

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2018 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 36 **Summer Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery** Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The estimated Chinook salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar is well below average. Chinook salmon run timing and abundance appear to be similar to 2015, a year with normal run timing (Figure 1). This indicates that the drainage-wide run will likely come in below the lower end of the preseason projection range of 173,000 to 251,000 fish with an inseason projected passage at Pilot Station of approximately 150,000 Chinook salmon. While a run of this size should be large enough to meet escapement goals, subsistence restrictions are necessary. The summer chum run is also below average and will likely come in below the preseason forecast of 2.5 million fish with an inseason projection range of 1.3 million to 1.5 million fish. The average midpoint for Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar during years with normal run timing is June 24 and the third quarter point is typically June 29th. The average midpoint for summer chum salmon at the Pilot Station sonar is around June 27 and the third quarter point is typically July 3.

As of July 1, the first pulse of Chinook salmon (~27,000 fish) should be near Stevens Village, while small numbers of early Chinook salmon may be approaching the Canadian border. A second pulse of Chinook salmon (~27,000 fish) should be passing Ruby as of July 1. A third pulse of Chinook salmon (~51,000 fish) was recently counted at the Pilot Station sonar and should be between Grayling and Kaltag. Early summer chum salmon should be passing into the Tanana River and the first group of summer chum salmon (~203,000 fish) should be passing Galena as of July 1. A second group of summer chum salmon (~290,000 fish) should be between Grayling and Kaltag. A third group of summer chum salmon (~275,000 fish) was recently counted at the Pilot Station sonar and should be approaching Holy Cross.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar project (June 2 to June 19) indicated that 56% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA will continue throughout the season. The age composition of 206 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 19 was 13% age-4, 49% age-5, and 37% age-6 fish. The proportion of fish

that were age-5 was below average, while the proportion of fish that were age-6 was above average. The proportion of fish that were female was well above average.

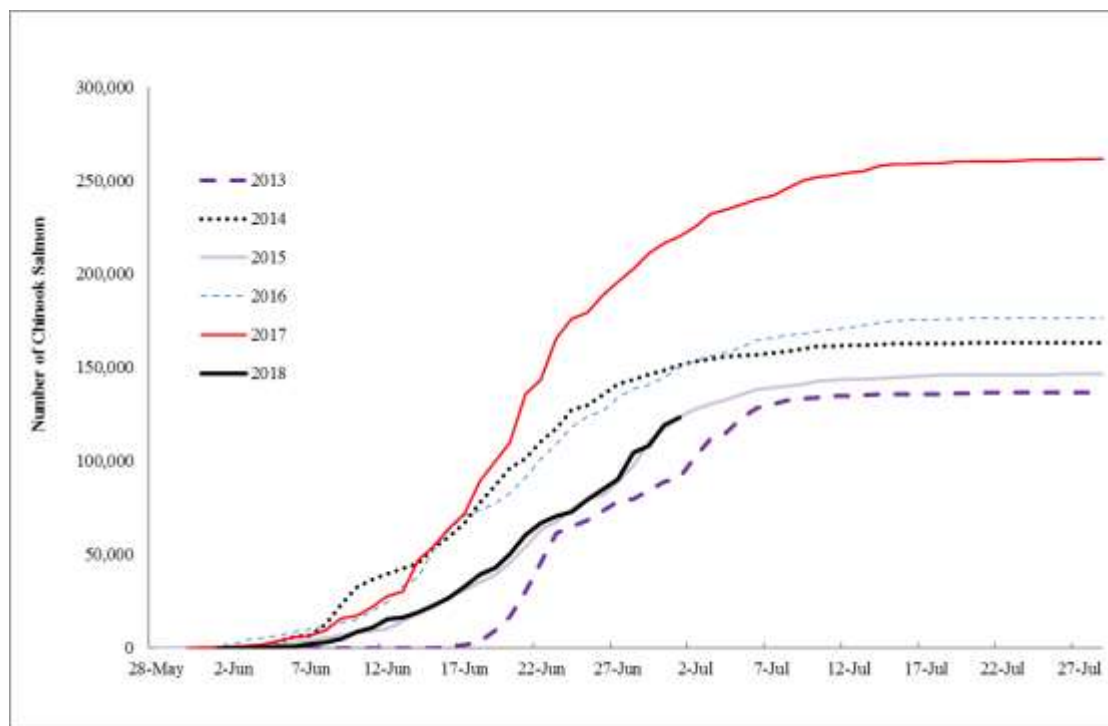


Figure 1. Cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar project, 2013 – 2018.

Assessment Projects

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

The combined cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites, as of July 1, is 18.61, which is below the historical average of 21.48. However, operations may not be comparable to previous years because fishing duration and net locations have been affected due to high water and large amounts of woody debris. River conditions have improved, and the nets are operating well.

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site, as of July 1, is 413.53, which is above the historical average of 366.47. As of July 1, the combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 13,358.18, which is well above the historical median of 5,387.24 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station began operations on June 1. The project is operating well and is not experiencing any issues with debris or equipment malfunction. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 1, is estimated to be 123,432 fish which is below the historical cumulative average of 147,039 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 1, is estimated to be 890,680 fish which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,167,008 fish for this date.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 25. As of July 1, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 183 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 379 Chinook salmon for this date. As of July 1, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 5,408 fish, which is below the historical median of 12,797 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goals are 2,100–4,900 Chinook salmon and greater than 40,000 summer chum salmon past the weir project.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 1, is 57,946 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 133,998 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal is 350,000–700,000 summer chum salmon past the sonar project.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower/sonar project began operations on June 27. As of July 1, one Chinook salmon has been observed. High water levels are preventing visual counting, but the sonar is operational. The biological escapement goal for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower.

Management Strategy

To allow some limited harvest of Chinook salmon and provide summer chum harvest opportunity, fishing time has been reduced to half of the regulatory fishing schedule and most subsistence fishing periods have been restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gill nets.

Commercial summer chum salmon fishing using dipnets and beach seines is ongoing in Districts 1 and 2 and Subdistrict 4-A with live-release fish wheels. Commercial fishermen are required to release all Chinook salmon alive and report the number of released fish on their fish tickets.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude including the marine waters near Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 1 (including the Black River and North Coastal District):

Subsistence fishing is closed and will open effective 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 3 with **6-inch** or smaller mesh gillnets for two 18-hour periods from:

- **2 p.m. Tuesday, July 3 to 8 a.m. Wednesday, July 4**
- **2 p.m. Friday, July 6 to 8 a.m. Saturday, July 7**

District 2:

Subsistence fishing is open effective 2 p.m. Monday, July 2 with **6-inch** or smaller mesh gillnets for two 18-hour periods from:

- **2 p.m. Monday, July 2 to 8 a.m. Tuesday, July 3**
- **2 p.m. Thursday, July 5 to 8 a.m. Friday, July 6**

District 3:

Subsistence fishing is open effective 2 p.m. Monday, July 2 for two 18-hour periods:

- **7.5-inch or smaller mesh: 2 p.m. Monday, July 2 to 8 a.m. Tuesday, July 3**
- **6-inch or smaller mesh: 2 p.m. Thursday, July 5 to 8 a.m. Friday, July 6**

Innoko River:

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

District 4 (including the Anvik River and the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

Fishing is currently open until 6 p.m. Monday, July 2 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Effective 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 4, fishing will open with set gillnets, drift gillnets, and fishwheels for three 24-hour periods:

6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets: 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, July 5

7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets: 6 p.m. Sunday, July 8 to 6 p.m. Monday, July 9

6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets: 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 11 to 6 p.m. Thursday, July 12

Koyukuk River:

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

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (including the communities of Tanana and Rampart)

Effective 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 3, fishing will open for two 24-hour periods with **6-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets** and fish wheels from:

- **6 p.m. Tuesday, July 3 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 4**
- **6 p.m. Friday, July 6 to 6 p.m. Saturday, July 7**

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the 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. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit areas are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks.

Subdistrict 5-D Lower and Middle (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to 22 Mile Slough, including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, and the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

Subsistence fishing is currently **closed**.

Effective 10 a.m. Thursday, July 5, subsistence salmon fishing will reopen for 3.5 days (84 hours) with **6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and fish wheels **from 10 a.m. Thursday, July 5, to 10 p.m. Sunday, July 8.**

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all

adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is **open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week** with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels. Fishermen should expect reductions in fishing time and gear restrictions in future announcements.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 2, fishing will open for two **24-hour** periods per week with **6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Mondays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays

6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage below the Wood River. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence salmon fishermen in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by 4:30 p.m. Thursday each week by reporting online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/ or by calling (907) 459-7388. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Kantishna River:

The Kantishna River is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is currently open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of five days per week from:

6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays

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 open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. A subsistence fishing permit is required in the Upper Tanana River Drainage.

Personal Use Fishing:

Subdistrict 6-C (from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 2, fishing will open for two **24-hour** periods per week with **6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Mondays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays

6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

A personal use salmon fishing permit and sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 p.m. Thursday** each week by reporting online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/ or by calling **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Commercial Fishing:

The summer chum salmon commercial fishery in Districts 1 and 2 will begin to transition to gillnet commercial periods, as the Chinook salmon run is winding down in the lower river. Chinook salmon may be kept for personal use in the summer chum gillnet fishery and must be recorded on a fish ticket as kept, not sold. In Subdistrict 4-A, commercial fishing is limited to manned fishwheels. **All Chinook salmon caught in selective gear must be released alive immediately and recorded on a fish ticket.** Fishermen must confirm they have a buyer prior to fishing.

Commercial Fishing Periods:

District 1 (including Black River) Commercial:

Commercial fishing will open for two 6-hour periods with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets:

- 6 p.m. to midnight, Wednesday, July 4
- 6 p.m. to midnight, Thursday, July 5

District 2 Commercial:

Commercial fishing will open for 12-hour periods with dip nets and beach seines:

- 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday, July 3
- 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday, July 4
- 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, July 6

Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately from dip nets and beach seines and must be recorded on a fish ticket.

Commercial fishing will open for two 6-hour periods with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets:

- 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, July 7
- 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday, July 8

Subdistrict 4-A Commercial (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village to Cone Point):

Commercial fishing is open for 24-hours a day, seven days a week until further notice.

Fishermen must use commercial fish wheels that are manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in commercial fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive and recorded on a fish ticket.

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