

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2016 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release #1

Board of Fisheries Actions: Yukon Area Regulatory Changes

Districts Affected: Yukon River Area

YUKON AREA REGULATORY CHANGES

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) recently met in Fairbanks from January 12 to January 16 to consider regulatory fisheries proposals concerning the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim areas. The board considered several proposals for the Yukon Area including, but not limited to, salmon management plans, allowable commercial and subsistence fishing gear, expanding commercial fishing areas and species, and resident species subsistence and personal use regulations. The following is a summary of the regulatory changes that were adopted and will be effective for the 2016 fishing season.

STOCK OF CONCERN STATUS

The board continued the stock of yield concern designation for Yukon River king salmon.

YUKON MANAGEMENT PLANS

Proposals 108 and 109 were submitted by Kwik'pak Fisheries and the Alaska Department of Fish and game (henceforth the department), respectively. Both of these proposals sought to lower the management triggers in the *Yukon River Summer Chum Salmon Management Plan* based upon a drainagewide escapement goal analysis (500,000–1,200,000 summer chum salmon) by the department. Under the new trigger points, subsistence fishing may occur at projected run sizes above 500,000 fish; up to 50,000 fish may be harvested commercially when the projected run size is more than 650,000 fish but less than 750,000 fish; and a drainagewide commercial

fishery may be opened above a projected run size of 750,000 fish. Sport fishing and personal-use may be allowed for run sizes above 650,000. **Proposal 108 passed 6-1 with these new management triggers. Therefore, given the overlapping intent with the two proposals, no action was taken on Proposal 109.**

Proposal 110 was submitted by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The proposal sought to increase the *Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan* fishing trigger point to 600,000 fish. The proposal was amended by the board to increase the trigger point to 550,000 fish. Under the new regulation, fall chum salmon directed commercial fishing can only occur when fall chum salmon runs are projected to be greater than 550,000 fish. **Proposal passed 4-3 as amended.**

YUKON SUBSISTENCE

Proposal 116 was submitted by the Tanana Rampart Manley Fish and Game Advisory Committee. The proposal would eliminate holding of a salmon caught in fish wheels in liveboxes prior to live release. Under new regulations, fish wheel operators must closely attend their fish wheel while it is in operation and must release specified salmon to the water alive in times of conservation. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

Proposal 118 was submitted by the department. The proposal would establish beach seine specifications for subsistence salmon fishing in the Yukon Area. The proposal was amended to 4-inches stretched measure to minimize gilling of smaller fish such as ciscoes. Under new regulations, beach seines used for subsistence salmon fishing may not exceed 150 fathoms in length, 100 meshes in depth, and 4-inches stretched measure. Additionally, the proposal was amended to include a specification that beach seines may not be constructed of single-strand or multiple-strand monofilament web. **Proposal passed 7-0 as amended.**

Proposal 119 was submitted by the department. The proposal would require the live release of king salmon from subsistence beach seines during times of king salmon conservation. Under new regulations, the live release of king salmon is now required for both subsistence and commercial beach seines. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

Proposal 121 was submitted by the department. The proposal would expand the area of allowable subsistence drift gillnet fishing for chum salmon in Subdistrict 4-A of the Yukon Area. Under new regulations, drift gillnetting for summer chum salmon may be allowed in all of Subdistrict 4-A by emergency order only from June 10 to August 2. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

YUKON COMMERCIAL

Proposal 122 was submitted by the department. The proposal sought to modify the Yukon Area commercial set gillnet length specification to an aggregate length standard. Under new regulations, commercial fishermen will be allowed to use multiple set gillnets with a combined total length of 150 fathoms. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

Proposal 123 was submitted by the department. The proposal would establish beach seine specifications for commercial summer chum salmon fishing in the Yukon Area. The proposal was amended to 4-inches stretched measure to minimize gilling of smaller fish such as ciscoes. Under new regulations, beach seines used for commercial fishing may not exceed 150 fathoms in length, 100 meshes in depth, and 4-inches stretched measure. Additionally, the proposal was amended to include a specification that beach seines may not be constructed of single-strand or multiple-strand monofilament web. **Proposal passed 7-0 as amended.**

Proposal 124 was submitted by the department. The proposal would allow the use of 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets in the commercial salmon fishery in District 6 of the upper Yukon Area by emergency order. Under new regulations, the department can restrict gillnets in the District 6 commercial fishery to 6 inches or less stretched measure during periods established by emergency order. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

Proposal 125 was submitted by the Kwik'pak Fisheries. The proposal sought to establish gillnet specifications for a pink salmon directed commercial fishery in the Yukon River. The proposal was amended such that a pink salmon directed commercial fishery may occur in District 1 of the Yukon River from June 15 to July 31 using gillnets that do not exceed 4.75-inches stretched measure. A pink salmon commercial fishery may only occur if a harvestable surplus of pink salmon is sufficient for subsistence use and if chum salmon escapement goals are expected to be achieved. **Proposal passed 7-0 as amended.**

Proposal 128 was submitted by Kwik'pak Fisheries. The proposal sought to expand the commercial fishing area in Yukon Area District 1 from its current terminus at Apoon Pass to Point Romanof. In addition, the proposal sought to expand the current boundary from the current one mile from any grassland bank to three miles. Under new regulations, the District 1 commercial boundaries extend from its terminus at the Black River to its terminus at Point Romanof and includes marine waters that extend from any grassland bank to three miles. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

AYK RESIDENT SPECIES SUBSISTENCE AND PERSONAL USE

Proposal 142 was submitted by Jack Reakoff. The proposal sought to modify the dates gillnet

gear may be used for subsistence fishing in the South and Middle Forks of the Koyukuk River. New regulations allow the use of gillnet gear in those areas from August 30 through June 1.

Proposal passed 7-0.

Proposal 143 was submitted by Marv Hassebroek. The proposal sought to reduce the subsistence bag and possession limit of northern pike in the Chatanika River drainage and prohibit the retention of northern pike over 30 inches in length. The proposal was amended to only close an area of the Chatanika River to subsistence fishing for northern pike. Under new regulations, that portion of the Chatanika River from its confluence with Goldstream Creek to a point three miles upriver is closed to the subsistence taking of northern pike through the ice. No changes to the bag and possession limits were adopted, nor were any size restrictions adopted. **Proposal passed 7-0 as amended. As the 2016 subsistence fishery has already begun, subsistence fishermen in this area will be notified by the department when this regulation goes into effect.**

Proposal 144 was submitted by Jack Wholecheese. The proposal sought to allow the use of gillnets across entire channels in portions of the Koyukuk River drainage until June 15 for the purpose of targeting northern pike. The proposal was amended such that in Racetrack Slough of the Koyukuk River and in the sloughs of the Huslia River drainage, from when each river is free of ice through June 15, the offshore end of the gillnet may not be closer than twenty feet from the opposite bank, unless closed by emergency order. **Proposal passed 4-3 as amended.**

Proposal 145 was submitted by the department. The proposal sought to allow the retention of northern pike in the Yukon Area Subdistrict 6-C personal use area. Under new regulation, personal use salmon fishermen in Subdistrict 6-C may now retain incidentally caught northern pike. **Proposal passed 7-0.**

Meeting summary, recorded audio, and meeting documents may be found on the Board of Fisheries website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main>

Any questions regarding these regulatory changes can be directed to either Stephanie Schmidt (907) 267-2217 in Anchorage or Jeff Estensen (907) 459-7217 in Fairbanks.

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