

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



Douglas S. Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner
Sam Rabung, Director



Contact:
Holly Carroll, Area Management Biologist
Deena Jallen, Assistant Area Management Biologist
Toll free fishing schedule hotline: (866) 479-7387
Fishing schedule hotline in Fairbanks: 459-7387

Lower Yukon Area Office
P.O. Box 127
Emmonak, Alaska 99581
Phone: (907) 949-1320
Fax: (907) 949-1830
Date Issued: 07/01/2019

2019 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 23
Summer Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The Chinook salmon run is currently coming in stronger than the run observed in 2018 and will most likely be within the preseason projection range of 168,000 to 241,000 fish. (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 24. Like 2018, some subsistence harvest restrictions are necessary in order to meet escapement goals and harvest share objectives on a run of this size.

Summer chum estimates are well below average at the Pilot Station sonar, indicating the run is late and weaker than expected. However, summer chum salmon passage in the lower river increased dramatically during the last two days and passage at the sonar has exceeded the lower end of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 fish. Current projections indicate a commercial surplus available for harvest (Figure 2). The average first quartile and midpoint are on June 24 and June 30, respectively, at the sonar project for years with late summer chum salmon run timing.

The strong early trickle of Chinook salmon may be as far upriver as the Canadian border, and sonar counting operations near Eagle are beginning now. As of June 30, the first pulse of Chinook salmon should be in Rampart and above. A smaller, second, pulse of Chinook salmon should be in District 4-A lower. A third pulse of Chinook salmon is currently passing by the Pilot Station sonar. Early summer chum salmon may be near Nenana and the first large group of summer chum salmon should be near District 4-A. The largest group of summer chum salmon (over 300,000 fish) just passed the sonar in District 2 and should be entering District 3.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar project (June 2 to June 23) indicated that 56% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA will continue throughout the season. The age composition of 390 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June

23 was 11% age-4, 52% age-5, and 36% age-6 fish. The percentage of fish that were female (48%) was above average.

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.

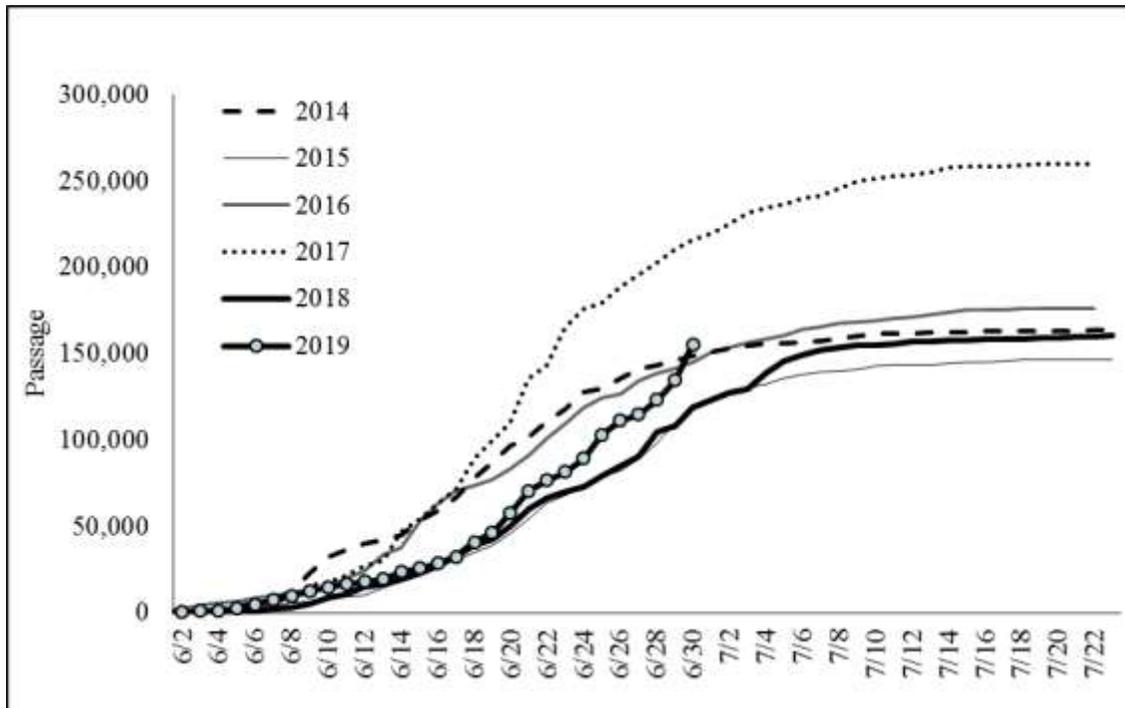


Figure 1. 2019 Cumulative total passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to recent years.

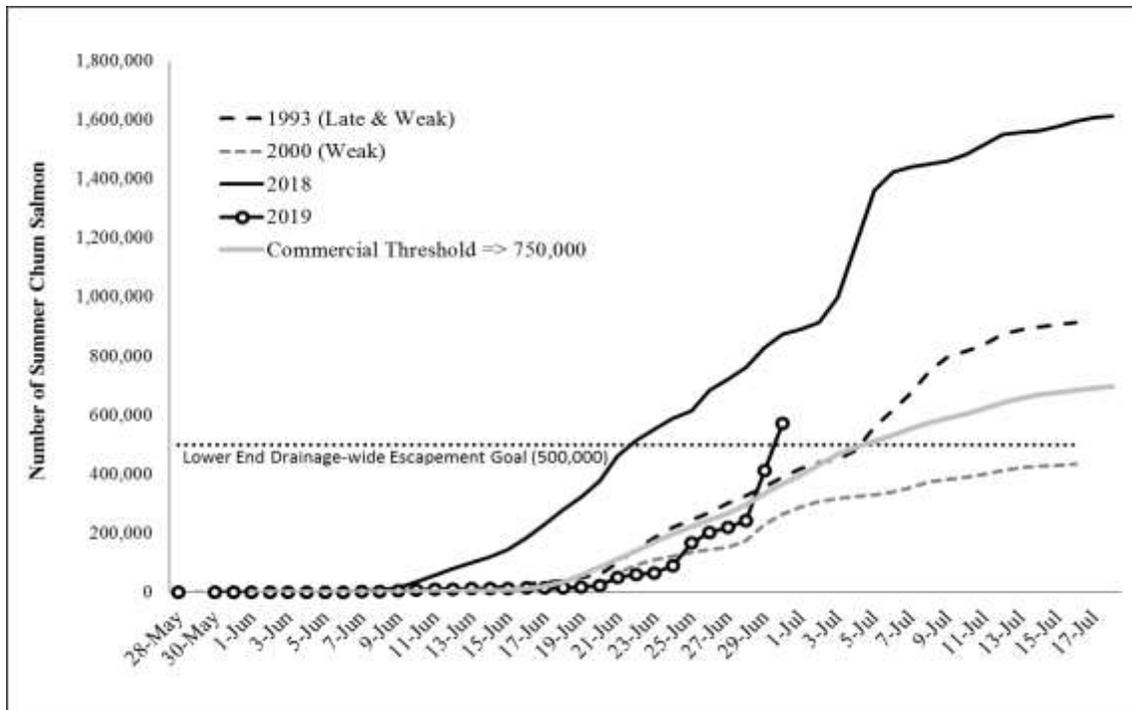


Figure 2. 2019 Cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to 2018, and late and weak years. The theoretical management “commercial threshold” of 750,000 summer chum needed for commercial harvest based on late run timing is included for reference. The horizontal dotted line represents the 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 32.39, which is above the historical average of 20.81. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site is 351.30, which is below the historical average of 362.41. The combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 5,475.78, which is below the historical median of 6,150.43 for this date. All CPUEs are current through June 30.

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 155,319 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 138,044 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 570,564 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,093,691 fish. All passage estimates are current through June 30.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 28, nearly 13 days late (due to high water). Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 370 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 268 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is 520 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 10,283 fish for this date. All passage estimates are current through June 30. The sustainable escapement goal for summer chum salmon is 40,000 fish.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 16. Summer chum salmon passage, as of June 30, is 9,965 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 108,988 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal for Anvik summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 30 and 2 summer chum salmon were counted on that date.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 24. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 33 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 87 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is 27 fish, which is above the historical cumulative median of 0 fish for this date. All passage estimates are current through June 30. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 24. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 51 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 74 fish. No summer chum salmon have been counted at the sonar. All passage estimates are current through June 30. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower site.

Management Strategy

While the Chinook run projection indicates escapement goals and harvest shares should be met, some level of harvest restriction, similar to last year, is needed. Like last year, fishing has been reduced to half the regulatory (windows) fishing schedule in all districts, gillnets are being restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh, and one fishing period per week has been cancelled, as needed, to allow fish to pass upriver. As the majority of Chinook are moving out of the lower river and chum numbers are increasing, gillnet restrictions are being relaxed to allow fishermen to target Chinook salmon, or chum salmon as needed.

Summer chum run projections have indicated a likely commercial surplus available for summer chum, though buyer capacity and incidental harvest of Chinook salmon will be considered for any future commercial openings.

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. Tuesday, July 2, subsistence salmon fishing will reopen with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 18-hour periods per week from:

- **2 p.m. Tuesdays to 8 a.m. Wednesdays**
- **2 p.m. Fridays to 8 a.m. Saturdays**

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.

Effective 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 3, subsistence salmon fishing will reopen with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 18-hour periods per week from:

- **2 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Thursdays**
- **2 p.m. Saturdays to 8 a.m. Sundays**

District 4-A (Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing is currently closed.

Effective 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 2, subsistence fishing will open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels for two 24-hour periods per week:

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

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (Galena, Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is currently closed and the previously announced closure for the July 2 period is still in effect.

Effective 6 p.m. Saturday, July 6, subsistence fishing will open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels for two 24-hour periods per week:

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

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart):

Subsistence fishing is on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 24-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

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

Subdistrict 5-D Lower and Middle (Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

Subsistence fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Effective 10 p.m. Monday, July 8 fishing will close.

Effective 10 a.m. Friday, July 12, fishing will reopen on a reduced regulatory schedule of one 84-hour opening per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

- **10 a.m. Fridays to 10 p.m. Mondays**

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in 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.

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.

In the Koyukuk River a subsistence fishing permit is required above Bettles, including the community of Wiseman, for all fish species.

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 on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 24-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets 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 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), and in the Upper Tanana River Area, 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/

-end-