

**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: 6/23/2014

**2014 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 20
Summer Update # 7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Assessment

The 2014 Chinook salmon run timing continues to track considerably earlier than historical averages as indicated from run assessment projects. The early group of Chinook salmon that entered the lower river on May 31 should now be located in the upper Yukon River and near the village of Fort Yukon by mid-week.

The first pulse of Chinook salmon migrated past the sonar project near Pilot Station on June 8 through June 10. The timing of this first pulse was approximately one week earlier than the average for historical years, and was four days earlier than the average for early years. The sonar project estimated the size of the first pulse was approximately 22,000 Chinook salmon. Based on historical upriver migration timing, the first pulse of Chinook salmon should be moving through Subdistricts 5-A and 5-B this week.

The second pulse of Chinook salmon started at the sonar project near Pilot Station on June 15 and has continued through June 22, with an estimated total passage of approximately 56,200 Chinook salmon. Similar to the first pulse, the timing of the second pulse is tracking considerably earlier than the average for historical and early years.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon past the sonar project near Pilot Station (June 1-11) estimated that 50% were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second pulse of Chinook salmon (June 12-20) estimated that 52% were of Canadian-origin. For more information about Yukon River inseason genetic MSA, please visit the [ADFG Gene Conservation Laboratory website at: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook_baseline](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook_baseline)

Total Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project through June 22 is estimated to be approximately 94,800 fish. The department is evaluating data uncertainty associated with this sonar passage estimate. Incorporating this uncertainty and very early run timing, the 2014 run size is on track to be near the high end of the preseason outlook range of 64,000 to 121,000. A Chinook run size of this magnitude is still lower than average, but has the potential to meet escapement goals and objectives. However, given the recent trend in Yukon River Chinook salmon run sizes, it is still too early to project whether escapement goals will be met until Chinook salmon start showing up at escapement projects. At this point, the department is hopeful that the conservative management actions and sacrifices made by fishermen to date will result in attaining spawning escapements needed to sustain this Chinook salmon run for future generations.

The majority of the summer chum salmon run is moving through the lower river, with relatively high catch rates in the Lower Yukon test fishery program. Daily passage estimates of summer chum salmon at the sonar project have been in excess of 100,000 fish per day for the last several days. Subsistence reports and recent commercial harvest information also indicate large numbers of summer chum salmon are present in the lower river. The average first quarter point at the sonar project near Pilot Station for summer chum salmon is June 22, but it appears the run could be tracking two or three days earlier than historical average run timing. Summer chum salmon passage by the sonar project through June 22 is estimated to be approximately 946,000 fish. Based on historical upriver migration timing, summer chum salmon should start showing up in good numbers in District 3 this week.

Summer Chum Salmon Radiotelemetry Project – Russian Mission

Tagging operations for the summer chum salmon radiotelemetry research project began June 12 upriver from the community of Russian Mission. As of June 22, 293 summer chum salmon have been tagged and released. In addition to the radio tag, summer chum salmon will also have a white spaghetti tag located at the base of the dorsal fin. If a tagged summer chum salmon is harvested, please note the date, time, and location and return the tag to the address listed on the outside of the radio tag or contact Stephanie Schmidt or Sean Larson with ADF&G (stephanie.schmidt@alaska.gov or sean.larson@alaska.gov). Tagging operations will continue through July 18.

Assessment Projects

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

8.5-Inch Set Gillnet: The cumulative CPUE as of June 22 is 20.75, which is above the historical average of 9.95 for this date for all years, and slightly above the historical average of 19.50 for early years for this date. Please note that calculations for CPUE account for fewer nets being fished compared to previous years. Due to these changes in project operations, the absolute CPUE estimates are difficult to compare to historical data and are not used as an indicator of abundance. Rather, the trend in CPUE at this project from one day to another is being used to evaluate the relative run timing.

In an effort to reduce the number of Chinook salmon taken in the LYTF, the number of set net sites has been reduced from four sites to one site. The Big Eddy set nets in the South Mouth were discontinued after June 6. The set net site in Middle Mouth was fully operational on June 7. It is unlikely the North Mouth site will be used during the 2014 season.

8.25-Inch Drift Gillnet: The cumulative CPUE as of June 22 is 501.35. Since the drift test fishery has not operated as long or as continuously as the set net program, we lack sufficient data to compare early years for the drift net program.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery/ ADF&G, YDFDA

5.5-Inch Drift Gillnet: The cumulative CPUE for summer chum salmon as of June 22 is 5,670.56, which is well above the historical median of 1,061.74 for this date.

Andreafsky River Weir/ USFWS

The Andreafsky River Weir was fully operational as of June 17. The cumulative Chinook salmon passage as of June 22 is 1 Chinook salmon. The summer chum salmon passage as of June 22 is 169 fish which is slightly above the historical median of 165 fish for this date.

Anvik River Sonar/ADFG

The Anvik River Sonar was fully operational as of June 17. The cumulative summer chum salmon passage as of June 22 is approximately 26,200 fish which is well above the historical median of 2,400 fish for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project is estimated at approximately 94,800 salmon as of June 22, which is below the historical cumulative average of approximately 119,800 for early years for this date.

Summer chum salmon passage is estimated at approximately 946,000 fish as of June 22, which is well above the historical median of approximately 417,000 for this date.

Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

As of June 22, the cumulative CPUE for Chinook salmon is estimated at 761.31 which is well above the historical average of 101.30 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for summer chum salmon is estimated at 33.23 which is above the historical median of 0.00 for this date.

Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 20 was 3% age-3, 10% age-4, 70% age-5, and 16% age-6 fish. Females comprised 31% of the 267 sampled. The age-5 percentage was above average, age-6 was below average, and the percent female was below average.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.5-inch LYTF set nets through June 20 was 2% age-4, 54% age-5, 42% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Females comprised 38% of the 313 fish sampled. Similar to Pilot Station test fishery, the LYTF age-5 percentage was above average, age-6 was below average, and the percent female was below average.

The summer chum salmon age composition from the 5.5-inch LYTF drift nets through June 22 was 18% age-4, 75% age-5, and 7% age-6 fish. Females were 58%. The sample size was 823 fish. The age-4 percentage was below average, age-5 was above average, and females were near average.

The summer chum salmon age composition from the beach seine and dip net commercial fishery was 30% age-4, 64% age-5, and 6% age-6 fish. Females were 52%. The sample size was 480 fish.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Management Strategies

Due to the uncertainty associated with the current Chinook salmon run size projection, a conservative management approach will be maintained. Poor escapement in recent years warrant continued caution as the 2014 Chinook salmon run progresses.

Subsistence salmon fishing for Chinook salmon is closed in all mainstem districts in the Yukon River. A subsistence salmon fishing closure has also been implemented on the Koyukuk and Innoko Rivers. Similar conservation actions are expected to be taken in District 6 including the Old Minto Area, as Tanana River stocks begin to build in the district.

Inseason assessment of the summer chum salmon run supports the preseason projection of an average to above average run. Daily fishing periods continue to be provided in Districts 1-3 with dip nets and beach seine gear to target summer chum salmon while requiring the live-release of Chinook salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing opportunity with selective fishing gear is also being provided in District 4, including the Anvik River.

Current Management

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:

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.

District 1 (including the Black River):

Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in District 1 is on the following schedule with dip net and beach seine gear only until further notice:

- Sunday-Friday from 12:00 noon until 12:00 midnight each day
- Saturday from 6:00 a.m. until 12:00 midnight

District 2:

Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in District 2 is on the following schedule with dip net and beach seine gear only until further notice:

- Sunday-Friday from 12:00 noon until 10:00 p.m. each day
- Saturday from 6:00 a.m. until 12:00 midnight

District 3: Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in District 3 is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with dip net gear only.

Fishermen using dip nets or beach seine gear are required to immediately release all Chinook salmon back to the water alive. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Great care must be taken to ensure 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 closed to conserve Chinook salmon in the Innoko River until further notice.

Subdistrict 4-A Lower (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek, including all adjacent tributary rivers and mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling):

Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in the *Anvik River Special Management Area* (which includes the lower 12 miles of the Anvik River) is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with dip nets and beach seine gear only.

Subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in the remainder of Subdistrict 4-A Lower will be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with dip net gear and live-release fish wheels only.

Subsistence dip net and beach seine fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from these gear types. Fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box and closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must also be returned to the water alive.

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 summer chum salmon in Subdistrict 4-A Upper is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with dip net gear and live-release fish wheels only. Subsistence dip net fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from this gear type. Fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box and closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

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 for salmon is currently closed in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C.

Effective 8:00 a.m. Thursday, June 26, subsistence fishing for summer chum salmon in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with dip net gear and live-release fish wheels only. Subsistence dip net fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from this gear type. Fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box and closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence fishing is currently closed to conserve Chinook salmon stocks in the Koyukuk River until further notice.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C: Subsistence fishing for salmon is closed in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C until further notice.

Subdistrict 5-D Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver):

Subsistence fishing for salmon is closed in Subdistrict 5-D Lower until further notice.

Subdistrict 5-D Middle (from the Hadweenzic River upstream to 22 Mile Slough and including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Venetie, Fort Yukon, and Chalkyitsik):

Subsistence fishing for salmon is closed in Subdistrict 5-D Middle until further notice.

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing for salmon is closed in Subdistrict 5-D Upper until further notice.

District 6: 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.

Commercial Fishing:

The preliminary commercial harvest in District 1 and District 2 combined through June 22 is approximately 152,000 summer chum salmon with a reported 3,877 Chinook salmon released alive.

District 1 (including the Black River) Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Commercial summer chum salmon fishing in District 1 is on the following schedule:

- Sunday-Friday from 12:00 noon until 12:00 midnight each day

These will be 12-hour commercial fishing periods that are open concurrent with subsistence fishing times.

District 2 Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Commercial summer chum salmon fishing in District 2 is on the following schedule:

- Sunday-Friday from 12:00 noon until 10:00 p.m. each day

These will be 10-hour commercial fishing periods that are open concurrent with subsistence fishing times.

Subdistrict 4-A Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Summer chum salmon directed commercial fishing opportunity is being provided in Subdistrict 4-A with fish wheels only. Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operations and all Chinook salmon caught in the fish wheels must immediately be released to the water alive. Chinook salmon caught and released must be recorded on a fish ticket

Commercial fishing will be open for seven 24-hour fishing periods, beginning at 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 23.

Period #1: Monday, June 23

Period #2: Tuesday, June 24
Period #3: Wednesday, June 25
Period #4: Thursday, June 26
Period #5: Friday, June 27
Period #6: Saturday, June 28
Period #7: Sunday, June 29

Subdistrict 4-A commercial fishermen will be notified by Saturday, June 28, regarding additional commercial fishing opportunity.

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-