

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2015 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 2
2015 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2015 Chinook salmon run is expected to range from poor to below average. Continued conservation measures will be necessary to meet escapement objectives. This information sheet describes the anticipated management strategies for the 2015 salmon fishing season.

2015 Run and Harvest Outlook for Yukon River Salmon

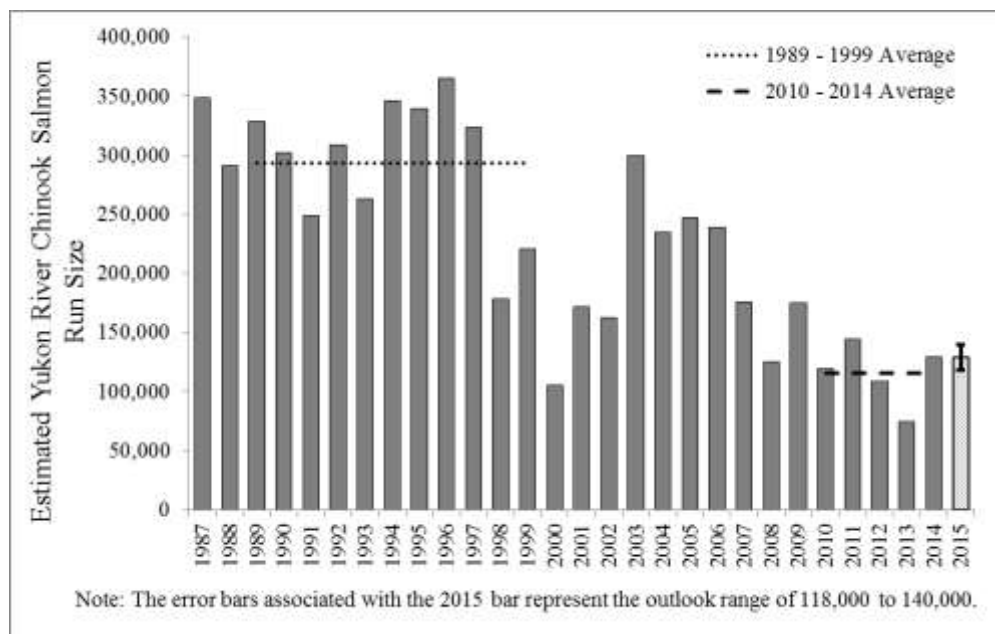
	Chinook	Summer Chum	Fall Chum	Coho
Projection:	Poor	Average to above average	Average to above average	Average to below average
Escapement:	Potential to meet most goals	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goals
Subsistence:	Fishery restrictions necessary	Expect to provide for normal harvest	Expect to provide for normal harvest	Expect to provide for normal harvest
Commercial:	No fishery anticipated	800,000 to 1,400,000 potentially available for harvest	250,000 to 470,000 potentially available for harvest	60,000 to 80,000 potentially available for harvest

Management Strategies

- Before Chinook salmon enter the river, subsistence fishing opportunity for non-salmon species will be provided and gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.
- As the Chinook salmon run begins to build, subsistence salmon fishing will close chronologically in each district based on the migration timing of Chinook salmon swimming upriver. The closure is expected to be in place to protect each of the Chinook salmon pulses. Fishermen in the Coastal District, Koyukuk, Innoko, and Tanana Rivers should also expect some closed fishing time to protect Chinook salmon in those areas.
- During subsistence salmon fishing closures, non-salmon species may be harvested using 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length. However, targeting of Chinook salmon with this gear type will not be allowed. This opportunity to harvest non-salmon will be reduced or discontinued if this gear is used to target Chinook salmon.
- When summer chum salmon become abundant, subsistence and commercial fishing opportunities will be provided with selective gear such as dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels that require the immediate and careful release of all Chinook salmon alive.
- Fishermen are strongly encouraged to avoid fishing when and where Chinook salmon may be encountered. Subsistence restrictions will be relaxed after the majority of the Chinook salmon run has passed through each section of river in order to harvest other species.
- If confidence is high that the Chinook salmon run is within the pre-season outlook range and escapement goals are likely to be met, the use of 6-inch gillnets may be considered to allow the selective harvest of summer chum salmon and small Chinook salmon between pulses when incidental catches of Chinook salmon would be expected to be low.
- The sport fishery for Chinook salmon will be closed throughout the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage, excluding the Tanana River drainage. Chinook salmon may not be retained or possessed. Restrictions for the Tanana River drainage will be announced in early June.
- The fall chum salmon run is anticipated to be of sufficient size to provide for full subsistence opportunity with a surplus for commercial harvest.
- The fall chum salmon commercial fishery is expected to begin in the Lower Yukon Area in the middle of July.

The 2015 Chinook salmon outlook is for a run size range of 118,000 to 140,000. This range is similar in size to the run observed in 2014 and requires subsistence harvest restrictions in order to assure minimum escapement objectives are met. As in recent years, initial management will be based on the expectation that the 2015 Chinook salmon run size will likely be near the lower end of this range. However, management strategies may change based on inseason run assessment information.

The following chart shows the historical estimated Chinook salmon total run size in the Yukon River, illustrating the drastic decline in production beginning in 1998. The cause of this drop in production remains largely unknown.



For 2015, the US/Canada Yukon River Panel agreed to continue Interim Management Escapement Goals (IMEG) in Canada of 42,500-55,000 Chinook salmon and 70,000-104,000 fall chum salmon based upon the Eagle sonar program. If escapement objectives are expected to be met and there is a surplus of Chinook salmon and fall chum salmon, additional Chinook and fall chum salmon will need to cross the border to fulfill harvest sharing commitments specified in the US/Canada Yukon River Agreement. The Fishing Branch River IMEG of 22,000-49,000 fall chum salmon is based upon the historical weir data. However, the Porcupine River Chum Salmon production has been consistently underperforming other Yukon River fall chum salmon stocks, so fishery managers will work with fishermen along the Porcupine River on exploring opportunities to conserve chum salmon in the local area.

For additional information:

Subsistence fishing schedule: 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call 907-459-7387.

ADF&G: Stephanie Schmidt, Anchorage 907-267-2217; Jeff Estensen, Fairbanks 907-459-7217; or contact the Emmonak office 907-949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office is expected to be open by May 30.

USFWS: Fred Bue, Fairbanks 907-455-1849 or 1-800-267-3997; or contact the Emmonak office 907-949-1798.

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