



Advisory Announcement

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2023 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #11

Summer Update #3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The first pulse of the Chinook salmon run may be passing by Pilot Station sonar. While daily passage estimates have picked up recently, the cumulative total for the season remains well below average and is similar to 2022. Consistent with the preseason management strategy to take a conservative approach this season, subsistence fishing closures will continue upriver based on run timing. This is intended to protect Chinook salmon stocks while they migrate upriver to spawning grounds in Alaska and Canada.

Summer chum salmon catches and passage estimates are also below average. The last few years, the summer chum salmon run has been entering the river up to a week late, and the midpoint of the run at Pilot Station Sonar has been around July 3. If the summer chum salmon run is projected to meet the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal (at least 500,000 fish), fishing opportunities with selective gear types may be announced. It is unlikely that any fishing for salmon would occur prior to the midpoint of the summer chum salmon run.

Assessment project and management updates will be shared during the weekly YRDFFA teleconferences each **Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. (Alaska time). Call in number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#**

Assessment Projects

All assessment data is updated with data through June 18.

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ADF&G and YDFDA

LYTF drift gillnet operations for Chinook and summer chum salmon began on June 5 at Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites. Drift sites have had high water and lots of debris. Several drifts in the last week have been cancelled due to poor fishing conditions and rough weather. The Big Eddy cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 26.63, which is below the historic average of 161.34. The Middle Mouth cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 7.74. The combined Chinook drift CPUE is 16.90, which is below the historic average of 20.53. The cumulative CPUE for summer chum salmon in the 5.5-inch drift gillnets is 289.05, which is below the historical median of 630.0.

To reduce Chinook salmon mortality, set net sites will not be used this year at Big Eddy or Middle Mouth locations. All salmon will be released alive from the test nets if possible. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to communities.

Data collected from Chinook and summer chum salmon will include ASL (Age, Sex, and Length). A few salmon of all species caught in LYTF will be sampled this year for other fish health research.

Pilot Station Sonar (ADF&G)

Pilot Station sonar began operations on June 6. Water levels are reported to be extremely high but dropping with some debris. Sonar and test fishing operations have been proceeding as planned. Cumulative Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be $9,467 \pm 5,685$ fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative average of 46,349 for this date, based on normal run timing years, and 20,147 fish based on late run timing years. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be $33,033 \pm 5,937$ fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is well below the historical cumulative median of 229,321 fish for this date based on normal timing years, and 127,874 fish based on late run timing years.

All Chinook salmon captured in the Pilot Station Sonar test fishery (PSSTF) will be sampled for age, sex, length and genetics, and most fish will be released alive. Additional biological sampling will be conducted for all Chinook salmon test fish mortalities as part of a broad collaborative effort to better understand salmon health and potential drivers of *en route* mortality and low productivity. Additional samples will include otoliths, heart, kidney, liver, intestine, eggs, blood, muscle biopsy, and fat content. The PSSTF heart samples will be used by ADF&G and USFWS, along with samples from other locations, to investigate the potential for *Ichthyophonus* associated mortality. Kidney samples from PSSTF are being tested for proliferative kidney disease. Fish health results will be available post season.

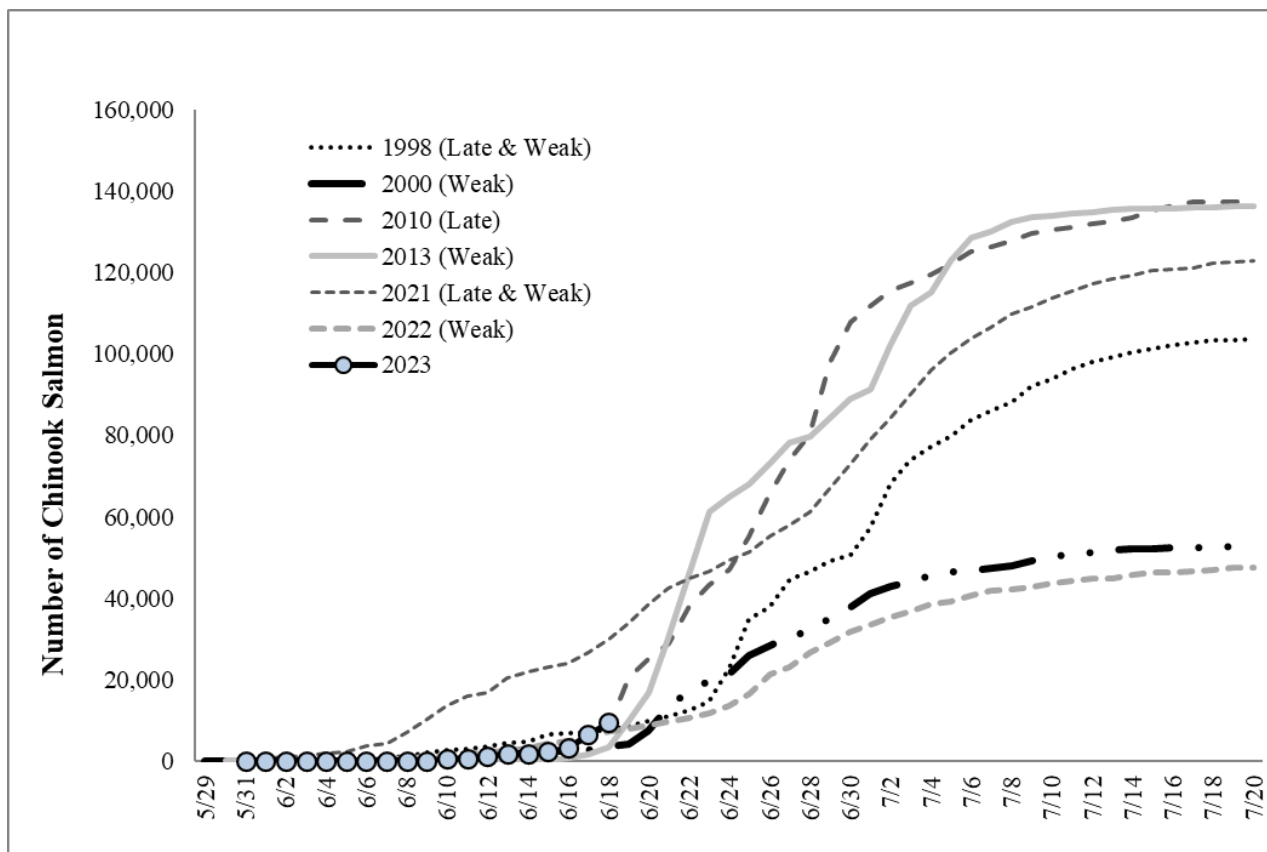


Figure 1. 2023 Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

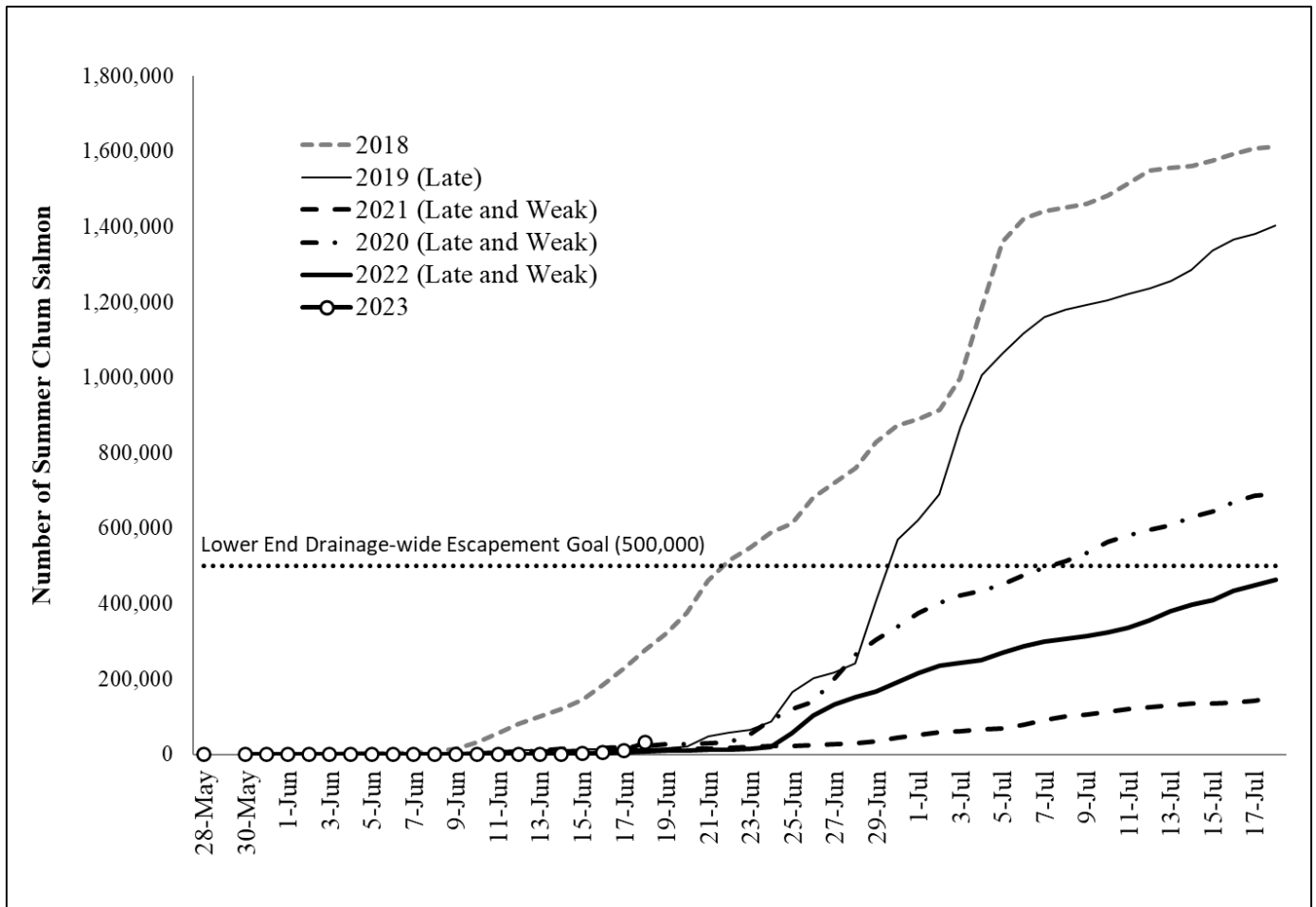


Figure 2. 2023 Cumulative passage of summer chum salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

East Fork Andreafsky Weir (USFWS)

Crew is on site, but high water is delaying weir installation.

Anvik River Sonar Project (ADF&G)

Counts began on June 15. As of June 18, passage is 135 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 478 fish.

Gisasa Weir (USFWS)

Crew is in camp and experiencing high water in the Gisasa River which may delay weir installation.

Chinook Radio Telemetry/ ADF&G

The Chinook salmon radio telemetry tagging project began June 19 in the lower river near Emmonak. Over the next three years (2023–2025), up to 500 Chinook salmon will be captured, radio tagged, and released alive in the lower Yukon River to resume their upriver migration. Each fish will be tagged with both an internal radio telemetry tag and an external spaghetti tag. More information about the project can be found on posters in communities along the river or at the ADF&G offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Emmonak. If you encounter a tagged fish this season and are successful at documenting the tag number, please call 1-877-467-2104 to report information about when and where the fish was observed. As a thank you for voluntarily reporting the tag number and associated information, you will be automatically entered into the

ADF&G salmon tag lottery. Please contact Josh Clark at 907-267-2217 or Fred West at 907-267-2237 with any questions.

Alaska-based projects that will begin operations later this season:

Eagle Sonar, and Salcha and Chena River Tower/Sonar (ADF&G); and Henshaw Weir (TCC).

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 85 summer chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through June 16 was 54% age-4, which compares to a historical average of 30% for this date. The age-5 component made up 45% of the samples, which compares to a historical average of 65% for this date. Of the samples, 1% were age-6 fish, which compares to the historical average of 4% for this date. The age-4 fish average length of 556 mm and the age-5 average length of 569 mm are both similar compared to average (2013–2022). Female summer chum salmon are slightly lower at 54% compared to a historical average (2013–2022) of 59%.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used during salmon fishing closures to target nonsalmon. **Four-inch or smaller mesh gillnets must be 60 feet or less in length and operated as a set net.** Fishermen are reminded to set this gear near shore and in areas where nonsalmon species are abundant to avoid incidentally harvesting salmon. While any salmon caught in this gear may be kept, if it appears salmon are being targeted with this gear, it could be further restricted.

Gear types for nonsalmon species include dip net, beach seine, hand line, longline, fyke net, lead, and spear, and during subsistence salmon fishing closures Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive. Pink and sockeye salmon may be retained. The area where hook and line gear may be used for subsistence has been extended above the Nulato River, except for District 6 and some closed waters (Figure 3).

In Districts 3-6, submerged gillnets may be used for subsistence and personal use during ice-free months, however submerged nets must have a visible buoy or cluster of floats attached to both ends of the net, plus a third float in the middle if the net is over 60 feet in length.

All gillnets must be marked with a buoy, float, or keg that has the fisherman's first initial, last name, and address.

Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, and 3 (from the Naskonat Peninsula to Point Romanof, and upriver to Old Paradise village, including the Black River and communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, and Holy Cross):

Salmon fishing is closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length and must be operated as a set net. Nets should be set near shore. Dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon species and pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

Innoko River (community of Shageluk):

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

Effective 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, salmon fishing is closed. Gillnets larger than 4-inch are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon and are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net. Nets should be set near shore.

Dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon species and pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

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

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon and are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net. Nets should be set near shore. Dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon species and pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C (including Galena and Ruby):

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

Effective 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon and are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net. Nets should be set near shore.

Dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon species, pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

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

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

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the Koyukuk River above Bettles including the community of Wiseman. Gillnet gear in the permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size.

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

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

Effective 8 p.m. Sunday, June 25, salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon and are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net. Nets should be set near shore.

Dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon species, pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

Subdistrict 5-D (including Stevens Village, Beaver, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Birch Creek, Chalkyitsik, Circle, Central, and Eagle):

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

In Birch Creek, and the subsistence area of Beaver Creek below Moose Creek, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 4 inches.

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.

District 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 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Kantishna River (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, including Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

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

Old Minto Area:

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

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):

Subsistence fishing is currently 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, and Salcha):

By regulation, Personal Use fishing is open on a schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. (noon) Wednesdays

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. (noon) Sundays

Personal use fishing will be closed once salmon arrive in the area.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing

Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (a portion of the Tanana River drainage 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, which includes Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction):

Fishing for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, subject to permit stipulations.

In the Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A and 6-B), a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use salmon permit and valid sport fishing license are required to fish for salmon in Subdistrict 6-C. A personal use whitefish and sucker permit and valid sport fishing license are required in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area.

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 907-459-7274 or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

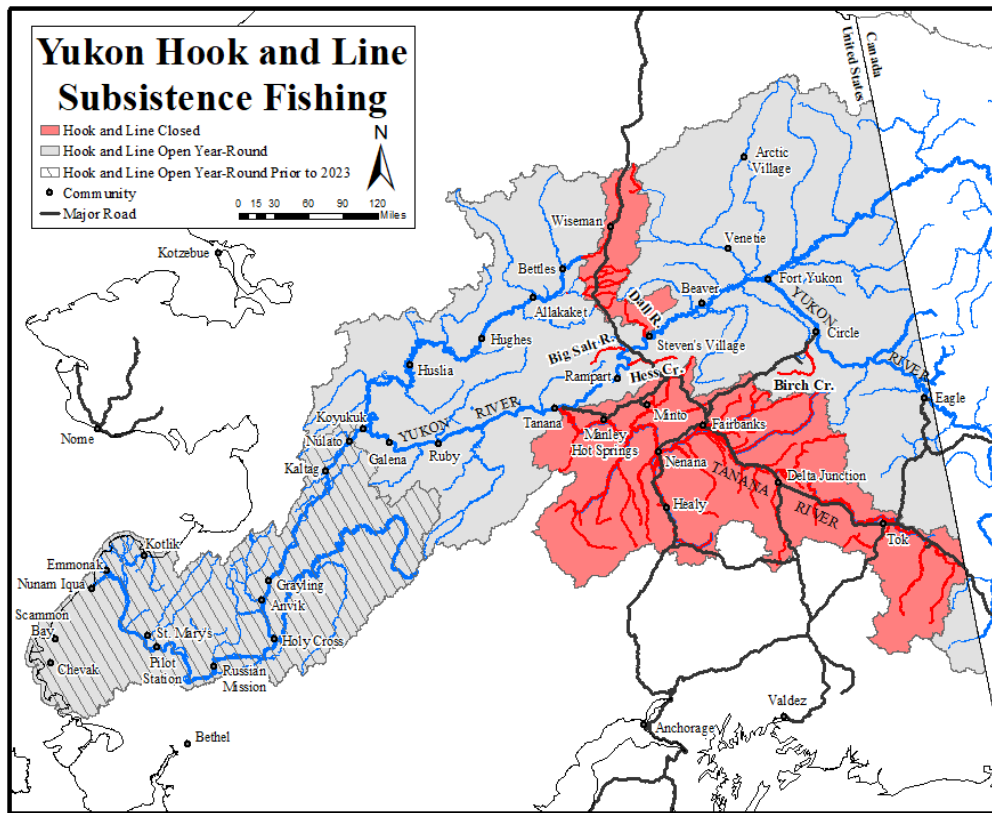


Figure 3. Areas where hook and line are legal as a subsistence fishing gear type in the Yukon Area (gray shaded areas). Closed areas for subsistence fishing with hook and line (red/darker shaded areas) include the Tanana River drainage, Big Salt River, Hess Creek, Dall River drainage, Birch Creek upstream of the Steese Highway bridge, Fish Creek drainage upstream from the mouth of Bonanza Creek, Bonanza Creek drainage, Kanuti River drainage upstream from a point 5 miles downstream of the state highway crossing, and Jim River drainage.

The ADF&G Emmonak office is open Mondays to Fridays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Sundays).

Federal Special Action

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this advisory announcement. As there is no salmon fishing allowed for Chinook and chum salmon, the Federal manager has not issued any Federal special actions at this time. The Emmonak USFWS office is not open. To reach the USFWS Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager, call Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G and the USFWS. Federal Special Actions will be posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements will be posted on www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov/ and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG.

