

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2018 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 15
Fall Update # 2, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2018 fall chum salmon preseason run projection is for a run size of 700,000 to 900,000 fish. This level of abundance is anticipated to be sufficient to meet escapement and subsistence needs and provide a surplus for commercial and personal use purposes. The estimated reconstructed fall chum salmon run size through July 28 (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) is estimated to be 167,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 143,000 fish for that date. The front of the fall season chum salmon run that entered the Yukon River on July 19 is expected to be near Kaltag on July 31, Galena around August 2, and Tanana/Huslia around August 7, Rampart around August 9 and the Canadian border around August 27.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average to above average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2014. A few coho salmon have been entering the Yukon River but the majority of the run begins building in early August.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 29 was 272.18 fall chum salmon, which is below the historical median of 328.34 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The fall season project began July 18 at Mountain Village. The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 29 was 275.51 fall chum salmon, which is below the historical median of 509.18 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season counts on July 19. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through July 29 was 134,000, which is below the median passage of approximately 166,000 fish for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

The preliminary fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run is dominated by age-4 fish, which is typical. As of July 21, the 2018 preliminary proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 55% and 42% respectively compared to the average of 57% age-4 and 41% age-5 fish based on a samples size of 108. Females currently represent 50% of the fish sampled (n=153), which is near the average of 53%, as of July 29.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

The Lower Yukon River has transitioned to fall season management. Districts 1 and 2 are open for subsistence fishing 7 days a week, 24 hours per day except for being closed 12 hours before, during, and after commercial periods. The dates and times of subsistence closures around commercial periods are included in commercial fishing news releases. In Districts 1-3 and the Coastal District, subsistence fishing is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5" or smaller mesh gillnets. Upon transitioning to the fall season, it is anticipated that each district and subdistrict will be placed on their full regulatory schedules with 7.5" or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels. Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C transitioned to fall season management on July 29 and Subdistrict 4-A will transition on July 31. At a recent Board of Fisheries meeting in Anchorage on July 17, emergency regulations were adopted that allow subsistence salmon fishing with drift gillnets in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A below Stink Creek after August 2 for the remainder of the 2018 salmon season.

Summer Season Assessment

As of July 29, the cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project near Eagle is approximately 38,000, which is below the historical average of approximately 42,000 fish for this date. The escapement goal for Chinook salmon on the East Fork Andreafsky River was met on July 11. Due to high water, the Henshaw Creek weir will not operate during 2018 and the Chena and Salcha river towers will not have complete salmon counts until post season. The drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million summer chum salmon has been met.

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis, the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run size is estimated to be about 73,000, which is similar to the lower end of the preseason outlook of 71,000 to 103,000 fish. A Chinook salmon run of this size should meet escapement goals, provide some subsistence harvest, and meet the harvest sharing objectives outlined in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

Assessment Projects

Sonar Project Near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station began operations on June 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 29, is estimated to be 161,631 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 182,078 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 1,613,076 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,898,620 fish.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 25 and ended on July 29. The estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage was estimated to be 3,972 fish, which is similar to the historical cumulative average of 3,899 Chinook salmon and within the escapement goal range of 2,100-4,900 Chinook Salmon. The cumulative summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 36,312 fish, which is below the historical median of 56,466 fish. The sustainable escapement goal for summer chum salmon is 40,000 fish.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15 and ended on July 26. Summer chum salmon passage was estimated to be 304,938 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 551,189 fish. The Anvik River biological escapement goal (BEG) is 350,000–700,000 summer chum salmon.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on July 3. As of July 29, 615 Chinook salmon and 1,214 summer chum salmon have been observed. These are incomplete counts because high water levels prevented visual counting for multiple days; however, a sonar at the project has remained operational. Season total counts using the sonar will be provided post season. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower project began operations on June 27. As of July 29, 2,520 Chinook salmon and 4,943 summer chum salmon have been observed. These are incomplete counts because high water levels prevented visual counting for multiple days; however, a sonar at the project has remained operational. Season total counts using the sonar will be provided post season. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower site.

Sonar Project Near Eagle / ADF&G

The sonar project near Eagle began operations on July 4. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 29, is estimated to be 37,573 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 42,234 Chinook salmon for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish which is assessed by estimating the passage at the mainstem sonar project near Eagle and then subtracting the estimated harvested fish removed upstream of the sonar.

Chinook Age and Stock Composition

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 on the second and part of the third pulse of Chinook salmon (June 20 to June 29) indicated that 47% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. The age composition of 362 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery, through June 29, was 11% age-4, 49% age-5, 38% age-6, and 1% age-7 fish. The proportions of Chinook salmon that were age-5 and age-7 were below average, while the proportions of fish that were age-4 and age-6 were above average. The proportion of fish that were female, 51%, was well above average.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Four strata of chum salmon genetic samples have been processed to date in 2018. The strata from June 1–June 18 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, of which 74% were lower stocks, 23%

were bound for the middle Yukon River and all other stocks were negligible. The strata from June 19–June 26 also consisted of 99% summer chum salmon of which 79% were lower stocks, 20% were bound for the middle Yukon River and again all other stocks were negligible. The strata from June 27–July 8 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon of which 57% were lower stocks, 33% were middle Yukon River stocks, and 10% were Tanana River stocks. The strata from July 9–July 18 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon of which 65% were lower stocks, 17% were middle Yukon River stocks, and 16% were Tanana River stocks.

Summer Season Management Strategy

As the Chinook salmon run passes through Subdistrict 5-D, fishing time is limited to half of the regulatory schedule and gear will remain restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fishwheels as escapement at the U.S./Canada border is assessed.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:

South Coastal District (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River):

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

District 1 including the North Coastal District (1 mile south of Black River to Point Romanof):

Subsistence Fishing in District 1 will be open for the fall season for 24 hours a day, 7 days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

During the current commercial period, subsistence salmon fishing in District 1, including the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers, **closed at 3:00 a.m. Monday, July 30, and will reopen at 12:00 noon Tuesday, July 31.** Additionally, during subsistence salmon closures, subsistence fishing in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers (including 500 yards around the mouths) is closed for all gillnet fishing, including gillnets with 4-inch mesh or less, is closed in these waters 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial opening.

District 2 (Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall):

Subsistence Fishing in District 2 will be open for the fall season for 24 hours a day, 7 days per week except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 3 (Russian Mission, Paimiut, Holy Cross):

Subsistence fishing in District 3 is open for the fall season 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

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.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, and includes the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing is currently on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size drift and set gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**
- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**

Effective 6 p.m. on Tuesday, July 31, subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 4A will remain open and then be on a 5-day per week schedule from 6 p.m. Tuesdays until 6 p.m. Sundays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size drift and set gillnets and fish wheels.

At a recent Board of Fisheries meeting in Anchorage on July 17, emergency regulations were adopted that allow subsistence salmon fishing with drift gillnets in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A below Stink Creek after August 2. **Subsistence fishermen in Subdistrict 4-A, including those fishing in the lower portion of Subdistrict 4-A below Stink Creek (includes the communities of Anvik and Grayling) may continue using drift gillnet gear for the remainder of the fall season.**

Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point upstream to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes the communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open for the fall season on a 5-day per week schedule from 6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Fridays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size drift and set gillnets and fish wheels.

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 and Yukon Bridge Area):

Subsistence fishing is open for two 48-hour periods per week with **7.5-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets** and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Thursdays

6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Sundays

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 (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border, including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, and the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open for 3.5 days (84 hours) per week with **6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and fish wheels:

10 a.m. Thursdays to 10 p.m. Sundays

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):

Subsistence fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays

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 gillnets and fish wheels. A subsistence fishing permit is required.

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):

Personal use fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays

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 sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon is prohibited. Chinook salmon may be kept for personal use in the summer chum and fall chum gillnet fishery and must be recorded on a fish

ticket as kept, not sold. Fishermen must confirm they have a buyer prior to fishing. District 4 is open to commercial fishing during the fall season. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Commercial Fishing Periods:

District 1 (including Black River) Commercial:

Fall Period 5:

District 1 Set Net Only Area is open from 3:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight on Monday, July 30.

The remainder of District 1 is open 6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight on Monday, July 30.

Fishermen may use 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 26 in District 1 is 35,059 fall chum salmon.

District 2 Commercial:

Commercial fishermen should standby for announcements.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 25 in District 2 is 15,287 fall chum salmon.

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. Commercial fish wheels are not required to be manned.

As a reminder, waste of salmon is illegal. Salmon caught in commercial wheels may be sold or the majority of the carcass must be salvaged for use by humans or domesticated animals. Disposal of male chum carcasses into the river is illegal. The buyer has committed to purchasing male chum salmon. Chinook salmon may not be sold.

Fishermen may release Chinook salmon immediately alive or retain them for personal use. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. Salmon kept for personal use will be recorded on the fish ticket as “not sold.” Any salmon that have been released alive should be recorded on the fish ticket as “released alive”.

District 6 Commercial (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, upstream to the Chena River, which includes the communities of Manley, Nenana, and Fairbanks):

Commercial periods will open concurrent with subsistence and personal use fishing schedules in District 6 until further notice. Commercial fish wheels are not required to be manned.

Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays**

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