Division of Commercial Fisheries
Forrest Bowers, Director

Headquarters Office
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

Advisory Announcement

CONTACT:
Matt Olson, Area Management Biologist
Bonnie Borba, Fall Season Research Biologist
1-907-459-7274 (Fairbanks)
Toll free fishing schedule and counts: 1-866-479-7387

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2026 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #29
Fall Update #12, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area

This will be the final update for the 2026 salmon season. The preliminary 2026 Yukon River fall chum salmon run size is 913,000 fish compared to a historical average run size of 943,000 fish (Figure 1). The drainagewide escapement goal range of 300,000–600,000 fish was exceeded as are expected of the U.S. tributary goals. However, the Canadian stocks remained weak even with this large run and were estimated to be slightly below their respective goals. The treaty objective (interim management escapement goal) for the mainstem Yukon River is 70,000–104,000 fall chum salmon and the Fishing Branch River is 22,000–49,000 fall chum salmon.

The 2026 coho salmon run was late and weak but enough to support subsistence harvest. The preliminary index of run size is likely between 108,000 and 116,000 fish, well below the historical average run index of 212,000 coho salmon.

After the Canada-bound fall chum salmon had migrated through most districts and the overall run was nearing completion, subsistence fishing restrictions in the mainstem of the Yukon River were removed. The mainstem of the Porcupine River will remain closed for the season.

Upper Yukon escapement assessment projects will be ongoing into October, using foot, boat, and aerial salmon enumeration surveys through early December. Please see the Current Subsistence Management Actions section below for the subsistence fishing schedule in your area.

Assessment Projects

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

Fall season operations began on July 16 and concluded on September 7 using 6-inch mesh gear to target fall chum and coho salmon. Operations through the normal end date of September 10 were cut short due to weather. Through September 7, the cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon was 2,123.01, which is above the historic cumulative CPUE of 1,272.81 for this date. The run timing for chum salmon was 9 days later than historical median of August 13. Through September 7, the cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 112.69, which is well below the historic cumulative CPUE of 305.29 for this date. The run timing for coho salmon was 5 days later than historical median of August 21. Fall chum and coho salmon were sampled for ASL (Age, Sex, and Length) and all retained fish were distributed to local communities.

Pilot Station Sonar (ADF&G)

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season on July 19 and concluded operations on September 7. Genetic mixed stock analysis, when applied to the passage estimates, indicates approximately 913,000 fall chum salmon are in the river, through September 7 (Figure 1). This is above the median cumulative passage of 823,000 fall chum salmon for this date. The cumulative passage of ALL chum salmon during the regulatory fall season is approximately 1,030,000 fish and includes a mixture of both summer and fall chum salmon. The run timing for all chum salmon in the fall season was 11 days later than the historical median of August 10, while the genetic fall chum salmon run was 9 days later than the historical median of August 14.

The coho salmon cumulative passage through September 7 was approximately 102,000 fish (Figure 2), which is below the historical passage of 174,000 fish through this date. The run timing for coho salmon was 4 days later than historical median of August 23.

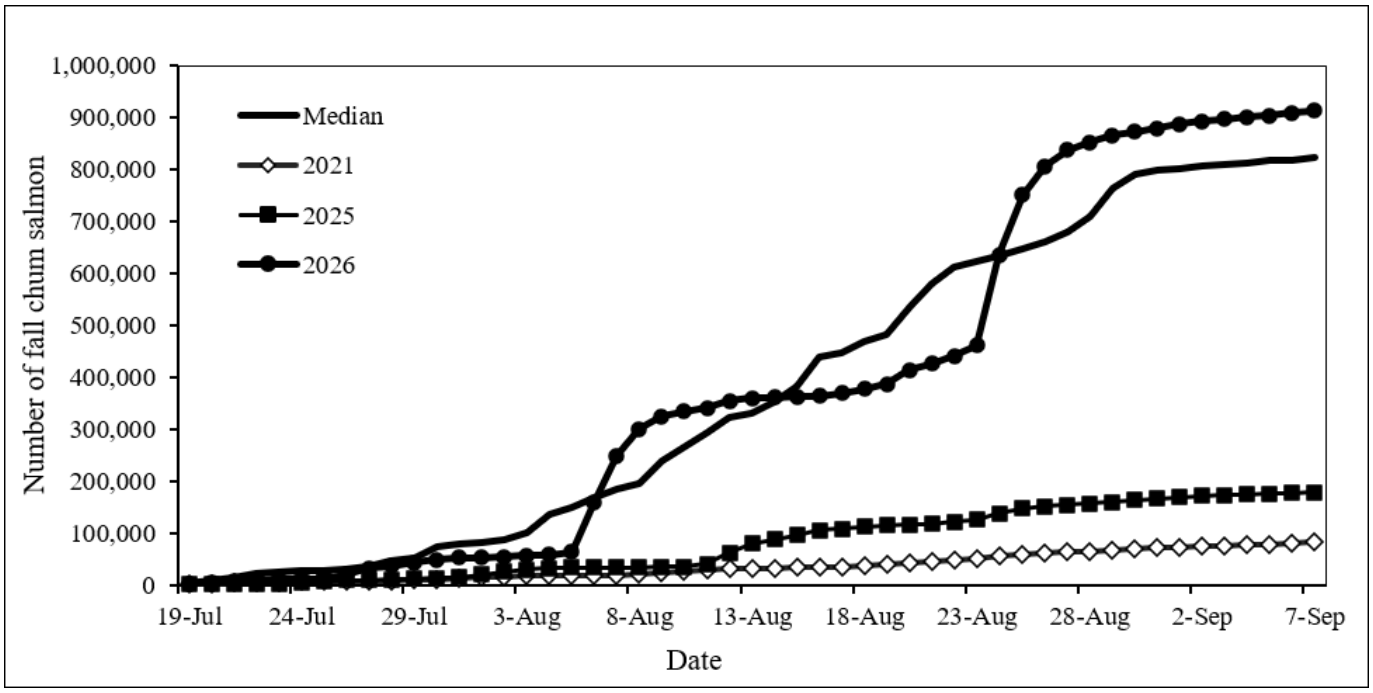


Figure 1. Cumulative passage of fall chum salmon (as determined using genetic mixed stock analysis) at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2026 compared to the historical median and select years.

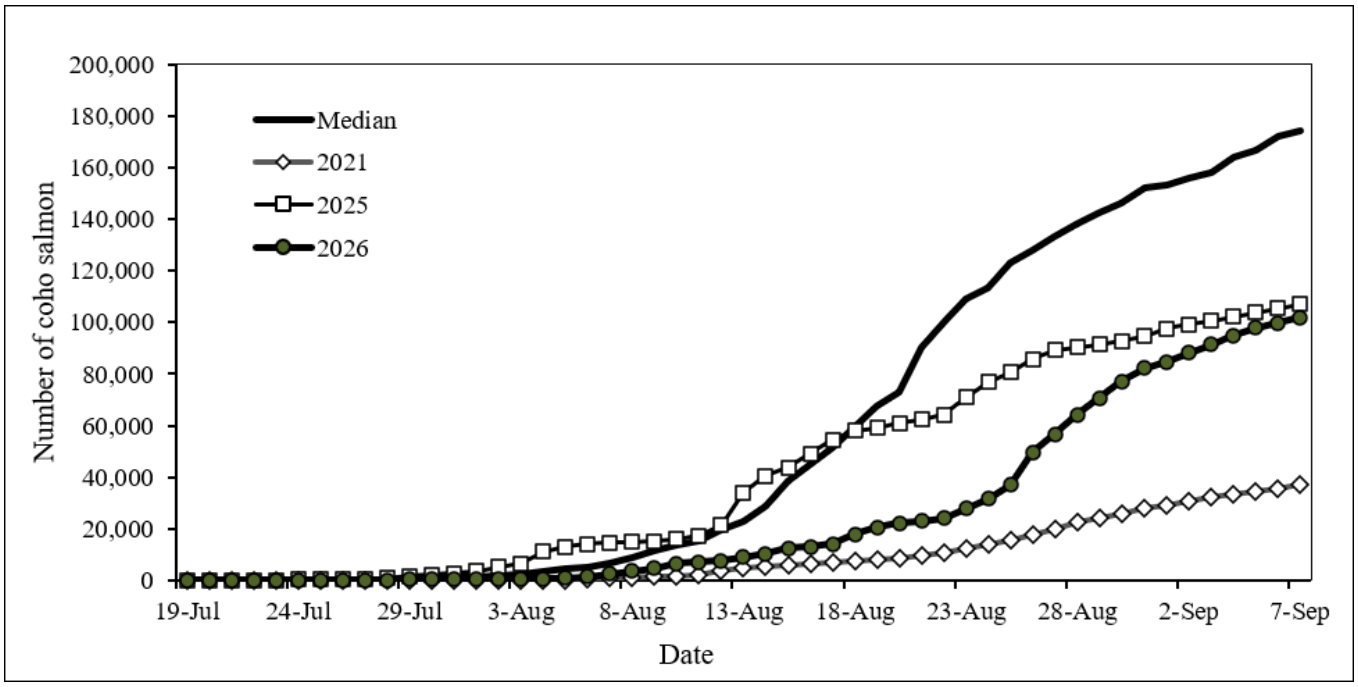


Figure 2. Cumulative passage of coho salmon based on the mainstem Yukon River sonar (Pilot Station), including estimates of downstream harvests, in 2026 compared to historical median and select recent years.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon, which includes a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on September 26 through October 14 is 261,500 fish. This estimate is above the median passage of 172,000 fall chum salmon. The Teedriinjik escapement goal range of 85,000–234,000 fall chum salmon was achieved. There was a good showing of these stocks in the first pulse that entered the lower river and the run timing was average with a historical median date of September 14.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon, which includes a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on September 26 through October 14 is 32,500 fish. This estimate is considered a minimum due to reduced counts during highwater, but the run was much improved from the previous 4 years 2021–2025, however as expected the run size is well below the median passage of 66,000 fall chum salmon. Run timing was 2 days late compared to the historical median date of September 15.

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

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage estimate of fall chum salmon, through October 23, (including a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on October 6), is 65,000 fish, which is below the median of 143,000 fish for this date (Figure 3). Even though the post season expansions were extended to estimate the latest portion of the run, the estimate is considered a minimum due to the nature of the run with the largest pulse entering the river at the end of the season and the stock proportions of upper Canadian components. This level of passage was slightly below what would provide for the interim management escapement goal of 70,000–104,000 fall chum salmon. Run timing was 6 days late compared to the historical median date of September 23.

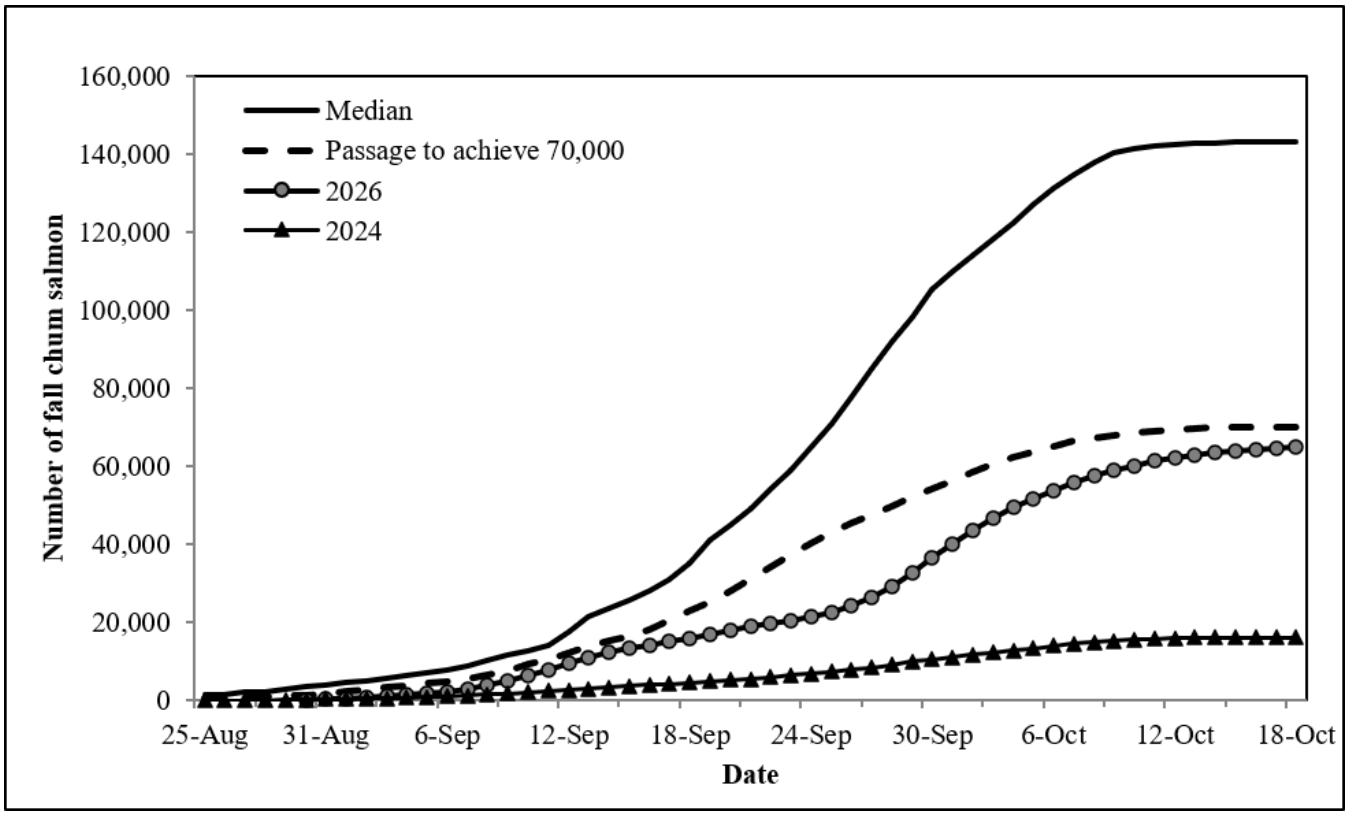


Figure 3. Cumulative passage of fall chum salmon based on the mainstem Yukon River sonar assessment project near Eagle. The dashed line is the passage required to meet the lower end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage estimate of fall chum salmon, including a post-season expansion through October 20 is 25,500 fish, which is slightly above the median of 24,000 fish. Run timing was 1 day late compared to the historical average date of September 15.

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

This project was unable to operate this year due to high water. An estimate will be made using the relationship with the upper Porcupine River project post season. At this time, preliminary estimates are slightly below the interim management escapement goal of 22,000–49,000 fall chum salmon.

Klondike River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

This was the first season counting operations were extended into the fall season and the project transitioned from counting Chinook salmon to chum salmon on September 3. Operations were concluded October 22 with a cumulative passage of 52 fall chum salmon.

Fall Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 715 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project from July 16 through September 7, consisted of 94% age-4 and 5% age-5 fish. The age-4 fish are well above the 2001–2025 historical average of 69% and the age-5 fish are well below the average of 28%. Of 761 chum salmon sampled through September 7, the percentage of females was 48%, which is below the 2001–2025 historical average of 58%. The fall season chum salmon average length through September 7 was 568 mm, which is below the 2001–2025 historical average of 582 mm.

The age composition of 54 coho salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project from July 16 through September 7, consisted of 30% age-3 and 70% age-4 fish which compared to the historical averages of 19% age-3 and 75% age-4. Of 62 coho salmon sampled through September 7, the percentage of female was 47%, which comparable to the 2001–2025 historical average. The coho salmon average length through September 7 was 546 mm, which is well below the 2001–2025 historical average of 562 mm.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon that passed the mainstem sonar for the entire season indicated the run was 85% U.S. and 15% Canada fall chum salmon stocks. Overall, the fall chum salmon stocks sampled from June 6 to September 7, consist of 30% Border/US (Teedriinjik, Sheenjek, Draanjik, and Coleen), 15% Canadian, and 54% Tanana Fall. Further breakdown of the results was provided inseason through the ADF&G Yukon River daily update for those who subscribe: https://list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Coastal District, Districts 1-4 and District 5 other than the Porcupine River drainage (including the Innoko and Koyukuk rivers, and the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia Hughes, Alatna, Bettles, Wiseman, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

> Subsistence fishing for salmon and nonsalmon is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal subsistence fishing gear. All fish caught may be retained.
>
> A subsistence permit is 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), 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 the Dall River, and in Subdistrict 5-D Upper from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. Permits are available at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

Porcupine River drainage (including the community of Chalkyitsik):

> **In the mainstem Porcupine River, including those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3 mouths of the Porcupine River (Figure 4), subsistence fishing for salmon will remain closed through December 31.** Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon from **noon Thursdays, through noon Sundays.** Nets are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net near shore. Fishing for nonsalmon remains open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with nonlethal or selective gear types.

In all <u>tributaries</u> of the Porcupine River, including the Sheenjek, Draanjik (Black), Coleen, and Salmon Trout rivers:

Subsistence fishing for salmon and nonsalmon **500 feet upstream from the mainstem Porcupine River** is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with **7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and all other legal subsistence fishing gear. All fish caught may be retained. Gillnet lengths are no longer restricted to 60 feet.

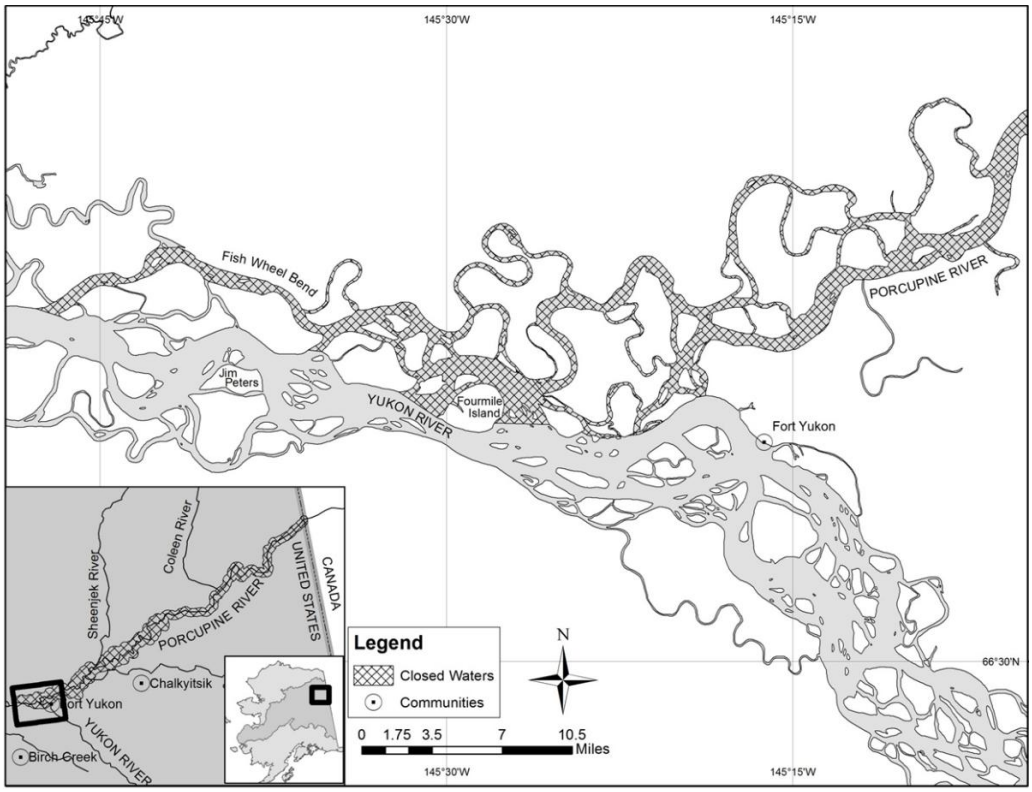


Figure 4. Map showing the Porcupine River confluence with the Yukon River.

A subsistence fishing 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 the Dall River and in Subdistrict 5-D Upper from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. Permits are available at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B, and the Upper Tanana Area (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, and 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, including the communities of Lake Minchumina, Manley, Minto, Nenana, the Delta Junction area, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Northway, and Nabesna):

Subsistence fishing for salmon and nonsalmon is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal subsistence fishing gear. All fish caught may be retained. Gillnet lengths are no longer restricted to 60 feet.

Fishermen are reminded that 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 (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):

Personal use salmon fishing is closed.

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):

Personal use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Fishing with other gear for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day, subject to permit stipulations.

A reminder to personal use fishermen that a personal use salmon permit is required to fish for salmon in Subdistrict 6-C and a personal use whitefish and sucker permit is required to fish for these species in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Both permits require a valid sport fishing license.

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. The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has issued separate Fishery special actions with the same schedule and dates that actions will be lifted. For additional information concerning Yukon River Federal Special Actions contact the USFWS Federal Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager, Holly Carroll; holly_carroll@fws.gov, (907) 351-3029 or Assistant Manager, Keith Herron; keith_herron@fws.gov, (907) 334-5391.

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

Federal Special Actions will be 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.

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