

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



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Date Issued: 9/12/2016

**2016 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 54
Fall Update # 8, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Fall Season Assessment

The 2016 fall chum salmon total run size projection, based on inseason assessment, is for 1.5 million fish. Because of the large size and timing of the third pulse and a small pulse that occurred the first week of September, the overall run timing is later than average. The coho salmon run size projection is for an above average return. Coho salmon timing is 1-5 days later than average based on the lower river assessment projects.

The first three pulses of fall chum salmon that entered the Yukon River on July 18, July 30 and August 10 should be approaching their spawning grounds. The fourth pulse of fish that began entering the Yukon River on August 20 is expected to be near Rampart on September 12, Beaver on September 17 and the Border around September 26. The fifth pulse is expected to be near Tanana and Huslia on September 12, Rampart on September 15, and the Border around September 29. A sixth pulse is expected to be near Russian Mission on September 13, Kaltag on September 19, Ruby on September 23, Tanana and Huslia on September 26, and the Border around October 13.

On the Tanana River, the fourth pulse is expected to be near Manley and Nenana around September 12 and September 15, respectively. The fifth and sixth pulses would be expected to arrive September 15-18 and September 29-October 2 between Manley and Nenana respectively. Most of the fall chum salmon in the last pulse should be bound for the Tanana River.

Pulses of coho salmon began entering the lower river on August 14, 20, 31 and September 7. The first pulse of coho salmon is expected to be near Tanana on September 16, Manley on September 20 and Nenana around September 24. The second pulse is expected to be near Koyukuk on September 12, Tanana on September 22 and Nenana around September 30. The third pulse is

expected to be near Anvik on September 14, Tanana on October 3 and Nenana around October 11. The fourth pulse is expected to be near Russian Mission on September 16, Kaltag on September 28, Tanana on October 10 and Nenana around October 18.

The fall season is drawing to a close in the lower river. However, the fall chum salmon run is well under way in the upper portion of Yukon River as passage at the Chandalar River sonar approaches the mid-point, passage at the mainstem Yukon River sonar near Eagle approaches the first quarter point and passage at the Porcupine River border sonar near Old Crow is just past the first quarter point.

Fall Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing/ADF&G, YDFDA

The project completed operations for 2016 season on September 10. The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through September 10 was 1,900.17, which is below the historical median of 2,098.98 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through September 10 was 528.14, which is near the historical median of 527.72 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through September 12 was 2,942.96, which is well above the historical median of 2,002.57 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through September 12 was 838.91, which is below the historical median of 1,086.98 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The mainstem sonar near Pilot Station completed operations for 2016 season on August 31. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 31 was 992,000 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 669,500 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 31 was 168,000 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 132,900 fish for this date.

Chandalar River Sonar/USFWS

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 11 was 112,800 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 99,000 fish for this date. The lower end of the escapement goal range of 74,000 to 152,000 fish was achieved on September 1.

Upper Porcupine River Sonar/DFO

The sonar project began operations on August 22. The estimated chum salmon passage through September 6 is 20,300 fall chum salmon. This project reached the average first quarter point on September 5.

Fishing Branch River Weir/DFO

The installation of the weir and operations have been hampered by high water much of the early season. Preliminary cumulative passage counts from September 8-11 are 4,000 fall chum salmon which is near the median passage for this date. The average first quarter point is September 14 at the historical weir site.

Sonar Project near Eagle/ADF&G and DFO

The sonar transitioned to fall chum salmon passage estimates on August 18. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 12 was 29,800 fish, which is near the median passage of approximately 30,000 fish for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

The preliminary fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run is dominated by age-4 fish, which is typical. However, this year's age-4 component is well above average, indicating exceptional production of the 2012 parent year. The 2016 preliminary proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 79% and 18% respectively compared to the average of 64% age-4 and 34% age-5 fish based on a samples size of 778 through August 16. Females represent 56% of the 1,212 fall chum salmon sampled which is near the average of 58% through September 10. For coho salmon, females represent 48% of the 522 fish sampled which is near the average of 47% through September 10. Females represented 48% of both the fall chum and coho salmon sampled in the District 1 commercial harvest based on 779 and 250 samples respectively. The remaining ASL samples will be analyzed post season from commercial, LYTF, Mt Village TF and escapement projects.

Stock Identification/USFWS

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the strata from August 23–31 that passed the mainstem sonar, which included the fourth and fifth pulses, contained approximately 26% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 22% Canada and 52% Tanana stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategy

The Coastal District, Districts 1, 2, 3, and Subdistrict 5-D as well as the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers have been on their full regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedules of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for the entire fall season. As a result of the Chinook salmon restrictions put in place in the Yukon Area this season, the department increased the opportunity to harvest fall chum salmon for subsistence use in most areas. Subsistence salmon fishing has been liberalized to seven days per week, 24 hours per day in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C. District 6 currently remains on their standard regulatory schedules. Subsistence fishermen may use gillnets with 7.5 inch mesh or smaller during the fall season.

Porcupine River fall chum salmon stock abundance has been low in recent years when compared to other stocks in the Yukon River drainage. Fall chum salmon escapements into the Canadian Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River, have fallen short of meeting the escapement objective agreed upon by U.S. and Canadian representatives in 4 of the last 6 years despite other Yukon River stocks meeting or exceeding their escapement goals or objectives. Therefore, as a precautionary approach, subsistence fishing for salmon in the mainstem Porcupine River was closed on Wednesday, August 31. Major tributaries are not affected by the closure, and subsistence fishermen in the mainstem of the Porcupine River may target non-salmon species with gillnets having 4-inch or smaller mesh size. Managers will closely monitor fall chum escapement into the Fishing Branch River throughout the season. If inseason information from the mainstem Porcupine River sonar and from the Fishing Branch River escapement monitoring projects indicates the fall chum salmon goal will be met, the department may relax subsistence fishing restrictions.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedules

Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to Point Romanof and including all state marine waters):

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

District 1 (including the Black River) and **District 2**:

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

District 3:

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

Innoko River:

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

District 4 (from ¾ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Illinois Creek, which includes all adjacent tributaries and the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena and Ruby):

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

Drift gillnet fishing is open **only in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek.** Drift gillnets may not exceed 25 fathoms in length.

Koyukuk River:

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

District 5 (from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek to the U.S./Canada border, including all adjacent tributaries and the communities of Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Eagle):

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

Porcupine River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed on the mainstem of the Porcupine River for the remainder of the fall season or until further notice. 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. Managers will closely monitor fall chum escapement into the Fishing Branch River throughout the season. If inseason information from

the mainstem Porcupine River sonar and from the Fishing Branch River escapement monitoring projects indicates the fall chum salmon goal will be met, the department may relax subsistence fishing restrictions.

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: Between the western tip of Garnet Island and the Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

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 is open for two 42-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

The Kantishna River is open on its regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule of 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

The Old Minto area is open on its regulatory schedule of 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 and fish wheels.

Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence fishermen fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

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 is open for two 42-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Friday until 12:00 p.m. noon Sunday and from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesday. Fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A reminder to fishermen that a personal use salmon fishing permit and a sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

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 and gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish in the Upper Tanana River Drainage.

Commercial Fishing:

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing

The commercial salmon season in Districts 1 and 2 finished on September 10. The commercial fishing season is open in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, and in District 6. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers interested in operating in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C must notify the department by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

In District 1, the preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 10 is 226,700 fall chum and 113,600 coho salmon. In District 2, the preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 10 is 213,000 fall chum and 68,400 coho salmon. Both the fall chum and coho salmon commercial harvests in Districts 1 and 2 combined were record highs.

Subdistrict 5-B, and 5-C Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Commercial fishing in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week until further notice. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with 6 inch or smaller mesh size.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 12 is 2,106 fall chum salmon.

District 6 Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Commercial fishing in District 6 is open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week on the following schedule with 6 inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- 6:00 p.m. Mondays, until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesdays
- 6:00 p.m. Fridays, until 12:00 p.m. noon Sundays

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 12 is 701 fall chum and 16 coho salmon.

All Yukon Area commercial fishermen should confirm their market prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers must notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. All fish species harvested and not sold must be recorded on the fish ticket as “caught but not sold”.

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 **459-7387**.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADF&G office in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

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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