

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

Here is a summary of the 1st, 2019 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, June 4, 2019. Call lasted 61 minutes. 43 callers participated

**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. Funded by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

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

**Political Representatives participating:** none

### **Communities participating this week: 10**

Alakanuk

Emmonak

Mountain Village

Saint Marys

Marshall

Russian Mission

Holy Cross

Anvik

Allakaket

Ruby

### **Subsistence Reports:**

Alakanuk: Pamela; May 30-June 2, 3 out of 6 fished, interviewed 20. Last week was 2. Fishing just beginning. Harvested 2%. No chum, caught kings and whitefish, water high and lots of debris. Waiting for the fish to come in. Some do not want to be interviewed till fishing starts. Working on boats etc. (sorry I will start typing now)

Emmonak: Nic; introduction, and short statement, early in the season, started out YRDFA, introducing on purpose, young people need to realize and know we have formed this organization to work together all the way to Canada. Preamble should always be firm on the statement of fairness and the benefits commercial and subsistence. we have sacrificed. Our purpose is to concern the salmon. As native users on the YR we work with the agency folks for fair use. That is where us elders came from with this organization working with the managers. Share the benefits.

St. Marys: Bill; nothing much happening down here. Really high water. Went out on Yukon the other day and it was rough and windy. Made a drift and fish are pretty spotty. It all depends on luck. There is a lot of drift out in the river. Not much to report. There are a few people going to fish. Waiting on the kings.

Marshall: Norma; Throughout the weekend a few boats out. One person caught one. It's been pretty slow. She has not started surveying. Really high water. All the sandbars are underway. There are lots of bird eggs floating due to high water over sand bars. Baby moose stranded. It couldn't go up the bank to the mom. Some men from community pushed it up to her. People are not really fishing yet.

Russian Mission: Basil; Hopes everyone's fish camps are ready for upcoming season. Not much fishing activity here. A few people had nets up before the ice left and the logs by and they were getting a few kings. And just a few days ago the logs hit. One older guy lost his net to the logs. He hasn't found it yet. There has not been much fishing activity in the last few days. People are getting 1 or so king a day. We were out Sunday, pulling up logs. Today there are not many left so people are probably stringing nets. People are waiting for fish to arrive and wondering when the restrictions will begin. Water really high and still creeping up slowly.

Holy Cross: David; first teleconference. Not a surveyor but there is some activity here, people getting ready. Still high water, a lot of debris in the river. Not a lot fishing activity, just people getting their boats ready.

Anvik: Sherry; Not much to report related to fishing. People are out getting ready for fishing, gathering their wood and poles. Not as much driftwood this week as last week. Everyone is waiting for a good fishing season.

Allakaket: Pollock; Water has been high. Last week it was over the banks. Now it has dropped down 5 or 6 feet. There is still snow in the mountains. Someone is catching pike and fish in the sloughs.

Ruby: Ed and Rachel; Water is dropping. Did a boat ride yesterday to check out the conditions. Drift has really calmed down. Drift subsided. Water is lowering. Everyone is waiting for fishing to start.

### ***Questions and discussion:***

Pam Cook - Alakanuk - Fishermen she interviewed wanted her to ask if they could use 7.5" nets until the regulations begin.

Holly - Yes, you can fish 24/7 and use a net up to 7.5" currently. When next news release comes out, you will be dropped in time (1/2) but not in net size.

Pam - Good because people are having a hard time here with the reduction of food stamps. Also, people caught 3 whales (Beluga) in their nets. There is a lot of debris.

Nic Tucker Sr. - Emmonak - Just introducing myself. He is an interim YR DFA Board member, which began in 1990. It's been an anomaly winter, no ice in Bering Sea. We only had 3 weeks of really cold weather here. Wants to talk about escapement and fairness. Other users, commercial fishermen. Fair managers, Alaska Managers- be fair to your own conscience. I grew up on the

fish and they made me live this long. When I was 5 months old, my mother died. There was no milk back then. They fed me fish broth and dried meat and that is how I survived.

Sebastian- Dawson City in the Yukon and Canada we are extremely concerned about the state of the salmon and the Chinook. It's been a long time since we've had a run enter the Yukon that is (a large size). It is discouraging to us, the effort we are making in Canada don't seem to be reciprocated in Alaska. The numbers of salmon coming into the river are ½ of what they used to be. And the spawner per recruitment are a fraction. I appreciate the efforts being made all along the river but they are not enough.

-Why are you encouraging people to use the larger size nets when we know that we need more Chinook (quantity and quality) to make it to the spawning grounds. We know we have fished out the larger Chinook.

Nic- as a user, if I may kindly share with you.... Yes, we know that since 1945, we saw the numbers back then, as a subsistence user, what we survived on day to day. from the human aspect, there is a central basic human need for these resources. I agree with you that the numbers have declined. That is part of the problem. However, we have done everything that we can to preserve the fish. For 30,000 year tradition. We have to perpetuate for the next 30,000 years. We have been encouraged to tap into this resource but to conserve it. But, there are actual people living all the way from the mouth to Canada. Commercial fishing is intertwined with subsistence. We have been forced to do this since 1945. This not all fish, there are humans too. Sebastian - I appreciate that, those words of wisdom. I just wanted to point out who I am. I have been fishing in the Dawson area since the early 1980s. I just fish Chum now because we do not have any Chinook yet. Further, I understand how different life is along the river, especially as you get further down river away from roads. I do appreciate the difficulty.

Holly- re our productivity is not what it used to be - returns per spawner - after a complete brood or group of parents come through, that is when we measure our returns per spawner. Now we are at 2.6 per spawner, which is the highest it has been since (2000s?) The reason we use 7.5 " gear is because it is smaller than it used to be. Used to be 8.5 which did select the larger fish. Now we are using 7.5 which selects across the age classes. Returns to Canada have gotten better. We still need to fish fish and we have a quota for each country and we have been under utilizing our quota.

Sebastian - chinook salmon - average passage, Chum - median (?) passage. Why

Fred West- reason for summer chum is because there is widely different, more inconsistent than chinook.

Sebastian - Why do you use average for Chinook?

Fred - passage rates are more consistent. Compared to chum.

Sebastian- not a statistician. I don't understand the implications. Are we comparing apples to oranges. There can be quite a difference between average and median.

Nic- Alaska has not been standing still. We had a native delegation, 1990s to ban high seas fishing of Chinook. Enforcement was a problem.

David Walker - Holy Cross - Encourage everyone. The last two years we have been really cutting back. We cut our smokehouses in half and we have been encouraging people along the

river to do the same. I think it will really make a difference in the returns. Question about the coastal villages? Have we heard how they are doing?

Holly - Kuskokwim are catching a few. Good sign when people catch belugas because that means the salmon are waiting offshore.

Basil- just to add on to David, in defense of Alaskans. When we are this far down the river, summer chum are a lot more healthy than when they reach up there. And cutting our smokehouses in half - 30% of what we usually get in kings and making up the rest with chums, doing everything we can to get the kings up to the spawning grounds. We have been doing this a long time and we stopped the king numbers from dropping off. How do we not know that these three pulses, the genetic stock, the dam in Whitehorse, an extinct stock, is the missing link to what we have been trying to accomplish all these years. Half the numbers coming into the river. It only makes sense that outmigration feeds into the returns. There are a lot of roads in Canada, are you guys protecting the spawning grounds like we hope you are?

Sebastian - you are concerned about stocks above the whitehorse dam? I agree that if the dam were proposed now, it would never be passed. I agree that it has an affect on the wild salmon. I wouldn't call them extinct but they are not strong. Protecting habitat. We do not have EPA but we have something. Our biggest threat is placer mining. WE do have a system to manage it. Any stream that supports spawning salmon is off limits. Any stream that has rearing salmon has severe restrictions.

Wayne - thanks for respectful way you are interacting with each other.

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3131 or look for us on the web at [www.yukonsalmon.org](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

or call toll-free 1-866-479-7387 for recorded fishing schedules and assessment information

For Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada updates, please visit:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/yukon/fmcountingfac.htm>

Please join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).