

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **2018 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 45**

#### **Summer Update # 7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

As of July 16, the Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are nearly complete in the lower river, and management will transition to fall season. The projected season total passage at the Pilot Station sonar is approximately 161,000 Chinook salmon. The Chinook salmon run appears to have normal run timing, which indicates that the drainage-wide run (which would include harvest and escapement of fish below the sonar) may likely come in towards the lower end of the preseason projection range of 173,000 to 251,000 fish (Figure 1). As of July 16, the first, second and third pulses of Chinook salmon have cleared most districts and should be passing through Subdistrict 5-D or traveling up the Tanana River. A fourth pulse of Chinook salmon should be approaching Subdistricts 5-ABC. As of July 16, the cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project near Eagle is approximately 7,200, which is below the historical average of approximately 9,000 fish for this date.

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), as of July 16, the Canadian Chinook salmon run size is estimated to be about 74,000 which is similar to the lower end of the preseason outlook of 71,000 to 103,000 fish. A Chinook salmon run of this size should meet escapement goals, provide some subsistence harvest, and meet the harvest sharing objectives outlined in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

Approximately 1.6 million summer chum salmon have been counted at the Pilot Station sonar and the drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million summer chum salmon has been met. Starting July 18, the summer chum salmon run will be considered complete at the sonar project and chum salmon estimates after that date will be managed as fall chum salmon.

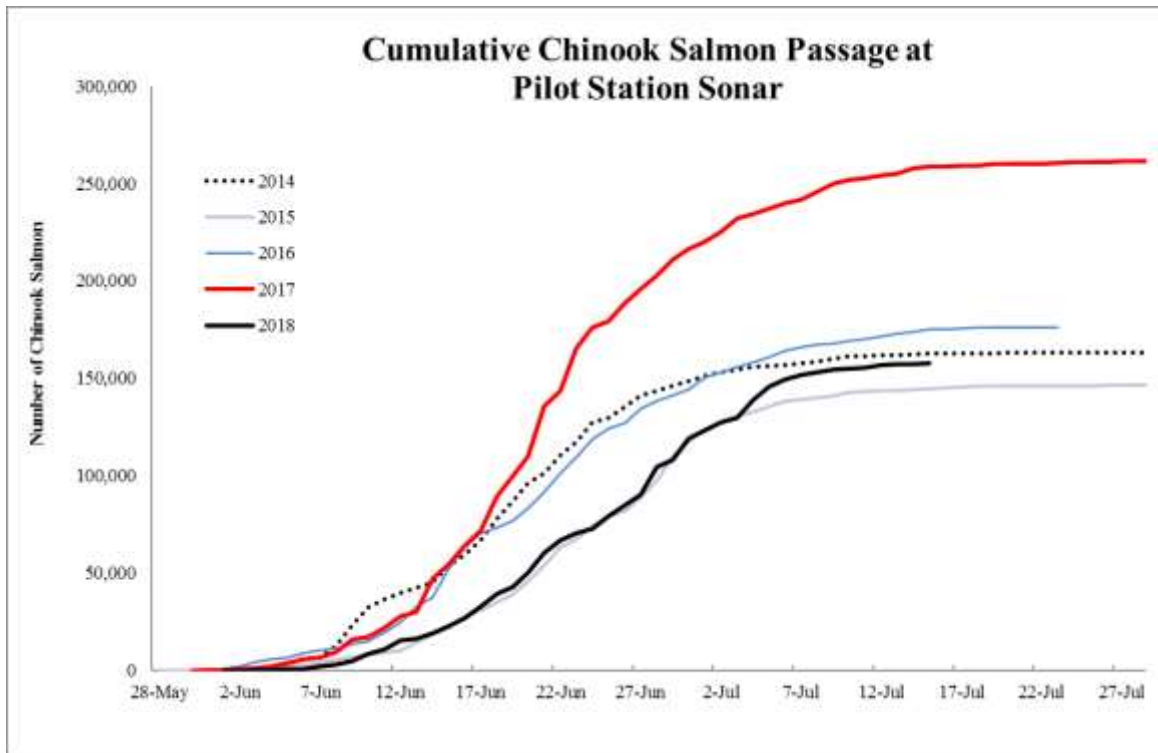


Figure 1. Cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar project, 2013 – 2018.

## Assessment Projects

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

The sonar project near Pilot Station began operations on June 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 157,631 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 178,988 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 1,577,177 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,858,921 fish for this date.

### East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 25. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 2,973 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 2,941 Chinook salmon for this date, and within the escapement goal range of 2,100-4,900 Chinook Salmon. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 27,305 fish, which is below the historical median of 46,077 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goal for Summer Chum salmon is 40,000 fish.

### Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 16, is 237,634 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 463,378 fish for this date. The Anvik River biological escapement goal (BEG) is 350,000–700,000 summer chum.

### Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on July 3. No fish counts have been reported at this time due to turbid water. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site.

### Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower/sonar project began operations on June 27. As of July 16, 743 Chinook salmon has been observed. This is considered an incomplete count because high water levels prevented visual counting for several days; however, the sonar has remained operational. Season total counts using the sonar will be provided postseason. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower site.

### Sonar Project Near Eagle / ADF&G

The sonar project near Eagle began operations on July 4. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 7,159 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 9,007 Chinook salmon for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish and is assessed at the mainstem sonar project near Eagle.

### **Chinook Age and Stock Composition**

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar project (June 2 to June 19) indicated that 56% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second and part of the third pulse of Chinook salmon (June 20 to June 29) indicated that 47% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. The age composition of 362 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery, through June 29, was 11% age-4, 49% age-5, 38% age-6, and 1% age-7 fish. The proportions of Chinook salmon that were age-5 and age-7 were below average, while the proportions of fish that were age-4 and age-6 were above average. The proportion of fish that were female, 51%, was well above average.

### **Chum Salmon Stock Identification**

Three strata of chum salmon genetic samples have been processed to date in 2018. The strata from June 1–June 18 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, of which 74% were lower stocks, 23% were bound for the middle Yukon River and all other stocks were negligible. The strata from June 19–June 26 also consisted of 99% summer chum salmon of which 79% were lower stocks, 20% were bound for the middle Yukon River and again all other stocks were negligible. The strata from June 27–July 8 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon of which 57% were lower stocks, 33% were middle Yukon River stocks, and 10% were Tanana River stocks.

### **Summer Season Management Strategy**

The Chinook salmon run is mostly complete in the Lower Yukon Area. During the tail end of the run, subsistence fishing is transitioning to the regulatory schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets or is open around commercial summer chum salmon periods. District 1 will transition to fall season management on July 16 and Districts 2 and 3 will transition on July 18.

As the Chinook salmon run passes through District 5, fishing time is limited to half of the regulatory schedule and gear will remain restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets as escapement at the U.S./Canada border is assessed.

### **Fall Season Management Strategy:**

The 2018 fall chum salmon preseason run projection is for a run size of 700,000 to 900,000 fish. This level of abundance is sufficient to meet escapement and subsistence needs, and provide a surplus for commercial and personal use purposes. A mixture of both summer chum and fall chum

salmon are currently entering the Yukon River. Commercial fishing in the lower river will likely harvest a mixture of both runs at this time.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2014. The majority of the coho salmon run will arrive in August.

### **Fall Assessment Projects**

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

The project began July 16 at Emmonak when the gear was switched from 5.5-inch mesh for summer chum salmon to 6-inch mesh targeting fall chum and coho salmon.

#### Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The fall season project will begin July 18 at Mountain Village.

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

The sonar project near Pilot Station will transition to fall season counts on July 19.

### **Subsistence Fishing Schedule:**

#### **South Coastal District** (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

#### **District 1 including the North Coastal District** (1 mile south of Black River to Point Romanof):

Subsistence salmon fishing in District 1, is open during the fall season 7 days per week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches, except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period.

Due to a commercial period, subsistence salmon fishing in District 1, including the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers, **will close at 1:00 a.m. Monday, July 16, and reopen at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 17.** During subsistence salmon closures, subsistence fishing in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers (including 500 yards around the mouths) is closed for all gillnet fishing, including gillnets with 4-inch mesh or less, is closed in these waters 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial opening.

#### **District 2:**

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets for one 18-hour period from **2 p.m. Monday, July 16 to 8 a.m. Tuesday, July 17.**

**Effective 3:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 18,** subsistence fishing in District 2 will be open for the fall season for 24 hours a day, 7 days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

#### **District 3:**

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory schedule of two 36-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets:

**8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays**

**8 p.m. Sunday to 8 a.m. Tuesdays**

**Effective 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18**, subsistence fishing in District 3 will be open for the fall season 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

**Innoko River:**

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

**District 4** (including the Anvik River and the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

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

**6 p.m. Sundays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays****6 p.m. Wednesday to 6 p.m. Fridays**

Fishermen may use set and drift gillnets and fish wheels, and all salmon may be retained. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species.

**Koyukuk River:**

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

**Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C** (including the communities of Tanana and Rampart)

Fishing is open for two 24-hour periods per week with **6-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets** and fish wheels from:

**6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays****6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays**

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the portions of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of 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 areas 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 in Fairbanks.

**Subdistrict 5-D** (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border, including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, and the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open for 3.5 days (84 hours) per week with **6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and fish wheels:

**10 a.m. Thursdays to 10 p.m. Sundays**

**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 fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

**6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays**

**6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays**

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage below the Wood River. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence salmon fishermen 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 p.m. Thursday each week by reporting online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/) or by calling (907) 459-7388. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

**Kantishna River:**

The Kantishna River 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.

**Old Minto Area:**

Subsistence fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of five days per week from:

**6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays**

**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):

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.

**Personal Use Fishing:**

**Subdistrict 6-C** (from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

**6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays**

**6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays**

A personal use salmon fishing permit and sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 p.m. Thursday** each week by reporting online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/) or by calling **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

**Commercial Fishing:**

Chinook salmon may be kept for personal use in the summer chum and fall chum gillnet fishery and must be recorded on a fish ticket as kept, not sold. In Subdistrict 4-A, commercial fishing is

limited to manned fishwheels. Commercial fishing will open in District 6 for fish wheels and gillnets. Fishermen must confirm they have a buyer prior to fishing.

**Commercial Fishing Periods:****District 1 (including Black River) Commercial:**

Fall Period 1:

District 1 Set Net Only Area is open from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Monday, July 16. The remainder of District 1 is open 4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Monday, July 16. Fishermen may use 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

**District 2 Commercial:**

Commercial fishing will open for one more 12-hour period for the summer season with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets from noon to midnight Tuesday, July 17. Fishermen should stand by for fall season commercial announcements.

**Subdistrict 4-A Commercial** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village to Cone Point):

Commercial fishing is open for 24-hours a day, seven days a week until further notice.

Fishermen must use commercial fish wheels that are manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in commercial fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive and recorded on a fish ticket.

**District 6 Commercial** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, upstream to the Chena River, which includes the communities of Manley, Nenana, and Fairbanks):

Commercial periods will open concurrent with subsistence and personal use fishing schedules in District 6 until further notice. Commercial fish wheels in District 6 are not required to be manned.

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

- **6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays**

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