

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) 949-1320
Fax: (907) 949-1830

Lower Yukon Office
PO Box 127
Emmonak, Alaska 99581
Date Issued: 6/2/2014

2014 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 10

Summer Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Assessment

The 2014 Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are slowly beginning to build as indicated by assessment information at the Lower Yukon test fishery program. Catch rates have increased moderately during the course of the last week, most notably in the last several days. The department is anticipating that the 2014 salmon runs will be earlier than normal.

Initial test fishing began at Pilot Station on June 1. The project is expected to be fully operational by Wednesday June 4.

Management Strategies

A very conservative management approach has been initiated early this season to protect the entire Chinook salmon run, which is anticipated to be the worst on record. Conservative management actions are now being implemented as the first Chinook salmon begin migrating into District 4 and the middle portion of the river. All gillnets greater than 4-inch mesh size must be removed from the water in the Northern Portion of the Coastal District, and Districts 1-4.

This closure is being similarly implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing. These closures are expected to be in place for most of the Chinook salmon run. Fishermen in Subdistricts 5-A, B, and C will be notified later this week regarding management actions that will be taken to conserve Chinook salmon in that area.

Non-salmon species may be harvested using 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length. However, this opportunity to harvest non-salmon will be discontinued if this gear is used to target Chinook salmon. Fishermen are strongly encouraged to avoid fishing where Chinook salmon may be encountered and are urged to track their non-salmon subsistence harvest.

Current Management

Coastal District: As in recent years, the Coastal District has been subdivided into two management areas to allow for more management precision and flexibility.

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice in all marine waters in the **Northern Portion of the Coastal District** from 62 degrees North latitude to Point Romanof. Management actions taken in the **Northern Portion of the Coastal District** are intended to provide protection to Chinook salmon prior to entering the river.

In the **Southern Portion of the Coastal District**, from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62° North latitude, the current subsistence salmon fishing schedule remains unaltered and is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

However, subsistence fishermen in the **Southern Portion of the Coastal District** should be prepared for management actions that will close subsistence salmon fishing when the first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to be passing through this coastal area. The department plans to meet with fishermen in the communities of Scammon Bay and Hooper Bay on Wednesday, June 4, to discuss Chinook salmon conservation and management strategies.

District 1 (including the Black River) District 2 and District 3: Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in Districts 1, 2, and 3 is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with dip net gear only.

Subsistence dip net fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from this gear type. This requirement to release Chinook salmon will be strictly enforced.

Subsistence fishermen unfamiliar with this gear type are encouraged to communicate with fishermen that used this gear type during the 2013 season. Great care must be taken to assure Chinook salmon are released unharmed so that they can swim the long distance upriver and spawn successfully. Fishermen are also strongly encouraged to avoid fishing where Chinook salmon may be encountered.

Innoko River: Subsistence fishing is currently open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should be prepared for management actions that will close subsistence salmon fishing when the first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to be migrating into the Innoko River.

Subdistrict 4-A Lower (from ¾ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling):

Subsistence fishing for salmon is closed until further notice. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Subdistrict 4-A Upper (from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing for salmon is closed until further notice. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is currently open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Effective 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 4, subsistence fishing for salmon will close. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence fishing is currently open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should be prepared for management actions that will close subsistence salmon fishing when the first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to be migrating into the Koyukuk River.

Subdistricts 5-A,B,C, and D: Subsistence fishing is currently open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when the first Chinook salmon begin migrating into Subdistricts 5-A, B, C, and D.

District 6: By regulation, the subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when Chinook salmon start moving into the Tanana River.

Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when Chinook salmon start moving into the Old Minto area.

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): This area includes the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area. Subsistence fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at **1-866-479-7387** (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call **(907) 459-7387**.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320.

-end-