for this time period. The first fall season samples are headed to the laboratory this week for analysis.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 25 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project, since fall operations began July 16, consisted of 58% age-4 and 42% age-5 fish which is near average from 1983–2021. The percentage of female chum salmon was 45% compared to the historical average (1986–2021) of 53%. The average length of 568 mm is larger than chum salmon in 2020 but is well below the historical average of 592 mm from 1981–2020.

The age composition of 327 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 27 was 12% age-4, 36% age-5, 46% age-6 and 6% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 and age-7 fish and the percentage of females (53%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than the recent 10-year average and the average length of 719 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.

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, beach seines, and spear. The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has concurrently issued Emergency Special Actions 2-FC-01-22, 2-FC-02-22, and 2-FC-03-22 to close Federal public waters to the harvest of fall chum in the Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. The emergency special actions also announced the transition dates for subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (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. 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 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. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox. Hook and line gear may be used up to and including the Nulato River.

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.

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

The transition to fall season management begins at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 5. Chum and Chinook salmon subsistence fishing will remain 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, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive. **Once fall season management begins, manned fish wheels may also be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive and may not enter a livebox.**

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species 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).

Subdistricts 5-D (including Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, and Fort Yukon):

Chum and Chinook 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 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):

Chum and Chinook 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):

Chum and Chinook 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):

Chum and Chinook 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/.

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. As a reminder, only whitefish and suckers may be retained in this fishery.

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/.

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 and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements will be posted on www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov/ and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG.

ADF&G subsistence fishing permits are available at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store

