



Advisory Announcement

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2023 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #6

Fall Update #3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2023 fall chum salmon preseason projection, based on the relationship between summer chum salmon and fall chum salmon run sizes, is for a run size of 425,000 fish. Mixed stock analysis (MSA) applied to the passage estimates to remove summer chum salmon resulted in an estimate of 37,000 fall chum salmon in the river as of August 6. The midpoint of the MSA fall chum salmon run at the mainstem sonar operated near Pilot Station typically occurs on August 14. The drainagewide escapement goal is 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, but the Canadian component of the run has been weaker than expected the last few years. Depending on the inseason abundance of Canadian stocks, the run may not be large enough to meet the Canadian treaty objectives for fall chum salmon, which are 70,000–104,000 fish in the mainstem Yukon River and 22,000–49,000 fish in the Fishing Branch River. As summer chum salmon comprise the majority of the early fall season salmon run, subsistence fishing for chum salmon has been allowed during the first ten days of the fall season in most districts. Subsistence fishing for chum salmon then closes until inseason estimates of abundance indicate a harvestable surplus of fall chum salmon is available.

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 in 2019. This year's coho run size is anticipated to be below average to average (average is 222,000 fish).

Assessment project and management updates will be shared during the weekly YRDFA teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. (Alaska time). Call in number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#. Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed can be accessed online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

Fall Assessment Projects

Updated with data through August 7.

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

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 231.25, which is below the average of 585.53. The midpoint for fall chum salmon typically occurs on August 12 at this site. The first coho salmon were caught in Middle Mouth on August 7.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE is 1,019.18, which is above the average of 790.92. The midpoint for fall chum salmon typically occurs on August 10 at this site. The first coho salmon were caught at this project on August 7.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

As of August 6, the cumulative passage is approximately 103,000 chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 257,000 chum salmon for this date. The midpoint for fall season chum salmon passage typically occurs on August 10 at this site. Genetic stock analysis was applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 37,000 fall chum salmon that have entered the river since July 19. This level of passage is well below the historical average of 237,000 fall chum salmon through August 6. Only a few coho salmon have been captured in the early portion of the run to date, with a cumulative passage estimate of 602 coho salmon. The first quarter point of coho salmon passage is typically August 16 at this site.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar crew are onsite and installing sonar.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar project began operations on August 6. The cumulative passage is 82 chum salmon.

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

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

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

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

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

This project will begin counting fall chum salmon in late August to early September.

Summer Season Assessment

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are complete through Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C and management has transitioned to fall season. Assuming late run timing, the third quarter point of the Chinook salmon run passed Eagle Sonar on August 3. The cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar as of June 7 is well below average and the current cumulative total is the second lowest ever for this location, with 2022 being lowest. The lower end of the most recent Canadian IMEG of 42,500 Chinook salmon will not be met. Passage of Chinook salmon at all U.S. assessment projects is well below average and escapement goals are unlikely to be met throughout the Alaskan portion of the drainage.

The 2023 summer chum salmon run appears to be near the upper end of the preseason projection of 280,000 to 900,000 fish. Summer chum salmon total run size and escapement will be estimated later this year after final assessment project and subsistence harvest estimates are available. Preliminary estimates of the summer chum salmon run are above 845,000 fish, and the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million fish has been met.

Summer Assessment Projects

Updated with data through August 7.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

Cumulative passage is 1,033 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 5,653 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon cumulative passage is 653, which is below the median cumulative passage of 7,876 fish for this date.

Salcha Tower / ADF&G

Operations ended on August 4. Cumulative passage was 1,242 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 7,738 fish, and 676 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 13,882 fish.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar was installed on June 30 and full operations (sonar and test fishery) began on July 1. Cumulative passage is 12,653 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 48,550 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)

Tagging fish in the lower river concluded on July 15 for the season, but tracking operations are ongoing. 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. Please contact Josh Clark at 907-267-2217 or Fred West at 907-267-2237 with any questions.

Stock Identification

The fourth stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery (from July 19-31) consisted of 73% summer chum salmon, of which 76% were lower river stocks, 20% were bound for the middle Yukon River, and 4% were bound for the Tanana River. The lower summer stocks were above average while the middle river and Tanana River components were below average for this time period. This stratum also contained an estimated 27% fall stocks which were composed of 71% upper Yukon U.S. (Teedriinjik, Sheenjek, and Draanjik), 7% Canada, and 22% Tanana River.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 90 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 27, consisted of 57% age-4 and 40% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 58% age-4 and 41% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through August 7 was 54% which is below the 1986–2022 historical average of 55%. The average length of 570 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 592 mm.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Nonsalmon

The opportunity to harvest nonsalmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets of 60 feet or shorter length is allowed in all subsistence areas. Fishermen should fish this nonsalmon gear in areas where resident species are more likely to be encountered. Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole,

hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seine, and spear. If closures are in place for a salmon species, they must be released alive immediately from nonsalmon gear (other than 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets).

Salmon

Coastal District, Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the Innoko, Anvik, and Koyukuk river drainages (including Chevak through Ruby):

The transition to fall season management is complete, and fishing for chum and Chinook salmon is closed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. Chinook and chum 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 communities of Wiseman and Coldfoot. Gillnet gear for nonsalmon in this permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size.

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

Fishing for 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. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Monday, August 14, subsistence fishing for chum salmon 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. Chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area).

Subdistrict 5-D (including Stevens Village through 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 near shore.

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 and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and the Kantishna River (from the Tanana River up to the mouth of the Wood River):

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

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), and northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage (including Minto Flats). A subsistence salmon permit is not required in Lake Minchumina.

Upper Tanana Area (including Delta Junction through Nabesna):

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

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in the Upper Tanana Area.

Personal Use Management Actions

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (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 open with dip nets and live release manned fish wheels only 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

Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for salmon in Subdistrict 6-C. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing (in the 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 is closed.

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 personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for whitefish and sucker 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 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 and fish counts can be obtained by visiting www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG or www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

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