

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Jeff Estensen, Area Management Biologist
Christy Gleason, Assistant Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 459-7217
Fax: (907) 459-7271

Fairbanks Area Office
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

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2015 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 41

Fall Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Assessment

The 2015 fall chum salmon inseason run projection is for a run size between 700,000 and 800,000 fish. This level of abundance is adequate to meet escapement and subsistence needs and provide for a commercial harvest. Inseason assessment is currently in line with the estimated run size for fall chum salmon. The coho salmon inseason run projection is for a run size greater than 200,000 fish which is above average.

As of August 31, the pulses should be at the following locations. The first fall chum salmon pulse should be approaching the communities of Carmack and Old Crow in the Yukon Territory after entering the Yukon River on July 18 and was estimated to be 118,000 fish in size. Two smaller groups of approximately 44,000 and 31,000 fall chum salmon passed the mainstem sonar by July 31 and August 6, respectively, and should be between Circle and Eagle. The fourth and largest pulse was estimated to be 127,000 fall chum salmon and should be approaching the Rapids - Rampart area. A fifth pulse of approximately 52,300 fall chum salmon is approaching Kaltag, and a sixth pulse of 52,400 fall chum salmon is approaching Holy Cross.

The fall season is drawing to a close in the lower river as the last day of operation for the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station is August 31. However, the fall chum salmon run is well under way in the upper portion of Yukon River as the Rapids test fish wheel approaches the midpoint of the run, fall chum salmon passage past the Chandalar River sonar approaches the first quarter point, and fall chum salmon passage is continuing to be counted at the mainstem Yukon River sonar near Eagle.

Fall Season Assessment Projects/OperatorsLower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing/ADF&G, YDFDA

The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 30 was 1,228.09 for fall chum salmon, which is near the historical median of 1,245.80 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 460.62, which is slightly above the historical median of 348.47 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through August 23 was 1,754.66, which is near the historical median of 1,761.76 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 30 was 1,473.21, which is above the historical median of 817.54 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 30 was 540,217, which is below the median passage of approximately 617,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 30 was 93,979, which is below the median passage of approximately 117,000 fish for this date.

Rapids Video Test Fish/Zuray

The cumulative CPUE from July 21 through August 30 is 13,617 chum salmon which is near the historical median of 13,051 fish for this date. The estimate adjusted for water levels is slightly below average for this date.

Chandalar River Sonar/USFWS

The project began counting on August 8 and the cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 21 is approximately 12,200 fish which is below the median of 15,500 fish for this date. High water has prevented the project from operating over the past week.

Mainstem Sonar at Eagle/ADF&G and DFO

The project transitioned to counting fall chum salmon as of August 13. Passage through August 30 is 4,797 fall chum salmon which is near the median of 3,719 for this date.

Upper Porcupine River Sonar/DFO

The sonar project began operations on August 10 the estimated chum salmon passage is 1,759 through August 21, this level of passage is similar to 2014, the only other year this project started this early (August 12). Project data has not been available for the past week.

Stock Identification/USFWS

The genetic strata from August 17-24, representing the fifth group of fish to enter the river contained approximately 16% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 40% Canadian and the Tanana fall component increased to 40%.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

The preliminary fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the fish are dominated by age-4 fish, which is typical, however the age-4 component is weaker than expected. The proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish to date is 58% and 31% respectively compared to the average of 66% age-4 and 32% age-5 fish. Females represent 63% of the fish sampled, which is

above the average of 58% for this date. The sample size is 876 fish for ages and 894 for sex. The proportion of females in the District 1 commercial catch samples through August 27 was 50% and included 7% 3-year olds, 53% 4-year olds, and 38% 5-year olds. The sample size was 692 fish for ages and 686 for sex from the commercial catch.

Fall Season Management Strategies

As a result of the severe Chinook salmon restrictions put in place in the Yukon Area this season, opportunity to harvest fall chum salmon for subsistence use has been increased to ease the hardships caused by these restrictions. Therefore, subsistence fishing has been liberalized to seven days a week in all of District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C in light of the conservation efforts for Chinook salmon this season.

Subsistence Fishing Schedules:

Coastal District:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets.

District 1 (including the Black River):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets 24 hours a day, seven days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after a commercial fishing period.

District 2:

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets 24 hours a day, seven days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after a commercial fishing period.

District 3:

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets.

Innoko River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to the tip of Cone Point, which includes the mainstem Yukon River villages of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is open seven days per week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size up to 7.5 inches. Subsistence fishermen fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A (upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek) can continue using drift gillnet gear during fall season subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point upstream along the north bank of the river to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open seven days per week, 24 hours per day, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

Koyukuk River:

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

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek to the ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately two miles downstream of Waldron Creek, including the communities of Tanana and Rampart as well as the area near the Yukon River bridge area):

Subsistence fishing is open seven days per week, 24 hours per day, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 5-D is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size up to 7.5 inches.

Subsistence salmon fishing in the mainstem Porcupine River is closed for the remainder of the fall season. During this closure, fishermen may fish for **non-salmon species** using gear with a mesh size of 4 inches or less. Tributaries such as the Sheenjek, Black, Coleen, and Salmon Trout Rivers remain open.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 p.m. noon Sundays. The Kantishna River is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week for subsistence salmon fishing.

Fishermen in Subdistricts 6-A, including the Kantishna River, and 6-B may use fish wheels or gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open five days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets or fish wheels.

Subdistrict 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 is currently open for two 42-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 p.m. noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesdays. Fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets or fish wheels. Chinook salmon caught in gillnets or fish wheels may be retained for personal use.

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): Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing

The fall season commercial season is drawing to a close in the lower river. The department anticipates two additional commercial periods in each District on Wednesday, September 2, and Friday September 4. The department does not anticipate any additional commercial periods in Districts 1 and 2 after September 4.

Two commercial fishing periods have taken place in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers interested in operating in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C should notify the department by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

The fall commercial season is open in District 6. Two additional commercial periods were announced in District 6 August 28 through September 2. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers interested in operating in District 6 should notify the department by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

District 1 including the Set Net Only Area Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Period #11: 9-hour period in the drift area and set net only area, August 27, with a harvest of 7,599 fall chum and 13,472 coho salmon.

Period #12: 6-hour period in the drift area and set net only area, August 30, with a harvest of 1,000 fall chum and 1,594 coho salmon.

The cumulative commercial harvest in District 1 through August 30 is 99,822 fall chum salmon and 64,298 coho salmon.

District 2 Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Period #11: 6-hour period, August 28, with a preliminary harvest of 10,961 fall chum salmon and 7,790 coho salmon.

Period #12: 6-hour period, August 31. No harvest reports available at this time.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 2 through August 28 is 69,386 fall chum salmon and 43,426 coho salmon.

District 6 Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Period #2: 42-hour period August 24-August 26, with a preliminary harvest of 32 fall chum salmon and 3 coho salmon.

Period #3: 42-hour period August 28-August 30. No harvest reports available at this time.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements are 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 ADF&G office in Anchorage for summer season questions at 267-2217.

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