

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2019 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 9 **Fall Update # 2, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2019 fall chum salmon preseason run projection, based on the summer chum to fall chum salmon relationship, is for a run size of 625,000 fall chum salmon with a range of 500,000 to 750,000 fish. Run sizes within this range are expected to provide for escapement and subsistence use needs. The estimated fall chum salmon run size through July 28 is 273,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 146,000 fish for that date. The front of the fall season chum salmon migration is expected to be near Nulato August 2, Ruby around August 5, and Tanana/Huslia around August 9, Rampart around August 8, Fort Yukon around August 16 and the Canadian border around August 26.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year's run is 2015. The majority of the coho salmon run will arrive in August. A few coho salmon have been entering the Yukon River but most of the run begins building in early August.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE through July 28 was 275.98 for fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 175.59 for this date. The first coho salmon caught was reported on July 18 at this project.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE through July 28 was 542.69 for fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 443.60 for this date. The first coho salmon caught was reported on July 19 at this project.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through July 28 was 230,000 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 138,000 fish for this date. The first coho salmon caught was reported on July 26 at this project.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

Fall chum salmon age analysis from the LYTF has not been completed at this time. Females currently represent 36% of the fish sampled (n=295), which is well below the average of 53%, as of July 28.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Yukon River Districts 1-4 have switched to fall season management. The remaining upriver districts and subdistricts will transition to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration reaches those areas. Subsistence fishermen can expect to fish their regulatory schedules upon transitioning to the fall season. In accordance with the *Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan*, a threshold run size of 550,000 fish is necessary to open a fall chum salmon directed commercial fishery. Commercial fishing would be allowed on the surplus above that level. Commercial fishermen should stand by for announcements regarding commercial openings.

As a reminder to subsistence fishermen, dip nets are a legal gear type for subsistence salmon fishing. Subsistence salmon fishermen may continue using gillnets, dip nets, and fish wheels. Personal use fishing in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River may only use set gillnets and fish wheels.

Summer Season Assessment

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are complete in the lower river and management has transitioned to fall season. As of July 28, the cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project near Eagle is approximately 27,000, which is below the historical average of approximately 41,000 fish for this date; however, run timing is likely at least 2 days later than normal. The escapement goals for Chinook and summer chum salmon on the East Fork Andreafsky River have been exceeded. Passage to the Chena and Salcha rivers is below average, but Chinook run timing may be approximately two or more days late to these projects. The drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million summer chum salmon has been exceeded.

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run size is estimated to be about 97,000 which is towards the upper end of the preseason outlook of 69,000 to 99,000 fish. A Chinook salmon run of this size should meet escapement goals, provide some subsistence harvest, and meet the harvest sharing objectives outlined in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

Summer Assessment Projects

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 28. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 5,100 fish, which exceeds the sustainable escapement goal range of 2,400-4,900 Chinook salmon. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 49,728 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 55,598 fish but exceeds the sustainable escapement goal of 40,000 summer chum salmon.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 16 and ended on July 26. Summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 249,013 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 545,720 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal for Anvik summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations roughly a week late on July 2 due to high water. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 1,315 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 2,050 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 18,754 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 46,257 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 28.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 30. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 401 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,092 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 30,396 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 171,731 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 28.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 24. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 1,734 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 6,291 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is 635 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 4,591 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 28. 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 3,234 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 8,617 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is 923 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 5,067 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 28. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower site.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 28, is estimated to be 27,016 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 41,007 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish. The goal is assessed post-season using the Eagle sonar count minus the estimated U.S. and Canadian harvest of Chinook salmon above the sonar.

Chinook Age and Stock Composition

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar (June 2 to June 23) indicated that 56% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second, and part of the third pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the sonar (June 24 to June 30) indicated that 42% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the remaining fish from the third pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the sonar (July 1 to July 7) indicated that 36% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. The age composition of 691 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 7 was less than 1% age-3, 11% age-4, 49% age-5, 38% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. All major age classes were within one percentage point of their historical averages (years 2009-2018). The percentage of fish that were female, 49%, was above average.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Two strata of chum salmon genetic samples have been processed to date in 2019. The strata from June 4–June 24 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, of which 80% were lower stocks and 19% were bound for the middle Yukon River. The strata from June 25–July 7 also consisted of

99% summer chum salmon of which 71% were lower stocks, 20% were bound for the middle Yukon River and 8% were bound for the Tanana River. The third summer strata July 8–18 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon of which 88% were lower stocks, 8% were bound for the middle Yukon River, and all other stocks were negligible. The Tanana River summer component was extremely weak in this stratum. The fourth strata from July 19–26, representing the transition to fall season, are currently at the laboratory and results will be available in the daily update once received <http://list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate>.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:

Coastal District (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River, 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) and **District 2** (Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station and Marshall):

Subsistence fishing is open for the fall season 24 hours a day, 7 days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Subsistence fishermen must remove both tips of the tail fin of Chinook salmon before concealing from plain view or leaving the fishing site.

District 3 (Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

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

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

Subsistence fishing is currently closed. Effective Tuesday July 30, subdistrict 4-A will reopen on a 5-day per week schedule from 6 p.m. Tuesdays until 6 p.m. Sundays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels. **Subsistence fishermen in all of Subdistrict 4-A, including those fishing in the lower portion of Subdistrict 4-A below Stink Creek (includes the communities of Anvik and Grayling) may use drift and set gillnet gear when subsistence fishing for salmon.**

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

Subsistence fishing is open for the fall season on a 5-day per week schedule from 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Fridays. Fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels. As a reminder, fishermen in District 4 may drift gillnet for all salmon; there are no longer dates when drifting is discontinued, and there is no longer a gillnet mesh depth restriction in state or federal waters.

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

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels for two 48-hour periods per week from:

- **6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Thursdays**
- **6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Sundays**

Subdistrict 5-D (including the Porcupine River, other adjacent tributaries, and communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open.

Effective 10 p.m. Monday, July 29 fishing will close and will remain closed until further notice.

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.

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 open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is 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 (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.

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 open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

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/.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon opened in Subdistrict 6-B of the Tanana River on July 26. However due to concern for a low returns of summer chum salmon in the Tanana River, commercial fishing in Subdistrict 6-B will close on July 30.

The fall chum directed commercial fishery began July 16 in the Lower Yukon. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 29 in District 1 is 38,876 fall chum salmon and 148 coho salmon; District 2 is 6,798 fall chum salmon and 16 coho salmon.

Commercial Fishing Periods:**District 1 and District 2:**

Fishermen should standby for announcements regarding further commercial openings.

Subdistrict 6-B:

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 29, commercial fishing for summer chum salmon will open for one 24-hour period with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels. **Commercial fishing will close at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 30 and will be closed until further notice.**

This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Emmonak call 949-1798.

News releases, test fish catches, and sonar counts are also available on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

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