

# **ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

## **DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

### **NEWS RELEASE**



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#### **2016 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 5**

#### **Coastal District and Districts 1 and 2 Subsistence Fishing Schedule**

Districts Affected: Lower Yukon Area

The preseason outlook for Chinook salmon is for a run size similar to last year of 130,000 to 175,000 fish. A precautionary management approach is being taken to restrict the harvest of Chinook salmon until inseason assessment indicates that escapement goals will be met and a reduced subsistence harvest can be supported. For this reason, the department will close subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon in anticipation of the first steady trickle of salmon and will stay closed through the first pulse of Chinook salmon.

The preseason outlook for the 2016 summer chum salmon run is projected to be 1.3 to 1.8 million fish and is anticipated to provide for escapement, a normal subsistence harvest, and a commercially harvestable surplus range of 450,000 to 950,000 summer chum.

Assessment information from the Lower Yukon Test Fishery program indicates that summer chum salmon have been moving into the river, but in low numbers over the past week. Chinook salmon have been caught in the test fishery in sufficient numbers to warrant closing the Northern Portion of the Coastal District, District 1, and District 2 to subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets. As in recent years, the Southern Portion of the Coastal District will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Given the presence of summer chum salmon, the dip net and beach seine subsistence fishery in Districts 1 and 2 will open 24 hours after the subsistence fishing closure for Chinook salmon. Fishermen should be aware that this subsistence selective gear opening is beginning early in the

season to help fishermen prepare, but catches may be low until the summer chum run builds in the lower river. Fishermen are encouraged to call **1-866-479-7387** for recorded Lower Yukon Test Fishery catch information beginning June 1.

The department asks subsistence fishermen to report their harvest information as well as their encounter rates with Chinook salmon while fishing for summer chum. These reports are useful for managing the early portion of the summer season.

### **Management Actions**

Currently, subsistence salmon fishing in the Coastal District and Districts 1 and 2 is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

In the **Southern Portion of the Coastal District**, (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude):

Effective 6:00 p.m. Sunday, May 29, subsistence salmon fishing will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, and gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size until further notice.

In the **Northern Portion of the Coastal District** (from 62 degrees North latitude to Point Romanof and including all state marine waters):

Effective 6:00 p.m. Sunday, May 29, subsistence salmon fishing will close until further notice.

#### **In District 1 (including the Black River):**

Effective 6:00 p.m. Sunday, May 29, subsistence Chinook salmon fishing is closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, May 30, subsistence fishing will reopen with dip nets and beach seine gear for 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon.

#### **In District 2:**

Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 31, subsistence Chinook salmon fishing is closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 1, subsistence fishing will reopen with dip nets and beach seine gear 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon.

Fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from dip nets and beach seines. The requirement to release Chinook salmon alive will be strictly enforced. Great care must be taken to assure Chinook salmon are released quickly and unharmed so that they can swim the long distance upriver and spawn successfully. Fishermen are also strongly encouraged to avoid fishing where Chinook salmon may be encountered.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures in the Yukon Area, 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets not exceeding 60 feet in length may be used for non-salmon species. Chinook and chum salmon caught in 4-inch gillnets may be retained, but fishermen are reminded not to target salmon as this gear is intended for non-salmon species.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at **1-866-479-7387** (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call **(907) 459-7387**.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADF&G office in Emmonak at 949-1320 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at 455-1849.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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