



Advisory Announcement

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2021 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #13

Summer Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The first pulse of Chinook salmon has been counted at the Pilot Station sonar and the second pulse appears to be passing now. While the true midpoint of the run will not be known until the run is complete, the run appears to be tracking between normal and late run timing. Current projections are showing that the Canadian and drainagewide Chinook salmon runs are near or below the lower end of the forecast ranges. These run sizes are so small that escapement goals may or may not be met, and there will likely be no extra fish available for harvest.

The early Chinook salmon are making their way upriver and should be approaching the U.S./Canada border. The first pulse of Chinook salmon should be nearing Ruby.

At this time, very few summer chum salmon have entered the Yukon River. As of June 28, the cumulative Pilot Station sonar counts for summer chum salmon are the lowest on record for this date. The run abundance is too low to project whether escapement goals will be met. Selective gear openings to target summer chum will be considered when summer chum salmon are more abundant and the run is projected to meet the drainagewide escapement goal.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association are held every Tuesday, at 1:00 p.m. To participate, call (800) 315-6338, and enter code: YUKON# (98566#).

Assessment Projects

All information is current through June 27.

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

Operations for 2021 have been altered compared to prior years. The Middle Mouth set gillnet site is not being operated, in order to reduce Chinook salmon mortalities. However, drift gillnet operations using 8.25-inch mesh have been added this season to obtain Chinook salmon catch per unit effort (CPUE) data from that location. In the South Mouth at Big Eddy, set gillnet operations for Chinook salmon and drift gillnet operations for summer chum and Chinook salmon are being operated the same as they were in past years. The Big Eddy Chinook salmon drift CPUE values can be compared to historical averages. The set net data from Big Eddy should not be compared to historical data because it does not include any Middle Mouth set net data this season; however, comparison of day-to-day CPUE data from this site should still give an indication of large groups of fish entering the river.

Chinook salmon test fish operations began early enough to evaluate the beginning part of the run, and the project has been running smoothly. The Big Eddy Chinook salmon set gillnet site began operations on June 3, and the cumulative CPUE is 20.61.

Chinook salmon drift gillnet sites at Big Eddy and Middle Mouth were operational on May 22 and June 5, respectively. The Big Eddy cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 37.18, which is

below the historic average of 329.76. The Middle Mouth cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 25.06, and the combined Chinook salmon drift CPUE is 38.34. LYTF data indicates Chinook salmon have been entering the lower river mostly in the South Mouth, with some fish entering the Middle Mouth.

Summer chum salmon drift gillnet sites at Big Eddy and Middle Mouth were operational on May 25 and June 5, respectively. The cumulative CPUE is 64.27, which is well below the historical median of 4,951.46. Morning test fish catches on June 28 indicated the first large group of summer chum salmon may be beginning to enter the river.

Efforts are being made to reduce Chinook salmon mortality in the LYTF and distribute test fish catches to community members. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to community members by Tribal councils or on a first come first-served basis from a public dock.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The Pilot Station sonar project began with a partial count on May 31 and full operations on June 1. Sonar and test fishing operations have been proceeding as planned. Water levels are slowly going down with minimal debris. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 57,529 ± 5,748 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative average of 119,276 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 29,135 ± 4,687 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is well below the historical cumulative median of 459,086 fish based on late run timing years.

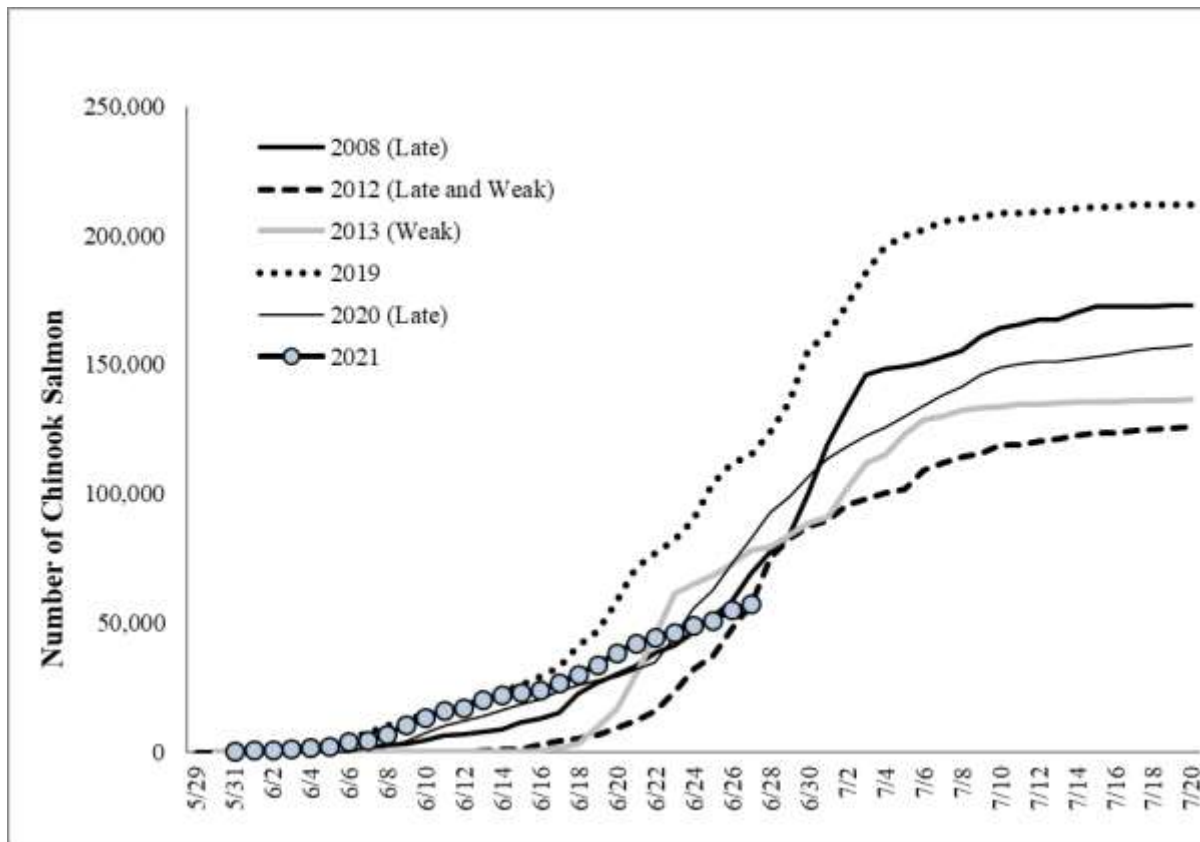


Figure 1. 2021 Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

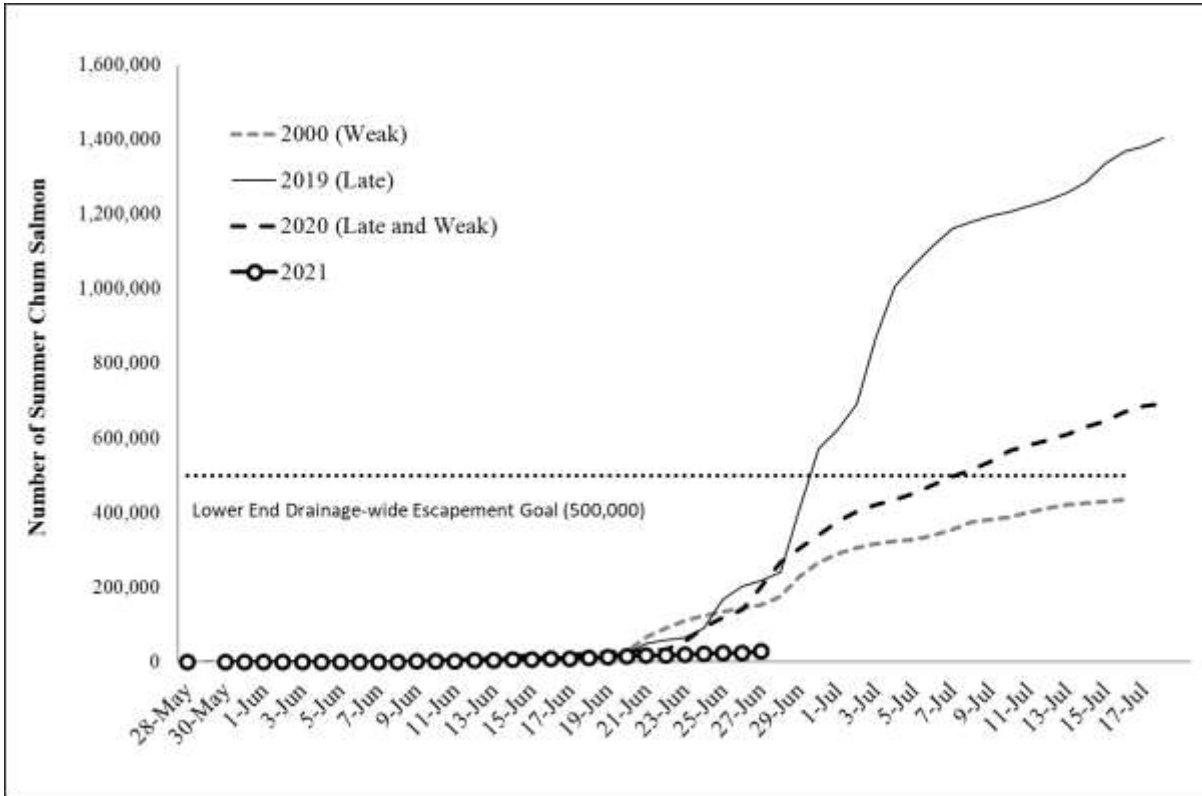


Figure 2. 2021 Cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and weak years. The horizontal dotted line represents the lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal for summer chum salmon.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began counting on June 18. Cumulative passage is 1 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 75 fish for this date; and 23 summer chum salmon, which is below the median of 2,650 fish for this date.

Anvik River Sonar Project / ADF&G

The sonar began counting on June 15. Cumulative passage is 1,921 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 22,406 for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

Crew is setting up the weir and expects to be fish tight and counting early this week.

Chena River Tower/Sonar (ADF&G)

Operations began on June 24. No salmon have been counted as of June 27.

Salcha Tower (ADF&G)

Salcha tower installation began on June 28.

Eagle Sonar (ADF&G)

Crew is currently setting up the sonar with possible estimates starting early this week.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar (USFWS)

Operations will begin later this season when fish arrive in the area.

Due to staffing and COVID mitigation concerns, USFWS will not operate Gisasa Weir this year.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon (Stratum 1, sampled from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery May 31 to June 22) indicated that $60\% \pm 7\%$ (90% Confidence Interval) of this group of fish were of Canadian-origin. Currently the projections for the Canadian-origin run indicate we will end up with a run size near the lower end or below the preseason outlook.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed to protect Chinook and summer chum salmon as they migrate upriver. The opportunity to harvest non-salmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is available during salmon closures; however, 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude which includes Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

North Coastal Area, District 1 and District 2 (from 62 degrees North latitude north to Point Romanof, including the Black River, and District 1 and 2 communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, and Marshall):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

District 3 (including Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Innoko River (community of Shageluk):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. In the Koyukuk River below the Dulbi River gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

A short subsistence fishing period is being provided to target currently migrating sheefish with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in a portion of the Koyukuk River:

The Dulbi River and Koyukuk River area upstream of the Dulbi River is open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets restricted to 60 feet or shorter length until 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 30 to harvest sheefish. Gillnets should be fished in sloughs and side channels with high abundance of sheefish and other non-salmon and avoid incidental harvest of summer chum and Chinook salmon. The timing of this opening is during sheefish passage and before the first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to arrive in early July.

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the Koyukuk River above Bettles including the community of Wiseman.

District 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (including Tanana and Rampart):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of Subdistricts 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area).

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; including the communities of Stevens Village Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Circle and Eagle):

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Effective 8 p.m., Monday, June 28, salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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 currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

Old Minto Area and Kantishna River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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 salmon fishing is currently closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length.

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, and Salcha):

Personal Use salmon fishing is currently closed.

Subdistrict 6-C Whitefish and Sucker Personal Use Fishing

Fishing for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, subject to permit stipulations.

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

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.

The Emmonak USFWS office is not open. To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager call 351-3029.



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

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, subsistence and commercial fishing is considered essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.