

Yukon River Fisheries: Who Does What?

This document was created to direct Yukon River fishers and stakeholders towards the agencies who can best address their most common questions and requests.

Who are the fish managers and how do I contact them? The primary Yukon River management agencies are the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). ADF&G and the Service work in cooperation when developing management strategies, collecting assessment data, and making daily fisheries management decisions. There are both State and Federal fishing regulations on the Yukon River. Most Federal regulations are very similar to the State regulations, so to avoid confusion, management actions are usually put out jointly by ADF&G and USFWS. The managers do not make or change regulations, they follow the regulations.



Alaska Department of Fish and Game: If you have questions about inseason State management pertaining to subsistence, personal use, or commercial fishing, please contact the following managers: Summer Season Area Manager (Chinook and Summer chum), Deena Jallen or Summer Season Assistant Manager, Sam Decker, or Fall Season Manager (fall chum and coho), Christy Gleason or Fall Season Assistant Manager, Shane Ransbury at the ADF&G Fairbanks office: (907) 459-7274.

For questions about sport fishing, contact the following managers: Yukon River Sport Fish Manager, Lisa Stuby (907) 459-7202, or Tanana River Sport Fish Manager, Andrew Gryska (907) 459-7339.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: If you have any questions about the subsistence management of Federal waters within the Yukon River drainage, please contact the USFWS Federal Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager, Holly Carroll; holly_carroll@fws.gov, (907) 351-3029.

During the fishing season, how do I stay informed on all the management actions taking place? Subscribe to ADF&G Advisory Announcements (previously called news releases) at the following link: www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov. Click on the "search and subscribe" button, then select Yukon for Management Area and press the subscribe button.

Read announcements on Facebook by searching YukonRiverfishingADFG or by clicking on the following link: www.facebook.com/YukonRiverfishingADFG/

To see if your area is open or closed to fishing, call the Yukon drainage toll free fishing schedule, and counts hotline: (866) 479-7387

Check weekly Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Fishing Reports for status summaries of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska – www.doi.gov/subsistence/news

How do I change STATE Yukon River fisheries regulations? The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) is the state’s regulatory authority that passes regulations to conserve and develop Alaska’s fishery resources. Changing State fishing regulations is a public process, and the BOF is responsible for considering and adopting regulations to allocate resources between user groups, fishing seasons, quotas and bag limits, size restrictions, means and methods (such as fishing gear), habitat protection, stock enhancement; and to develop commercial, subsistence, sport, and personal use fisheries. Proposed changes to regulations (proposals) are considered for the Yukon drainage once every three years and proposals are usually accepted December through April before the upcoming cycle. **Changes to Yukon River fishing regulations will be considered by the BOF during the 2022-2023 cycle and proposals are due April 11, 2022.**

To learn more about the Alaska Board of Fisheries or to submit proposals for changes to the State fishing regulations go to: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main Anyone from the public can submit proposals to change State fishing regulations, but many people usually begin with their State Advisory Committee (AC). There are 13 State Advisory Committees representing Interior Alaska Yukon River fishermen. For questions about these ACs, call the State Interior Region Coordinator, Kyle Campbell, at (907) 459-7263 or kyle.campbell@alaska.gov. There are three State Advisory Committees representing Lower Yukon River fishermen. For questions about these ACs, call the State Western Region Coordinator, Savannah Hollingworth, at (907) 543-2931 or savannah.hollingworth@alaska.gov.

For Information about State Advisory Committees go the following webpage: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=process.advisory

How do I change Federal Yukon River fisheries regulations?



Changing Federal fishing regulations is also a public process, and the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) is the decision-making body that oversees the Federal Subsistence Management Program. For Information about the FSB, Federal Regional Advisory Councils, or to submit proposals for changes to federal regulations go to: www.doi.gov/subsistence



Anyone from the public can submit proposals to change Federal fishing regulations, but many people usually begin with their Federal Regional Advisory Council (RAC). There are three Federal RAC representing Yukon River fishermen. These are: Eastern Interior RAC, the Western Interior RAC, and the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC. For questions about these RACs, call Council Coordinator Division Supervisor, Katya Wessels, at (907) 786-3885 or

katerina_wessels@fws.gov



Who decides how many salmon for escapement and harvest go to

Canada? U.S./Canada Treaty Negotiations: A portion of the annual Yukon River Chinook and fall Chum salmon runs spawn within the Canadian waters of the Yukon River. These are referred to as Yukon River Canadian-origin

salmon stocks. Management of Yukon River Chinook and Fall Chum salmon has long been a matter of common interest and concern to Alaskan and Canadian fishermen. Beginning in 1985, the U.S. and Canada agreed to cooperate on the management, research, and enhancement of Pacific salmon and signed the Pacific Salmon Treaty. After many years of negotiation between Yukon River fishery stakeholders from both countries, the Yukon River Salmon Agreement under the Pacific Salmon Treaty was signed in 2002. It represented an international commitment to the restoration, conservation, and management of Canadian-origin salmon upon which Yukon River communities depend. The Yukon River Panel and its technical advisory group the Joint Technical Committee are the bodies formed by the Yukon River Salmon Agreement. The Yukon River Panel is a twelve-person body with six Panel members each from the U.S. and Canada, representing the interests of Yukon River fishers, First Nations, Tribal Councils, fisheries managers, and others who depend upon salmon for subsistence, cultural, commercial, or recreational purposes. This body recommends escapement goals to be implemented by each country for Yukon River Canadian-origin Chinook and Fall chum salmon and provides annual management recommendations to both countries. To learn more about the Yukon River Panel and view its membership go to: www.yukonriverpanel.com/

For questions about the Yukon River Panel contact the U.S. Co-Chair, John Linderman, at (907) 267-2115 or john.linderman@alaska.gov

Among other provisions, the Yukon River Salmon Agreement established a \$1.2 million annual Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Fund to support projects and associated research and management activities directed towards the restoration, conservation, and enhancement of Canadian-origin salmon stocks in the Yukon River. An annual R&E Fund Call for Proposals is initiated in early summer with proposals due by the beginning of October each year. The Panel makes final approval decisions on R&E Fund programs during annual pre-season meetings in April. To learn more about the R&E Fund go to: www.yukonriverpanel.com/restoration-enhancement-fund/

Additional funds go towards U.S. research and management efforts. This includes the Research and Management (R&M) Fund which annually allocates approximately \$260,000 towards advancing the scientific and public understanding of the biology and management of Yukon River Chinook, Chum, and Coho salmon. For questions about the R&M Fund contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service R&M administrator, Matt Keyse, at (907) 456-0418 or Mathew_keyse@fws.gov

Who is advocating for fishermen?

This list may be incomplete, but here are a few other agencies and stakeholder groups that are working hard to advocate for Yukon River fish and fishers.



Bureau of Indian Affairs: The Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) mission is to enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives. Since its inception in 1824, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been both a witness to and a principal player in the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages. The entire state of Alaska falls under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Region, with the small exception of the Annette Island Reserve, which falls under the Northwest Region. More than 180,000 Tribal members make up the 229 Federally Recognized Tribes under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Regional. Nearly a quarter of these Tribes, approximately 55 in total, fall within the Yukon River drainage. For more information about the BIA Alaska Region go to: www.bia.gov/regional-offices/alaska

An important service that the BIA provides is maintaining the Tribal Leaders Directory. To ensure timely and proper Government to Government Consultation, please check and update your Tribes contact information, including email, in the Directory.

To view the Tribal Leaders Directory, go to the following webpage: <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/tribal-leaders-directory/>

To update your Tribal information please contact Sarah Walker, BIA Alaska Region, at sarah.walker@bia.gov or call (907) 271-4506.



Native unity. TCC works toward meeting the health and social service needs of Tribal members and beneficiaries throughout the region.



Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission: The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is organized as Dena' Nena' Henash or "Our Land Speaks"; an Alaska Native non-profit corporation, charged with advancing Tribal self-determination and enhancing regional Native unity. TCC works toward meeting the health and social service needs of Tribal members and beneficiaries throughout the region. One of the many services that TCC provides is the management of natural resources via their Hunting and Fishing Task Force and the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC). For information about the TCC and the YRITFC go to: www.tanachiefs.org/tag/yukon-river-inter-tribal-fish-commission/



Association of Village Council Presidents: The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) provides community development, education, social services, culturally relevant programs and advocacy for the people and 56 tribes of Western Alaska; to promote self-determination, protection and enhancement of cultural and traditional values, as well as natural resources management and protection. For more information about the AVCP go to: www.avcp.org/



Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association: The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) was created to conserve Yukon River salmon runs by giving a voice to the people who have managed the resource for thousands of years. YRDFA has become an essential part of the communications between fishers and fishery managers in this region. YRDFA represents village fishers at important state, federal and international decision-making tables, works to document and utilize Traditional Ecological Knowledge in fisheries management and strengthens the long-term economic viability and sustainability of Yukon River communities through preserving subsistence fisheries and enhancing commercial fisheries. YRDFA also serves as a leading research organization aimed at conserving Yukon River wild salmon throughout their life cycles. To learn more about YRDFA go to: www.yukonsalmon.org



Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association: The Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association's (YDFDA) mission is to create a self-sustaining, independent fishing company that will create income and employment opportunities for Yukon Delta residents. YDFDA has established several subsidiaries. Yukon Marine Manufacturing, located in Emmonak, builds boats that are sold to residents for fishing operations. Through Kwik'pak Fisheries, LLC, YDFDA is a leader in the Yukon River salmon fishery. It is the only company participating in the fishery throughout the season and throughout all of the lower Yukon River fishing areas, serving both member and non-member communities alike. For information about YDFDA go to: www.ydfda.org



Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada: The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is a Canadian federal institution, responsible for safeguarding our waters and managing Canada's fisheries and oceans resources. DFO helps to ensure healthy and sustainable aquatic ecosystems through habitat protection and sound science. For information about the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada please go to: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/yukon/index-eng.html



Yukon Salmon Subcommittee: The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) is a Canadian public advisory body whose mandate is to make recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and to Yukon First Nations on all matters related to Yukon River salmon, their habitats and management, including legislation, research, policies, and programs.

The YSSC consists of 10 members: two from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (one nominated by Government, and one nominated by the Council of Yukon First Nations), two nominated by the Minister and two nominated by the affected Yukon First Nations for each of the Yukon, Alsek and Porcupine River drainage basins for matters concerning their respective drainage basins. The Minister appoints the members.

In accordance with the Agreement, DFO provides technical and administrative support to the YSSC as required to determine appropriate plans for Yukon River salmon management. To learn more about the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee and view its membership go to:

www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/yukon/yssc-scsy/index-eng.html



**Council of Yukon
First Nations**

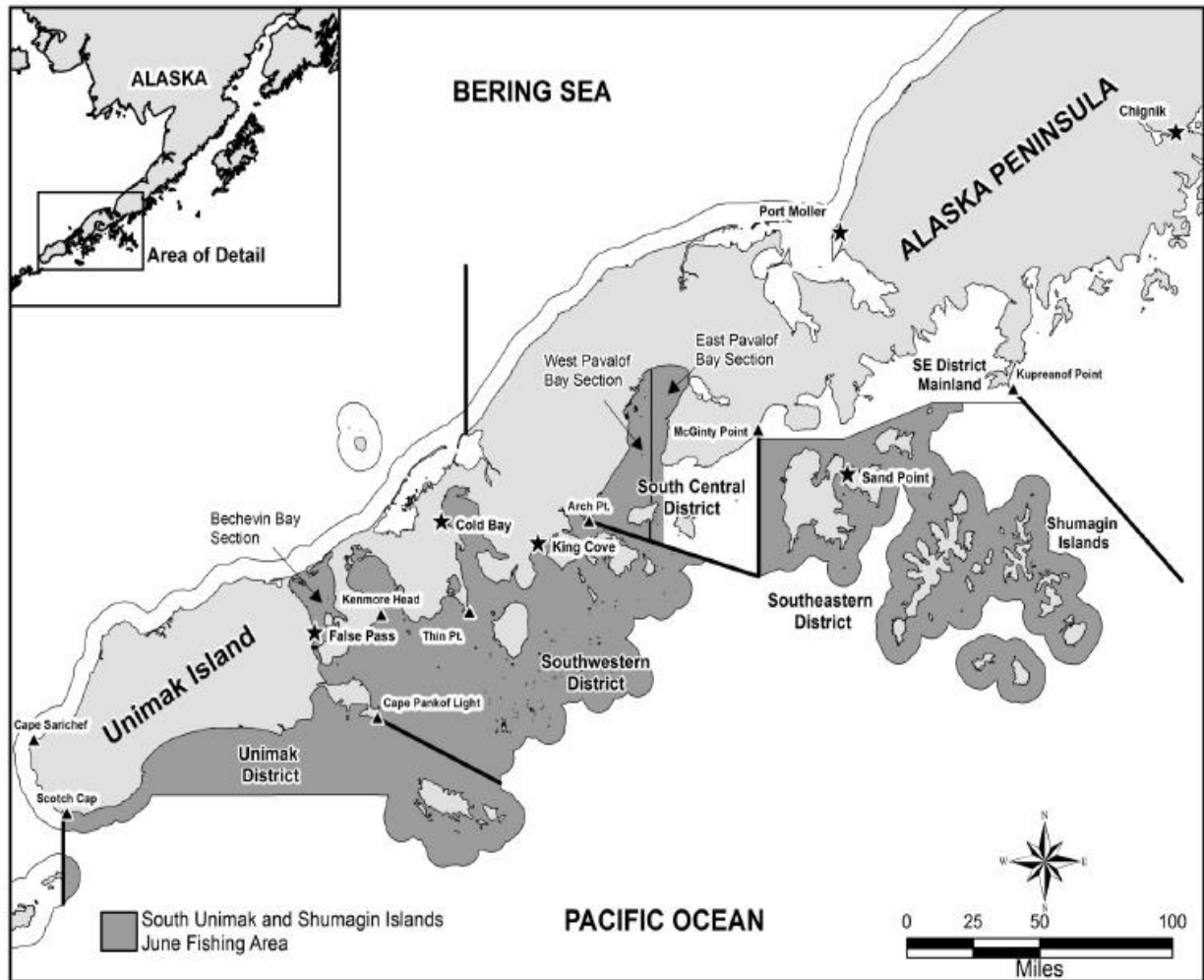
Council of Yukon First Nations: The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) is a Canadian non-profit society working for the First Nations of the Yukon. The Council of Yukon First Nations mandate is to serve as a political advocacy organization for Yukon First Nations holding traditional territories, to protect their rights, titles and interests. Several First Nations members or their representatives serve on the Yukon River Panel, Joint Technical Committee, and the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee. Information about the Council of Yukon First Nations can be found at: cyfn.ca/

General Fisheries topics that come up frequently:

What is Area M? (see map below) The Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Management Area, commonly referred to as Area M, includes those waters on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula west of the Chignik Management Area; the waters on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula west of Bristol Bay; and waters of the Aleutian Islands west of Unimak Island and east of the Atka-Amlia Management Area. Area M is managed by ADF&G and consists of multiple fishing districts with different managers. Commercial fishers are generally targeting Sockeye Salmon in this fishery, but most of the harvest is Pink Salmon. Chum Salmon make up a significant, but smaller portion of the harvest. A very small percentage of the harvest consists of Coho and Chinook Salmon. Pacific cod, other groundfish, crab, herring, and halibut also contribute to the commercial fisheries of Area M.

Are Area M fishers taking our fish? Area M fishermen harvest both local and non-local stocks. A substantial effort was undertaken to genetically sample Area M Sockeye and Chum salmon. This was called the WASSIP study. The WASSIP study could not distinguish between Chum Salmon stocks headed for the Yukon and those headed to Bristol Bay, Kuskokwim, and Norton sound, except for fall Chum Salmon headed to Canada. Chum Salmon headed to these areas, except for the fall Chum Salmon headed to Canada, were classified as Coastal Western Alaska (CWAK) stocks. It was found that some fish harvested in the Area M fishery were CWAK stocks, but the number of fish that were headed to the Yukon, specifically, is unknown. However, the harvest of fall Chum Salmon headed to Canada in the Area M fishery was very small (1-2%) on average. ADF&G is working on additional studies to try and tease out which stocks are being harvested in the Area M fishery.

Appendix B2.–Map of South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries with areas open to fishing defined.



Were there previous management strategies to reduce the incidental harvest of CWAK and Yukon Fall chum salmon in Area M? Yes, the regulation history can be found in Appendix B1 on pages 54-61 of the South Alaska Peninsula annual management report:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidPDFs/RIR.4K.2021.12.pdf>

For questions about Area M, call the Deputy Director of ADF&G Commercial Fisheries, Forrest Bowers, at (907) 465-6139 or forrest.bowers@alaska.gov

To learn more about the Area M fisheries go to:

www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareaakpeninsula.main

To download the map go to:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/pdfs/commercial/akpeninsula_stat_map.pdf

What's the difference between incidental harvest and bycatch? Some fishers may target one species for harvest, but also “incidentally” harvest other species. These incidentally harvested species are not bycatch. Incidentally harvested species that are sold or kept for use are just part of the harvest, they are not considered bycatch. Bycatch is defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as fish that are harvested in a fishery, but which are not sold or kept for personal use. This includes the portion of the catch that is discarded back into the sea, and unobserved mortality due to a direct encounter with fishing gear that does not result in the capture of that species by a fisherman. Discards include species that must be returned to the sea by law (regulatory discards), and fish that are discarded at the discretion of the fisherman because they are not economically worthwhile to keep (economic discards). Although commercial fishermen try to catch only fish that can be sold or kept, fishing gear is not 100% selective, and some undesirable fish and other organisms are caught incidentally in the course of fishing operations. These non-target organisms are considered bycatch.



For Bering Sea bycatch information: Neither the ADF&G, nor the USFWS manage the commercial fisheries occurring in the Bering Sea. The Bering Sea fisheries are managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries division, with guidance from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC). The NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office works with the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and the NPFMC to manage Alaska’s sustainable fisheries. Using the best available science, NOAA Fisheries works through the NPFMC process to develop measures for the best management of Alaska’s fisheries, considering a range of factors such as the health of the fish stocks and economic impact of fishery practices. Once fishing levels and regulations are adopted and approved, NOAA Fisheries works to implement the NPFMC decisions. The goal is to allow fishermen to harvest the optimum number of fish while leaving enough in the ocean to reproduce and provide future fishing opportunities in perpetuity. For more information about NOAA Fisheries go to: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/alaska#fisheries To learn more about the North Pacific Fish Management Council go to: www.npfmc.org

Most Yukon River fishermen are particularly interested in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) offshore trawl fisheries. Salmon are caught incidentally in this fishery, especially in the pollock pelagic trawl fishery. Salmon are considered a prohibited species catch (PSC) in groundfish fisheries and cannot be retained for sale and are considered by-catch. Nearly all salmon taken as bycatch are Chinook and Chum salmon. For the latest Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch Update go to: www.npfmc.org/salmon-bycatch-overview/

The NPFMC has developed materials for people who want to know more about Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska fisheries management issues. These handouts can be found at: www.npfmc.org/overview/

For more information on getting involved in the NPFMC speak with Diana Evans, Deputy Director: 907-271-2815