

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2014 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 36

Fall Update # 6, 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 the final pulse of fall chum salmon occurred spread over three days from August 25-27 and was estimated to be only 42,000 fish.

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 indicates 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.

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 31 was 2,480.74, which is above the historical average of 1,249.15 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 31 was 667.90, which is above the historical average of 317.09 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council and BSFA

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through September 1 was 1,176.53, which is below the historical median of 1,849.76. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through September 1 was 612.32, which is below the historical average of 883.47 for this date.

Mainstem Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 1 is approximately 644,200 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 605,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through September 1 is approximately 216,700 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 122,600 fish for this date.

Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

The project began counting fall chum salmon on August 3 based on flesh color. The cumulative CPUE from July 21 through September 1 is 15,952 chum salmon which is above the historical median of 13,624 fish for this date. The estimate adjusted for water levels is below average for this date.

Chandalar River Sonar/USFWS

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through September 1 is approximately 71,000 fish which is well above the median of 42,800 fish for that date.

Mainstem Sonar Project near Eagle/ADF&G & DFO

The mainstem sonar near Eagle began counting fall chum salmon on August 13. The cumulative estimated passage as of September 1 is approximately 18,000 fall chum salmon which is above the historical median of 5,500 for this date.

Upper Porcupine River Sonar/DFO

The mainstem sonar project located downstream of Old Crow and upstream of the U.S./Canada border began counting fall chum salmon on August 12. This startup date allowed estimation of the early group of fish. The cumulative estimated passage through August 31 is approximately 6,400 fall chum salmon.

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 September 1 was 1,865, which is below the historical average of 2,600 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through September 1 was 319, which is above the historical average of 91 for this date.

Stock Identification

Results from the genetics samples taken from August 18 through August 24 indicated fall chum salmon represented approximately 96% of the passage at the mainstem Yukon River sonar for those dates. Overall, the fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 29% Chandalar/Sheenjek stocks, 27% Canadian stocks, and 39% Tanana fall stocks. Most likely the last strata of genetics from August 25 through September 7 will contain high proportions (>50%) of fall chum salmon bound for the Tanana River.

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 or 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: The fall chum salmon directed commercial fishery in Districts 1 and 2 closed by regulation after August 31. The 2014 Yukon Area coho salmon run appears to be well above average based on assessment projects. Providing a coho salmon directed commercial fishery in District 1 is warranted based on coho salmon run strength. By regulation, a coho salmon directed commercial fishery can occur from September 1 through September 10. Fishermen in District 1 should stand by for further commercial announcements. There is currently no buyer operating in Y-2 and the department does not anticipate any further commercial openings in that district for the remainder of the season.

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. There is currently no buyer operating in District 6. 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 #10: 9 hours, 107 permit holders; 1,534 fall chum/11,125 lbs and 3,017 coho salmon/20,900 lbs.

The total cumulative commercial harvest in District 1 is 50,977 fall chum salmon and 51,896 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 Districts 6:

The total cumulative commercial harvest in Districts 6 is 529 fall chum/3,543 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 is 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. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

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 Fairbanks at 459-7274.

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