



DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE
ALASKA DEPT. OF FISH AND GAME

PROJECT CONTACT

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STUDY COMMUNITIES

KOTLIK

MARSHALL

NUNAM IQUA

PILOT STATION

PROPOSED STUDY COMMUNITIES

ALAKANUK

SAINT MARY'S

PROJECT TIMEFRAME
2014–2017



ADF&G complies with OEO requirements as posted at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=home.oestatement>

Harvest Monitoring and Local Traditional Knowledge of Nonsalmon Fishes in the Lower Yukon River

This study will document subsistence harvests and local knowledge of whitefish and other nonsalmon fishes in the lower Yukon River area.

Overview

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence is conducting a study to document harvests and local knowledge of whitefish and other nonsalmon fish in the lower Yukon River area. We also hope to develop a way to estimate how much nonsalmon fish people are catching each year. Interviews with knowledgeable people from the study communities will give us background information that can help us understand the importance of nonsalmon fish to lower Yukon fishers and their families.

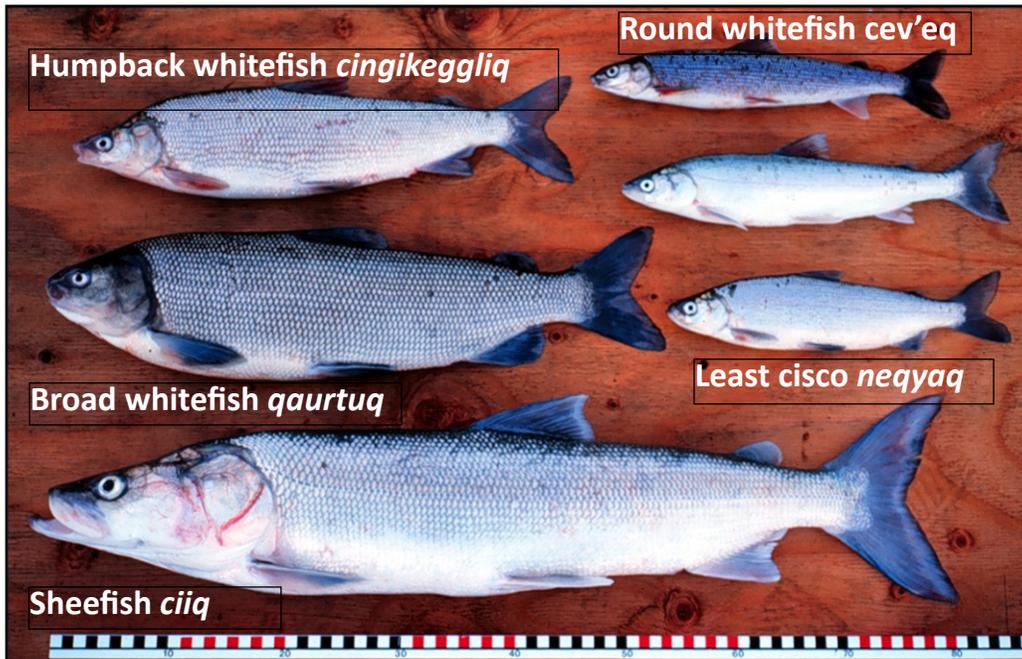
We know that whitefish and other nonsalmon fish are very important to many people, but we know very little about how much people are catching and how these fish are used. There is also a small commercial fishery for Bering cisco (*imarpinraq*) in the lower river. It is too early to tell how this fishery might affect the Bering cisco stock or subsistence harvests of the species, but more information from area households could help us understand the possible effects. Research is funded by the U.S. Department of Interior Office of Subsistence Management.

Location

We will complete surveys in 6 communities in the lower Yukon River area, pending community approval from local traditional councils. We have conducted the first year of research in Nunam Iqua, Pilot Station, and Marshall, received approval from Kotlik to conduct research, and have invited Alakanuk and Saint Mary's to participate.

Objectives

1. Estimate subsistence harvest and use of nonsalmon fishes for 2014 and 2015, including sharing, seasons of harvest, changes in use of nonsalmon fish from year to year, and basic information about individuals living in each household.
2. Document local knowledge related to nonsalmon fish, including: identification of different species and their local names; methods of fishing and fish preservation; whitefish population abundance and trends; mapping of harvest areas, other significant habitats, and fish-related place names.
3. Describe the characteristics that determine the amount of nonsalmon fish that a household or community might harvest as a way to predict and explain changing nonsalmon harvests from year to year.



Species of whitefish found in the Yukon River drainage and coastal areas of the Yukon River delta. Photo by Randy Brown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

What we plan to do

- Complete short harvest surveys for most households in each community in 2015 and 2016. Hire and train local research assistants in the study communities to help with completion of surveys.
- Interview knowledgeable local people to learn about the importance of whitefish and other nonsalmon fish.
- Analyze all information from surveys and interviews to develop ways of estimating yearly harvests of nonsalmon fish in communities of the region.
- Share this information with study communities and write a report explaining the study and its results.

Project Timeline

2014 Contact study communities for approval to conduct the research

2015 Travel to study communities to complete surveys and conduct interviews

2016 Complete second year of harvest surveys. Additional interviews may also be conducted

2017 Write a final report that will be reviewed and approved by all study communities. The final report will be given to the study communities, the Office of Subsistence Management, the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and other interested organizations. Researchers will make recommendations for future studies of whitefishes and present study results at meetings in each community and at professional meetings and conferences.

