

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2019 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 16

Summer Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Chinook salmon run timing and abundance appear to be similar to 2018, a year with normal run timing (Figure 1). The average first quarter point for Chinook salmon for a run with normal run timing at Pilot station sonar is June 18 and the midpoint is typically June 24th. The run appears to be coming in near the lower end of the preseason projection range of 168,000 to 241,000 fish. Like 2018, subsistence harvest restrictions are necessary in order to meet escapement goals and harvest share objectives.

Summer chum estimates are well below average at the Pilot Station sonar, indicating the run is late and weak. The 2019 summer chum run is similar to the weak runs of 2000 and 2001, which would have fallen below the lower end of the current Drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 fish (Figure 2). The average first quartile and midpoint are on June 24th and June 30th, respectively, at the sonar project for years with late summer chum salmon run timing.

As of June 23, the first pulse of Chinook salmon (~57,000 fish) should be spread throughout District 4, while the strong early trickle of Chinook salmon may be as far upriver as Fort Yukon. Early summer chum salmon may be near Tanana and the first large group of summer chum salmon should be near Russian Mission.

Chinook salmon samples from the test fishery at the Pilot Station sonar project from June 2- June 22 are being analyzed for genetic mixed stock analysis and results will likely be in the next update.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association are held every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. To participate, call (800) 315-6338, and enter code: YUKON# (98566#). Sharing your local knowledge, harvest information and fishing observations on these calls is very helpful for effective management.

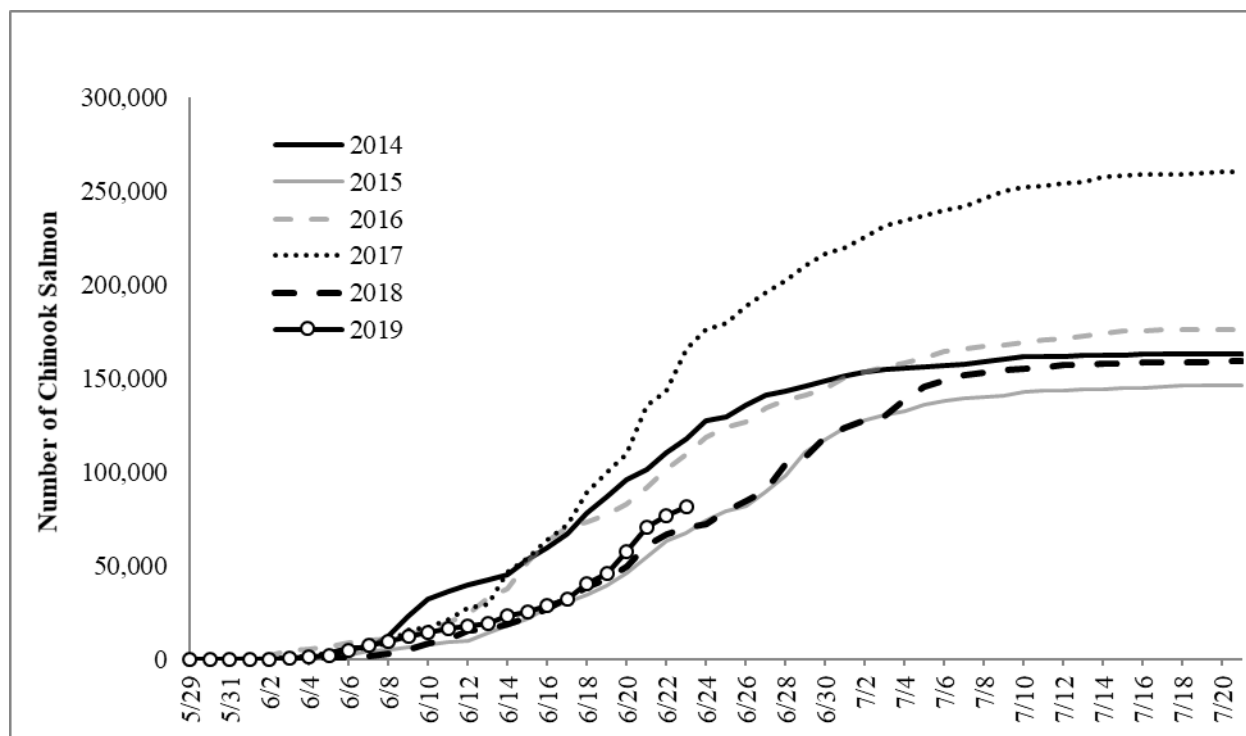


Figure 1. Cumulative total passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to recent years.

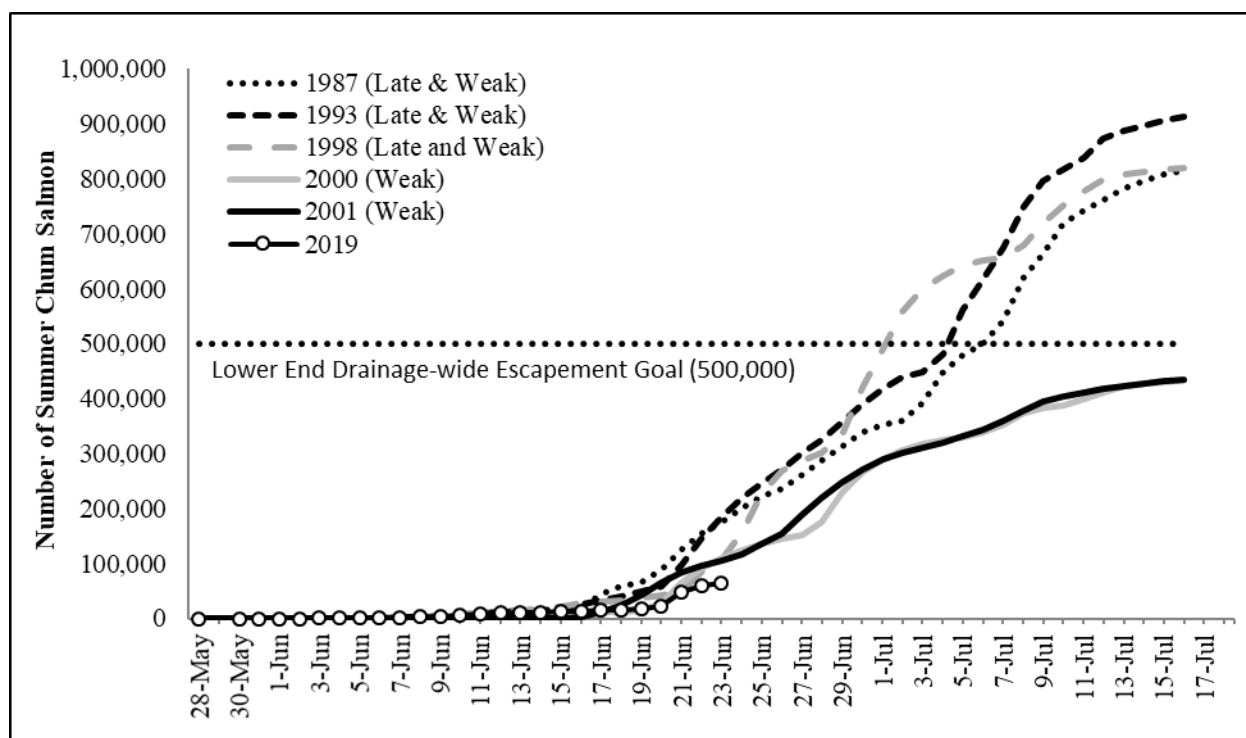


Figure 2. Summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and weak years. The horizontal dotted line represents the current lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal for summer chum.

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ 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 is 20.35, which is above the historical average of 14.72. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site is 183.26, which is below the historical average of 267.48. The combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 1,565.63, which is below the historical median of 4,084.18 for this date. All CPUEs are current through June 23.

Operations at the LYTF have been altered from previous years, so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The Pilot Station sonar is operating well and is not currently experiencing any issues with debris. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 81,464 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 92,875 fish, but is similar to 2018 passage for this date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 65,177 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 550,890 fish. All passage estimates are current through June 23.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on the June 16. Summer chum salmon passage, as of June 23, is 3,265 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 15,619 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal for Anvik summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000.

Management Strategy

Like last year, fishing is being reduced to half the regulatory (windows) fishing schedule, gillnets are being restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh, and one fishing period per week is being cancelled as needed to allow fish to pass upriver. Unlike last year, there is much less overlap between the summer chum and Chinook salmon run, and this may affect fishermen's success when using 6-inch mesh to fish for Chinook salmon.

Based on current chum run strength, there is no commercial fishery for summer chum.

Current Subsistence Management

As a reminder to fishermen, dip nets are now a legal subsistence gear type and are allowed during subsistence salmon gillnet openings. Subsistence fishermen may retain any Chinook salmon harvested in dip nets, gillnets and fish wheels, unless otherwise specified in the announcements. During salmon fishing closures, fishing for non-salmon is allowed, however, gillnets must be 4-inch or smaller mesh.

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude including the marine waters near Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

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

District 1 (Black River, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik and Emmonak): Subsistence fishing is currently closed.

- **Effective 2 p.m. Friday, June 28, subsistence fishermen are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets for one 18-hour period from 2 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Saturday**

Fishermen should stand by for further announcements regarding the Tuesday, July 2 period.

District 2 and 3: (Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station and Marshall, Russian Mission and Holy Cross): Subsistence fishing is currently closed. As previously announced, the Wednesday, June 26 period has been cancelled.

- **Effective 2 p.m. Saturday, June 29 subsistence fishermen are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets for one 18-hour period from 2 p.m. Saturday to 8 a.m. Sunday**

Fishermen should stand by for further announcements regarding the Wednesday, July 3 period.

District 4-A (Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk): Subsistence fishing is currently closed and will open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets for two 24-hour periods:

- **6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 26**
- The Saturday, June 29 period is being cancelled,
- **6 p.m. Tuesday, July 2 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 3**

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (Galena, Ruby): Subsistence fishing is currently closed and will open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets for two 24-hour periods:

- **6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 26**
- **6 p.m. Saturday, June 29 to 6 p.m. Sunday, June 30**
- The Tuesday, July 2 period is being cancelled

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart): Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets and fish wheels.

Effective 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 26, subsistence salmon fishing will close.

Subsistence fishing will reopen 6 p.m. Friday, June 28 with 6-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 24-hour periods per week from

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

Subdistricts 5-D (including the communities of Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Eagle): S

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

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of subdistricts 5-C and 5-D, and subdistricts 6-A, 6-B, and the Upper Tanana River drainage. The permit areas of Subdistrict 5-C and 5-D are 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.

Innoko, Koyukuk and Kantishna Rivers:

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

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, including Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets and fish wheels. **Effective 6 p.m. Saturday, June 29, subsistence salmon fishing will close.**

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 1, fishing will reopen with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 24-hour periods per week from:

- 6 p.m. Mondays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays
- 6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels and **will close at 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 3.**

Effective 6 p.m. Friday, July 5, fishing will reopen 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 (from 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, including Dot Lake, Tok, Tanacross, Northway):

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

Personal Use Fishing:

Subdistrict 6-C Personal Use Salmon (from the Wood River upstream to the Salcha River, including Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha)

Personal Use salmon fishing is currently on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from 6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays, and from 6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays.

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 1, Personal Use salmon fishing will be open on a reduced schedule of two 24-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

- 6 p.m. Mondays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays
- 6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

Fishermen may only use set gillnets and fishwheels in the Personal Use salmon fishery.

In the Tanana River up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A and 6-B) a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use permit is required to fish for salmon and other species from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Salcha River (Subdistrict 6-C).

A subsistence permit is required for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats. Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

News releases, test fish catches, and sonar counts are also available on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

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