

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2016 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 27

Summer Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Assessment

Based on sonar and run timing estimates, the 2016 Chinook salmon run is on track to be within the preseason outlook range of 130,000 to 175,000 fish and the 2016 summer chum salmon run is on track to be near the upper end of the preseason outlook range of 1.3 to 1.8 million fish. The current run size projection estimates indicate the Chinook salmon run is strong enough to meet escapement objectives and provide limited incidental harvest with six-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

As of June 20, the first Chinook salmon caught in the LYTF should have passed by Circle and the first summer chum salmon should be in the Koyukuk River and beyond Tanana. The first pulse of approximately 23,000 Chinook salmon lasted 4 days at the sonar project near Pilot Station and should be passing Koyukuk on June 20. A second 3-day pulse of approximately 33,000 Chinook salmon closely followed the first pulse and should be near Grayling on June 20. The first pulse of approximately 395,000 summer chum salmon lasted six days at the sonar project and should be between Holy Cross and Anvik on June 20. While passage estimates for Chinook and summer chum salmon at the sonar have dropped off slightly since June 17, we expect to see daily passage estimates increase for both species by June 21 based on increased catches at the LYTF. The historical median for early run Chinook and summer chum salmon at the sonar is June 19 and June 25, respectively.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon past the sonar project near Pilot Station (May 30 to June 14) estimated 52% of the fish were of Canadian-origin, which is slightly above expectations for Chinook salmon runs during even years. For more information about Yukon River inseason genetic MSA, please visit the ADF&G

Gene Conservation Laboratory website at:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook_baseline

Fishermen are reminded that the Yukon River Inseason Salmon Management Teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Alaska time. Dial (800) 315-6338, and enter participant code: YUKON #.

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) / ADF&G and YDFDA

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnets at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites combined as of June 19 is 20.27, which is above the historical average of 16.90. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE at the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site as of June 19 is 347.64, which is above the historical average of 196.23. The combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gill net at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites as of June 19 is 4,421.83, which is well above the historical median of 1,638.30 for this date.

Operations at the LYTF for both Chinook and summer chum salmon have been altered from previous years so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. All healthy Chinook salmon are released alive from the test nets and injured salmon will be distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils. Fewer set net sites are being fished than in the past to reduce Chinook salmon mortality.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since 1995. The project is operating well and has not experienced any major issues from debris or equipment malfunction. Chinook salmon passage as of June 19 is estimated to be 76,713 fish which is above the historical cumulative average of 52,313 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage as of June 19 is estimated to be 552,873 fish which is well above the historical cumulative median of 219,544 summer chum salmon for this date.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 16. Summer chum salmon passage as of June 19 is estimated to be 8,458, which is above the historical cumulative median of 998 for this date. The biological escapement goal for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations on June 17, which is one of the earliest start dates since 1995. Summer chum salmon passage as of June 19 is estimated to be 139 fish, which is above the historical median of 17 for this date.

Management Strategies

Closures for subsistence Chinook salmon fishing have been implemented from the Northern Portion of the Coastal District up through District 5, based on historical migratory timing, in order to protect the early fish and first pulse of Chinook salmon as they make their way upriver.

Subsistence gillnet fishing periods consistent with a reduced regulatory schedule have begun in Districts 1 through 4 and will continue upriver based on migratory timing. The intent of these gillnet openings is to provide fishermen opportunity to more efficiently meet their subsistence needs for summer chum salmon while providing some limited harvest of Chinook salmon that are likely to be smaller, younger fish as a result of the 6-inch mesh restriction.

The 2016 summer chum salmon run is expected to be average to above average so liberal summer chum salmon subsistence fishing with selective gear types that allow the live-release of Chinook salmon has been provided in Districts 1 through 5-C. Summer chum salmon commercial fishing periods are also continuing with dip net and beach seine gear in Districts 1 and 2.

General Management Reminders:

- When subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon is closed, fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from dip nets, beach seines, and fish wheels. Fish wheel users must closely attend their wheels and immediately release Chinook salmon alive from the livebox. The requirement to release Chinook salmon alive from all selective gears will be strictly enforced.
- Beach seine gear may not exceed 150 fathoms in length, 100 meshes in depth, and 4-inches stretched measure. Beach seines may not be constructed of monofilament webbing. All Chinook salmon must be released alive from beach seine gear.
- During subsistence salmon fishing closures in the Yukon Area, gillnets 4-inch or smaller mesh of 60 feet or shorter length may be used for non-salmon species. All salmon caught in 4-inch gillnets may be retained but fishermen may not target salmon as this gear is intended for non-salmon species. If it is determined that fishermen are using gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh size to target Chinook salmon during Chinook salmon closures, enforcement may seize this gear and the opportunity to use 4-inch gillnets to target non-salmon may be removed.

Current Management

Southern Portion of the Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets until further notice.

Northern Portion of the Coastal District (from 62 degrees North latitude to Point Romanof and including all state marine waters):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice.

District 1 (including the Black River):

Effective 8:00 p.m. Monday, June 20, the subsistence dip net and beach seine fishery is closed.

Effective 8:00 p.m. Monday, June 20, subsistence salmon fishing will be open for two 18-hour periods with 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets:

- 8:00 p.m. Monday, June 20, until 2:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 21
- 8:00 p.m. Thursday, June 23, until 2:00 p.m. Friday, June 24

Chinook salmon caught in gillnets may be retained for subsistence use. Between the fishing periods subsistence salmon fishing is closed.

District 2:

Effective 8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 19, the subsistence dip net and beach seine fishery is closed.

Effective 8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 19, subsistence salmon fishing will be open for two 18-hour periods with 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets:

- 8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 19, until 2:00 p.m. Monday, June 20
- 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, until 2:00 p.m. Thursday, June 23

Chinook salmon caught in gillnets may be retained for subsistence use. Between the fishing periods subsistence salmon fishing is closed.

District 3: Currently, subsistence fishing with dip nets and beach seine gear is open for 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon. Chinook salmon caught in dip nets and beach seines must be released alive.

Effective 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, the subsistence dip net and beach seine fishery is closed.

Effective 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, subsistence salmon fishing will be open for two 18-hour periods with 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets:

- 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, until 2:00 p.m. Thursday, June 23
- 8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 26, until 2:00 p.m. Monday, June 27

Chinook salmon caught in gillnets may be retained for subsistence use. Between the fishing periods subsistence salmon fishing is closed.

Innoko River: Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 20, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. This gear restriction will be in place until further notice.

Subdistrict 4-A Lower (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling including all tributaries):

Currently, subsistence summer chum salmon fishing in the lower portion of Subdistrict 4-A is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with selective gear including dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels only. Any Chinook salmon caught in these gear types must be immediately released to the water alive. The selective gear fishing season will be discontinued effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, subsistence salmon fishing will be open for two 24-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels until further notice on the following schedule:

- 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays
- 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Mondays

All salmon caught in gillnets and fish wheels may be retained for subsistence use. Drift and set gillnets are allowed in all of Subdistrict 4-A during subsistence salmon openings. A set gillnet may not exceed 150 fathoms and a drift gillnet may not exceed 25 fathoms in length.

Subdistrict 4-A Upper: (from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Currently, subsistence summer chum salmon fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with selective gear including dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels only. Any Chinook salmon caught in these selective gear types must be immediately released to the water alive. The selective gear fishing season is being discontinued effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 27.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 27, subsistence salmon fishing will be open for two 24-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels until further notice on the following schedule:

- 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays
- 6:00 p.m. Thursdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays

All salmon caught in gillnets and fish wheels may be retained for subsistence use. Drift and set gillnets are allowed in all of Subdistrict 4-A during subsistence salmon openings. A set gillnet may not exceed 150 fathoms and a drift gillnet may not exceed 25 fathoms in length.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 20, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. This gear restriction will be in place until further notice.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek upstream 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):

Subsistence fishing is currently open with dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon.

Fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from dip nets, beach seines, and fish wheels. Fishermen must closely attend the fish wheel and Chinook salmon must be immediately released alive from the livebox.

Subdistrict 5-D Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver):

Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 5-D Lower is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with fish wheels or 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets to conserve Chinook salmon. Chinook salmon may be retained from both of these gear types.

Subdistrict 5-D Middle (from the Hadweenzic River upstream to 22 Mile Slough and including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Venetie, Chalkyitsik and Fort Yukon):

Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 5-D Middle is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, subsistence fishing for salmon in Subdistrict 5-D Middle will be open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with fish wheels or 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets to conserve Chinook salmon. Chinook salmon may be retained from both of these gear types.

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Circle City and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 5-D Upper is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Friday, June 24, subsistence fishing for salmon in Subdistrict 5-D Upper will be open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with fish wheels or 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets to conserve Chinook salmon. Chinook salmon may be retained from both of these gear types.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open for two 42-hour fishing periods per 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. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when Chinook salmon start moving into the Tanana River.

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 and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when Chinook salmon start moving into the Old Minto area.

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, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area): 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.

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 currently consists of 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 fish wheels and 7.5-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets.

Effective at 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 20, personal use salmon fishing in Subdistrict 6-C will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh set-gillnets, dip nets, and live-release fish wheels. Chinook salmon must be released alive from dip nets and fish wheels.

Commercial Fishing:

Fishermen requested at pre-season management meetings that the department provide an alternating schedule rather than concurrent subsistence and commercial periods for lower river districts in order to reduce competition among fishing sites. The department is endeavoring to accommodate these requests along with any limitations the processor may have when scheduling commercial periods.

District 1 (including the Black River):

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon in District 1 will be open for the following periods with dip nets and beach seine gear only:

- Tuesday, June 21, from 3:00 p.m. until Wednesday, June 22, at 3:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 22, at 3:00 p.m. until Thursday, June 23 at 3:00 a.m.

District 2 Commercial:

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon in District 2 will be open for the following periods with dip nets and beach seine gear only:

- Monday, June 20, from 3:00 p.m. until Tuesday, June 21, at 3:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 21, from 3:00 p.m. until Wednesday, June 22, at 3:00 a.m.

All Chinook salmon are required to be released alive from dip net and beach seine gear and must be recorded on a fish ticket. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Great care must be taken to ensure Chinook salmon are released unharmed so that they can swim the long distance upriver and spawn successfully.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at **(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 Emmonak at (907) 949-1320 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Emmonak at (907) 949-1798.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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