

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



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Date Issued: September 10, 2018

**2018 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release 62
Fall Update # 8, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2018 the inseason total run size of fall chum salmon as of September 7 (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is estimated to be 1,300,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 816,000 fish.

The peak of the first and second pulses of the fall season chum salmon are expected to be approaching the U.S./Canada border around September 10th and 16th, respectively. The third pulse is expected to be near Fort Yukon around September 13, and the U.S./Canada border around September 23. The fourth pulse contained a good proportion of Tanana River stocks and is expected to be near Nenana around September 10, and the U.S./Canada border around September 26. The fifth pulse is expected to be near Tanana/Huslia around September 15, and the U.S./Canada border around October 5. A smaller sixth pulse is expected to be near Koyukuk on September 15, Tanana/Huslia around September 21, and the U.S./Canada border around October 11. The Tanana River should have fall chum salmon for the remainder of September.

The coho salmon were three days later than average at the mainstem Yukon River sonar site at Pilot Station. The inseason total run size of coho salmon as of September 7 (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is estimated to be 237,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 209,000 fish.

The second pulse of coho salmon that entered the Yukon River around August 18 is expected to be near Manley around September 11 and Nenana around September 14. The third pulse of coho salmon that entered the Yukon River on August 27 is expected to be near Tanana/Huslia around September 18, Manley around September 20 and Nenana around September 23.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through September 9 was 2,961.66, which is above the historical median of 1,518.01 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE through September 9 was 381.96, which is below the historical median of 441.08 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through September 7 was 3,011.92, which is above the historical median of 2,032.76 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE through September 7 was 676.28, which is below the historical median of 1,078.85 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative passage estimate through September 7 was 927,000 fall chum salmon, which is above the median passage of approximately 707,000 fish for that date. The cumulative passage estimate for coho salmon through September 7 was 137,000 coho salmon which is below the median of 160,000 for that date. This project was concluded for the season on September 7, 2018.

Chandalar River Sonar / USFWS

The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon through September 9, is 27,029 fish which is well below the median of 93,000 fish for that date. The low passage to date is not unexpected given that the fall chum salmon run is late this season. The daily passage began increasing with the arrival of the pulse that entered the river on August 2.

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 September 9 was 3,978, which is below the median passage of approximately 27,000 fish for this date. The low passage to date is not unexpected given that the fall chum salmon run is late this season. The daily passage began increasing with the arrival of the pulse that entered the river on August 2.

Upper Porcupine Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project has been dealing with high water most of the season. One bank operations began on August 27 while the second bank became operational on September 6. The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon based on partial operations is 453 fish which is below the average of 9,900 through September 8. Late run timing could also be affecting these counts as well, as even the combined bank daily passage rates are seven times lower than the average daily passage for this time of year.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

The preliminary fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run was dominated by age-4 fish (66%), which is typical. This year's return started out with a higher than average age-5 component which was expected based on the strong age-4 return last season. The return of age-4 fall chum salmon was also respectable producing a larger run than the was projected preseason. As of September 9, female fall chum salmon represented 61% of the fish sampled (n=1,321), which is near the average of 58%. For coho salmon females represent 48% of the fish sampled in LYTF (n=284), which is near average as of September 9.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on fall season chum salmon for the strata from August 24–September 2 that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar contained approximately 2% summer chum and 98% fall chum salmon. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 14% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 25% Canadian and 59% Tanana Fall stocks. These proportions reflect that stocks bound for the Tanana River were dominating while the upper stock components of Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek) dropped off substantially, with a greater proportion of Canada stocks remaining in the upper Yukon River. Genetic mixed stock analysis on fall season chum salmon for the last strata from September 3-7 are on the way to the lab and 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 all of 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 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, a subsistence salmon fishing schedule in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River is being implemented. Managers will closely monitor inseason information at the mainstem Porcupine River sonar and the Fishing Branch River escapement monitoring projects to determine future management actions as appropriate.

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):

For these last commercial openings, subsistence salmon fishing in District 1, including gillnet fishing in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers, is currently closed. **At 3:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 11, subsistence fishing will reopen and remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.**

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

Subsistence Fishing in District 2 is open 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. For the announced commercial period, **subsistence salmon fishing closed at 2:00 a.m. Monday, September 10 and will reopen at 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 11.**

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.

Porcupine River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open weekly from 12:00 noon Thursdays to 12:00 noon Mondays in the Porcupine River. This includes those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3 mouths of the Porcupine River. Subsistence salmon fishing in tributaries such as the Sheenjek, Black, Coleen, and Salmon Trout rivers will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

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/ 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. A subsistence fishing permit is required.

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/ 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:

In the Lower Yukon River, the coho salmon directed commercial fishery ends by regulation on September 10. After today's commercial periods, the department does not anticipate and additional commercial salmon openings for the remainder of the 2018 season in Districts 1 and 2.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 9 is 368,941 fall chum salmon and 104,927 coho salmon. This is the 3rd largest harvest of fall chum salmon and 4th largest harvest of coho salmon in the 57-year history of commercial fishing in the Lower Yukon. The department congratulates District 1 and 2 commercial fishermen for hard work this season.

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 4-6. 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:

Last commercial period:

Set Net Only Area: 12:00 noon until 9:00 p.m., Monday, September 10

Remainder of District 1: 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., Monday, September 10

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 9 in District 1 is 199,578 fall chum salmon and 65,024 coho salmon.

District 2 Commercial:

Last commercial period: 2 p.m. until 8 p.m. Monday, September 10

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 8 in District 2 is 169,363 fall chum salmon and 39,903 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 prior to purchasing salmon 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):

Currently, there are no registered buyers operating in District 6.

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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