

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: 8/21/2017

2017 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 40

Fall Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The 2017 fall chum salmon inseason projection is for a run size greater than 2 million fish. This level of abundance is sufficient to provide for escapement, subsistence harvest, with a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes. The estimated fall chum salmon run size through August 20 (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) is estimated to be 1,912,500 fish, which is above the historical median of 581,000 fish for that date.

The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 17 and is expected to be approaching the Canadian border at this time. The second pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 27 and is expected to be near Fort Yukon around August 23 and the Canadian border around August 30. On the Tanana River fall chum salmon should be near Manley on August 22 and near Nenana on August 24. A small group entered the Yukon River on August 1 and is expected to be near Tanana/Huslia around August 20, Fort Yukon around August 28, and the Canadian border around September 4. The largest pulse of fall chum salmon entered August 12, and is expected to be near Kaltag on August 24, Galena around August 26, near Tanana/Huslia around August 31, Fort Yukon around September 8, and the Canadian border around September 15. On the Tanana River this group of fall chum salmon should be near Manley on September 2 and near Nenana on September 4. Another pulse began entering on August 19 and is expected to be near Marshall August 22, near Anvik August 27, near Nulato September 1, near Tanana/Huslia around September 7, Fort Yukon around September 15, and the Canadian border around September 22. On the Tanana River this group of fall chum salmon should be near Manley on September 9 and near Nenana on September 11.

Coho salmon have arrived with the first pulse moving into the Yukon River with the largest pulse of fall chum salmon. A larger second pulse of coho salmon entered on August 19 with the latest fall chum salmon pulse as well. The preliminary coho salmon inseason projection is for a

run size of 260,000 fish. The estimated coho salmon run size through August 20 (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) is estimated to be 104,000 fish, which is near the historical median of 90,500 fish for that date.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 20 was 2,829.72 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 1,203.38 for this date. Based on median timing, 86% of the fall chum salmon run is in the river at this time.

The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon as of August 20 was 255.76, which is above the historical median of 248.16 for this date. The coho salmon run is approaching the average three quarter-point on August 23.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 20 was 5,506.54 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 1,549.23 for this date. Based on median timing, 82% of the fall chum salmon run is at this project by this time.

The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon as of August 20 was 318.58, which is well below the historical median of 467.86 for this date. The coho salmon run is approaching the mid-point at this project.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 20 was 1,568,611, which is above the median passage of approximately 515,352 fish for this date. The fall chum salmon run is just passed the median three-quarter point in timing.

The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 20 was 83,709, which is above the median passage of approximately 67,136 fish for this date. The coho salmon run is currently approaching the average mid-point of passage.

Chandalar River Sonar / USFWS

The Chandalar River sonar became operational on August 8. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 20 was 19,681, which is above the median passage of approximately 12,017 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. The 2017 preliminary proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 80% and 18% respectively compared to the average of 65% age-4 and 33% age-5 fish based on a samples size of 829. Females represent 60% of 697 fish sampled which is above the average is 56%. Preliminary age samples from the commercial test fishery also indicate high proportions of age-4 fish at 76% and age-5 fish at 22% based on 514 samples.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on chum salmon for the strata from August 3–12 that passed the mainstem sonar, representing a small group contained approximately 14% summer chum and 86% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon components contained primarily

11% lower summer stocks. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 38% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 33% Canadian and 15% Tanana stocks. The next strata representing the largest pulse of chum salmon passage from August 13–20 is on the way to the lab and results should be available mid-week (watch for it in the Yukon River daily updates).

Fall Season Management Strategies

Subsistence salmon fishing in all Alaska areas of the Yukon River are under fall season management. The subsistence fishing schedules in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C have been liberalized to seven days per week, 24 hour per day. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. In all areas of the Yukon River, subsistence fishermen using four inch mesh or less gillnets may use an aggregate length of set gillnet not exceeding 150 fathoms in length, and drift gillnets not exceeding 50 fathoms in length. In the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A, drift gillnets may not exceed 150 feet in length.

Summer Assessment Projects

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and DFO

As of August 20, approximately 73,268 Chinook salmon have been estimated past the sonar project near Eagle, which is above the historical average of approximately 56,360 fish for this date. Through August 18, approximately 51% of the Chinook salmon passage at the Eagle sonar was female, which is above average for this date. 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.

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.

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

Drift gillnet fishing is open in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A only (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 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels.

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 salmon fishing is currently 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 and 5-D 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.

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, Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, and District 6. 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.

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 prior to operating by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

District 1, including the Set Net Only Area:

There are no commercial announcements at this time. Stand by for announcements.

Verbal reports from District 1 period #11 commercial opening on August 20 indicate a preliminary harvest of 20,924 fall chum and 18,093 coho salmon from 217 deliveries. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 20 in District 1 is 276,395 fall chum and 31,725 coho salmon.

District 2:

There are no commercial announcements at this time. Stand by for announcements.

Verbal reports from District 2 period #10 commercial opening on August 18 indicate a preliminary harvest of 20,452 fall chum and 5,007 coho salmon from 105 deliveries. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 18 in District 2 is 103,994 fall chum salmon and 8,068 coho salmon.

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. Each commercial fishing period will be 7-days and will end at 12:00 p.m. Mondays each week until further notice. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with 6 inch or smaller mesh size. Commercial fishermen should confirm their market before they fish.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 14 is 944 fall chum salmon.

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 6-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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