



Advisory Announcement

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2023 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #8 **Fall Update #4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

The 2023 fall chum salmon inseason projection is for a run size of 320,000 fish. Genetic analysis applied to the fish passage estimates at the Yukon River mainstem sonar near Pilot Station indicate 146,000 fall chum salmon are in the river as of August 13 (Figure 1). The fall chum salmon run is near the historical midpoint. The drainagewide escapement goal is 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, but the Canadian component of the run has been weaker than expected the last few years. Depending on the inseason abundance of Canadian stocks, the run may not be large enough to meet the Canadian treaty objectives for fall chum salmon, which are 70,000–104,000 fish in the mainstem Yukon River and 22,000–49,000 fish in the Fishing Branch River. As summer chum salmon comprise the majority of the early fall season salmon run, subsistence fishing for chum salmon has been allowed during the first ten days of the fall season in most districts. Subsistence fishing for chum salmon then closes until inseason estimates of abundance indicate a harvestable surplus of fall chum salmon is available.

Coho salmon typically enter the Yukon River in mid-August with the bulk of the run passing the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) between August 13 and 24. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements in 2019. This year's coho run size is anticipated to be below average to average (average is 222,000 fish).

Assessment project and management updates will be shared during the weekly YRDFDA teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. (Alaska time). Call in number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#. Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed can be accessed online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

Fall Assessment Projects

Updated with data through August 14.

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

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 298.64, which is below the average of 849.62. The three-quarter for fall chum salmon typically occurs on August 19 at this site. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 9.39, which is below the average of 112.35. The first quarter point for coho salmon typically occurs on August 13 and the midpoint occurs on August 20.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE is 1,604.33, which is above the average of 1,203.30. The three-quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on August 18. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 9.00, which is below the average of 191.28. The first quarter point for coho salmon typically occurs on August 17.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season counts on July 19. The cumulative passage is approximately 226,000 chum salmon. This compares to a median cumulative passage of 383,000 chum salmon.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) was applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 148,000 fall chum salmon that have entered the river since July 19 (Figure 1). This level of passage is below the median cumulative passage of 407,000 fall chum salmon. The midpoint of the MSA fall chum salmon run typically occurs on August 14.

The cumulative passage of coho salmon is approximately 5,479 (Figure 2), which is below the median of 22,000 fish. The first quarter point of coho salmon passage is typically August 16 at this site.

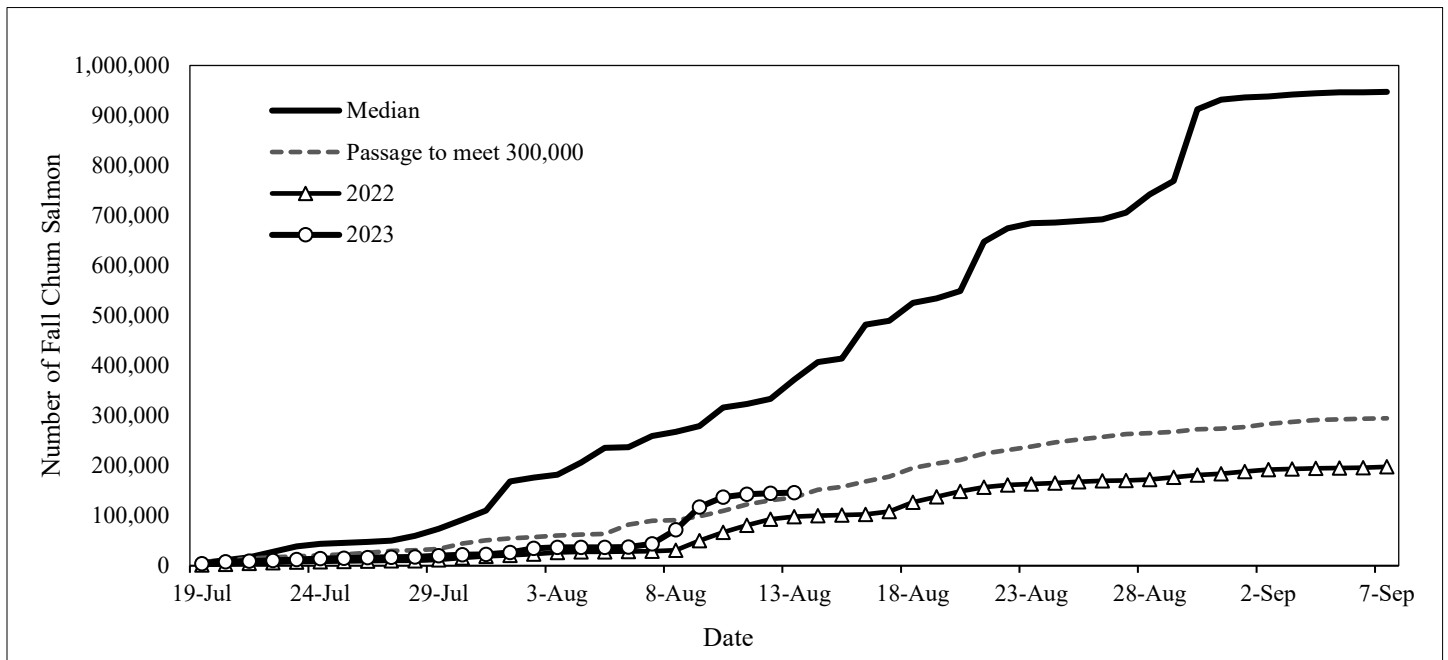


Figure 1. Cumulative passage of fall chum salmon at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2023 compared to the historical median, and 2022. The dashed line is the passage required to meet the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal.

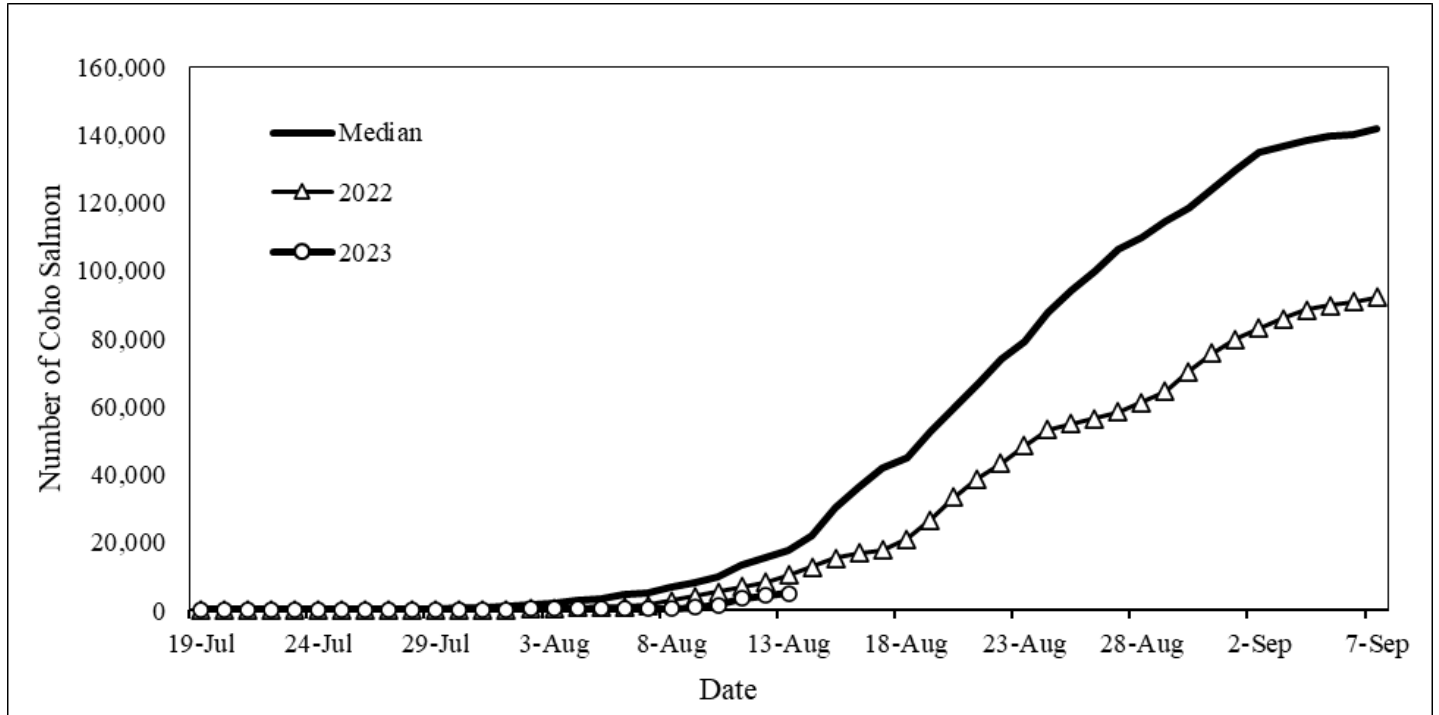


Figure 2. Cumulative passage of coho salmon at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2023 compared to the historical median and 2022.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began operations on August 8 and has a cumulative passage of 1,160 fall chum salmon, which is below the median passage of 3,499 fish. The Teedriinjik escapement goal is 85,000–234,000 fall chum salmon.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar project began operations on August 6 and has a cumulative passage of 199 fall chum salmon, which is below the median passage of 906 fish.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

This project will transition from counting Chinook to fall chum salmon later in August.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will transition from counting Chinook to fall chum salmon later in August.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will begin counting fall chum salmon in late August to early September.

Summer Season Assessment

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are nearly complete through Subdistrict 5-D and District 6 management has transitioned to fall season. Assuming late run timing, the Chinook salmon run at Eagle is estimated to be close to 99% complete. The cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar as of August 14 is well below average and the current cumulative total is the second lowest ever for this location, with 2022 being lowest. The lower end of the most recent Canadian IMEG of 42,500 Chinook salmon will not be met. Passage of Chinook salmon at all U.S. assessment projects is well below average and escapement goals are unlikely to be met throughout the Alaskan portion of the drainage.

Summer Assessment Projects

Updated with data through August 14.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

Operations ended on August 11. Cumulative passage was 1,069 Chinook salmon, which was below the average of 5,663 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon cumulative passage was 834, which was below the median cumulative passage of 8,091 fish for this date.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar was installed on June 30 and full operations (sonar and test fishery) began on July 1. Cumulative passage is 14,124 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 51,015 fish. The Eagle sonar project is used to assess the number of Canadian-origin Chinook and fall chum salmon that enter Canada. End of season sonar estimates will be used, along with other information, to calculate total border passage and escapement in Canada.

Chinook Radio Telemetry (ADF&G)

Tagging fish in the lower river concluded on July 15 for the season, but tracking operations are ongoing. Each fish was tagged with both an internal radio telemetry tag and an external spaghetti tag. **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.

Stock Identification

The fourth batch of genetic samples ending July 31, consisted of 73% summer chum salmon and 27% fall stocks. The fifth stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery entered from August 1-13, these samples are on the way to the lab and the results will be reported next week.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 226 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 8, consisted of 75% age-4 and 24% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 63% age-4 and 36% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through August 14 was 54% which is near the 1986–2022 historical average of 55%. The average length of 571 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 592 mm, however they are much larger than the previous two years.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Nonsalmon

Harvest nonsalmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets of 60 feet or shorter length is allowed in all subsistence areas. Fishermen should fish this nonsalmon gear in areas where resident species are more likely to be encountered. Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole (excluding District 6), hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seine, and spear. If closures are in place for a salmon species, they must be released alive immediately from nonsalmon gear (other than 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets).

Salmon**Coastal District, Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4, Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C, and the Innoko, Anvik, and Koyukuk river drainages (including Chevak through Rampart):**

Chum and Chinook salmon fishing is closed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. Chinook and chum salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles, including the communities of Wiseman and Coldfoot. Gillnet gear for nonsalmon in this permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size. A subsistence permit is also required to fish for all species in Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area).

Subdistrict 5-D (including Stevens Village through Eagle):

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 near shore.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of Dall River and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (including the Kantishna River drainage and Manley through Nenana) and the Upper Tanana Area (including the Delta Junction area through Nabesna):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 25, subsistence fishing for chum salmon will close and retention of coho salmon will be allowed. Dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. Chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in Lake Minchumina and in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and Kantishna River drainage), northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage (including Minto Flats), and all species in the Upper Tanana Area. A subsistence salmon permit is not required in Lake Minchumina.

Personal Use Management Actions**Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (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):**

Personal Use salmon fishing is open with dip nets and live release manned 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

Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 25, Personal Use salmon fishing will close.

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for salmon in Subdistrict 6-C. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing (in the 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):

Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels is closed.

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

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for whitefish and sucker in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

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. Fishermen must be Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest salmon in Federal public waters. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.

This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS.

Federal Special Actions are posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions and shared on

Facebook at www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements and fish counts can be obtained by visiting

www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG or www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

To receive advisory announcements by email, sign up at www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov.

To receive fish counts by email, sign up at www.list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate.

