

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

Here is a summary of the 6th, 2019 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, July 2, 2019. Call lasted 83 minutes. 56 callers participated at 50 minutes

**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: 20**

Alakanuk  
Mountain Village  
Marshall  
Russian Mission  
Holy Cross  
Anvik  
Grayling  
Koyukuk  
Huslia  
Galena  
Ruby  
Rapids  
Fort Yukon  
Eagle  
Nenana  
Fairbanks  
Old Crow  
Dawson  
Mayo  
Whitehorse

### **Community level reports from Alaska:**

**Alakanuk:** Pamela - I contacted 22 households and interviewed 14. 10 households didn't fish. Some reported worse fishing, some better. Water levels have dropped 2 feet. Very warm water. Most households are complete with their summer salmon harvest. Most are waiting for fall chum and coho. Fishermen said their catch was healthy, but small in size. Water is warm.

**Mt. Village:** Nita - one family fished out of 9. 90% subsistence needs met with chums, 100% kings. It is really smoky in Mountain.

**Marshall:** Norma Evan - This week I spoke with 11 families and 2 fish. Same this week for king catches. Most families said it was too hot to fish or berry pick. We had weather in the mid 90s. Water holding steady probably from all the chum coming in. Some parts of our river are becoming shallower and wider. I have fished in the same area for 30 years. Break from fish cutting for berry picking. On my lunch break I walked in the water. It felt cool.

**Russian Mission:** Basil - Interviewed a bunch of people here. 90% of the people are done with summer salmon. Most are hoping to make up with fall chum. Don't know if anyone is picking berries but last I heard they were not quite ready yet. Last opening people went out with 7.5" net and they got a tote full = 24. They were red, turning color. One infected chum. Right under skin, pus. Water is low and dropping and warm, kids are swimming. Very smokey for past four days. Can't see 300 yards away. Everyone is done and waiting for fall chum and berries.

**Holy Cross:** Ken - heard people were pretty close to being done.

**Anvik:** Ken Chase - in Anvik people were still catching 10-12 in the evening. They were turning a little red.

**Grayling:** Ken Chase - fished on Sunday in opening in Grayling area. They were still catching good there. Caught quite a few fish. 20 or so I caught were still bright. Females. Some small males were starting to turn color.

**Koyukuk:** Benedict Jones - We've got about 80% done for king salmon fishing now. 2nd pulse really good now. Had a set net at mouth of Koyukuk river in for 2 hours and got 30 fish. Water level the same for the last few days. very smokey.

**Huslia:** Zoe - 2 people said that last year they did not get enough kings. One person said that fishing for chum and king was better this week than last week. Waiting for the water level to go down. Less drift.

**Galena:** Howard - 7.5" mesh, 13 boats working one area on Sunday. Few chums caught. Looking nice. End of second run that we were fishing on.

**Ruby:** Rachael - Not in Ruby right now but did do survey last couple of days. Two days ago water was pretty low and warm. Everyone that was fishing was catching an adequate number of kings. Some people are at 85-100% of their goals. Fish have been high quality. Very large kings. Mainly all male. Not so many females. Did not run into any issues with parasites or pus pockets. A few people that I couldn't get a hold of because they were at fish camp or processing fish.

**Rapids:** Stan

- Water dropped some more and at lowest all season and lowest many ever recall for King season. Water has been about 10 feet lower however before in September years back.

- Number of people, wheel and net fishers, report some trouble catching king in the lower water but some have found new eddies not any good in higher water.

- Only a handful of chum caught this week again. Not that unusual in years longer past but for recent past it's unusual.

- Again King health is normal and some non-project Ichthyophonus sampling done at my camp and none found yet.

- Many more family households showing up at camps so people are happy run is good enough to allow 2-48 hr openings a week.

- Expect some to reach towards half done this coming week but some are also just starting due to later start or poorer fishing spots.

**Fort Yukon:** Andrew: contacted 15 households, conducted 12 interviews. 7 households fishing, some saying worse than last week. Seems like larger family groups are working together, running multiple gear. Low numbers of fish. Some people are not fishing yet. It was supposed to closed yesterday at 10pm but closure was cancelled. Lots of smoke here. People are content and heading out fishing.

Fish seemed like they were just starting to get thicker as we were moving towards the closure that was cancelled.

**Eagle:** Ruby: Contacted 4 households this week. 2 household interviewed, 2 did not fish. One reported that fishing is same as last week. Other reported this week as better. Both caught a few kings. All using 5.5” nets, 6” and 7.5” set nets. Very very hot in Eagle, 90 degrees and very smokey. Mostly small males caught. 4lb to 30 lb king. Water level is very low in Eagle for this time of year. Better fishing because low debris but water is so warm.

**Nenana:** Victor Lord - some fishing for king salmon. Usually pretty good around 7/9. Smokey, all good. People are still fishing so effort is on. very smokey.

**Fairbanks:** Virgil - hot and smokey and the river is low.

#### **Community level reports Canada:**

**Old Crow:** Darius- Robert Bruce Sr. 128 chinook through sonar. Caught 40 fish, 75% male. Urging our community to use 50’ net. Going to get an update on water temperature soon. Most have pulled their nets. We are going to be doing some in stream incubation. Salmon plan on website. Salmon conference in Fort Yukon. Salmon is good quality up here.

**Dawson:** Natasha - Al - water is low. no temp yet. First fish showed up. First Nation tourist fish wheel. They caught one salmon. Don’t know if they kept it or let it go.

**Mayo:** Josey- we have low water on Stewart and Mayo river. Everyone is waiting for the fish. anytime soon I think

**Whitehorse:** Jesse- water levels are low. Lots of haze from forest fires. Waiting for fish to arrive?

#### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada Canadian Management Update YRDFA Conference Call – July 9, 2019**

- With the arrival of Chinook salmon at the international border, Canada is in the process of finalizing the 2019 fishery management strategy and early season management measures.

- 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.
- The Porcupine Sonar located near the community of Old Crow has been operational since June 27 and has counted 128 Chinook salmon as of July 7.
- Additional 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 YRDFa. 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.

John; 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 -  $\frac{3}{4}$  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.