



Advisory Announcement

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2023 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #4 **Fall Update #2, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2023 fall chum salmon preseason projection, based on the relationship between summer chum salmon and fall chum salmon run sizes, is for a run size of 425,000 fish. The drainagewide escapement goal is 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, but the Canadian component of the run has been weaker than expected the last few years. Depending on the inseason abundance of Canadian stocks, the run may not be large enough to meet the Canadian treaty objectives for fall chum salmon, which are 70,000–104,000 fish in the mainstem Yukon River and 22,000–49,000 fish in the Fishing Branch River. As summer chum salmon comprise the majority of the early fall season salmon run, subsistence fishing for chum salmon has been allowed during the first ten days of the fall season in most districts. Subsistence fishing for chum salmon then closes until inseason estimates of abundance indicate a harvestable surplus of fall chum salmon is available.

Coho salmon typically enter the Yukon River in mid-August with the bulk of the run passing the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) between August 13 and 24. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements in 2019. This year's coho run size is anticipated to be below average to average (average is 222,000 fish).

Assessment project and management updates will be shared during the weekly YR DFA teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. (Alaska time). Call in number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#. Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed can be accessed online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

Fall season operations began on July 16 using 6-inch mesh gear to target fall chum and coho salmon. As of July 30, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 97.17, which is below the average of 326.68 for this date. The first quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs July 31 at this site.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

Fall season operations began on July 18. As of July 30, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 531.56, which is above the average of 517.25 for that date. The first quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs July 29 at this site.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season counts on July 19. As of July 30, the cumulative passage is approximately 80,000 chum salmon. This compares to a median cumulative passage of 143,000 chum salmon for this date. The first quarter point for fall season chum salmon passage typically occurs July 30 at this site.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

This sonar project typically begins August 8 to count fall chum salmon.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

This sonar project typically begins August 8 to count fall chum salmon.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

This project will transition from counting Chinook to fall chum salmon in August.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will transition from counting Chinook to fall chum salmon in August.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will begin counting fall chum salmon sometime in late August to early September.

Summer Season Assessment

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are complete in the lower river through District 4, and management has transitioned to fall season. Assuming late run timing, the third quarter point of the Chinook salmon run is projected to reach the sonar project located near Eagle on August 3. The cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar is well below average and only larger than what was observed in 2022 on this date. Current projections indicate that the lower end of the most recent Canadian IMEG of 42,500 Chinook salmon will not be met. Passage of Chinook salmon at all U.S. assessment projects are well below average and escapement goals are unlikely to be met.

The 2023 summer chum salmon run appears to be near the upper end of the preseason projection of 280,000 to 900,000 fish. Summer chum salmon total run size and escapement will be estimated later this year after final assessment project and subsistence harvest estimates are available. Preliminary estimates of the summer chum salmon run are above 845,000 fish, and the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million fish has been met.

Summer Assessment Projects

Updated with data through July 30.

East Fork Andreafsky Weir / USFWS

Operations ended July 27. Cumulative passage was 194 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 3,799 fish, and 2,308 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 52,765 fish. Counts at this project should be considered a minimum estimate. The project had a delayed start due to high water preventing weir installation, and for several days the weir was not fish tight.

Anvik River Sonar Project / ADF&G

Operations ended July 26. Cumulative passage was 60,548 summer chum salmon, which was below the median cumulative passage of 450,229 fish. The sonar was pulled between July 10 and July 24 due to high water. Counts at this project should be considered a minimum estimate.

Gisasa Weir / USFWS

Counts at this project should be considered underestimates. The project had a delayed start due to high water preventing weir installation and for several days the weir was not fish tight. Cumulative passage is 455 Chinook salmon, which is below the average cumulative passage of 1,985 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon cumulative counts are 15,678 fish, which is below the median cumulative passage of 42,460 fish for this date.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

Cumulative passage is 965 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 5,505 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon cumulative counts are 324, which is below the median cumulative passage of 4,368 fish for this date.

Salcha Tower / ADF&G

Cumulative passage is 1,212 Chinook salmon, which is below the cumulative average of 7,389 fish, and 491 summer chum salmon, which is below the cumulative median of 6,693 fish.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar was installed on June 30 and full operations (sonar and test fishery) began on July 1. Cumulative passage is 9,745 Chinook salmon which is below the cumulative average of 39,304 fish. The Eagle sonar project is used to assess the number of Canadian-origin Chinook and fall chum salmon that enter Canada. End of season sonar estimates will be used, along with other information, to calculate total border passage and escapement in Canada.

Chinook Radio Telemetry (ADF&G)

Tagging fish in the lower river concluded on July 15 for the season, but tracking operations are ongoing. Each fish was tagged with both an internal radio telemetry tag and an external spaghetti tag. **If you encounter a tagged fish this season and are successful at documenting the tag number, please call 1-877-467-2104 to report information about when and where the fish was observed.** As a thank you for voluntarily reporting the tag number and associated information, you will be automatically entered into the ADF&G salmon tag lottery. Please contact Josh Clark at 907-267-2217 or Fred West at 907-267-2237 with any questions.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) was performed on samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery. Chinook salmon samples collected from the early fish and first pulse (Stratum 1, June 7–June 25) indicated that 44% ± 8% (90% Credible Interval) were of Canada-origin. Samples from June 26–July 6 (Stratum 2) indicated that 52% ± 8% (90% Credible Interval) were of Canada-origin.

The third stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery (from July 9 through July 18) consisted of 97% summer chum salmon, of which 59% were lower river stocks, 30% were bound for the middle Yukon River, and less than 11% were bound for the Tanana River. The lower summer stocks are below average while the middle river and Tanana River components are above average for this time period.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 90 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 27, consisted of 57% age-4 and 40% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 58% age-4 and 41% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through July 28 was 39% which is below the 1986–2022 historical average of 52%. The average length of 565 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 592 mm.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Subsistence fishing for salmon with gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh size is closed to protect migrating Chinook salmon. During fishing openings with selective gear types, fishermen may use dip nets, beach seines, hook and line gear and manned fish wheels. **All Chinook salmon must be released alive.** Fish wheels must be manned at all times during operation; Chinook salmon may not enter a live box and must be immediately returned to the water using a chute, slide, tote, or other fish friendly means.

In Districts 3–6, submerged gillnets may be used for subsistence and personal use during ice-free months, but submerged nets must have a visible buoy or cluster of floats attached to both ends of the net, plus a third float in the middle if the net is over 60 feet in length.

Gillnets must be marked with a buoy, float, or keg that has the fisherman's first initial, last name, and address.

Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office 907-459-7274 or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Nonsalmon

The opportunity to harvest nonsalmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets of 60 feet or shorter length is allowed in all subsistence areas. Fishermen should fish this nonsalmon gear in areas where resident species are more likely to be encountered. Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole, hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seine, and spear. If closures are in place for a salmon species, they must be released alive immediately from nonsalmon gear (other than 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets).

Salmon

Coastal District, Innoko River, and Districts 1, 2, and 3 (including Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, and Shageluk):

The transition to fall season management is complete, and fishing for chum and Chinook salmon is closed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. Chinook and chum salmon must be released alive.

District 4 (including the Anvik and Koyukuk River drainages, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Hughes, Allakaket, Alatna, Bettles, Wiseman, Coldfoot, Galena, and Ruby):

Fishing for chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Effective at the date and times listed below, chum salmon subsistence fishing will close and retention of coho salmon will be allowed. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. Chinook and chum salmon must be released alive.

- **12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, August 2**, Subdistrict 4-A Lower (Anvik and Grayling) including the Anvik River
- **12:01 a.m. on Sunday, August 6**, Subdistrict 4-A Upper and Koyukuk River drainage (Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, Bettles, Wiseman, and Coldfoot)
- **12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, August 8**, Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (Galena and Ruby)

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles, including the community of Wiseman, and Coldfoot. Gillnet gear in this permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size.

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

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area).

Subdistrict 5-D (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border and all other adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon and are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net near shore.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of Dall River and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, Old Minto Area, and Kantishna River (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Wood River, including the Wood and Kantishna River drainages, Lake Minchumina, and Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in Lake Minchumina and in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and Kantishna River drainage), and northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage (including Minto Flats). A subsistence salmon permit is not required in Lake Minchumina.

Upper Tanana Area (defined as 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, including Delta Junction area, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Northway, and Nabesna):

Fishing for summer chum salmon is open with selective gear 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in the Upper Tanana Area.

Personal Use Management Actions

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (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 open with dip nets and live release manned fish wheels only on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:

6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays

Chinook salmon must be released alive.

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for salmon in Subdistrict 6-C. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing (in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, a portion of the Tanana River drainage 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, which includes Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction):

Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets is closed.

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

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for whitefish and sucker in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Federal Special Action

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this advisory announcement. Fishermen must be Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest salmon in Federal public waters. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS. Federal Special Actions will be posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements and fish counts can be obtained by visiting www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG or www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

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