



Advisory Announcement

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2021 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #14

Summer Update # 5, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

At this time, the majority, or at least three quarters, of the Chinook salmon run has entered the lower river and 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 not be met, and there will likely be no extra fish available for harvest.

Very few summer chum salmon have entered the Yukon River. As of July 4, the cumulative Pilot Station sonar counts for summer chum salmon are the lowest on record for this date. Unless the 2021 summer chum run is the latest on record, we have reached the historic midpoint. The current run size projection for summer chum salmon is well below the 500,000 fish needed to meet the drainagewide escapement goal.

Most escapement projects, particularly for summer chum salmon, are showing returns that are below average for this date. To protect the spawning escapements of Chinook and summer chum salmon, fishing will remain restricted in all areas of the Yukon River drainage at this time.

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 July 4.

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 27.24.

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 43.50, which is

below the historic average of 380.25. The Middle Mouth cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 49.54, and the combined Chinook salmon drift CPUE is 53.87.

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 143.34., which is well below the historical median of 6,789.46.

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 95,975 ± 8,844 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative average of 159,269 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 67,503 ± 9,742 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is well below the historical cumulative median of 1.2 million fish based on late run timing years.

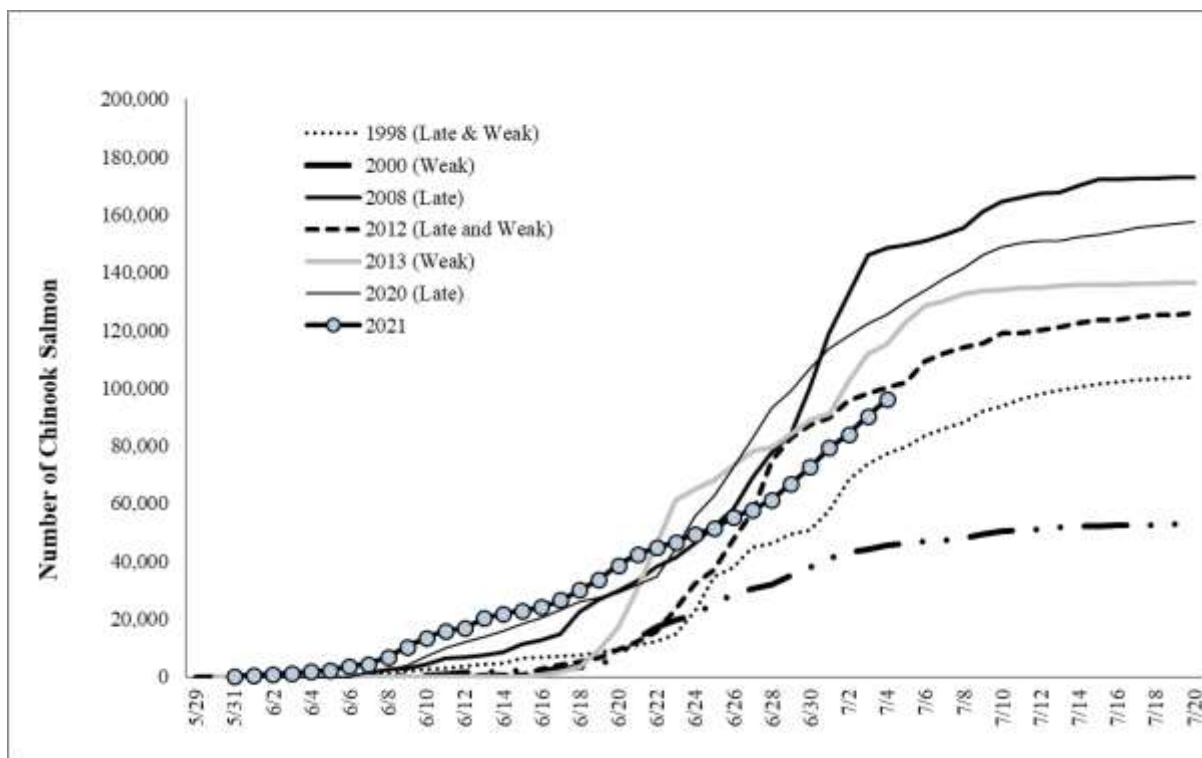


Figure 1. 2021 Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

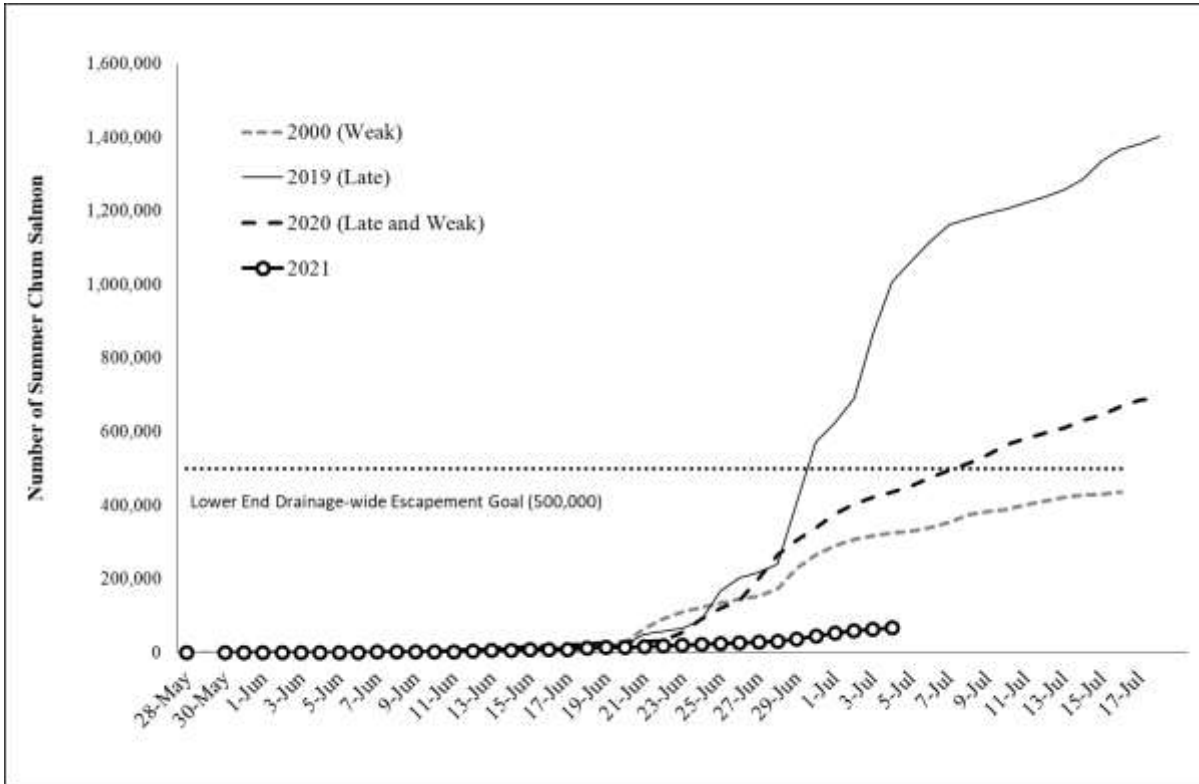


Figure 2. Cumulative 2021 summer chum salmon passage (black line with open circles) at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years. The horizontal dotted line represents the lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal for summer chum salmon. In 2000, summer chum salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar (dashed gray line) was under 450,000 fish and one of the weakest runs on record.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began counting on June 18. Cumulative passage is 6 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 584 fish for this date; and 143 summer chum salmon, which is below the median of 18,711 fish for this date.

Anvik River Sonar Project / ADF&G

The sonar began counting on June 15. Cumulative passage is 3,735 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 123,645 fish for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

Counts began at the weir on June 29. Cumulative passage is 4 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 21 fish for this date; and 23 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 193 fish for this date.

Chena River Tower/Sonar (ADF&G)

Counts began on June 24. Cumulative passage is 395 Chinook salmon, which is above the average of 155 fish for this date. Water conditions are low and with good visibility. No summer chum salmon have been counted yet, which is normal for this date.

Salcha Tower (ADF&G)

Counts began on June 30. Cumulative passage is 309 Chinook salmon, which is above the average of 179 fish for this date. Water conditions are low and with good visibility. No summer chum salmon have been counted yet, which is normal for this date.

Eagle Sonar (ADF&G)

Operations began on June 28. Cumulative passage is 389 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 829 fish for this date.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar (USFWS)

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

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.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 232 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 22 was 2% age-4, 51% age-5, 41% age-6 and 6% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 and age-7 fish and the percentage of females (51%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than average, with the exception of age-4 fish. However, the average length of 757 mm across all age classes is larger than the recent 10-year average length of 737 mm because of the above average proportion of age-6 and age-7 fish increasing the overall average length.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed to protect Chinook and summer chum salmon as they migrate to their spawning grounds. 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. While any salmon, including pink salmon, may be retained in this gear if caught, this gear should be fished in areas where Chinook and summer chum salmon are not abundant. There is no stock concern for pink salmon this year.

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

District 5 (upstream to the U.S./Canada border including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries; including Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

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 Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area), and in Subdistrict 5-D from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

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.

A personal use permit is required to fish for 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/>.