

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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



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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  
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#### **2014 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 27**

#### **Fall Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

#### **Fall Assessment**

Fall chum salmon typically enter Yukon River in erratic fluctuations with large pulses of fish occurring over several days often followed by several days of lower passage. To date six pulses have entered the Yukon River, the first three were relatively small each with less than 75,000 fall chum salmon. Then a lull in passage occurred while winds were blowing offshore the first two weeks in August. Two larger pulses entered on August 13 and August 18-19 estimated at 92,000 and 251,000 fall chum salmon respectively with an additional pulse of fall chum salmon entering on August 25.

At this time, this level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and provide for an above average subsistence harvest, personal use, and commercial harvests. The current fall chum salmon inseason projection and the preseason run projection, based on a historical relationship between summer chum and fall chum salmon runs both indicate a run size of greater than 850,000 fish.

In season run assessment of coho salmon indicates an average to above average run size. Coho salmon have been entering Yukon River in good numbers and their passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station is well above the median. The three quarter point of the coho salmon run at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station on average occurs on August 26.

#### **Fall Season Assessment Projects**

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

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through August 25 was 2,321.56, which is above the historical average of 1,199.36 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 25 was 594.87, which is above the historical average of 292.23 for this date.

#### Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council and BSFA

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through August 24 was 1,140.12, which is below the historical median of 1,634.23. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 24 was 457.35, which is below the historical average of 662.23 for this date.

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

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 24 is approximately 601,600 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 481,200 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 24 is approximately 147,800 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 86,100 fish for this date.

#### Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

The Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel began counting fall chum salmon on August 3. The cumulative CPUE as of August 24 is 11,986 chum salmon which is above the historical median of 9,586 fish for this date. The estimate adjusted for water levels is nine times greater than the median for this date and near average for this date.

#### Chandalar River Sonar/USFWS

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 24 is approximately 47,600 fish which is well above the median of 17,100 fish for that date.

#### Eagle Sonar/ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began counting fall chum on August 13. The cumulative estimated passage as of August 24 is approximately 5,200 fall chum salmon which is above the historical median of 850 for this date.

#### Manley Test Fish Wheel/ADF&G

The test fish wheel operated near Manley on the Tanana River as part of the sonar project began counting chum salmon August 9. The cumulative chum salmon CPUE for the project through August 24 was 1,186, which is above the historical average of 759 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 24 was 40, which is above the historical average of 8 for this date.

#### Stock Identification

Results from the genetics samples taken from August 7 through August 17 indicated fall chum salmon represented approximately 95% of the passage at the mainstem Yukon River sonar for those dates. Overall, the fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 26% Chandalar/Sheenjek stocks, 38% Canadian stocks, and 32% Tanana fall stocks. Chum salmon genetic samples for the time period August 18-August 24 were sent to the laboratory and analysis should be available before the end of the week.

#### Age Composition Fall Season

The fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets through August 22 was 50% age-4 and 46% age-5 fish while proportions of age-3 and age-6 are less than 4%. The average proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 66% and 32% respectively for this date. Females represent 59% which is average for this date. The sample size was 812 for gender and 809 fish for ages.

The proportion of females in the District 1 commercial catch samples through August 19 was 65% and the dominant age class was 65% 4-year olds and 33% age-5 coho salmon. The sample size was 640 fish for ages and 637 for gender from the commercial catch.

Coho salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets through August 19 was 12.5% age-3, 80% age-4 and 7% age-5. The average proportion of age-3, age-4 and age-5 is 15%, 77%, and 5% respectively. Females represent 51% in the 253 fish sampled compared to the average of 44% for this date. District 1 commercial samples for periods on August 15 and August 19 were composed of 49% female and 80% age-4 coho salmon.

### **Summer Chum Salmon Radiotelemetry Project – Russian Mission**

Tagging operations for the summer chum salmon radio telemetry 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 with a white spaghetti tag located at the base of the dorsal fin for identification purposes. If a tagged 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. Data analysis will be ongoing through the winter and updates on the project will be provided at various fisheries meetings. If you have any further questions about the project feel free to 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)).

### **Fall Season Management Strategies**

Subsistence: The department anticipates all districts remaining on their current schedules for the remainder of the fall season.

Commercial Fisheries: Seven commercial fishing periods have been announced in District 1, and six periods in District 2. Fishermen in each district should stand by for further commercial announcements, and be prepared for short notice openings.

Commercial fishing will be open for one period in District 1 on Monday, August 25 from 12:00 noon until 9:00 p.m. This will be a 9-hour commercial fishing period with gillnets restricted to six-inch or smaller mesh.

Commercial fishing in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C is on a 5 day per week schedule from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays. There is currently no buyer operating in either subdistrict. Commercial fishermen must confirm their buyer prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Commercial fishing in District 6 is on a two 42-hour period per week schedule from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays. However, there are no buyers anticipated to be operating in District 6 after August 27. Commercial fishermen must confirm their buyer prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

## **Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing**

### Preliminary harvest information for District 1:

Period #6: 6 hours, 178 permit holders; 10,011 fall chum/74,039 lbs and 20,925 coho salmon/144,392 lbs.

The total cumulative commercial harvest in District 1 is 37,543 fall chum salmon and 25,647 coho salmon.

### Preliminary harvest information for District 2:

Period #6: 4 hours, 147 permit holders; 2,576 fall chum/17,653 lbs and 10,157 coho salmon/68,828 lbs.

The total cumulative commercial harvest in District 2 is 50,262 fall chum salmon and 33,198 coho salmon.

### Preliminary harvest information for Subdistricts 5-A and 5-B:

The total cumulative commercial harvest in Subdistricts 5-A and 5-B is 1,264 fall chum/9,477 lbs.

### Preliminary harvest information for Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B and 6-C:

Period #1: 343 fall chum/2,298 lbs and 63 coho salmon/296 lbs.

## **Subsistence Fishing Schedule**

**Coastal District:** Subsistence 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.

### **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:**

For the entire District 3 including the 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.

### **District 4:**

For the entire District 4 including the Koyukuk River, subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

The use of subsistence **drift gillnet gear** is allowed in the portion of Subdistrict 4-A upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek.

### **District 5:**

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.

Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the

portion of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the Dall River and from the upstream mouth of 22-Mile Slough to the US/Canada Border. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit area are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks.

**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 less.

**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 open on 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. Gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less are allowed.

Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in all of District 6 and the Upper Tanana Area.

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.

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.

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