

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

Here is a summary of the 5th, 2019 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, July 2, 2019. Call lasted 83 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 US Dept. of the Interior, Office of Subsistence Management.

**Media participating:** KZPA radio-Hans @ Fort Yukon, Selkirk First Nation-Quanita Joseph TC.

**Political Representatives participating:** none

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

Nunam Iqua  
Alakanuk  
Kotlik  
Mountain Village  
Saint Marys  
Marshall  
Russian Mission  
Anvik  
Koyukuk  
Huslia  
Galena  
Ruby  
Rapids  
Fort Yukon  
Eagle  
Fairbanks  
YRITFC  
Pelly  
Teslin  
Whitehorse

**Community level reports:**

**Nunam Iqua:** Stanley Pete - murky, high winds catching kings and chums. Some reports of Silvers, humpies.

**Alakanuk:** Pamela - 25 households contacted, 7 fished, 8 did not fish. 5 reported worse than last week. 1 same and 3 better. 35% chum harvest, 2% king harvest. Gear type was 5 7/8 and 6" set and drift nets. Most are 100% complete harvesting subsistence. Some are still waiting on fall chum. Fish and game has been delivering fish to our communities. There is less debris in the water.

John- Traditional commercial fishermen haven't harvested salmon yet. We request that we be able to sell a few incidentally harvested chinook salmon. Doesn't seem right to be closed. Should not have been 6" opener. Expect high numbers through sonar. Concerned about fishermen in Alakanuk who survive off commercial fishery.

**Kotlik:** Marvin - ? % of households are done with subsistence. Have to travel a long way. Water levels have dropped significantly. Storm hit. One jack that wasn't very healthy looking. Everyone is looking forward to commercial fishing.

**Mountain. Village:** Nita - interviewed 4 households. Some didn't fish in the last opening. A couple of families are done for the season. Unless they go for silvers (fall chum). the majority of people have caught their needs during last subsistence openings. Some saw pus in fish. 5 1/2 and 5 7/8 winds high, rainy.

**St. Mary's:** Bill Alstrom - haven't been out on river but heard from others who have. Still kings in river. Just the other day a bunch of chums were starting to hit, summer chums. Some people put their gear in and caught a boat load. Even kings. Some caught bristol bay fish - the reds (sockeye). Still fish going up the river. Quite a few kings out there. Someone went out with dipnet, targeting chums and got a few kings. Chums were so thick that he got 6 or 7 chums at one time. Windy and cool today, cloudy. All done with my subsistence fishing, locked up the smokehouse and done for the year.

**Marshall:** Norma Evan - 11 families spoke to. Chum was better than last week. Some said it was better for King. 80% of my chum were female. Most families reported 75-80% done. Water started to drop. Little to no drift in the river. Shallow

water was warm at the sandbar. Some families are holding off on fishing to start on other subsistence activities. Berries are already ready. A lot of families aren't fishing. Last year I helped a lot of Elders with Kings. I am fine with the commercial fishery but not the sale of Kings.

**Russian Mission:** Basil - I spoke with 12 fish camps and interviewed 10. 9 went fishing and 5 didn't. A lot of people were using dip nets to control their catch. Some went out with 6" nets for chum and finished in that opening. There was a lot of drift causing a lot of snags. The people that went with dip nets didn't get what they thought they would, so they are hoping for another opening. Thankful for the 7 1/2" opening coming up. We have rain and wind. We had to throw away 1 king. All chums were good that we caught. One fishcamp said they had to throw away 2 chums due to puss.

**Anvik:** Ken Chase - I haven't heard anything from Shageluk, but Holy cross had a good opening. Anvik has an opening tonight. As of last Tuesday they were doing real good. Water is steady. Maybe half of the people here are done fishing. In Grayling they had the same thing. Hitting pretty good last Tuesday. A few chum. They are real nice. Lots of sheefish reports. They are really big this year.

**Koyukuk:** Benedict Jones - We've got about 10% of our Kings last opening. They were pretty good size; 5-6 year olds. Water is stable and cloudy.

**Huslia:** Zoe - 1 person last week wasn't able to get as many Kings and chums as he wanted. Water levels are going down.

**Galena:** Howard - Water temp was 17 degrees C. Moderate to small drift. 13 boats out on Saturday. A few did ok. Mostly jacks and mostly males. Virtually no dogs (chum salmon) reported.

**Ruby:** Rachael - Quite a bit of drift and high winds. A lot of people were struggling with drift in the net. When I was doing my surveys people were reporting not getting fish. They were fishing the same area I was. Saturday and Sunday we picked up close to 60 Kings. We fulfilled our goal of being 100%. I am not sure what others are doing and I don't understand why its not going as well for others, but it seems to have picked up since last opening. No Summer chum. Water conditions are good. Otherwise people are looking forward to the next opening to get some more subsistence for the winter.

Ed- 6pm Saturday subsistence fishing will open to 6pm Sunday, then again 6pm

Tuesday to 6pm Wed.

**Rapids:** Stan - -- Water continues to stay stable and low.

- King fishing not much improved from last week but pulses not arrived yet.

- Most fishers have not caught a chum yet but heard of 4 caught so far.

- Fish health seems normal with no unusual reports. Some whiter flesh kings and small puss pockets as usual though.

- Most everyone has started fishing now and reports of just above 0%, to 25% of minimum needs met for a year of conservation of king.

- Less concern for King run not being minimally okay now that run numbers are as last year but everywhere there is concern for poor summer chum run closing King fishing somehow or fall chum run being poor as the summer chum run and no dog food this winter. However, that has probably now changed with the run coming through Pilot.

**Fort Yukon:** Andrew: Interviewed 10 people, 5 reported fishing, 4 reported catching fish. Those that are fishing are only catching 1 or 2 a day. A lot of people started this last weekend. Water levels are pretty low. Still having hot dry weather here.

**Eagle:** Ruby: I contacted 5 households. 1 interviewed 3 are not fishing yet. One household fishing caught a few kings. All fish in fine condition. 5 1/2 " net, were fishing for white fish when they caught a King, and then moved to 7 1/2" to fish for Kings. A lot of debris in the water. A lot of people are waiting to put fish wheels in because families are traveling and they don't have enough help.

**Fairbanks:**Virgil - I don't have too much to say, but the Chena is really low and it is smokey. We had up to 92 degrees a couple of days ago and 90's again this weekend.

Dorothy-

**Stephanie/YRITFC** - I got on the call too late last week to give an update. Big thank you to all the communities that hosted the Fish Commission. Really productive meetings. Common theme we heard was the impact of fisheries on our

wild salmon. Other big concern we heard was Fukushima. No detectable levels of radiation in our seafood have been found.

Group went to Numan, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Kaltag, Ruby, Tanana, Reps joining us from Huslia, Nulato, Rampart, Beaver Impact of hatchery fish on wild king salmon discussed. ADFG said ongoing studies.

**Pelly:** Roger Alfred - still waiting for fish, a lot of forest fires, water going down.

**Teslin:** Elizabeth - lots of thundershowers.

**Dawson:** ? - smokey

**Whitehorse:** ? - thunder showers, expecting more forest fires

**Whitehorse:** Jesse/DFO - Oliver Barker river conditions through the Canadian Yukon. Glacier melt happening, the upper river is slowly increasing. Middle river is leveling out. All levels are lower than historic levels.

### **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 rebuilding 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 2019 Canadian fishery management strategy and coincide with the arrival of the first Chinook salmon at the international border.
- Given the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon rebuilding process is still underway, we anticipate that a conservative 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 midpoint of the run is particularly important as it will inform Canadian fishery management measures implemented immediately upstream of the international border during the first half of July.
- Information received through these weekly calls is also particularly helpful in informing fishery management strategies in Canada.

### **ADFG/USFWS inseason managers**

Holly: A lot of people have realized that we've hit a turning point. All along we've been saying that the chinook run has been tracking with the 2018 run. Last year we had a lot of restrictions in place. We didn't exceed the goal last year. Where we are now with a run that is slightly better than last year, maybe we don't need to restrict as much. The run is a little bit late. We are seeing below average escapements. We need to be careful. Even though we have a pretty good river wide run size, we have very hot temperatures and we aren't sure what that is going to do. We are being cautious. You will see us relax restrictions. In a weird turn of events we have had a summer chum run that is later than we've ever seen. But it is very large. We don't know where we are on this run since it was so late. 500,000-1.2 million escapement goal. We don't have a concern about subsistence fishing of summer chum. Drainage wide, the escapement goal is met. We need to be aware that Kings will be caught in commercial. They will be kept for their subsistence. We are accounting for that. The fish (Kings) are spread throughout the river. Currently we are keeping 6" restriction in place.

### **USFWS**

Fred- summer chum very concerning, some folks really depend on those. Last week we had a different view on what the run was. We've gotten good numbers of fish to come through the river. There is a lag. Now that we can confirm the magnitude of that run, we can change our management quite a bit. It is a good

thing. Summer chum still aren't great, but we don't have to close it down and be as strict as we thought we were going to have to be.

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Canadian Management Update  
YRDFA Conference Call – July 2, 2019**

- The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada is currently considering the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee's 2019 Management and Allocation Recommendations to ensure that resulting fishery management measures are administered in a way which supports rebuilding of Yukon River Chinook salmon stocks into the future.
- With the arrival of Chinook salmon at the international border, Canada is in the process of finalizing the 2019 fishery management strategy.
- Given the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon stock rebuilding process is still underway, a conservative approach to managing Canadian salmon fisheries is required.
- A key Canadian fishery management priority will continue to be to ensure that large, Chinook salmon reach their spawning grounds in order to support future returns.
- Canadian fishery management measures will rely on information collected by Pilot Station and Eagle enumeration programs, lower Yukon River Chinook salmon genetic analysis, Pacific Salmon Treaty harvest share provisions and associated harvest in Alaska to inform upcoming fishery opportunities.
- Upstream of the international border, several assessment programs will assess Chinook salmon passage in 2019. These will include Porcupine Sonar, Pelly River Sonar, Big Salmon River Sonar, the Whitehorse Rapids Fishway, as well as an experimental project on the Klondike River near Dawson funded by the Yukon River Panel's Restoration and Enhancement Fund.
- Information from Canadian assessment projects will be shared in the coming weeks as it becomes available.

***Questions and discussion:***

Roger/Eugene? - The health of Chinook Salmon due to water temps?

Holly - We know that warm water has an effect. We are hearing of more puss pockets and less savory fish. If fish are left in set nets the fish isn't as good. Our assessment team has been putting together materials and sharing through YR DFA. We know that this puss is likely a parasite that is not bad for humans to eat. Stan made a comment that what people are seeing is USUAL. And that's important. What he is trying to say is that he is not seeing anything out of the ordinary for the fish he is cutting. The water temperature is important. We are taking a cautious approach because of that.

Roger/Eugene - Are the infected fish small or larger fish?

Basil - in regards to pus pockets in Russian Mission, smaller kings infections in chums come in all sizes. King - biggest infected one was a 4 year old. flesh was really worn out and bruised. pus pocket was huge.

John Lamont-

DFO ? - a couple of weeks ago I asked if the YSSC was going to put together a notice to fishermen. Did that happen?

Pamela - They did answer that last week.

Steve Gotch - One of the specific recommendations from the YSSC was to implement a 6" restriction in 2019. We are waiting for a response for implementation.

FYI - I've been fishing since 1965. We used to fish from June 1-June 30. Chum would come about the middle of June. Summer chum would come late June. When the commercial fishery would close June 30 then we would put up our subsistence in July.

Harvey-What is the % of the run at Pilot? Kings?

Holly - We just published the update yesterday. About 75% of King run. Mid - ¾ point of the run. 161,352 through July 1. We are above average right now.

Remican(?) from Kotlik - thank you Holly for extending our season in Kotlik. We are at the lower end of Yukon on north side. We were able to get all our kings because Chums came in later. We used to catch kings first and chums came in later. This is what it used to be like. Kings are strong now, these are the later runs, upper river kings What is projected number of kings past sonar and what used to be historical. Are we getting close to this?



Holly - projected number at pilot 200,000 king salmon. Historically king runs were 300,000. Runs used to be so large that we didn't have to restrict subsistence. 2017 was a run of 240,000. Ocean conditions are crazy, unprecedented.

John - I'd like a little clarification from Holly. When you were explaining the percentage through Pilot you said 141k was historically the midpoint. What is the timeframe for that history? 10 years or 5 years?

Holly - this includes everything since 1995. Some of those years include high levels of commercial removal below Pilot. It's just an average that means we aren't terrible. We are pretty good.

John - one last question. On the conservative side, how conservative are you?

Holly - are you asking how confident I am in the numbers? This year has been an incredible year for numbers. I have a ton of faith that we are right on the number for King salmon. We do have a range, but I think this is a pretty accurate estimate.

Call ended at: 2:23pm

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](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#).

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.