

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: August 27, 2018

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

#### **Fall Update # 6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2018 fall chum salmon inseason total run size projection is currently above 900,000 fish. The estimated fall chum salmon run size as of August 26 (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is 850,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 681,000 fish for that date. The average three-quarter point of the fall chum salmon run is August 20 at Pilot Station.

The peak of the first pulse of the fall season chum salmon is expected to be near Fort Yukon around August 31 and the Canadian border around September 10. The second pulse is expected to be near Tanana/Huslia around August 27, Stevens Village around August 31, Fort Yukon around September 6 and the Canadian border around September 16. The third pulse is expected to be near Kaltag around August 27, Galena around August 29, Tanana/Huslia around September 3, Fort Yukon around September 13, and the Canadian border around September 23. The fourth pulse entered immediately after the previous pulse and is expected to be near Kaltag around August 30, Galena around September 1, Tanana/Huslia around September 6, Fort Yukon around September 16, and the Canadian border around September 26. There is a fifth pulse moving into the river starting today that is expected to be near Marshall on August 30, Anvik around September 4, Galena around September 10, Tanana/Huslia around September 15, Stevens Village around September 19, Fort Yukon around September 25, and the Canadian border around October 5.

The coho salmon were late in entering the Yukon River and inseason assessment is projecting their total run size will be below the season average of 206,000 fish. However, indications are that another pulse of coho salmon may be entering the river, but it's size will not be assessed for two more days when it begins to pass the sonar near Pilot Station. The current coho salmon run size as of August 26 (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) is estimated to be 116,000 fish which is below the median of 155,000 fish for that date. The average three-quarter point of the coho salmon run is August 29 at Pilot Station. The peak of

the first pulse of coho salmon is expected to be near Kaltag around August 29, Tanana around September 6 and Nenana around September 11.

### **Fall Assessment Projects**

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

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through August 26 was 1,921.66, which is above the historical median of 1,419.65 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE through August 26 was 127.51, which is below the historical median of 356.50 for this date.

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

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through August 26 was 2,419.33, which is above the historical median of 1,731.93 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE through August 26 was 483.11, which is below the historical median of 757.42 for this date.

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

The cumulative passage estimate through August 26 was 642,000 fall chum salmon, which is near the median passage of approximately 657,000 fish for that date. The cumulative passage estimate for coho salmon through August 26 was 69,000 coho salmon which is below the average of 114,000 for that date.

#### Chandalar River Sonar / USFWS

The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon, beginning August 12 through August 26, is 7,085 fish which is below the median of 24,000 for that date. Given that the first major pulse of fall chum salmon will not reach this area of the river until late August this is not unexpected.

#### Sonar Project near Eagle / ADF&G, DFO

The mainstem sonar operated near Eagle transitioned from Chinook to fall chum salmon beginning August 21. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 26 was 471, which is below the median passage of approximately 2,559 fish for this date. Given that the first major pulse of fall chum salmon will not reach this area of the river until early September this is not unexpected.

#### 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. As of August 18, the 2018 preliminary proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 62% and 34% respectively compared to the average of 66% age-4 and 33% age-5 fish, based on a samples size of 716. Females represent 60% of the fish sampled (n=878), which is near the average of 58%, as of August 25. For coho salmon females represent 46% of the fish sampled in LYTF (n=108), which is average as of August 25.

### **Chum Salmon Stock Identification**

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on fall season chum salmon for the strata from August 16–19 was followed closely by a second pulse, strata August 20-23, are currently at the lab. The results will be available later this week.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing in all Alaska areas of the Yukon River are under fall season management. During the fall season, subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. Because 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 to seven days per week, 24 hours per day in Districts 4 and 5.

In recent years, the abundance of fall chum salmon in the upper Porcupine River has been low 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 five of the last ten years despite other Yukon River stocks meeting or exceeding their escapement goals or objectives. Like the action taken in previous years, to improve fall chum escapement to the spawning grounds in Canada, subsistence salmon fishing restrictions in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River may be implemented. Managers will closely monitor inseason information at the mainstem Porcupine River sonar and the Fishing Branch River escapement monitoring projects to determine management actions.

### **Subsistence Fishing Schedule:**

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

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven 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 Fishing in District 1 is open for the fall season for 24 hours a day, seven days per week except for closures before, during, and after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

During the current commercial period, subsistence salmon fishing in District 1, including the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers, **closed at 12:00 midnight Sunday, August 26, and will reopen at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 28.** Additionally, 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 before, during, and after each commercial opening.

#### **District 2** (Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall):

Subsistence Fishing in District 2 is open for the fall season for 24 hours a day, seven 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** (Russian Mission, Paimiut, Holy Cross):

Subsistence fishing in District 3 is open for the fall season 24 hours a day, seven 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** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes all the communities between Anvik and Ruby):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size drift and set gillnets and fish wheels.

**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.

**District 5** (from Illinois Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border, and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes all the communities between Tanana 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 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.

**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 noon Sundays**

**6 p.m. Mondays to 12 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 size 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 noon Sundays**

**6 p.m. Mondays to 12 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:**

To date, commercial fishing has been directed on fall chum salmon in accordance with the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan. By regulation, the fall chum directed commercial fishery in the Lower Yukon ends on August 31. The department will decide later this week on whether a coho salmon directed commercial fishery September is warranted. Commercial fishermen in Districts 1 and 2 can expect to continue a 2-period per week schedule until August 31. Districts 4 and 6, and Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C are open to commercial fishing during the fall season. Currently, there are no registered buyers operating in Districts 4 or 5. Fishermen must confirm they have a buyer prior to fishing. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

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

Fall Period 14:

District 1 Set Net Only Area is open from 12:00 noon until 9:00 p.m. on Monday, August 27. The remainder of District 1 is open 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Monday, August 27. Fishermen may use 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 24 in District 1 is 143,240 fall chum salmon and 36,185 coho salmon.

**District 2 Commercial:**

Fishermen should standby for announcements.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 21 in District 2 is 101,263 fall chum salmon and 17,551 coho salmon.

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

The commercial fishing season is open for the fall season. Currently, there are no registered

buyers operating in District 4. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 2 in Subdistrict 4-A is 596 fall chum salmon.

**Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C Commercial** (from Illinois Creek along the north bank of the Yukon River upstream the mouth of the Tanana River, and both along banks of the Yukon River upstream to the regulatory markers 2 miles below Waldron Creek, which includes the communities of Tanana and Rampart as well as the area near the Yukon River Bridge):

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 set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Commercial fishermen must confirm their buyer or market prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 20 in Subdistrict 5-B and 5-C is 896 fall chum salmon.

**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 fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

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

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 26 in District 6 is 150 fall chum salmon and 1 coho salmon.

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