

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



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**2017 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 19
Summer Update # 3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and run timing estimates, the 2017 Chinook and summer chum salmon runs appear to be tracking similar to 2016 and are likely to fall within the preseason outlook ranges. Sonar passage estimates over the next several days will continue to improve our run projections for both species.

As of June 19, the first Chinook salmon caught in the LYTF should have passed by Rampart and the early summer chum salmon should be moving up the Koyukuk River and upstream of Ruby. The first pulse of approximately 18,000 Chinook salmon lasted 4 days at the sonar project near Pilot Station and should be passing Galena on June 19. A second pulse of approximately 42,000 Chinook salmon passed the sonar between June 14 and 17. As of June 19, the strength and duration of the first pulse of summer chum salmon is still being assessed at Pilot Station sonar and the start of this large group of summer chum should be approaching Holy Cross. Based on recent LYTF catches, daily passage estimates at the Pilot Station sonar are expected to increase over the next couple days for both Chinook and summer chum salmon. The average historical midpoint at the sonar for early run fish is June 19 for Chinook salmon and June 25 for summer chum salmon.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon past the sonar project near Pilot Station (May 31 to June 13) estimated that 43% of the fish were of Canadian-origin.

The Yukon River Inseason Salmon Management Teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Alaska time. Dial (800) 315-6338, and enter participant code: YUKON #. Fishermen are encouraged to call in and share information about their fishing and local river conditions which helps with run assessment.

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery/ ADF&G and YDFDA

The combined cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites, as of June 18, is 12.41, which is above the historical average of 9.07. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site, as of June 18, is 257.45, which is above the historical average of 176.74. As of June 18, the combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gill net at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 12,631.40, which is well above the historical median of 1,629.02 for this date.

Operations at the LYTF for both Chinook and summer chum salmon have been altered from previous years so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. Efforts have been made to reduce Chinook salmon mortality in the test fishery. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets and any dead or injured salmon will be distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1. The project is operating well and has not experienced any issues from debris or equipment malfunction. As of June 18, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 89,437 fish, which is above the historical average of 52,512 for this date. As of June 18, the estimated cumulative summer chum passage is 667,569 fish, which is well above the historical median of 241,444 for this date.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14, which is the earliest start date on record. The first summer chum salmon passed the weir on June 15 and first Chinook salmon passed the weir on June 17. As of June 18, one Chinook and 48 summer chum have passed by the weir. The sustainable escapement goals are 2,100-4,900 Chinook salmon and greater than 40,000 summer chum past the weir project.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. Summer chum salmon passage, as of June 18, is 2,734 fish, which is above the historical cumulative median of 920 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations on June 18, which is one of the earliest start dates since 1995. Summer chum salmon passage, as of June 18, is 7 fish, which is below the historical median of 9 fish for this date. No Chinook salmon have been observed at the project as of June 18.

Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 13 was 9% age-4, 62% age-5, 25% age-6, and 4% age-7 fish. The sample size was 79 fish, of which 56% were female. All age percentages were average for this date and females were above average.

Management Strategy

A precautionary management approach is being taken this season given the trend of below-average returns of Chinook salmon. The first pulse of Chinook salmon, which is typically

dominated by stocks bound for Canada, is in District 4. Management actions have been taken in Districts 1 through 4 to close salmon fishing with gillnets and re-open with selective gear before the first pulse enters each area. Selective gear includes dip nets, beach seines, and manned (live-release) fish wheels, which allow harvest of summer chum and the safe release of all Chinook salmon.

Current Chinook salmon assessment near the midpoint in the run indicates run strength is similar to 2016, therefore subsistence fishing opportunity is warranted. After the first pulse of Chinook salmon pass through each area, subsistence fishing is reopening with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in order to provide harvest opportunity for summer chum and some limited harvest opportunity for Chinook salmon. The intent is to spread harvest across more of the run, providing limited harvest opportunity sooner after the first pulse than 2016, so fishermen can harvest higher quality summer chum and Chinook salmon while drying conditions are typically better. Some openings with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh are being provided in districts based on assessment information, in order to provide limited Chinook opportunity, particularly in subdistricts and districts with very high chum salmon passage rates relative to Chinook salmon.

Current Management

As a reminder, during salmon fishing closures, fishermen may use gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh of 60 feet or shorter length.

All Chinook salmon must be released alive from dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels during openings with selective gear.

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude): Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 1 (including Black River and North Coastal District):

Effective 4 a.m. Wednesday, June 21, subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on the following schedule:

- **4 a.m. until 2 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays (10-hour period each day)**

Dip nets may not be used during subsistence gillnet openings.

District 2:

Effective 8 a.m. Wednesday, June 21, subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on the following schedule:

- **8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays (10-hour period each day)**

Dip nets may not be used during subsistence gillnet openings.

District 3:

Fishing is open for one 24-hour period with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from noon, Tuesday, June 20, until noon, Wednesday June 21.

Effective 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory schedule of two 36-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays**
- **8 p.m. Sundays to 8 a.m. Tuesdays**

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.

Subdistrict 4-A Lower (including the Anvik River):

Subsistence fishing is currently open with dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels only to target summer chum salmon 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All Chinook salmon must be released alive from these selective gear types.

Effective 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, subsistence fishing with selective gear will close and immediately re-open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week:

- 6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays
- 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays

Fishermen may keep any Chinook salmon harvested in set and drift gillnets and fish wheels during these periods.

Subdistrict 4-A Upper:

Fishing is currently open with dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels only to target summer chum salmon 24 hours a day, until 6 p.m. Sunday, June 25. All Chinook salmon must be released alive from these selective gear types.

Effective 6 p.m. Sunday, June 25, subsistence fishing with selective gear will close and immediately re-open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week:

- 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays
- 6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays

Fishermen may keep any Chinook salmon harvested in set and drift gillnets and fish wheels during these periods.

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.

Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C:

Subsistence fishing is currently open with dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels only to target summer chum salmon 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All Chinook salmon must be released alive from these selective gear types.

Effective 6 p.m. Sunday, June 25, subsistence fishing with selective gear will close and immediately re-open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory salmon fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week:

- 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays
- 6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays

Fishermen may keep any Chinook salmon harvested in set and drift gillnets and fish wheels during these periods. Effective 6 p.m. Sunday June 25, Federally qualified subsistence fishermen may fish with drift gillnets in Federal public waters with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh during open fishing periods.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C:

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

Effective 6 p.m. Friday, June 23, subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets will close. Fishing will immediately reopen with selective gear, including dip nets, beach seines and live-release fish wheels 24 hours per day 7 days per week to target summer chum salmon.

All Chinook salmon must be released alive from these selective gear types.

Subdistrict 5-D:

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

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B:

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

Effective noon on Wednesday, June 21, subsistence salmon fishing will close.

Effective 6 p.m. Friday June 23, subsistence fishing will reopen on the regulatory subsistence schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from 6 p.m. Fridays until noon Sundays and from 6 p.m. Mondays until noon Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

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

Effective 6 p.m. Friday June 23, subsistence fishing will be 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.

Upper Tanana Area:

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

Subdistricts 6-C:

Personal use salmon fishing currently consists of two 42-hour periods each week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until noon Wednesdays. Fishermen may use fish wheels and 7.5-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets.

Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing continues in District 1 with selective gear and will be provided in District 2 based on buyer capacity. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening.

District 1 (including Black River) Commercial:

Commercial fishing is open on a schedule of six 12-hour periods per week with dip nets and beach seines from 3 p.m. each day to 3 a.m. the following day, Monday thru Saturday. Fishermen should stand by for further announcements.

District 2 Commercial:

Commercial fishing will begin in District 2 to target summer chum salmon with dip nets and beach seines. Because there is limiting buyer capacity in District 2 above Mountain Village this season, fishermen must ensure they have a buyer before fishing. Commercial fishing will be open with selective gear only for two 6-hour periods:

- **From 9 p.m. Wednesday, June 21 until 3 a.m. Thursday, June 22**
- **From 9 p.m. Friday, June 23 until 3 a.m. Saturday, June 24**

More periods may be announced based on buyer capacity. **All Chinook salmon must be released alive from commercial dip nets and beach seines and recorded on a fish ticket.**

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 949-1320, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Emmonak at 949-1798.

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