

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2019 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 15 **Fall Update # 3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2019 fall chum salmon preseason projection, based on the summer chum to fall chum salmon relationship, has been revised to a range of 700,000-800,000 fish. Run sizes within this range are expected to provide for escapement, subsistence needs, and a limited commercial fishery. After an extended summer chum salmon run, the number of fall chum salmon entering the Yukon River has increased substantially this past week. The fall chum salmon that entered the Yukon River on August 1 are expected to be near Anvik August 9, Kaltag August 13, Galena August 15, Tanana/Huslia August 20, Rampart August 22, Fort Yukon August 30 and the Canadian border around September 9.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year's run is 2015. The coho salmon are beginning to enter the Yukon River and timing appears normal though the first quarter of the run is not until August 12 in the lower river.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE through August 4 was 490.41 for chum salmon, which is below the historical median of 533.34 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon as of August 4 was 9.13 which is below the median of 25.14 however it is early in the run. The first quarter point of the coho salmon run is typically around August 12 at this project.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE through August 4 was 838.68 for chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 696.58 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 15.20 which is below the historical median of 21.74 as of August 4.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through August 4 was 306,000 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 223,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage was 1,413 fish, which is below the median of 3,754 through August 4. The first quarter point of the coho salmon run is typically around August 16 at this project.

Age Composition Fall Season / ADF&G

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run is dominated by age-4 fish. The 2019 preliminary proportions of age-4 is 77%, well above the average of 60% and age-5 is 22% which is below average (39%). Females represent 34% of the fish sampled (n=392), which is well below the average of 55%, as of August 4.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on chum salmon for the strata from July 19–26 that passed the sonar near Pilot Station, contained approximately 88% summer chum and 12% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon stocks in the sample contained primarily Lower River stocks at 64%, Middle River stocks at 11% and Tanana River stocks at 13%. The next group of fish that entered the river will include a higher proportion of fall chum salmon. After this group passes the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station the samples will be sent to the lab for analysis and results will be available in the daily update <http://list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate>.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Yukon River Districts 1-4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C 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

Most summer season assessment projects have concluded operations for the 2019 season. The escapement goals for Chinook and summer chum salmon on the East Fork Andreafsky River were exceeded and the escapement goal for Chinook salmon on the Salcha River was met. The drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million summer chum salmon was exceeded.

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run size was 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. As of August 4, the cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project near Eagle is approximately 40,000, which is below the historical average of approximately 52,400 fish for this date; however, run timing is likely at

least 2 days later than normal. Chinook salmon passage to date at the Eagle sonar likely represents 80%-85% of the expected total passage at the project.

Summer Assessment Projects

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 28 and ended on July 30. Chinook salmon passage was estimated to be 5,111 fish, which exceeded the sustainable escapement goal range of 2,100-4,900 Chinook salmon. Summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 49,881 fish, which exceeded 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 was below the historical cumulative median of 545,720 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal for Anvik River is 350,000–700,000 summer chum salmon.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations roughly a week late on July 2 and ended on July 30. Chinook salmon passage was estimated to be 1,328 fish, which was below the historical cumulative average of 2,087 fish. Summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 19,099 fish, which was below the historical cumulative median of 46,257 fish.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 30 and ended on August 2. Chinook salmon passage was estimated to be 438 fish, which was below the historical cumulative average of 1,131 fish. Summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 34,342 fish, which was below the historical cumulative median of 189,319 fish.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 24 and ended on August 2. Chinook salmon passage was estimated to be 2,018 fish, which was below the historical cumulative average of 6,381 fish. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site. Summer chum salmon passage was 2,704 fish, which was below the historical cumulative median of 6,126 fish. Summer chum salmon arrived very late this season and passage may have been peaking when the project was pulled due to high water.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 24 and ended on August 2. Chinook salmon passage was estimated to be 4,678 fish, which was below the historical cumulative average of 9,157 fish but fell within the BEG of 3,300–6,500 fish. Summer chum salmon passage was 2,117 fish, which was below the historical cumulative median of 11,566 fish. Summer chum salmon arrived very late this season and passage may have been peaking when the project was pulled due to high water.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of August 4, is estimated to be 39,752 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 52,335 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.

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):

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.

Due to a commercial period, subsistence salmon fishing, including all gillnets in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers, will close at 1:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 6, and reopen at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, August 7.

Subsistence fishermen must remove both tips of the tail fin of Chinook salmon before concealing from plain view or leaving the fishing site.

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

District 4 (Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

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

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, fish wheels, and dip nets 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**

Effective 6 p.m. Tuesday, August 6, subsistence fishing will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with the same gear.

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 closed.

Effective 10 a.m. Friday, August 9, fishing will open on a reduced regulatory schedule of one 84-hour period per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

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

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 is open concurrent with subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 6-B of the Tanana River. In order to spread harvest out through the summer chum salmon run, the processor will buy a limited number of fish per period. Commercial fishermen should coordinate with the buyer regarding scheduling deliveries and the amount of fish the processor will purchase. Chinook salmon may be retained for personal use. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 4 in Subdistrict 6-B is less than 1,000 summer chum.

The fall chum directed commercial fishery began July 16 in the Lower Yukon. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 4 in District 1 is 38,876 fall chum salmon and 148 coho salmon; District 2 is 16,324 fall chum salmon and 397 coho salmon.

Commercial Fishing Periods:

District 1:

Commercial fishing will open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets:

Set Net Only Area: 9-hour period on Tuesday, August 6 from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Remainder of District 1: 6-hour period on Tuesday, August 6 from 4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

District 2:

Fishermen should standby for announcements regarding further commercial openings.

Subdistrict 6-B:

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays**

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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