



Advisory Announcement

Released: September 6, 2023

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2023 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #12 **Fall Update #7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

The fall chum salmon run is nearing conclusion in the lower Yukon River and is projected to be less than 300,000 fish. Genetic analysis applied to the fish passage estimates at the Yukon River mainstem sonar near Pilot Station indicate 288,000 fall chum salmon are in the river as of September 5 (Figure 1). 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. Subsistence, personal use, and commercial fishing remain closed for fall chum salmon.

Coho salmon arrived later and weaker than average in all the Lower Yukon River assessment projects. At the mainstem Yukon River sonar project near Pilot Station, 47,000 coho salmon have been counted as of September 5, compared to a historical cumulative of 178,000 for this date (Figure 2). The coho salmon run is past the three-quarter point of the run. The coho salmon inseason run projection is less than 66,000 fish, which is the second lowest on record and well below the average run size of 222,000 fish. All fishing for coho salmon is closed.

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 September 5.

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

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 874.09, which is below the average of 1,452.24. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 95.85, which is below the average of 358.95. This project operates through September 10.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE is 2,686.68, which is above the average of 1,963.85. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 201.21, which is below the average of 944.66. This project operates through September 12.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) was applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 288,000 fall chum salmon that have entered the river since July 19 (Figure 1). This level of passage is below the median cumulative passage of 946,000 fall chum salmon. The cumulative passage of coho salmon is approximately 47,000 (Figure 2), which is well below the median of 178,000 fish. This project operates through September 7.

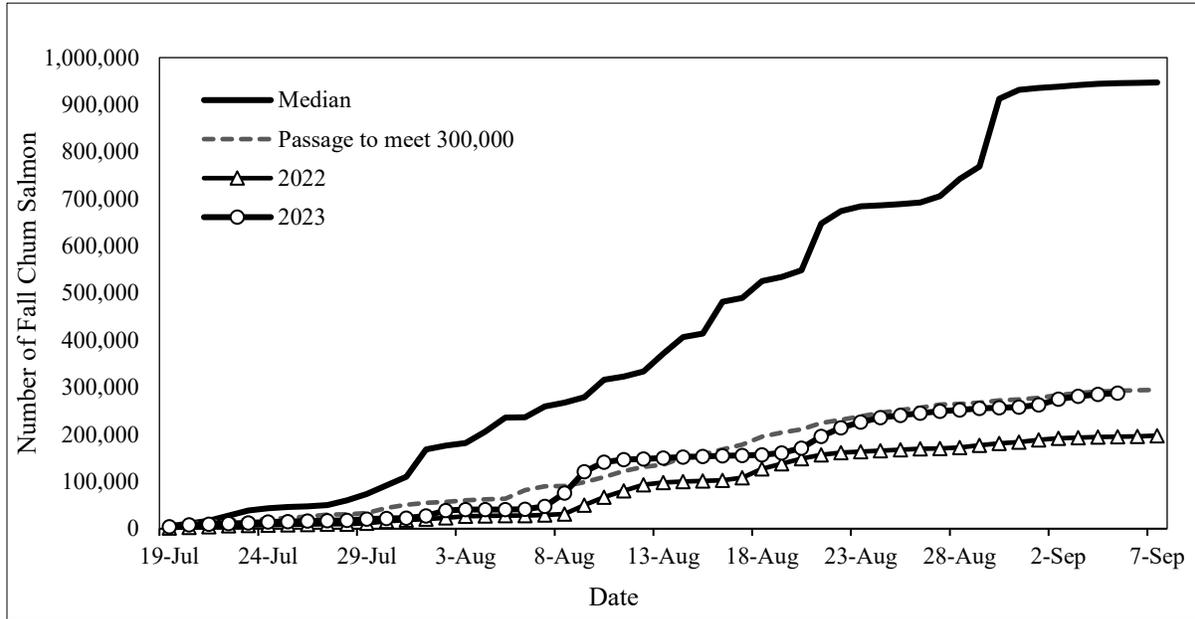


Figure 1. Cumulative passage of fall chum salmon using the mainstem Yukon River sonar assessment project (Pilot Station) in 2023 compared to the historical median and 2022. The dashed line is the passage required to meet the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal.

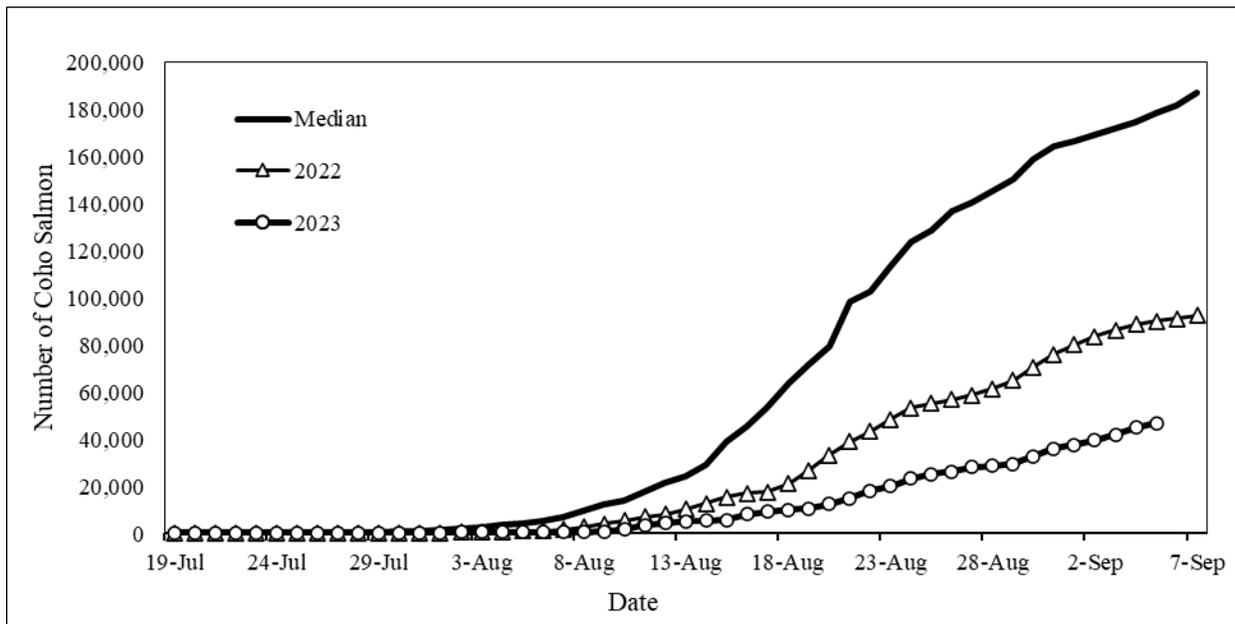


Figure 2. Cumulative passage of coho salmon using the mainstem Yukon River sonar assessment project (Pilot Station) in 2023 compared to the historical median and 2022.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began operations on August 8 and has a cumulative passage of 23,000 fall chum salmon, which is below the median passage of 55,000 fish. However, these values are a minimum since a high-water event is interfering with normal operations. Both sonars were out of the water for six days, and only one bank has been redeployed for the last two days. The cumulative passage number includes interpolated data for the operating

bank and will be updated when the second bank sonar gets redeployed. The first-quarter point typically occurs on September 5. The Teedriinjik escapement goal range is 85,000–234,000 fall chum salmon.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar project began operations on August 6 and has a cumulative passage of 2,067 fall chum salmon, which is below the median passage of 20,000 fish. The first-quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on September 7 at this project.

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

This project transitioned to counting fall chum salmon on August 28 and has a cumulative passage of 946 fish, which is below the median passage of 8,600 fish. The first-quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on September 16 at this project.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This sonar project transitioned to counting fall chum salmon on August 20. The cumulative passage of 1,040 fall chum salmon is below the median passage of 7,000 fish. The first-quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on September 4 at this project.

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

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

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon that passed the mainstem sonar from August 14–20 indicated approximately 5% were summer chum and 95% were fall chum salmon. The fall chum salmon stocks consisted of 22% Border/US (Teedriinjik, Sheenjek, and Draanjik), 20% Canadian, and 53% Tanana Fall stocks. Overall, since July 19, the run consists of 83% U.S.-origin and 17% Canada-origin fall chum salmon stocks.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 531 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 27, consisted of 79% age-4 and 17% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 67% age-4 and 30% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 4 was 54%, which is below the 1986–2022 historical average of 58%. The average length of 572 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 592 mm. However, they are much larger than the previous two years.

The age composition of 86 coho salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 27, consisted of 16% age-3 and 82% age-4 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 16% age-3 and 76% age-4. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 4 was 44%, which is below the 1986–2022 historical average of 47%. The average length of 540 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 575 mm.

Subsistence Management Actions

Nonsalmon

Harvest of 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. Harvest of nonsalmon with 6-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets of 60 feet or shorter is allowed in Lake Minchumina and in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats (see fishing permit requirements). Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole (excluding District 6), 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 gillnets).

Salmon

Yukon Area Districts:

Fishing for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon is closed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for pink salmon and sockeye salmon in all districts except District 6, where hook and line is closed for all species. Chum, coho, and Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence fishing permit is required in the following areas:

All species

- The South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles (including the communities of Wiseman and Coldfoot). Gillnet gear for nonsalmon in the Koyukuk permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size.
- 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).
- The portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of the Dall River.
- The upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.
- The Upper Tanana Area.

Salmon

- The Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and the Kantishna River drainage), excluding Lake Minchumina.

Northern pike

- The Tolovana River drainage (including Minto Flats).

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 closed.

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 and fish wheels 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. The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has rescinded all 2023 Federal Special actions in the Yukon River drainage. For more information, contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS. Federal Special Actions are 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.

To receive advisory announcements by email, sign up at www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov.

To receive fish counts by email, sign up at www.list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate.

