



## **Advisory Announcement**

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### **2020 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #22**

#### **Fall Update # 8, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2020 fall chum salmon inseason projection is for a run size of near 200,000 fish and is currently tracking as the lowest run size on record. Using genetic analysis on all chum salmon that have passed the mainstem sonar site operated near Pilot Station since July 19, it is estimated that 189,000 fall chum salmon have entered the Yukon River as of September 7. The projected abundance is below the level needed to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000-600,000 fall chum salmon, tributary escapement goals, and Canadian treaty objectives (see management strategies below). Fall chum salmon are typically dominated by age-4 fish however, that age class produced by the 2016 parent year, has shown extremely poor survival in chum salmon runs throughout the state.

Fall chum salmon typically take 39 days to migrate from the mouth of the Yukon River to the U.S./Canada border, with estimated travel rates of 35 miles per day, though travel times may be a bit slower with this year's sustained high water. The last identified fall chum salmon group that entered the Yukon River on August 27 would be approaching the U.S./Canada border around October 5.

Coho salmon are entering the river weaker and later than average to date. Coho salmon returning this year are primarily offspring of the 2016 escapement. The projection of coho salmon run size passing the Yukon River mainstem sonar operated near Pilot Station using late run timing is 109,000 fish.

#### **Fall Assessment Projects**

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

The cumulative CPUE through September 7 was 1,158.70 for fall chum salmon, which is below the historical average of 1,597.25 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 157.50, which is well below the historical average of 416.93 for September 7. This project will continue operations through September 10.

##### Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE through September 7 was 701.08 for fall chum salmon, which is well below the historical median of 2,080.22 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 299.86, which is well below the historical average of 1,062.15 for September 7. This project will continue operations through September 12.

### Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through the last day of operations on September 7 was 262,000 fish, which is well below the median passage of approximately 740,000 fish for this date. The estimated fall chum salmon component of this count is approximately 189,000 fish after the application of genetic stock proportions. The overall fall chum salmon run timing was 5 days earlier than average at this project. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through September 7 was 108,000 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 150,000 fish for this date. The overall coho salmon run timing was 5 days later than average at this project.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions or funding concerns, these projects did not operate: Teedriinjik (Chandalar) River sonar project operated by USFWS and the Upper Porcupine River sonar project operated by DFO in the Yukon Territory of Canada.

### Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar project transitioned to fall season on August 25 and has estimated 2,243 fall chum salmon through September 7, which is below the median passage of 16,000 by this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin fall chum salmon is 70,000-104,000 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. Based on overall run size as determined by the sonar in the lower Yukon River mainstem operated near Pilot Station and genetics composition to date it is unlikely that the lower end of the escapement goal will be met.

### Age Composition Fall Season / ADF&G

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets through August 26 consists of 50% age-4 and 47% age-5 (n=554), compared to the previous years' average of 67% age-4 and 31% age-5. Females represent 55% of the fall chum salmon sampled (n=633), which is below the average of 58%, as of September 7. The average length is 599 mm from a sample of 632 fall chum salmon, which is above the 10-year (2010–2019) average of 583 mm. Females represent 50% of the coho salmon sampled (n=131), which is above the average of 47%, as of September 5. Coho salmon average length, from the LYTF project, is 548 mm (n=125), which is below the 10-year (2010–2019) average of 565 mm.

### Chum Salmon Stock Identification / USFWS, ADF&G

Genetic mixed stock analysis on all chum salmon that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar near Pilot Station from August 17-27 indicated the samples contained 94% fall chum salmon. Within the fall chum salmon stocks the Tanana represented 64%, Border U.S. stocks (Teedriinjik, Sheenjek, and Black rivers) was 21%, and Canada was 15%. The samples from August 28 through September 7 are headed to the lab; look for the results in the Yukon River daily update email later this week. To subscribe go to the following link:

<http://list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate>.

### **Fall Season Management Strategy:**

This year's fall chum salmon run fell below the 300,000 fish threshold needed to allow subsistence fishing. In accordance with the Yukon River Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, subsistence fishing for fall chum salmon has been closed for most of the season. Based on run timing, current low catches at both the Lower Yukon and Mountain Village test fisheries, and low passage numbers at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station, the 2020 fall chum salmon run is essentially complete. At this time subsistence fishing restrictions are being relaxed to provide fishing opportunity for coho salmon and other fish species. Subsistence fishing restrictions have been eased in Districts 1-3. Subsistence fishermen in upriver districts and subdistricts should stand by for announcements regarding the relaxing of subsistence restrictions in their areas.

**Current Subsistence Management Actions**

**Coastal District** (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 nautical mile south of the Black River, which includes Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open for 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Fishermen may also use other types of salmon gear such as dip nets and fish wheels. All fish caught may be retained.

**Districts 1-3** (Black River, and communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open for 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Fishermen may also use other types of salmon gear such as dip nets and fish wheels. All fish caught may be retained.

**Innoko River:**

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

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Subsistence fishermen may also use selective gear that includes hook and line, live-release (manned) fish wheels, and dip nets to target salmon other than fall chum salmon and non-salmon fish species. Fall chum salmon must be released alive immediately from the selective gear and bypass any livebox on a fish wheel.

Note that only fishermen in Subdistrict 4-A downriver from the community of Nulato may use the hook and line gear.

**Koyukuk River** (Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Subsistence fishermen may also use selective gear that includes live-release (manned) fish wheels and dip nets to target salmon other than fall chum salmon and non-salmon fish species. Fall chum salmon must be released alive immediately from the selective gear and bypass any livebox on a fish wheel.

**Subdistrict 5-A** (Tanana; **south bank only** and begins at a point opposite the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek upstream along the south bank of the river to the easternmost edge of the Tanana River mouth and includes the following islands: Second, Corbusier, Sixmile, Deet'laa', Swanson, Blind, Basco, Sword, Leonard, Still, Tanana, and Mission.):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Subsistence fishermen may also use selective gear that includes live-release (manned) fish wheels and dip nets to target salmon other than fall chum salmon and non-salmon fish species. Fall chum salmon must be released alive immediately from the selective gear and bypass any livebox on a fish wheel.

**Subdistricts 5-B, 5-C, and 5-D** (Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Subsistence fishermen may also use selective gear that includes live-release (manned) fish wheels and dip nets to target salmon other than fall chum salmon and non-salmon fish species. Fall chum salmon must be released alive immediately from the selective gear and bypass any livebox on a fish wheel.

**Kantishna River:**

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Subsistence fishermen may also use selective gear that includes live-release (manned) fish wheels and dip nets to target salmon other than fall chum salmon and non-salmon fish species. Fall chum salmon must be released alive immediately from the selective gear and bypass any livebox on a fish wheel.

**Upper Tanana Area** (the Tanana River from the confluence with 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):

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

**Subdistrict 6-C Salmon** (Personal use fishery from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha and surrounding area communities):

Personal use salmon fishing in is closed until further notice.

**Subdistrict 6-C Whitefish and Sucker Personal Use Fishing**

Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels follows the Subdistrict 6-C salmon fishing schedule and is closed until further notice. Fishing with other gear for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day.

**Subsistence and Personal Use Permit Areas**

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

A subsistence permit is also required for all species in the “Upper Tanana River” area from the confluence with 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. A personal use permit is required to fish for whitefish and suckers in the Fairbanks Non-Subsistence area (from the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank). 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 (459-7274) or online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/).



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 Fairbanks call 456-0406.

Announcements will be shared on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG](https://www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG)

### **COVID-19**

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.