**Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!**

Here is a summary of the 10th, 2019 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, August 6th, 2019. Call lasted 60 minutes. 35 callers participated at 40 minutes into the call.

**Background:** Yukon River salmon management teleconferences are held annually every Tuesday in June, July, and August for managers and fishers throughout the Yukon River drainage to discuss fishing conditions and management strategies in real time as the salmon run is occurring. YRDFA Yukon River Teleconferences are funded by the US Dept. of the Interior, Office of Subsistence Management.

**Media participating:** KZPA radio-Hans @ Fort Yukon

**Political Representatives participating:** none

**Communities & organizations participating this week: 10**

Alakanuk

Marshall

Russian Mission

Koyukuk

Allakaket

Galena

Nenana

Dawson

Teslin

Whitehorse

**Community fishery reports-Alaska:**

**Alakanuk: Pamela** - very high water. Some are waiting on later fish.**Community fishery reports-**

**Marshall: Norma** - I spoke with the usual fish cutters and no one reported fishing for fall chum yet. Most ladies are still berry picking. Also moose hunting is open. One coho caught yesterday. When its coho time, they usually jump all over and you can usually catch on the first cast if you are using the right hook. We have had a very rainy week, finally good weather today. Lot of escapement passing through Marshall but no one is fishing. Since the heat spell. She thinks last time people were fishing in Marshall was June.

**Russian Mission: Basil** - not too much fishing activity. Most people picking berries and also unit 18 moose hunting has started so everyone is looking. My brother set his 5” net yesterday and he caught 1 whitefish, 40 silvers (they were all small but shiny and healthy), 1-2 older summer chum. Raining. Still raining. we want to cut them but it is too rainy. You need a constant fire just to get them to air dry. Water came up a couple feet in the last couple days. Saw some geese flying around a couple days ago. We we are going to start cutting, we will switch to a larger mesh net to catch some larger silvers (fall chum) when the weather is better for drying them.

**Koyukuk: Benedict Jones** **-** No fishing here. Water up 20” since last week and still raising. Rain here and there. I put in a set net one day and all I caught was whitefish. No fall chum yet.

**Allakaket: Pollock Simon** - No fishing. Next activity is … water has cleaned up lots, dropped about 6” last night. We pulled all our salmon nets. We just have one net in the slough for little pike and whitefish. Raining.

**Galena: Howard -** The river is slowing rising with lots of debris. Only a couple people fishing still catching summer chum with no scarring or bad marks on them. One fisherman caught all males one night. We are still catching kings here. Temperature is dropping (what was temp?) ?7 degrees

**Nenana: Victor Lord -** River is up. His brother caught some chum salmon and it looked pretty good. He stopped his wheel because the drift was getting so bad. I saw 2 70’ logs, we call them wheel wreckers. There are chum in the river.

**Community fishery reports-Canada**:

**Dawson: Sabastian Jones** - There are some people still fishing, some have stopped. River is about same height that it has been all summer. Water is warm. Much siltier than I am used to seeing.

**Teslin: Carl Sidney** - no idea where the salmon are. No one is fishing in Teslin.

**Whitehorse: Harvey** - Yukon Salmon Subcommittee, Yukon River is higher than it has been most of the summer. Teslin river is up too. Haven’t heard much about fishing at upper end.

**Yukon River Management Reports:**

***Alaska Department of Fish and Game*** YRDFA 8/06/19 Assessment by Bonnie Borba ADF&G Fall Season Research Biologist in Emmonak

In 2019 the summer chum salmon run was later than normal spilling over into the fall season increasing the summer chum salmon overall run size to 1.9 million. This in-turn increases the fall chum salmon preseason projection slightly, to a range of 700,000-800,000 fall chum salmon. This is still a below average fall chum salmon run size which is approximately 1.0 million fish.

The LYTF assessment project has a fall chum salmon CPUE of 543 which is near the average of 561 as of August 5.

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates run is dominated by age-4 fish. The 2019 preliminary proportions of age-4 is 77%, well above the average of 60% and age-5 is 22% which is below average (39%). Females represent 34% of the fish sampled (n=392), which is well below the average of 55%, as of August 4.

MVTF fall chum salmon CPUE of 956 is above the average of 749 as of August 5.

The mainstem Yukon River sonar near Pilot Station has a cumulative passage from July 19 to August 5 of 318,000 chum salmon which is above the median of 244,000 as of August 5.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on chum salmon for the strata from July 19–26 that passed the sonar near Pilot Station, contained approximately 88% summer chum and 12% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon stocks in the sample contained primarily Lower River stocks at 64%, Middle River stocks at 11% and Tanana River stocks at 13%. The next stratum is expected to have higher proportion of fall chum salmon. After this group finishes passing the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station the samples will be sent to the lab for analysis and results will be available in the Yukon River daily update.

The large group of summer chum salmon that entered on July 18, using a migration rate of 30 miles per day, would be approaching Tanana/Huslia around August 9. The fall component headed into the upper portion of the drainage would be near Fort Yukon around August 16 and the Canadian border around August 26 based on 35 miles per day. In the past week we have seen a substantial increase in the number of fall chum salmon in the catches. The fall chum salmon that entered the Yukon River on August 1 are expected to be near Anvik August 9, Kaltag August 13, Galena August 15, Tanana/Huslia August 20, Rampart August 22, Fort Yukon August 30 and the Canadian border around September 9. Most of these fish will be heading for the upper Yukon River area.

Coho salmon run size is anticipated to be average (at 217,000 fish). At this time, it is too early to determine the timing and abundance of the coho salmon run based on inseason assessment. Coho salmon are present in all the test fisheries and are present in the commercial harvests in small amounts. The majority of the coho salmon do not arrive until mid to late August.

***Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 8/6/19-Fall Management:Jeff Estensen***

Wide range and uncertainty that warrants caution in our approach to management, particularly management of the commercial fisheries 700,000 to 800,000 fish, across that range of fish abundances, it is expected to provide enough fish to need escapement, mainstem Yukon River treaty objective, and subsistence use needs, and a limited commercial harvest.

**Subsistence Fisheries**

o Districts 1-4 and 5ABC are open 7/d/wk 24 hours

o Subdistricts 5D and District6 should stand by for announcements regarding their switch to fall management

o Porcupine is the exception; closed to subsistence salmon fishing to begin season. Announcement later next week

**Commercial Fisheries**

o Have been taking very cautious approach considering the outlook range

o We had several commercial periods during the transitional period between the summer and fall seasons (2 in Y1 and 1 in Y2) with the intent of allowing additional commercial harvest of summer chum, which were still present in high number up until the last week.

o As Bonnie mentioned we have revised our projection which means we have a limited surplus available for commercial harvest

o Looking at limited fishing opportunity in lower river; reduced schedule-Shorter duration periods, allow limited harvest

o when we start getting a better idea of what the fall chum run size will be based on inseason assessment projects such as the LYTF, mainstem sonar near the community of Pilot Station, and genetics, confidence in run projection

o At that point we can assess where we are at and make decisions keeping in mind that our priorities are; meet escapement and treaty objectives, provide for subsistence use

***Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada: Jesse Trerice-Fishery Manager***

Canadian In-season fishery management decisions are informed by:

o The obligations set out in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement;

o The International Yukon River Panel’s 2019 recommendations;

o The Canadian Yukon River Salmon Integrated Fishery Management Plan; and,

o In consultation with the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee and Yukon First Nation Governments.

• Importantly, Yukon River salmon fishery management decisions in Canada are guided by the obligation to support rebuilding Canadian-origin Chinook salmon stocks. This is a multi-year effort that requires long-term commitment and cooperation.

• A key Canadian fishery management priority continues to be to ensure that large, Chinook salmon successfully reach their spawning grounds in order to support future returns.

• We consider data collected at both the Pilot Station and Eagle enumeration programs, information available on Alaskan fisheries, and Pacific Salmon Treaty harvest share allocations to determine if adjustment to fishery management measures currently in place are required.

• **Information on assessment programs in Canada**

• The Porcupine River Sonar located near the community of Old Crow has counted 3,361 Chinook salmon as of August 4.

• The Pelly River Sonar located near the community of Pelly has counted 4,518 Chinook salmon as of August 4.

• The Big Salmon Sonar located approximately 2/3 of the way between the international border and the headwaters of the Yukon River has counted 1,744 Chinook salmon as of August 3.

• The first Chinook was counted in the Whitehorse Fish Ladder during last week’s YRDFA teleconference last and as of today, August 6, the fish ladder counted a total of 7 Chinook. The Ladder is located about 1,730 miles from the mouth of the river.

**Fishery Management Measures Currently in Place in Canada (as of 8/ 6/ 2019):** Despite seeing fewer Chinook at the Eagle sonar than we expected (based on the pre-season forecast and counts at Pilot) we currently anticipate that we will make escapement and provide for a First Nation Fishery.

• Harvest of Chinook salmon in Canadian First Nation subsistence fisheries is being administered in accordance with local First Nation Government management plans, and are informed by Pacific Salmon Treaty harvest allocations and international border passage estimates.

• First Nation harvest reports are indicating slow and low harvest compared to average.

• To date, harvest of Chinook salmon in Canadian sport, domestic or commercial fisheries has been prohibited.

• The conditions of licence have been finalized for the Commercial fall Chum fishery, these include two new conditions for 2019 which are that:

o The maximum allowable mesh size in the Chum fishery is 6-inch, and;

o All Chinook salmon caught in the Chum Commercial fishery must be released.

***Questions and discussion:***

John Lamont - lower Yukon - is there any summer season manager on the phone? Chinook salmon question.

Holly - yes.

John - With the numbers of Chinook salmon passing pilot, preliminary number, just over 200,000

Holly - 219,000, not surprised that people have still seen Chinook in Galena. Still trickling in; 300-400 a day.

John- noticed numbers at Eagle are really low. Totals being so low, even if 220,00 went through Pilot and 70,000 went to spawning grounds in US., there still should be 150,000, less 50,000 for subsistence. What are the estimates?

Holly - escapement into Eagle is about 40,000. Calculate Canadian origin post-season. We have to know how many total fish were harvested on US side. We don’t know how many escape on the spawning grounds. We only monitor 2 rivers. Met Salcha goals and Andreafsky. We monitor and Bonasila. We do aerial survey and we met three area goals, Nulato, West Fork Andreafsky River and ?. We do not know where all the other fish went. Expected higher passage at the border. Don’t think it was the commercial take. Where all the salmon go? We cannot do that in season.

John- Henshaw, ? and Chandalar?One of the king spawning grounds at the border. Were those reviewed or not?

Holly - we do not have a sonar on the Candalar.

Norma - slough above Pilot Station. Sloughs connect to Marshall, Tuktuk slough.

Sebastian - about the age composition in fall season. I note that you mentioned and you posted that the run is dominated by age 4 fish. Much higher proportion of age 4 than usual and much more males than females. These fish that were sampled, are they actually fall chum?

Bonnie - Yes the numbers reflect mixed summer and fall chum. I expect that to continue...

Norma- I was cutting fish this summer, tiny worms in the meat, 2 out of 50 have them. Are those the ones that, during the extreme heat, died off?

Carl Sydney - biologists, if we expect 40,000 salmon to cross the border. (hard to hear) I thought we were going to have a full first nation fishery. Now? Any thoughts on that, Jesse?

Holly - *defers to Canadian managers.*

Keith- manager for Yukon River treaties and fisheries, we are on the same page for numbers so you go ahead.

Holly- You are asking, what is our end projection here at the sonar, we think it is going to be late. 2-4 days late at Eagle. So our projection for end count is 44-49,000. Meet the minimum goal of 42,500 and provide a couple thousand. First Nation harvest for last few years was about 2000 kings. We do count fish all the way through Aug 15. 8 more days of counts. Could have strong tail trickel. But it won’t make up a lot of numbers.

Ben Jones - Koyukuk- Holly - when is fall chum open 7 days a week?

Holly - Question for Jeff, subdistrict 4.

Jeff- Benedict are you talking about district 4A. 24/7 open for subsistence fishing.

Call ended at: 2:00 pm

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| **Toll free fishing schedule hotline: 866/479-7387**  **Fishing Schedule hotline in Fairbanks: 907/459-7387**  **Contact info for ADFG YR Fall Season Manager; call 907/949-1320**  **Contact info for ADFG YR Summer Season Manager; call 907/267-2324** | | |

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