

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 4th, 2019 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, June 25, 2019. Call lasted 105 minutes. 59 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 US Dept. of the Interior, Office of Subsistence Management.

Media participating: KZPA radio-Fort Yukon,

Political Representatives participating: none

Communities & organizations participating this week: 21

Alakanuk

Mountain Village

Saint Marys

Marshall

Russian Mission

Holy Cross

Anvik

Nulato

Koyukuk

Huslia

Galena

Ruby

Rapids

Fort Yukon

Nenana

Minto

Fairbanks

Dawson

Mayo

Teslin

Whitehorse

Community level reports:

Alakanuk: Pamela- contacted 20, 13 were interviewed. 3 did not fish. 3 said worse than last week, 3 the same, 9 better. 5% were chums, 8% kings. Gear type was 5.5, 5 7/8", 6 3/4, both set and drift. One household let go of some fish due to pus pockets. Water level steady. River conditions - water level high a few days out of the week. The rest was good. Fish swimming. Some fishermen completed, others need more because they are fishing for multiple families. A concerned fisherman about radiation. Towards Kotlik there were a lot of dead seals on the beach.

Mt. Village: Nita - water level dropped but sand bars still covered with water. Fishermen used 5.5 and 6" gear. A couple families are still having families meeting their subsistence needs because they don't have gas or somebody stole their steering wheel for their boat. So far 2 fishermen caught wounded fish. One fisherman caught 2 sockeye salmon.

St. Mary's: Bill Alstrom -Not so much going on around here. Water is dropping. Seems like most subsistence is done for fishing for kings. Everyone wondering what is happening with summer chums. Just waiting until F&G gives their report. Did hear from some fishermen that the chums are not as ocean bright as usual.

Sven Pauken- Some fisherman had to get rid of chums due to pus.

Marshall: Norma Evan - This week I spoke with 10 families and 8 fished. Compared to last week said it was better this week and 4 said it was the same. Of my catch this week, mostly males... Most families are up to 70% with their harvest. Water went down 7 feet. No drift. People are asking if they can use dipnets. I have seen a few summer chums out of my catch that are already coloring.

Russian Mission: Basil - Morning. There is a lot of background noise. I can also barely hear last 3 reporters. About 1/2 of fish camps are done with their summer salmon harvest. The other half is about 80 % done. A few camps have just started. We are asking for more openings. Other than that, most everyone is done with summer salmon. We got 60 chum and we had to throw away ___ 30%? **due to pus.** Water is real low and still dropping. Finally got some breeze.

Holy Cross: David Walker - Water is really dropping. About 80 degrees today. About ½ of fishermen did fairly well in the last period, catching 30-40. About 50% of us are about 10% done. It is getting pretty hot. We have 75-80 degree weather for the next 3-4 days. We have gnats too. If you come to Holy Cross, bring a head net.

Anvik: Ken Chase - I was up at Grayling at last closing. Fish were not really running heavy. Lots of sheefish. I heard from Holy Cross. Shageluk, I couldn't get ahold of anyone there. I haven't heard what Anvik River is doing. Majority of people are still trying to get a bunch of fish.

Nulato: Arnold Demoski -A lot of people are fishing but not having much luck. About 1 per hour. People are barely catching what we need, using a lot of gas. I know we are in conservation but it is stressful.

Koyukuk: Benedict Jones - Water dropped about 18". Last opening the whole village got about 25 (kings) and that's about it.

Huslia: Zoe - didn't survey this week, but her Dad talked to a fisher and he said he caught 3 kings. Fishing eddy site washed out? We will have to try fishing 70 miles downriver this year.

Galena: Howard - moderate fishing activity this week, about 5 fishermen were out. Two caught about 60 all together. PH was 7.95 at ?? Really slow with lots of jacks. White pus pockets. One fisherman didn't know what it was and gave it to a family member and two of those family members came down with vertiulitus? Some kings are turning red already.

Fred - I've been fishing at 4 mile. but the water got too low. I went to Dainty Island. I got one and went drifting and then tore up my net due to low water. Tonight I am going to try with a 6 " net. So far I have got 10 kings for the whole season. It is pretty slow.

Ruby: Catherine - Surveyor submitted data sheets. One fisher reports that quality of meat in kings is very pale and mushy. Another reported that fish are jacks almost large trout size. This fisher fished 18-20 hours and only got 4.

Rachael - Water level is really low in Ruby. We have not seen the water this low except for late fall. Water temp is really warm. Traditionally we don't start fishing until the first week of July. Elders go out then, they can usually fish for one day to get the fish they need for their smokehouses. Sadly there are NO

smokehouses going here. There are not a lot of fish, not a lot of people catching fish. Really super warm water. Someone fished for 18 hours and they got 2 kings. Usually they can fish that long and be done for the season.

Rapids: Stan - Rapids Report.

- Water conditions low for time of year but stable at present. No drift.
- Most all the fish camps have opened (about 12 so far) and about half the gear in the water. Most camps are not operating at capacity with normal family members waiting for that typical July 1 - 4th time when they come. King catches have been off and on okay for the beginning of the run but numbers need to increase before the larger family invests time into being at camp. This is normal and as it usually is each year in the camps.
- King are generally healthy looking, red fleshed fish. No fish sampling project running this year but a number of fishers experienced in Ichthyophonous disease sign detection regularly check hearts for it and none has been seen yet. Last year's sampling project showed a low 1.5% ICH in King so don't expect much this summer either.
- Fishermen have been talking about:
 1. the low water but have all seen it before.
 2. size of king is small especially in fishwheels and 6" nets. Female rate is very low so far.
 3. No summer chum seen so far. This is normal somewhat but last few years they have showed up almost right with the king.
 4. Fish seen so far are king, a fair amount of Bering cisco and a smaller amount of sheefish, humpback and broad whitefish.
 5. people are still worried about king run being not good as most still are just starting or going to fish soon.
- There are maybe a few camps have a portion of their needs met but others are at 0% or just rising off that number. Our camp just cut our first strips today and started the smokehouse. Stan at Rapids

Fort Yukon: Andrew: folks got started, just getting started. Heard that 1-2 people were fishing.

Minto: Jeep - people are at fish camp and they haven't come back yet. They left last Sunday. No report from them yet.

Nenana: Victor Lord - Just came back from bailing my boat out. Since last week, one fisherman caught a fish on the river. When the drift gets up it is tough fishing. The one who caught the fish had to move his net due to drift. Drift is heartache for

fishermen around here. Hats off to fishermen down river who are in conservation mode because king salmon are so important to us up here.

Fairbanks: Virgil Umphenour - just listening. Chena river really low and it is hot!

Dorothy-listening and praying that the salmon get better. Wants salmon ceremonies, offering gifts to water and salmon.

Dawson: Natasha - Water is low, no fishing activities. Trondek Gwitchen is not fishing this summer.

Mayo: Jimmy John-water low and hot.

Teslin: Carl Sidney- water is low.....

Whitehorse: Jesse/DFO

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Canadian Management Update YRDFA Conference Call – June 25, 2019

- The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has received the Yukon Salmon Sub- Committee's Management and Allocation Recommendations for 2019.
- The various recommendations provided are being carefully considered to ensure that resulting public commercial and domestic fishery management measures are administered in a way which supports responsible and sustainable management of Yukon River Salmon stocks into the future.
- We anticipate the Minister will provide his decision by July 1, which will result in the finalization of the Canadian fishery management strategy and coincide with the arrival of the first Chinook salmon at the border.
- Given the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon rebuilding process is still underway, we anticipate that a coordinated approach to managing salmon fisheries will again be required in 2019.
- A key Canadian priority will continue to be to ensure that 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 Pilot Station and Harvest in Alaska to assist with estimating the anticipated number of Chinook salmon that are likely to return to Canada.

- The total number of Chinook past Pilot station at the mid-point of the run is particularly important as in Canadian fishery management measures implemented immediately upstream of the international border in the first half of July.
- Information received through these weekly calls is also particularly helpful in informing fishery management strategies in Canada.

Holly - similar actual run size to last year. We are between 1st quarter point and ½ point. Usually year June 20 is mid point. Last year's run size was below average run size. We managed fishery and met goal. We are pulling periods. Goal to provide some king opportunity. Everyone above district 2 is still in early fishing. May not meet their whole goal, hoping that people will find other ways to meet their needs or pick away at their goal. Small fish. 6" should be catching more younger fish. Strong early trickle of kings. Provided much more opportunity than usual on that. Trickle is often smaller male fish.

Summer chum run is lower than we have ever seen it. If you are concerned about fall chum due to the relationship between the strength of the summer chum run, Jeff Estensen is on the line and can address that.

Bonnie - tracking summer chum due to relationship with fall chum. summer chum late. Genetics in. We will know more after we process this. Next week update on genetic samples. Now we are monitoring and will keep updating you.

Jeff - preseason meetings... when we talk about relationship between fall and summer chum. Relationship is the most important tool. Fine tune our management. aware that this could be a lower than expected fall chum run this year. Not sure yet how this will affect subsistence and commercial fishery. Stand by.....

Questions and discussion:

Wayne asked Holly about water temperatures

Holly - temps are well above average. Starting to trend back downwards. maybe things will level out. Bigger concern not just when Yukon is warm, but when tributaries are warm. Concern is what will happen when they get into their spawning grounds. It can affect meat quality. Especially if they are holding out in the Bering Sea and then come up river.

- other thing Im hearing from a lot of fishermen is that they think the fish are swimming deep and I agree with them. maybe the fish are swimming deep.

Wayne asks Fred if he has any numbers from the Bering Sea?

Fred- most people know there wasn't a lot of ice cover. Fish are free to go whatever area and temperature they want or chasing forage fish. Fish are experiencing two different scenarios as they move upriver.

Carl - Referring to Pam's comments - wondering what they did with the dead seals or did they discard them, and the fish?

Pam - with the fish, one person caught a bunch but 10 of them had really big pus pockets. He pushed on one of them and they push out white and yellow. He discarded them, he gave them to the dogs, he didn't want to put them back in the river. She tells them to take a picture of them. Or to take it to ADFG.

- with the seals up on land, all the mammals. They are concerned because it was 18 miles and closer, on the beaches. Everyone is wondering. I do not have an answer for that. I am concerned too. People call me with questions so I am sharing for them.

Carl - do any managers have any comments or concerns?

Holly- in regards to marine mammals. These dead seals were reported near Kotlik a couple of weeks ago. NOAA (federal agency). State only tests marine mammals in relation to subsistence. Could be a problem with lack of sea ice. When animals die from lack of sea ice, they are often carried away on sea ice. There has not been any radiation found in the tests. Not an expert on mammals.

Carl - I still hear concerns about radiation and Fukushima. Is there any way that ADFG can put out a memo stating that there is no radiation found.

- Also, when people talk about fish, can they identify which kind of fish they are talking about.

Pam - also likes the idea of memo so she can share with her community.

Victor in Nenana- In the 70s and 80s tricklers used to be big fish. Males. Nowadays fish are smaller in general. Traditionally I do not remember them being little.

- curiosity/comment. Is there a village of Minto in Canada that fish swim by Jimmy Johnny in Yukon - a place in Canada called Minto - Yes. It is not too far from Pelly Crossing. People go there and fish. There are about 2-3 families living there now and fishing.

- about warm water - Elders have been saying the water is going to get warmer. Water is going to get warmed. Fish tend to look for colder water portion. They are going to stay around there and there are going to be hardly any fish. They go from one shore to the other shore.

Victor Lord - Thank you very much.

Janet Woods - Comment on Victor's comments. Because we are using small mesh size, so maybe that is why we are catching smaller fish. I know the test fishery is using 8.5" nets. What size fish are you catching in those nets?

Holly - great comment. Hard for us to know, fishermen are fishing on shore and using smaller nets. Our test fishery uses larger nets. We are analyzing report now. Stand by for that information.

Norma - Can we use dipnets in Y2?

Holly - yes dipnets are an allowable gear when it is open for salmon. But when it is closed for salmon you can only use 4" targeting whitefish, if you catch a salmon in your 4" because they will die.

Holly - thank you to YRDFA surveyors. I really appreciate everyone for being on the ground to share information and to bring their questions to us.

Pam - can you send news releases to our TC?

Holly- Your tribal Council should be getting them. or you can go to facebook page and they are there too.

Ben ??? - do they change management if it is a late run?

Holly- typically when chum come in after July 15, we track them. genetic samples. summer chum projection. There is almost no way the run can make up for this time. I could be wrong and we would adjust our management strategy. They are running strong today. typically they do not come in this late and then be strong.

Jeep - this fish, is it only chum or are the kings affected too?

Fred Bue - I missed what you said? Did you ask about ick?

Jeep - the pus

Erik- we are seeing them in the chum, not the kings

Norma- I have been fishing and cutting. I have only seen it in the chums, not the kings. One king with tapeworms.

Arnold- where is the second pulse.

Holly- We are seeing the second pulse at the Pilot sonar today. A large group of king and chum today.

Ben Jones - Koyukuk - Holly I am concerned about females. I caught 24 and only 3 females. 7 1/2 in mesh and 9 meshes deep

Holly - That is a pretty shallow net. They should be in your area now. We are getting age and sex data from Pilot and will report that next week. There are some restrictions coming your way. Almost all small fish are male.

Fred Beans from Mountain - looking at Delta Discovery June 11 - picture of a guy holding up a whitenose. Delta fishing report - Pilot Station F&G test net, later part of month?

Holly - I missed the part about whitefish

Fred- there is a picture of a test net fisher and he is holding up a whitenose, don't they come in late June.

Holly- thanks for asking. We had an early run at Emmonak and they were all whitenoses. We heard that they are usually at the end of the run. Nothing is normal this year. Not the chum timing, air temp, water temp, run timing. Hopefully it does not mean the end of the run. I'd love to hear more about this.

- white nose and black nose kings. Are there any brown nose kings? Ha, ha.

Mickey - Nulato- Is there going to be a plan for some openings for king fishing in Y4a. It is possible that fall chum numbers will be low. When people in Nulato can not get enough kings, they finish off with fall chum. Concerned.

Jeff- I hear you loud and clear. We will be providing an update. summer to fall chum relationship. We adjust our management after we see the summer chum. Staff is very aware of what is going on right now.

Fred Beans in Mountain Village - maybe an invitation wouldn't be so bad.

Victor - thank YR DFA for teleconference. Becoming very important. Next week will be even more important with the fall season starting. Info we are receiving is phenomenal.

Howard - concern about pus pockets. some are really obvious. some kings meat is streaked with yellow. I wonder if people could include a picture or an update about parasites.

Holly - can you send us a photo of what you saw.

Howard - wish I could but I got mosquito spray on my phone.

Chris Stark - if any fisherman online has access, I will personally pay for boxing them up and preserving them, lets get them in.

Bill Alstrom - Holly if you are still on, I realize you are not down in Emmonak, if any of your colleagues are in Emo. When you get fish out of test fishery, do you see these problems?

Holly - Thanks for that. Very good questions. Hard for us to answer that because we don't process fish. We are not cutting meat. Hard to say that we don't see that because we don't process fish. Way I look at it, there are always weak animals in any herd. There are always fish that have beluga bites or pus pockets. That says to me, normal. But further you get upriver, the weaker they get.

Arnold - Sorry I missed the past couple of weeks. Good to know we are not the only ones struggling in 4A.

Call ended at: 2.45pm

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

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3141 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#).

Thank you for doing your part to conserve and carefully use Yukon River fish! As a shared resource, it will take everyone working together to maintain a sustainable fishery.