

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 2nd, 2019 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, June 4, 2019. Call lasted 77 minutes. 46 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 & organizations participating this week: 19

Alakanuk
Mountain Village
Saint Marys
Marshall
Russian Mission
Holy Cross
Anvik
Nulato
Koyukuk
Huslia
Allakaket
Galena
Ruby
Fort Yukon
Nenana
YRITFC
Old Crow
Dawson
Whitehorse

Subsistence Reports:

Alakanuk: Pamela-Contacted 24. Interviewed 15 households, 14 fished. Other folks want to wait. 23% of fish King. 59% chum. Gear type 5 ¾, 5 ⅞, 6" & 7.5. All fish healthy. High water compared to last year. Also, some people are 100% finished fishing. Others need more because they are fishing for more households. Some are done with Kings but would like chums. One person said they don't have

enough fish because they are fishing for multiple families. Water has been extremely high. I got to go out fishing. It was nice, I went fishing for Elders.

Mt. Village: Nita - We had some people who fished and a couple who didn't because they didn't have money or someone stole parts off their motor. There is still debris in-river. Some people caught Kings and some caught a few chums. One person met their needs for Kings. Others still need more Kings to meet their goals for this summer. Comments include: We need to subsistence fish to teach our kids how to do it. Please keep it open. Another said, "happy with the way fishing is going. Good fishing and good weather to dry the fish"

St. Marys: Bill Alstrom - There are fish in the river. Water level holding. Water level pretty high but receding slowly. Last few days we have been having high winds from SW or NW. People have been going out fishing. They have been catching Kings. Chums are slow. Kings are not coming in in one big pulse, more sporadic. But when they do hit, the first Kings, fisherman can catch them. Subsistence wise, most people are pretty much filling their fish racks. Subsistence for Kings, they are pretty well satisfied. A couple of people I talked to said they are done with their King fishing. I have been out the last couple of days and I'm practically finished with Chinook fishing, now just waiting on chums. People have been satisfied so far. No complaints. There will be some late starters. I still see some fishermen going out. All in all, seems like most of the people have full fish racks. Waiting on summer chum. they are slower, not like last year when chums came in first. and then kings trickled in. Y1 and Y2 - windows have kicked in. We will be reducing our fishing time on Thursday to 2 - 18hr openers.

Marshall: Norma Evan - this week she spoke with 10 families and 7 fished. some families are holding back on fishing. There are 2 smokehouses that fell in the river. Still early in-season and I see some families getting ready. Of my catch 80% males, all healthy, most families are at 0%. A couple of big families have not started due to motor problems. Water still high but it has dropped a foot. Less debris since water dropped. We fished between 2 sandbars. Really nice weather for drying.

Russian Mission: Basil Larson - Fire 5 miles west of Kako. Little to no rain all summer. Few people went out fishing and had to cut their nets because of underwater logs or snags. Hot dry weather good for drying salmon. Everyone is happy to fish these first Kings before the first pulses. 70% of fish camps are up and running getting 2-4 fish a day. Most everyone is using set nets because of the

underwater logs. Concern about dying sea mammals out in the sea. Wondering about dying salmon. We are in the early stages of getting our camps ready and thankful for opportunities to fish.

Holy Cross: David Walker - I sit on Yukon River Panel as advisor. Water dropped, a lot of debris. Fishermen are battling it. Catching 4-5 a day. or 2-3. I caught 3 sheefish so far. It's pretty early. Fishermen are getting ready, their smokehouses.

Anvik: Sherry Kruger. Here in Y3 a couple of people have set their nets. One fisherman I spoke to caught 15 in the last few days. They are just starting to hit. River is high, dropping a little.

Nulato: Mickey Stickman - People are getting ready. We hauled a boat load of smoke wood yesterday. People are getting their smokehouses ready, cleaning their poles. Water levels are high but dropping steady. I saw only one set net out last night when I was going for a ride to get poles. I haven't heard if they caught anything yet. People have their nets out for sheefish, but with the price of gas at \$5.40 gallon.... We have had a lot of sporadic rain. We just had Denakkanaaga conference here last week.

Koyukuk: Benedict Jones - Nothing to report, no fish yet. Water dropping about 4-6 inches every 12 hours. no debris. Waiting for fish. I heard the salmon bird this morning. It said 3 days....

Huslia: Zoe - no one is fishing yet at home.

Allakaket: Pollock - Water is high, dropping down slowly every day. I had fish net in slough. Waiting for the King salmon.

Galena: Howard - Benedict is right, I heard the fish bird on 31st of May and we caught on June 1st(?). Water is dropping 4-6 inches every day. Sure is good to eat fresh fish.

Ruby: Rachael - Fishing myself recently. Drifting, set net. I keep hearing that people are getting all jacks. I caught a really large nice silver King. I was drifting for about 4 hours, several drifts. We were using a 6". We were getting all really small jacks. They would just go right through the net. Not many people out fishing yet, they are kinda waiting.

Fort Yukon: Andrew Firman - Don't have much to report. just calling in to say hi and let everyone know I'm listening in. Just regular fishing activity around Fort Yukon. getting their gear ready.

Nenana: Victor Lord - water is up but not high. One guy here is building a wheel. Another building a raft for a wheel. I saw some cotton flying yesterday and that is early so I think the fish are early. Question for Bill - people meeting their subsistence needs. But first pulse hasn't come yet? So are people meeting their subsistence needs on the tricklers? And the tricklers are all the way up to Ruby now?

-Bill answers - we call them forerunner. Stragglers or the scouts. Before the main pulse comes in. They have been going out. I know one guy in Alakanuk who is done with his subsistence catch of Kings. He is a hustler who goes out and gets it over and done with. People catching kings are the ones who put an effort into it. Most people I know have racks filled up with strips. Catching all of the these ... but we haven't seen the big heavy run yet.

Victor- good healthy native food.

Stephanie/YRITFC - Commissioner Vincent-Lang, director of fish and game, Sam Raybun. next week on river. Trying to hit every region of the river in one trip. Couple of villages in lower river. Tanana, Fort Yukon. Working on way for people in nearby villages to attend these meetings. Questions - call Stephanie or Brooke Woods, chair of fish commision.

Old Crow: Stan-There is a boat that left here, 14 hrs to Fort Yukon. Indication that it is good water to travel on the river right now. Water level is good. Bit of rain. Waiting for the salmon and fishing.

Dawson: Sebastian Jones - no fishing taking place here. River started off extremely low, came up for a while but heading back down. Unusually low. Weather is warm. Nobody here expects to go fishing for King salmon this summer.

Whitehorse: Steve Gotch. A number of us from Fisheries and Oceans are here. Very unusually dry spring. Month of May was particularly dry with no snow melt. But come June, we've seen rain and cooler temperatures. Helped with forest fire situation. Things are starting to be a bit more variable with temps and rainfall.

ADFG notes:

Fred West assessment update.

Question about first pulse of Kings - we wait to see catches increase at our test fishery at middle mouth and south mouth. If it sustains for 3-4 days, then we confirm it at Pilot Station. Timing - In the past we haven't seen a pulse this early. We are still waiting to see what happens.

Holly - Nice early trickle.

Our reports state expected day that fish will arrive in communities. We start detecting these fish for timing in our test fisheries. Fish trickling in early, and fishermen are being effective at catching these. Why we have been providing full access to the early kings. Pressure at Board of fish for early fish for ceremonial use. But too early to project run size, now we are starting conservative approach, by implementing windows at half schedule. Implementing that as a start. If run is weaker, we will drop to 6". If run is stronger, we may relax these restrictions. Y2 is on their restricted schedule, to minimize harvest, allow some harvest but not much harvest.

-comment made about marine mammals. People concerned about Fukushima radiation. DEC tests salmon and we have not detected it in any Alaska salmon. Mammals tested by federal agencies. There has not been any bad levels of radiation. A report of seals found dead on the beach. Please contact NOAA or FWS.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada-Canadian Management Update

Jesse Trerice - Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee, have concluded their pre-season management planning meetings with upper Yukon River First Nation Governments, advisory bodies and fishers.

The 2019 Canadian management strategy will be finalized in late June, in advance of the arrival of the first Chinook salmon at the international border. The 2019 Canadian management strategy will be based on the Yukon River Panel 2019 management recommendations, objectives established by the Yukon River Salmon Agreement, recommendations from the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee, and the results of consultations with Yukon First Nation Governments and community members.

The 2019 pre-season forecast jointly developed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) predicts the return of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon will be between 69,000 and 99,000. This is

considered a weak run size and well below the historical average of 150,000. Based on the pre-season drainage wide outlooks for Chinook and fall chum we anticipate similarly low returns for both species in the Canadian portion of the Porcupine river drainage.

Given the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon rebuilding process is still underway Canada anticipates that a conservative approach to managing salmon fisheries will again be required in 2019. Strategies that involve selective harvest of smaller and younger Chinook salmon in subsistence fisheries, basing in-season management adjustments on information available at the midpoint (or later) of the timing of the return, coupled with facilitating escapement of at least the mid-point (or upper end) of the spawning escapement goal range are likely to be central to the overall Canadian management strategy.

The key priority for management in Canada will remain focused on ensuring that sufficient numbers of large Canadian-origin salmon reach their spawning grounds in order to sustain future returns. Over the coming weeks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will rely on information collected by assessment programs at Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Pilot Station and harvest in Alaska to inform in-season management decisions in Canada.

Questions and discussion:

John Lamont - tributaries to the Tanana. Doesn't seem right that we take the blunt of the restrictions at the mouth. I guess the Department or managers should wait until the Tanana has the normal numbers coming up.

- she will make a note to the area manager of your concern.

Gale Vick - letting people know that there are some villages who are receiving nets. If they have not contacted me, please have them do so when they get the net so we can check them off. 907-227-7442. 6" nets for people who were on the list and applied before the deadline of Jan 31st.

Victor - Nenana - Way up here on the Tanana River, I know we try to stick to fish. Tragedies on the ocean. Salmon have been affected by the Ocean.

Fred West said something about 8 1/2" nets. Question about bigger salmon coming up. We used to get 90lb Salmon. Thank you John about the personal use fishery. Gale, we probably missed the deadline but if there are any leftover nets, Nenana Native council could use a net.

- *Fred West- early in season, hard to access. Catches are average size.*

- *Holly - follow up. Department does recognize that fish are getting small. Potential reason mortality in the ocean but also a trend to return early- rather than 7 year olds they are coming back as 5 or 6 year olds. We have kept larger mesh in our test fishery to see change. Because we have lost the larger fish, we get less fish in our 8 1/2. More in our 7"*
- *Wayne - is there an overall theory in the marine environment why fish are coming back early?*
- *Holly - for this year, we haven't confirmed this is an early year?*
- *Wayne - in maturity?*
- *Holly - okay coming back to the river younger than they might have. Don't have a lot of data in front of me that I can simplify. It could be temp, predator/prey, complex. Happening in a lot of stocks in different systems.*

Old Crow - Stan - How many have been counted at Pilot Station? When would you consider it as first pulse? What number or age or date, would give you indication of first pulse coming up?

- *Holly - We watch for sustained number of high passage and track it at Pilot. haven't seen numbers at pilot. In some years we call something a first pulse and then later decide it a strong trickle. Management perspective - instead of closing on first pulse, we are trying to restrict across the run. Fishing on early first fish are now restricted.*

John Lamont - Jesse - Do the Canadians have a restriction of 7.5" in Yukon territory?

Jesse, Steve- mesh size restrictions - process of annual regulations. Still in process. Mesh size restrictions under way. Expect some progressive restrictions this year. Likely to align with recommendations of YRP of 6".

Call ended at 2:15pm

Contact info for ADFG YR Summer Season Manager; call 907/267-2324

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.

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#).