

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Eric Newland, Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 267-2217
Fax: (907) 267-2442

Anchorage Regional Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518
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2014 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 1

Board of Fisheries Actions: Yukon Area Salmon Fisheries Summary

Districts Affected: Yukon River Area

YUKON AREA REGULATORY CHANGES

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) recently met in Anchorage March 17–21 to consider statewide shellfish and supplemental proposals. Three proposals were adopted by the board affecting the Yukon Area commercial salmon fishery regulations. The following is a summary of the regulatory changes that will be effective for the 2014 fishing season.

Proposal 371 was submitted by Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA). The proposal sought to remove dip net size restrictions for the Yukon Area Districts 1–3 commercial summer chum salmon fishery. This proposal was amended to provide a larger dip net frame for noncircular dip nets.

Under the new regulation, fishermen in Districts 1–3 commercial summer chum salmon dip net fishery may use a net frame that is non-circular, in which the width–height dimensions may not exceed 6 feet by 3 feet.

All other existing dip net specifications remain unaltered. A circular net frame may be up to 5 feet across, as measured through the net opening. The dip net bag depth must be at least one-half of the greatest straight-line distance, as measured through the net opening. Mesh size for dip nets is four and one-half inches or less. A commercial permit holder can operate up to four dip nets at a time. Fishermen are required to immediately release incidentally caught king salmon back to the water alive.

Proposal 372 was submitted by Virgil Umphenour. The proposal sought to modify the specifications and operations of commercial fish wheels in the Yukon Area by allowing the use of leads. Adoption of this proposal aligns regulations with current commercial fishing practices, authorizing a long standing practice.

Proposal 373 was submitted by ADFG (department). The proposal sought to remove the exception allowing for dead king salmon to be taken, but not retained, in the Yukon Area Districts 1–3 dip net and beach seine commercial summer chum salmon fishery. Adoption of this proposal closes the loophole that may allow fishermen to illegally harvest king salmon while commercial fishing and clearly ensures all king salmon are returned immediately to the water alive.

Proposal 377 was developed by the board from an emergency petition request by YDFDA. This proposal sought to authorize the use of purse seine gear for commercial harvest of Yukon River summer chum salmon in Districts 1–3 during times of king salmon conservation. Secondly, it would allow monofilament purse seine web to be used in this fishery. This proposal failed.

However, a test fishery will likely be conducted this summer by the department in cooperation with the proponent to further evaluate the feasibility of harvesting summer chum while releasing live king salmon from purse seine gear.

Any questions regarding these regulatory changes can be directed to either Eric Newland (907) 267-2217 in Anchorage or Jeff Estensen (907) 459-7217 in Fairbanks.

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