

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



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**2017 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 18  
Fall Update # 2, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery  
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

**Fall Season Assessment**

The 2017 fall chum salmon preseason projection is for a run size greater than 1.1 million fish. This level of abundance should be sufficient to provide for escapement, an average subsistence harvest, and a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes. The estimated fall chum salmon run size through July 30 (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) is estimated to be 388,800 fish, which is above the historical median of 160,000 fish for that date. The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 17 and is expected to be near Galena around July 31, and Tanana/Huslia around August 5, Rampart around August 7 and the Canadian border around August 20. The second pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 27 and is expected to be near Kaltag on August 8, Galena around August 10, and Tanana/Huslia around August 15, Rampart around August 17 and the Canadian border around August 30.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average to above average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2013. A few coho salmon have been entering the Yukon River but the majority of the run begins building in early August.

**Fall Assessment Projects**

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

The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 30 was 531.51 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 352.16 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 30 was 1968.50 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 565.23 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through July 30 was 388,826, which is above the median passage of approximately 159,990 fish for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

Fall chum salmon age analysis from the LYTF has not been completed at this time. Based on last year's run, the age-5 component is expected to be above average. Females currently represent 63% of the fish sampled (n=356), which is above the average of 54% for this date.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the strata from July 19–22, which included the first large pulse, contained approximately 62% summer chum and 38% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon components were dominated by the lower summer stocks at 25%, Tanana summer stocks at 21%, and followed by the middle Yukon stocks at 16%. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 25% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 12% Canadian and 1% Tanana.

**Fall Season Management Strategies**

The Coastal District, and Districts 1, 2, and 3, Innoko and Koyukuk rivers, and District 4 subsistence fishing are under fall season management. Subsistence fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will transition to fall season management early next week. Fishermen in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C should standby for an announcement later this week. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. Subdistrict 5-D and District 6 will transition to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration enters those areas.

**Summer Assessment**

As of July 30, approximately 60,850 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project near Eagle, which is above the historical average of approximately 44,248 fish for this date. Chinook salmon passage also surpassed the upper end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal at the Eagle sonar. Through July 27, approximately 50%, or 27,000 fish, of the Chinook salmon passage at the Eagle sonar were female. On average, about 41% of the passage at the Eagle sonar consists of female Chinook salmon. The average historical third quarter point at the sonar for Chinook salmon is July 26 for early run fish and July 29 for normal run fish. The 2017 Chinook salmon run surpassed the upper end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal into Canada with sufficient surplus for the Canadian harvest share of the Total Allowable Catch.

The Chinook salmon escapement goal at the East Fork Andreafsky River has been met. Chinook salmon passage estimates at the Henshaw Creek and Gisasa River weirs are below average for this date. Unfortunately, high water conditions have hindered tower counts on the Salcha and Chena rivers; however, initial tower counts and sonar estimates indicate that escapement goals will likely be met. Post-season analysis is needed to confirm final passage estimates at these

projects. The aerial Chinook salmon Sustainable Escapement Goals (SEG) were met for the West Fork Andreafsky River, the Anvik River, and the Nulato River.

### **Summer Assessment Projects**

#### Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1. As of July 30, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 261,458 fish, which is above the historical average of 213,408 fish for years with early run timing. Preliminary run timing dates suggest the 2017 Chinook salmon run was approximately three days earlier than historical average run timing. A season total of 3,094,350 summer chum salmon were counted at the sonar, which is well above the historical median of 1,875,491 summer chum salmon.

#### East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14. As of July 30, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 2,970 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 3,946 Chinook salmon for this date. As of July 29, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 55,532 fish, which is slightly below the historical median of 56,810 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goals (SEG) are 2,100-4,900 Chinook salmon and greater than 40,000 summer chum past the weir project. Both of these escapement goals have been met.

#### Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. As of July 26, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 415,136 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 441,614 for this date. The biological escapement goal (BEG) for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project. Summer chum salmon passage exceeded the lower end of the escapement goal on July 14.

#### Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations on June 18. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 30, is estimated to be 1,083 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 2,176 for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 30, is estimated to be 73,584 fish, which is above the historical median of 44,359 summer chum salmon for this date.

#### Henshaw Creek Weir / USFWS

The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 26. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 30, is estimated to be 677 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,146 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 30, is estimated to be 360,068 fish, which is well above the historical median of 144,699 summer chum salmon for this date.

#### Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 26. As of July 30, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 1,782 fish and 10,502 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. These counts are considered incomplete due to 14 days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 fish past the tower.

### Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 27. As of July 30, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 3,354 fish and 19,280 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. These counts are considered incomplete due to four days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 fish past the tower.

### Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar project began operations on July 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since the project began in 2005. As of July 30, approximately 60,850 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project, which is above the historical cumulative average of 44,248 for this date. The lower end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal for Chinook salmon of 42,500–55,000 was exceeded July 23.

### Age Composition

The age composition of 536 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 19 was 8% age-4, 54% age-5, 36% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. About 53% of the fish sampled were female. Age-5 fish and females were above average, age-6 fish were average, and age-4 fish were below average.

The age composition of 271 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Eagle test fishery through July 20 was 2% age-4, 48% age-5, 49% age-6, and 1% age-7 fish. About 43% of the fish sampled were female. Age-5 fish and females were above average, age-6 fish were average, and age-4 fish were below average.

### Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first strata of Chinook salmon, which included early fish and the first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar (May 31 to June 13), estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second strata, which included all of the second pulse of Chinook salmon (June 14–20), estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the third strata (third pulse) of Chinook salmon (June 21–25) estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Final mixed stock analysis information will be available post season.

Five strata of chum salmon genetic samples have been processed in 2017. The strata from May 31–June 19 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, 73% lower stocks, 23% were bound for the middle Yukon River and about 4% were bound for the Tanana River. The strata from June 20–June 26 also consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, 91% lower stocks, 5% were bound for the middle Yukon River and about 4% were bound for the Tanana River. The strata from June 27–July 9 consisted of 96% summer chum salmon, 69% lower stocks, 22% middle Yukon River stocks, and 5% Tanana River stocks there was also a small showing of fall stocks at 4%. The strata from July 10–18 consisted of 98% summer chum salmon, 71% lower stocks, 18% middle Yukon River stocks, and 10% Tanana River stocks and only 1% fall stocks.

## **Current Management**

**Coastal District** (from the Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River, including the communities of Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

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

**District 1** (including the area 1 mile south of Black River north to Point Romanof and waters up to 3 miles offshore, including the communities of Nunam-Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, and Kotlik):

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

### **District 2:**

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, except for closures before, during, and after each commercial fishing period. **For the commercial period scheduled for Monday, July 31, subsistence fishing will close at 3:00 p.m. Monday, July 31, and reopen at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 1.**

### **District 3:**

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

### **Innoko River:**

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

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

Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 4A is open on a 5-day per week schedule of 6 p.m. Tuesdays until 6 p.m. Sundays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

Drift gillnet fishing is currently closed in Subdistrict 4A. **Effective 12:01 a.m. Thursday, August 3, drift gillnet fishing will be open in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A** (Stink Creek to the tip of Cone Point and includes Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk) for the remainder of the fall season.

Drift gillnets may not exceed 150 feet 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.

**Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C** (from Cone Point upstream to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes the communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open on a 5-day per week schedule of 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Fridays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

**Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C** (from Illinois Creek upstream to regulatory markers two miles downstream of Waldron Creek which includes the communities of Tanana, Rampart, and the Yukon River Bridge area):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Thursdays**
- **6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Sundays**

**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, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

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

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the portion of Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River, 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. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit area are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Fairbanks.

**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 fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Kantishna River:

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

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is on the regulatory subsistence fishing schedule of 5 days per week from 6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh 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.

**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 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

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

**Subdistricts 6-C** (Personal use fishery 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 fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

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.

### **Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing**

In the Lower Yukon, the fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in Districts 1, 2, and 3. Fishermen in Districts 1 and 2 should stand by for announcements concerning commercial periods. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening. Commercial fishermen may use gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

In the Upper Yukon, the fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in District 4. Fishermen in Subdistrict 4-A should standby for announcements concerning commercial periods. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening. Commercial fishermen may use fish wheels and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. It is anticipated that commercial openings will be announced for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, and for District 6 in early August.

The sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon in the fall chum salmon directed commercial fisheries is prohibited. Commercial gillnet fishermen can release live Chinook salmon or use them for subsistence purposes. Chinook salmon retained from commercial gear must be recorded on a fish ticket as retained but not sold.

Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers intending to operate in the Yukon Area must notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

### **District 1, including the Set Net Only Area:**

There are no commercial announcements at this time. Standby for announcements.

Verbal reports from District 1 period 5 commercial opening on July 27 indicate a preliminary harvest of 29,019 fall chum and 381 coho salmon from 239 deliveries. The preliminary

cumulative commercial harvest through July 27 in District 1 is 126,465 fall chum and 1,014 coho salmon.

**District 2:**

Period #4: Commercial fishing will be open for one 4-hour period in District 2, from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., Monday, July 31.

Verbal reports from District 2 period 3 commercial opening on July 29 indicate a preliminary harvest of 13,421 fall chum and 40 coho salmon from 93 deliveries. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 29 in District 2 is 30,100 fall chum salmon and 49 coho salmon.

**Subdistrict 4-A Commercial** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point including the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

**Commercial fishing is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week until 6 p.m. Sunday, August 6.** Fishermen may use 6-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets or fish wheels. Fish wheels do not need to be manned during the fall season commercial fishery. Commercial fishermen should confirm their market before they fish.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 30 in Subdistrict 4-A is 3,927 fall chum salmon.

**Summer Season Commercial Fishing**

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon is nearly complete for 2017. To date, the preliminary total harvest of summer chum salmon is 547,262 fish.

The preliminary commercial harvest in District 1 is approximately 345,395 summer chum salmon with a reported 3,881 Chinook caught and released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 5,503 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use from gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvest in District 2 is approximately 47,770 summer chum salmon with a reported 742 Chinook salmon released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 76 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence from gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvest in Subdistrict 4-A is approximately 150,329 summer chum salmon. To date, 50 Chinook salmon have been reported on fish tickets as caught and released.

Commercial fishing in District 6 opened on July 14. As of July 30, approximately 3,768 summer chum salmon have been harvested. To date, 62 Chinook salmon have been released alive and 163 have been kept for subsistence use.

**Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week on the following schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays, until noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays, until noon Wednesdays**

Commercial fishermen should coordinate with the buyer on a daily basis regarding scheduling deliveries. Commercial fish wheels in District 6 are not required to be manned.



All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. Chinook salmon may not be sold. All Chinook salmon caught but not sold must also be recorded on the fish ticket. Other fish species caught but not sold must also be recorded on the fish ticket. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Fishing schedules, test fish catches and sonar counts are 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, please call ADF&G in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320, 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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