



Advisory Announcement

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2020 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #16

Fall Update # 6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2020 fall chum salmon inseason projection is for a run size of less than 300,000 fish and is currently tracking as the lowest run size on record. Mixed stock analysis (MSA) was applied to the passage estimates to remove summer chum salmon and is currently estimating 130,000 fall chum salmon are in the river as of August 23. At this time based on median timing, the fall chum salmon run would be past the three-quarter-point at the mainstem sonar operated near Pilot Station. The projected abundance is below the level needed to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000-600,000 fall chum salmon, tributary escapement goals, and Canadian treaty objectives (see management strategies below). Fall chum salmon are typically dominated by age-4 fish however, the 2016 parent year that produced that age class has shown extremely poor survival in chum salmon runs throughout the state.

Fall chum salmon typically take 39 days to migrate from the mouth of the Yukon River to the U.S./Canada border, with estimated travel rates of 35 miles per day, though travel times may be a bit slower with this year's sustained high water. The first chum salmon are expected at the U.S./Canada border any day, and the first identified sizeable fall chum salmon group that entered the Yukon River during the summer to fall transition on July 19 would be approaching the U.S./Canada border around August 31.

Coho salmon are entering the river weaker and later than average to date. Coho salmon returning this year are primarily offspring of the 2016 escapement. An average run size of coho salmon is approximately 243,000 fish.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE through August 23 was 980.73 for fall chum salmon, which is below the historical average of 1,360.67 for this date. The three quarter-point for fall chum salmon is typically on August 17 for this project. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 84.76, which is well below the historical average of 296.81 for August 23. The three quarter-point for coho salmon is typically on August 24 at this project.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE through August 23 was 487.01 for fall chum salmon, which is well below the historical median of 1,744.47 for this date. The three quarter-point for fall chum salmon is typically on August 18 for this project. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 45.00, which is well below the historical average of 584.98 for August 23. The three quarter-point for coho salmon is typically on August 29 at this project.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through August 16 was 200,000 fish, which is far below the median passage of approximately 648,000 fish for this date. The estimated fall chum salmon component of this count is approximately 130,000 fish after the application of genetic stock proportions. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 23 was 39,000 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 81,000 fish for this date. The three quarter-point for coho salmon is typically on August 27 at this project.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) River sonar project operated by USFWS and the Upper Porcupine River sonar project operated by DFO in the Yukon Territory of Canada is not operating this season.

Age Composition Fall Season / ADF&G

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets through August 11 consists of 47% age-4 and 49% age-5 (n=360), compared to the previous years' average of 63% age-4 and 36% age-5. Females represent 53% of the fish sampled (n=529), which is below the average of 57%, as of August 23. The average length is 598 mm from a sample of 530 fall chum salmon, which is above the 10-year (2010–2019) average of 583 mm. Coho salmon average length, from the LYTF project, is 543 mm (n=43), which is below the 10-year (2010–2019) average of 565 mm.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification / USFWS, ADF&G

The fall chum salmon component, estimated using MSA on all chum salmon that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar near Pilot Station from August 3-16, contained 88% fall chum salmon. The sample of fall chum salmon included 69% U.S.-origin and 31% Canadian-origin stocks. The Fall U.S. stocks included 43% Border U.S. stocks (Teedriinjik, Sheenjek, and Black) and 57% Tanana stocks. The Tanana stocks were higher than average for that time period.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Within the Yukon River Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a threshold of 300,000 fall chum salmon is needed to allow any fishing for fall chum salmon in the Yukon Area. The current inseason projection is below that threshold, therefore subsistence, commercial, sport, and personal use fishing for fall chum salmon are closed in the Yukon Area until further notice. In addition, the projected abundance would not achieve the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000-600,000 fall chum salmon, and likely not achieve any of the tributary escapement goals, and/or Canadian treaty objectives.

Although subsistence fishing for salmon is being closed at this time, subsistence fishing for other important species such as whitefish and pike will remain open seven days per week, 24 hours per day with use of 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Fishermen fishing in Districts 1, 2, and 3, and in Subdistrict 4-A downriver from the community of Nulato can use hook and line gear to target non-salmon species and salmon other than fall chum salmon. Fish wheels may not be used to fish for whitefish and other non-salmon species during closed subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The fall chum salmon run will continue to be monitored throughout the season to determine if any surplus becomes available for subsistence opportunities. Fishermen should watch for advisory announcements regarding changes to the subsistence salmon fishing schedule.

Summer Assessment Projects

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, through August 23, is estimated to be 32,885 which is below the historical cumulative average of 56,892 fish for this date. Catch per unit effort (CPUE)

from the species composition test fishery will be used to determine switchover counting date from Chinook to fall chum. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish. The goal is assessed post-season using the Eagle sonar count minus the estimated U.S. and Canadian harvest of Chinook salmon above the sonar. Based on current passage and run timing, it is unlikely that the lower end of the escapement goal will be met.

ADF&G, USFWS, and TCC projects that did not operate in 2020

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions or funding concerns, these projects did not operate: East Fork Andreafsky Weir, Anvik River Sonar, Gisasa River Weir, Henshaw Creek Weir, and Salcha River tower/sonar.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Coastal District (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 nautical mile south of the Black River, which includes Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

Districts 1-3 (Black River, and communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Subsistence fishermen may use hook and line gear to target non-salmon species and salmon other than fall chum salmon.

Innoko River:

Fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 4 (Grayling, Anvik, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species. Fishermen in Subdistrict 4-A downriver from the community of Nulato may use hook and line gear to target non-salmon species and salmon other than fall chum salmon.

Koyukuk River (Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

District 5 (Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, including Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

Kantishna River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice. Fishermen may use 4 inch or less gillnet gear to target non-salmon species.

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):

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

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (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, Salcha and surrounding area communities):

Personal use salmon fishing in is closed until further notice.

Subdistrict 6-C Whitefish and Sucker Personal Use Fishing

Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels follows the Subdistrict 6-C salmon fishing schedule and is closed until further notice. Fishing with other gear for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day.

In the Tanana River up to the Wood River (Kantishna River and Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B) a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use permit is required to fish for salmon from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Salcha River (Subdistrict 6-C).

A subsistence permit is also required for all species in the “Upper Tanana River” area 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. A personal use permit is required to fish for whitefish and suckers in the Fairbanks Non-Subsistence area (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). A subsistence permit is required for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats.

Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office (459-7274) or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks call 456-0406.

Announcements will be shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG

**COVID-19**

Under Alaska’s Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska’s Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.