

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
*Jeff Regnart, Director*



---

Contact:  
Jeff Estensen, Area Management Biologist  
Phone: (907) 949-1320  
Fax: (907) 949-1830

Lower Yukon Area Office  
P.O. Box 127  
Emmonak, Alaska 99581  
Date Issued: 7/28/14

#### **2014 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 10**

#### **Fall Update # 1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

#### **Fall Assessment**

The preseason fall chum salmon run projection, based on a historical relationship between summer chum and fall chum salmon runs, is greater than 850,000 fish. This level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and provide for an above average subsistence harvest, personal use, and commercial harvests. Fall chum salmon typically enter the Yukon River in erratic fluctuations with large pulses of fish occurring over several days often followed by several days of lower passage. As a result, inseason abundance projections for fall chum salmon are highly variable until approximately the first quarter to midpoint of the run based on the mainstem Yukon River sonar located near Pilot Station, which, on average, occurs July 31 and August 8 respectively.

A first group of chum salmon entered the Yukon River on the transition date from summer to fall day season (July 16). A second group of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River from July 20-23 and has passed by the mainstem Yukon River sonar site (estimated at 60,000 fish).

The coho salmon run is expected to be average to below average in run size. A few coho salmon have been caught in both the LYTF and mainstem sonar test fishery projects as well as in the commercial fishery. The first quarter and midpoint of the coho salmon run at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project on average occurs on August 16 and August 21 respectively. There is a possibility that both fall chum and coho salmon may be slightly early in run timing.

#### **Summer Assessment**

The Chinook salmon run is coming to an end in the Upper Yukon River. After approximately two weeks of daily passage estimates that were above 2,000 Chinook salmon, Eagle sonar passage counts have rapidly declined over the past few days. The cumulative passage estimate for Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar through July 27 is approximately 55,200 fish. As a result of considerable conservation efforts, the 2014 Chinook salmon run has achieved the upper end of the border escapement objective of 42,500 – 55,000, despite being below average in run size.

The preliminary projection for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon based on cumulative passage at the Eagle sonar project and historical run timing is approximately 59,000. As of July 27, the Chinook salmon run was approximately 95% complete at Circle, which is located in Subdistrict Upper 5-D.

Persistent high water conditions have impacted operations at the escapement monitoring projects on the Gisasa River, Henshaw Creek, Chena River, and Salcha River. At the Chena River, sonar is being used to generate daily estimates of total salmon passage. An analysis will be conducted post season to estimate total passage by species and assess escapement for Chinook and summer chum salmon.

An aerial survey of the Chena River was conducted during a recent break in the weather, and survey counts and species composition were promising. If conditions continue to improve aerial surveys could be flown later in the week on the W. Fork Andreafsky, Nulato, and Anvik Rivers. Additional surveys are also likely to be attempted in the Tanana River drainage.

Summer chum salmon passage through July 18 at the sonar located near Pilot Station was estimated at approximately 1.9 million fish. The Anvik River escapement goal of 350,000 – 700,000 was achieved on July 14, while the cumulative passage estimate of approximately 37,000 summer chum salmon at E.F. Andreafsky River is behind what is necessary to meet the escapement goal of greater than 40,000 fish.

### **Assessment Projects**

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

The project began July 16 at Emmonak. The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through July 27 was 550.59, which is above the historical average of 235.66 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through July 27 was 5.53, which is above the historical average of 0.72 for this date.

#### Andreafsky River Weir/ USFWS

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage as of July 27 is approximately 5,900 Chinook salmon which is above the historical average of approximately 3,700 for this date. The summer chum salmon passage as of July 27 is approximately 37,200 fish which is below the historical median of approximately 42,500 for this date.

#### Gisasa River Weir/ USFWS

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage as of July 13 is 1,570 Chinook salmon which is above the historical average of 1,011 for this date. The summer chum salmon passage as of July 13 is approximately 32,100 fish which is above the historical median of approximately 24,200 for this date. Due too high water the project has concluded operations for the season.

#### Anvik River Sonar/ADFG

The Anvik River sonar project concluded operations on July 26. The preliminary cumulative count was 399,200 summer chum salmon. The current passage level is within the biological escapement goal range of 350,000-700,000 summer chum salmon.

### Mainstem Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project is estimated at approximately 137,000 salmon as of July 27, which is below the historical cumulative average of approximately 195,000 for early years for this date.

Summer chum salmon passage is estimated at approximately 1.9 million fish as of July 18, which is in line with the historical median for this date.

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through July 27 is 112,300 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 100,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through July 27 is 512 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 184 fish for this date.

### Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

As of July 27, the cumulative CPUE for Chinook salmon is estimated at 6,309.36 which is well above the historical average of 2,431.51 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for summer chum salmon is estimated at 2194.78 which is above the historical median of 1395.73 for this date.

### Eagle Sonar/ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on June 27. The project was fully operational as of June 28, approximately three days early. The cumulative estimated passage as of July 27 is approximately 55,200 Chinook salmon which is well above the historical average of 29,700 for this date.

### Stock Identification

Chum salmon genetic samples processed from July 14 through July 18 indicated that summer chum salmon made up approximately 68% of the sample while fall chum salmon represented an estimated 32% of the passage at the mainstem Yukon River sonar for those dates. Overall, the fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 17% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek) and 14% Canadian. The Tanana fall group was negligible at this time.

### **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 and concluded on July 13. Approximately 1,200 summer chum salmon were tagged and released. In addition to the radio tag, summer chum salmon 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](mailto:stephanie.schmidt@alaska.gov) or [sean.larson@alaska.gov](mailto:sean.larson@alaska.gov)).

Tagged summer chum salmon are continuing to migrate upriver. Towers have indicated the fish are spreading through the study area as far upstream as Rapids, Upper Koyukuk (near Indian River), and Chena and Salcha rivers. Fish in the lower reaches are beginning to complete their life cycle and fish in the middle Yukon are currently the most active (Koyukuk, Nulato and Melozitna rivers). Aerial survey flights in the lower and middle Yukon River areas are concentrating on smaller tributaries that are not covered by towers with future surveys to cover the Koyukuk River tributaries.

## **Fall Management Strategies**

Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4 have been placed on their full regulatory subsistence schedules for the fall season. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Beginning 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 29, the use of subsistence drift gillnet gear will be allowed during subsistence salmon fishing periods in the portion of Subdistrict 4-A upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

The remaining upriver subdistricts will transition to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration enters those areas. Subsistence fishermen should stand by for any announcements regarding subsistence fishing.

## **Summer Management Strategies**

The 2014 Chinook salmon run is estimated to be approximately 95% complete through Subdistrict 5-D Middle. As the Chinook salmon run comes to an end in the Upper Yukon, the subsistence salmon fishing closure is being discontinued. Based on migration timing, subsistence fishing opportunities are being provided in each portion of Subdistrict 5-D with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

Furthermore, subsistence salmon fishing gear restrictions are being relaxed in the Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C and in the Koyukuk River. Personal use salmon fishing will be allowed in Subdistrict 6-C now that the vast majority of the run is expected to be approaching the spawning grounds.

## **Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing**

Four commercial fishing periods have been announced in District 1, and two periods in District 2. District 1 commercial fishermen can expect to fish on a Monday and Thursday schedule, while District 2 fishermen can expect to fish on a Wednesday and Sunday schedule. These schedules are intended to allow for commercial harvest while providing windows for fall chum salmon to pass upriver for escapement and subsistence needs. The department may adjust the commercial schedules if necessary to pass more fall chum salmon upriver.

### Preliminary harvest information for District 1:

Period #3: District Y-1 (including Set Net Only Area), 6 hours (4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. July 25), 3,378 fall chum/25,464 lbs. (\$0.60/lb.), 116 coho/664 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.)

Period #4: District Y-1 (including Set Net Only Area), 6 hours (4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. July 28). Currently there is no harvest to report.

### Preliminary harvest information for District 2:

Period #2: District Y-2, 6 hours (2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. July 27),  
5,159 fall chum/39,511 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 268 coho/1,866 lbs.

## **Summer Season Commercial Fishing**

The preliminary commercial harvest in the summer chum directed commercial fishery in District 1 and District 2 combined through July 16 is approximately 427,300 summer chum salmon with a reported 5,440 Chinook salmon released alive and 440 Chinook salmon caught but not sold

### **Subdistrict 4-A Commercial Fishing Schedule**

The summer commercial fishing season in Subdistrict 4-A has closed. The preliminary total commercial harvest in Subdistrict 4-A is 94,600 summer chum salmon with a reported 295 Chinook salmon released alive.

### **Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B**

The cumulative harvest through July 27 is approximately 4,300 summer chum salmon with a reported 187 Chinook salmon released alive.

The requirement that commercial 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 is discontinued. Commercial fishermen may use either set gillnets or fish wheels to target summer chum salmon. Gillnets are restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Commercial fishing is open for one additional 42-hour fishing period, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 28.

Period #6: 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 28, until 12:00 noon Wednesday, July 30.

### **Subsistence Fishing Schedule**

**Coastal District:** Subsistence fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

#### **District 1 (including the Black River) and District 2:**

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial salmon fishing period and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

#### **District 3:**

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

#### **Innoko River:**

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

**Subdistrict 4-A** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, including all adjacent tributary rivers and mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays through 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Beginning 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 29, the use of subsistence drift gillnet gear will be allowed during subsistence salmon fishing periods in the portion of Subdistrict 4-A upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays through 6:00 p.m. Fridays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

**Koyukuk River:**

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

**Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C:**

Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 48-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 29, the requirement to release Chinook salmon alive from fish wheels and the 6-inch or smaller mesh size restriction are being discontinued.

Therefore subsistence fishing will be open from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays with fish wheels or fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

**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 salmon fishing is currently open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

**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 salmon fishing is currently closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 28, the subsistence salmon fishing closure will end in 5-D Middle and will then be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

**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 salmon fishing is currently closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 1, the subsistence salmon fishing closure will end in 5-D Upper and will then be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels must be equipped with a chute or a live box. Fish wheels must

be closely attended while in operation and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive.

Fishermen will be notified by Tuesday, July 29, with an update that will detail when these gear restrictions will be discontinued in each portion of Subdistrict 5-D or if changes to this schedule are necessary.

As a reminder non-salmon species may be harvested using 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60 feet in length during subsistence salmon fishing closures.

**Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B consists of two 42-hour periods each 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.

**Old Minto Area:**

Subsistence salmon fishing in The Old Minto Area will be open from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

As a reminder non-salmon species may be harvested using 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60 feet in length during subsistence salmon fishing closures.

**Subdistricts 6-C** (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 in Subdistrict 6-C is currently closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 28, personal use salmon fishing in Subdistrict 6-C will reopen and return to the normal schedule which consists of two 42-hour periods each 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.

Please note: Fishermen planning to personal use fish for whitefish and sucker in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, are required to contact the Fairbanks Fish and Game office to obtain a Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker permit.

**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-