



Advisory Announcement

CONTACT:

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2023 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #24 **Summer Update #7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

At this time, the 2023 Chinook salmon run appears similar in abundance to the very poor run observed in 2022. The Canada-origin and drainagewide Chinook salmon runs are well below historical averages. Alaskan fisheries are being managed for the most recent Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500–55,000 Canadian-origin Chinook salmon and to achieve Alaskan tributary escapement goals. These escapement goals are not expected to be achieved due to low run abundance. Chinook salmon fishing remains closed.

A strong 4th pulse of summer chum salmon has entered the river in the last week. Summer chum salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar has exceeded 790,000 fish, which is within the drainagewide escapement goal range of 500,000 to 1.2 million fish. Subsistence fishing with selective gear types for summer chum salmon is open 24 hours per day up through Subdistrict 5-ABC and subsistence areas of the Tanana River. Few summer chum salmon migrate as far upriver as Subdistrict 5-D; as such, salmon fishing remains closed in this area to conserve the small run of Chinook salmon heading to Canada.

All Chinook salmon must be released alive from selective gear types. Fishermen are reminded to practice respectful and safe fish handling techniques and ensure any Chinook salmon caught in selective or nonsalmon gear types are released alive so they may continue upriver to their spawning grounds. If it appears that Chinook salmon are being targeted with this gear, fishing will be further restricted.

Assessment project and management updates will be shared during the weekly YR DFA teleconferences each **Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. (Alaska time). Call in number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#**

Assessment Projects

Updated with data through July 16.

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

LYTF operations for summer season concluded July 15

The Big Eddy cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 51.31, which is below the historical average of 370.94. The Middle Mouth cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 68.74. The combined Chinook drift CPUE is 61.24, which is slightly above the 2021–2022 average of 55.99. The cumulative CPUE for summer chum salmon in the 5.5-inch drift gillnets is 1,705.30, which is below the 2002–2022 median of 2,799.08.

Fall season operations began on July 16 switching to 6-inch mesh gear to target fall chum and coho salmon. As of July 17, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 23.01 which is below the average of 56.00 for this date.

Pilot Station Sonar (ADF&G)

Water levels are continuing to drop with some debris. Cumulative Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 57,866 ± 14,321 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative average of 139,642 for this date, based on late run timing years. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 792,176 ± 35,351 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,141,167 fish based on late run timing years.

All Chinook salmon captured in the Pilot Station Sonar test fishery will be sampled for age, sex, length, and genetics. Additional biological sampling will be conducted for all Chinook salmon test fish mortalities as part of a broad collaborative effort to better understand salmon health and potential drivers of *en route* mortality and low productivity. Additional samples will include otoliths, heart, kidney, liver, intestine, eggs, blood, muscle biopsy, and fat content. The heart samples will be used by ADF&G and USFWS, along with samples from other locations, to investigate the potential for *Ichthyophonus*-associated mortality. Kidney samples are being tested for proliferative kidney disease. Fish health results will be available post season.

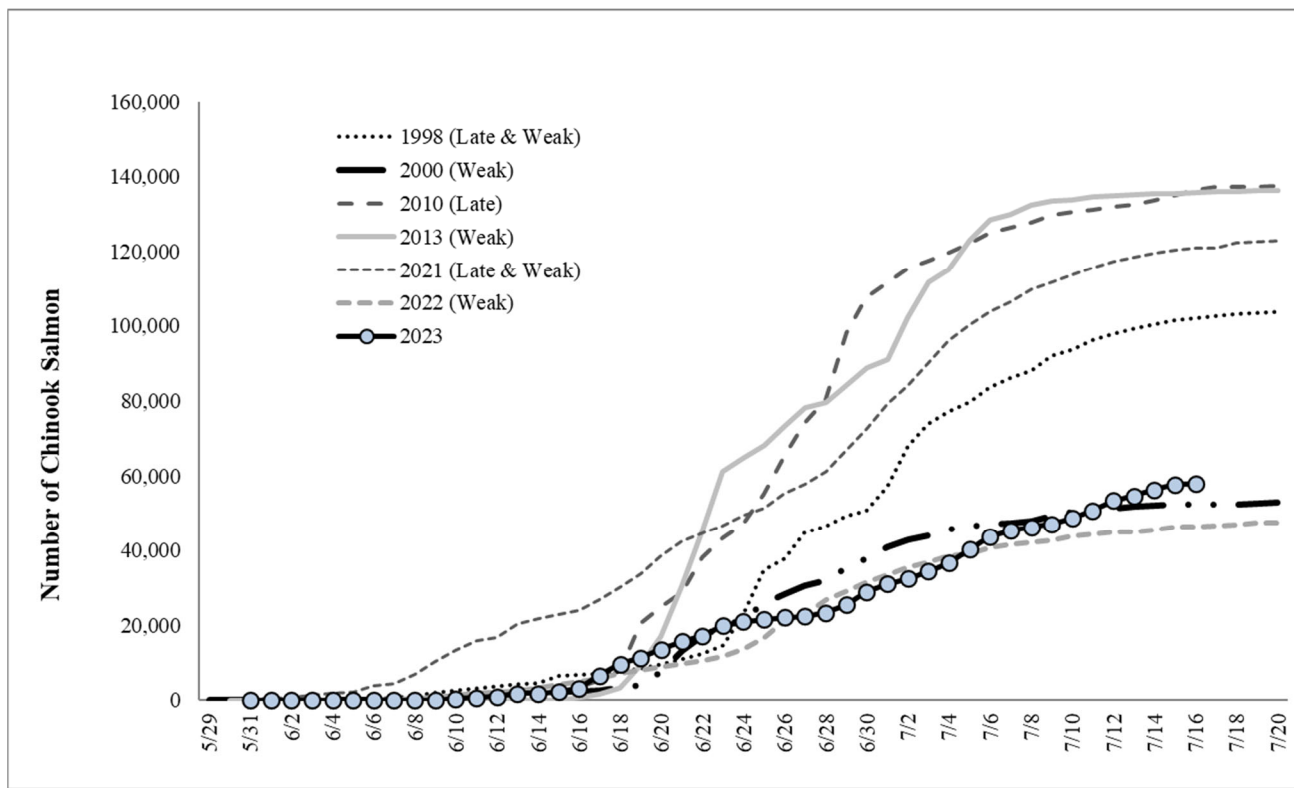


Figure 1. 2023 Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

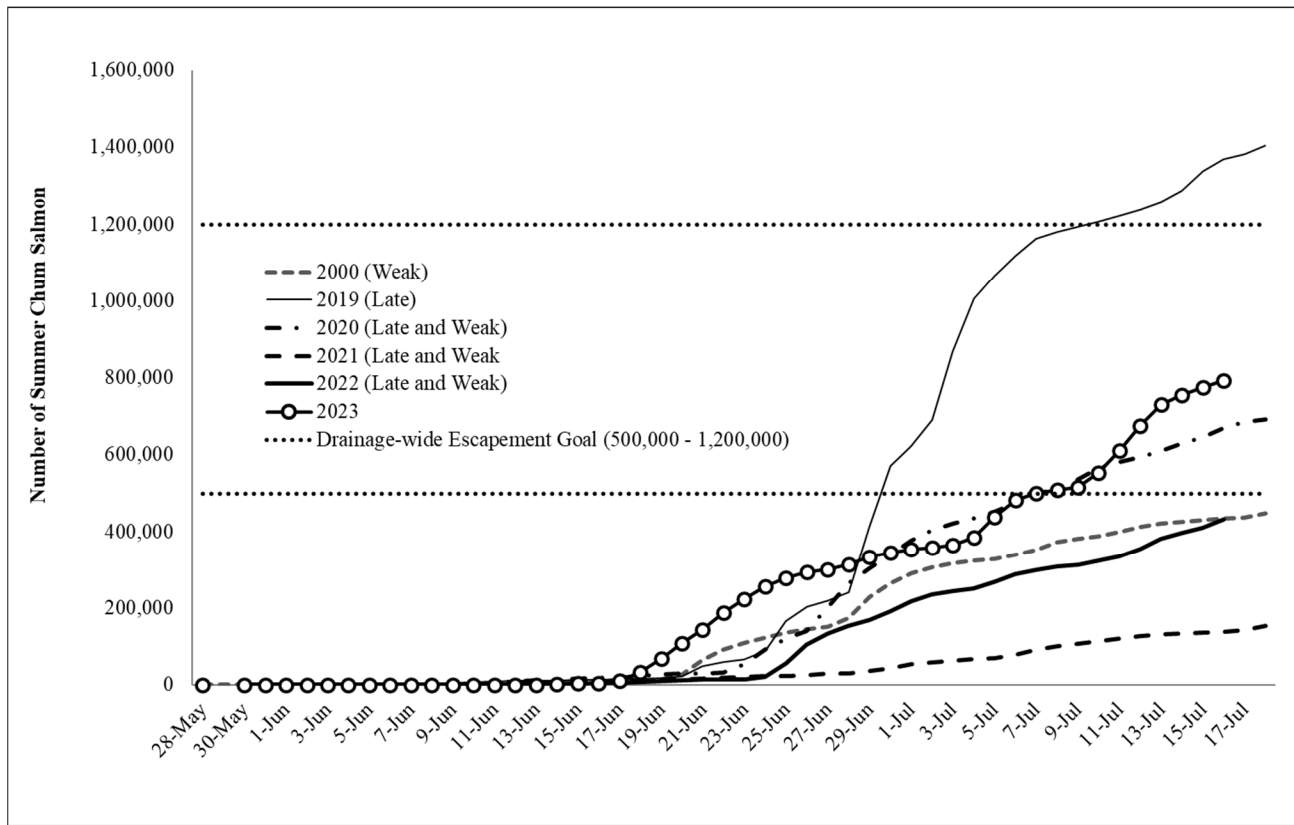


Figure 2. 2023 Cumulative passage of summer chum salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

East Fork Andreafsky Weir (USFWS)

The weir was fish tight by the evening of July 8, but water levels rose over the weekend of July 8 and 9, preventing accurate counts. As of July 15, the weir was fish tight again. Both Chinook and summer chum salmon counts are underestimates. The minimum observed cumulative passage is 49 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 3,074 fish, and 1,050 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 47,082 fish.

Anvik River Sonar Project (ADF&G)

Counts began on June 15. Water levels rose over the weekend of July 8 and 9, requiring the need to pull the sonar on July 10. The cumulative passage as of July 10 was 47,216 summer chum salmon, which was below the cumulative median of 253,000 fish for that date. The sonar unit will be redeployed once water levels drop.

Gisasa River Weir (USFWS)

Fish counts began on July 4. Water levels rose over the weekend of July 8 and 9, preventing accurate counts. As of July 16, the weir was fish tight again. Counts are underestimates. The minimum observed cumulative passage is 153 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 1,211 fish, and 4,517 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 31,427 fish.

Henshaw Creek Weir (TCC)

The crew is in camp and experiencing high water, which is delaying weir installation.

Chena River Sonar/Tower (ADF&G)

Counts began on June 29. Cumulative passage is 655 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 2,549 fish, and 105 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 231 fish.

Salcha River Sonar/Tower (ADF&G)

Counts began on July 6. Cumulative passage is 18 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 521 fish, and 111 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 239 fish.

Eagle Sonar Project (ADF&G/DFO)

The sonar was installed on June 30 and full operations (sonar and test fishery) began on July 1. Cumulative passage is 1,551 Chinook salmon which is below the cumulative average of 10,044 fish. The Eagle sonar project is used to assess the number of Canadian-origin Chinook and fall chum salmon that enter Canada. End of season sonar estimates will be used, along with other information, to calculate total border passage and escapement in Canada.

Chinook Radio Telemetry (ADF&G)

2023 was the first year of a 3-year effort to capture and tag Chinook salmon near Emmonak and track upriver migration to evaluate concerns for *en route* mortality. Tagging fish in the lower river concluded on July 15 for the season, but tracking operations are ongoing. The number of Chinook salmon tagged was low due, in part, to high water conditions combined with poor run abundance. Each fish was tagged with both an internal radio telemetry tag and an external spaghetti tag. **If you encounter a tagged fish this season and are successful at documenting the tag number, please call 1-877-467-2104 to report information about when and where the fish was observed.** As a thank you for voluntarily reporting the tag number and associated information, you will be automatically entered into the ADF&G salmon tag lottery. More information about the project can be found on posters in communities along the river or at the ADF&G offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Emmonak. Please contact Josh Clark at 907-267-2217 or Fred West at 907-267-2237 with any questions.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 217 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station Sonar test fishery through July 6 was 5% age-4, 64% age-5, 27% age-6 and 4% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-5 and age-7 fish were above average, while age-6 fish were below average. The percentage of females was the same as the recent 10-year average, based on evaluation of external body characteristics. Except for age-4 fish, Chinook salmon within each age class are smaller than the recent 10-year average, and the average length of 722 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 736 mm.

The age composition of 796 summer chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 12 was 57% age-4, which compares to a historical average of 50% for this date. The age-5 component made up 42% of the samples, which compares to a historical average of 48% for this date. Of the samples, 1% were age-6 fish, and less than 1% were age 3. The age-4 fish average length of 546 mm is slightly smaller compared to the 2013–2022 average. The age-5 average length of 555 mm was below average but larger than what was observed last year. Female summer chum salmon are slightly lower at 50% compared to the 2013–2022 average of 56%.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) was sampled from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery. Chinook salmon samples collected from the early fish and first pulse (Stratum 1, June 7–June 25) indicated that 44% ± 8% (90% Credible Interval) were of Canada-origin. Samples from June 26–July 6 (Stratum 2) indicated that 52% ± 8% (90% Credible Interval) were of Canada-origin.

The second stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery (from June 26 through July 8) consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, of which, 89% were lower river stocks, 11% were bound for the middle Yukon River, and less than 1% were bound for the Tanana River. The lower summer

stocks are above average while the middle river and Tanana River components are below average for this time period.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Subsistence fishing for salmon with gillnets is closed to protect migrating Chinook salmon.

During summer chum salmon fishing openings with selective gear types, fishermen may use dip nets, beach seines, hook and line gear and manned fish wheels. **All Chinook salmon must be released alive.** Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operation; Chinook salmon may not enter a live box and must be immediately returned to the water using a chute, slide, tote, or other fish friendly means.

Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **Four-inch or smaller mesh gillnets must be 60 feet or less in length and operated as a set net.** Fishermen are reminded to set this gear near shore and in areas where nonsalmon species are abundant to avoid incidentally harvesting salmon. While any salmon caught in this gear may be kept, if it appears salmon are being targeted with this gear, it could be further restricted.

Other subsistence gear types for nonsalmon species include hook and line, dip net, beach seine, hand line, longline, fyke net, lead, and spear. The area where hook and line gear may be used for subsistence has been extended above the Nulato River, except for District 6 and some closed waters.

In Districts 3-6, submerged gillnets may be used for subsistence and personal use during ice-free months, however submerged nets must have a visible buoy or cluster of floats attached to both ends of the net, plus a third float in the middle if the net is over 60 feet in length.

Gillnets must be marked with a buoy, float, or keg that has the fisherman's first initial, last name, and address.

Coastal District and Districts 1 (from the Naskonat Peninsula to Point Romanof and including the Black River and the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, and Kotlik):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. **All Chinook salmon must be released alive.**

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, July 25, chum salmon subsistence fishing will close and retention of coho salmon will be allowed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon.

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

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. **All Chinook salmon must be released alive.**

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Friday, July 28, chum salmon subsistence fishing will close and retention of coho salmon will be allowed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon.

District 3 and the Innoko River (communities of Russian Mission, Holy Cross, and Shageluk):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. **All Chinook salmon must be released alive.**

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, July 30, chum salmon subsistence fishing will close and retention of coho salmon will be allowed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon.

District 4, the Anvik and Koyukuk Rivers, and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Hughes, Allakaket, Alatna, Bettles, Galena, Ruby, Tanana and Rampart):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Summer chum, pink, and sockeye salmon may be kept. All Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Dip nets, beach seines, hook and line, and manned fish wheels may be used. Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operation; Chinook salmon may not enter a live box and must be immediately returned to the water using a chute, slide, tote, or other fish friendly means. All Chinook salmon must be released alive.

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. Gillnet gear in the permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

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

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border and all other adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon and are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net. Nets should be set near shore.

Dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon species. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence permit is 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.

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

Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, Old Minto Area, and Kantishna River (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Wood River, including the Wood and Kantishna River drainages, Lake Minchumina, and Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Summer chum, pink, and sockeye salmon may be kept. All Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels may be used for summer chum, pink, and sockeye salmon. Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operation; Chinook salmon may not enter a live box and must be immediately returned to the water using a chute, slide, tote or other fish friendly means. All Chinook 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 Lake Minchumina and 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):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed.

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 24, fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear types 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels may be used for summer chum, pink, and sockeye salmon. Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operation; Chinook salmon may not enter a live box and must be immediately returned to the water using a chute, slide, tote or other fish friendly means. All Chinook salmon must be released alive.

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

Personal Use Management Actions

Subdistrict 6-C (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.

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

A reminder to personal use fishermen that a personal use salmon permit is required to fish for salmon in Subdistrict 6-C and a personal use whitefish and sucker permit is required to fish for these species in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Both permits require a valid sport fishing license.

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/.

The ADF&G Emmonak office is open Mondays to Fridays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Sundays).

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. The Federal manager issued Federal emergency special actions to restrict the selective gear opportunities for summer chum salmon to federally-qualified subsistence users

only in federal public waters. The Emmonak USFWS office is not open. To reach the USFWS Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager, call Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G and the USFWS. Federal Special Actions will be posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions.

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

