

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2017 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 35  
Summer Update # 7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery  
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

As of July 16, the cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project near Pilot Station was approximately 259,000, which is above the upper end of the drainage-wide preseason outlook of 195,000 fish and above the early year average run timing of 210,000 for this date. A run size of this magnitude has not been observed since 2005. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be about 99% complete at the Pilot Station sonar as of July 16. Preliminary run timing dates suggest the 2017 Chinook salmon run was approximately three days earlier than historical average run timing.

As of July 16, the cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the sonar project near Eagle was approximately 20,000, which is above the historical average of approximately 11,000 fish for this date. The first pulse of Chinook salmon has been counted and the second pulse is currently being assessed. The third and fourth pulses of Chinook should reach the sonar by July 19 and July 23, respectively.

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), as of July 16, the Canadian proportion of the run is estimated to be above the upper end of the preseason outlook of 97,000 fish. A Chinook salmon run size of this magnitude should meet escapement goals, provide an increased subsistence harvest over 2016, and meet the harvest sharing objectives outlined in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

The Chinook salmon escapement goal at the East Fork Andreafsky River has been met. Chinook salmon passage estimates at the Henshaw and Gisasa Creek weirs are slightly below average for this date. Unfortunately, high water conditions have hindered operations at the escapement monitoring projects on the Salcha and Chena rivers. Sonar counts have continued on the Chena and Salcha rivers during high water conditions but apportioned counts of Chinook and summer chum salmon will not be available until post-season data analysis is concluded.

As of July 16, the cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the sonar project near Pilot Station is approximately 3,085,000, which is above the preseason outlook of 2.5 million fish and well above the historical cumulative median of 1,800,000 fish for this date. Starting July 18, the

summer chum salmon run will be considered complete at the sonar project and chum salmon estimates after that date will be managed as fall chum salmon.

The escapement goal of at least 40,000 summer chum passage at the East Fork Andreafsky River weir was achieved on July 9. The escapement goal of 350,000–700,000 summer chum passage at the Anvik River sonar was achieved on July 14. Summer chum salmon passage estimates at the Gisasa River and Henshaw Creek weirs are well above averages for this date

The Yukon River Inseason Salmon Management Teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Alaska time. Dial (800) 315-6338, and enter participant code: YUKON #.

## **Assessment Projects**

### Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1. The project is operating well and has not experienced any issues from debris or equipment malfunction during the entire summer season. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 258,652 fish, which is above the historical average of 210,269 fish for years with early run timing. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 3,084,839 fish, which is well above the historical median of 1,853,549 fish for this date.

### East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 2,517 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 3,138 Chinook salmon for this date. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 49,528 fish, which is above the historical median of 48,454 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goals (SEG) are 2,100-4,900 Chinook salmon and greater than 40,000 summer chum past the weir project. Both of these escapement goals have been met.

### Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 365,723 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 372,522 for this date. The biological escapement goal (BEG) for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project. Summer chum salmon passage exceeded the lower end of the escapement goal on July 14.

### Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations on June 18. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 825 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,297 for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 64,191 fish, which is above the historical median of 31,451 summer chum salmon for this date.

### Henshaw Creek Weir / USFWS

The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 26. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 502 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 602 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 16, is estimated to be 257,778 fish, which is well above the historical median of 48,508 summer chum salmon for this date.

### Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 26. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 216 fish and 93 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. These counts are considered incomplete due to 11 days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower.

#### Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 27. As of July 16, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 1,305 fish and 518 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. These counts are considered incomplete due to four days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower.

#### Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar project began operations on July 1. As of July 16, 19,797 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar, which is above the historical average of 11,082 for this date. The Canadian Interim management escapement goal (IMEG) for Chinook salmon is 42,500–55,000.

### **Age Composition**

The age composition of 355 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 25 was 7% age-4, 55% age-5, 35% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. About 52% of the fish sampled were female. Age-5 fish and females were above average, age-6 fish were average, and age-4 fish were below average. The age composition of 463 Chinook salmon sampled from the LYTF set gillnets through June 22 was 4% age-4, 47% age-5, 48% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. About 44% of the fish sampled were female. The age composition of 489 summer chum salmon sampled from the LYTF drift gillnets through June 22 was 34% age-4, 63% age-5, and 3% age-6 fish. About 58% of the fish sampled were female. Age-5 fish were above average, age-4 fish were below average, and percent females were average.

### **Stock Identification**

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first strata of Chinook salmon, which included early fish and the first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar (May 31 to June 13), estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second strata, which included most of the second pulse of Chinook salmon (June 14-18), estimated 56% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the third strata (third pulse) of Chinook salmon (June 19-25) estimated 40% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin.

Three strata of chum salmon genetic samples have been processed to date in 2017. The strata from May 31–June 19 consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, 73% lower stocks, 23% were bound for the middle Yukon River and about 4% were bound for the Tanana River. The strata from June 20–June 26 also consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, 91% lower stocks, 5% were bound for the middle Yukon River and about 4% were bound for the Tanana River. The strata from June 27–July 9 consisted of 96% summer chum salmon, 69% lower stocks, 22% middle Yukon River stocks, and 5% Tanana River stocks there was also a small showing of fall stocks at 4%.

### **Summer Season Management Strategy**

Assessment of the 2017 Chinook salmon run is indicating the Canadian-origin run size is above the upper end of the preseason forecast and likely to achieve escapement goals and harvest sharing goals in both U.S. and Canada.

## Fall Season Management Strategy

The 2017 fall chum salmon preseason run projection is for a run size greater than 1.1 million fish. This level of abundance is sufficient to meet escapement and subsistence needs, and provide a surplus for commercial and personal use purposes. A mixture of both summer chum and fall chum salmon are currently entering the Yukon River.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2013. Coho salmon will begin entering the Yukon River any day but the majority of the run arrives in August.

## Fall Assessment Projects

### Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing / ADF&G, YDFDA

The project began July 16 at Emmonak when the gear was switched from 5.5-inch mesh for summer chum salmon to 6-inch mesh targeting fall chum and coho salmon.

### Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The fall season project will begin July 18 at Mountain Village.

### Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station will transition to fall season counts on July 19.

## Current Management

**Coastal District** (from the Naskonat Peninsula to 1 mile south of Black River, including the communities of Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

**District 1** (including the Black River and the communities of Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, and Kotlik):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, except for closures 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. **Subsistence salmon fishing closed at 3 a.m. Monday, July 17, and will reopen at 3 p.m. Tuesday, July 18 after the commercial period.**

**District 2** (including the communities of Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, Saint Marys, Pilot Station, and Marshall):

Subsistence fishing with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week. **Subsistence fishing will be closed from 4 p.m. Tuesday, July 18 to 2 a.m. Wednesday July 19.**

**Effective 2 a.m. Wednesday, July 19, subsistence fishing in District 2 will be open during the fall season for 7 days per week, 24 hours a day with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, except for closures 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period.**

**District 3** (including the communities of Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence fishing is currently open on the regulatory schedule of two 36-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **8 p.m. Sunday, July 16 to 8 a.m. Tuesday, July 18**
- **8 p.m. Wednesday, July 19 to 8 a.m. Friday, July 21**

**Effective 8 a.m. Friday, July 21, subsistence fishing in District 3 will be open for the fall season 7 days per week, 24 hours a day with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.**

#### **Innoko River:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

**Subdistrict 4-A** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, including the Anvik River, which includes the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**
- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**

**Drift gillnet fishing is no longer allowed in Subdistrict 4-A.**

#### **Koyukuk River:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

**Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C** (from Cone Point upstream along the north bank of the river to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes the communities of Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**
- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**

**Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C** (from Illinois Creek upstream to regulatory markers two miles downstream of Waldron Creek which includes the communities of Tanana and Rampart):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Thursdays**
- **6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Sundays**

**Subdistrict 5-D** (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the portion of Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River, between the western tip of Garnet Island and the Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit area are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars.

Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks.

**Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Subsistence salmon fishermen fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by 4:30 PM Thursday each week by contacting the department at (907) 459-7388. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

**Kantishna River:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

**Old Minto Area:**

Subsistence fishing is on the regulatory subsistence fishing schedule of 5 days per week from 6 p.m. Fridays until 6 p.m. Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

**Upper Tanana Area** (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

**Subdistricts 6-C** (Personal use fishery from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal use fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the Tanana River drainage.

**Commercial Fishing**

The Lower Yukon summer chum-directed commercial fishery began on June 10 in District 1 and June 21 in District 2. Fishermen in both districts were required to use selective gear types (beach seines and dip nets) and release all incidentally caught Chinook salmon back to the water alive. Chinook salmon caught and released were required to be recorded on a fish ticket. In District 1, commercial fishing with selective gear closed on June 22, and reopened on June 23 for gillnets.

In District 2, commercial fishing with gillnets opened on July 11.

The preliminary commercial harvest in District 1 through July 16 is approximately 342,395 summer chum salmon with a reported 3,876 Chinook caught and released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 5,498 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use from gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvest in District 2 through July 16 is approximately 47,770 summer chum salmon with a reported 742 Chinook salmon released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 76 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence from gillnets.

Commercial fishing in Subdistrict 4-A began on June 25 with live-release fish wheels. As of July 16, approximately 118,602 summer chum salmon have been harvested. To date, only 10 Chinook salmon have been reported on fish tickets as caught and released.

Commercial fishing in District 6 opened on July 14. Preliminary harvest information from the commercial period is not yet available.

Commercial openings will be announced based on buyer capacity. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening. The Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan goes into effect in District 1 beginning July 16. Upriver management districts and subdistricts will switch to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration reaches those areas.

**District 1, including the Set Net Only Area Commercial:**

District 1 is under fall season management. The sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon is allowed during Fall season. Commercial fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will open for one 12-hour period:

- **3 p.m. Monday, July 17 until 3 a.m. Tuesday, July 18**

**District 2 Commercial:**

Commercial fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will open for one additional 6-hour period for summer chum salmon:

- **6 p.m. to midnight Tuesday, July 18**

In District 2, the sale of Chinook salmon is prohibited until Fall season begins on July 19. Any Chinook salmon caught in gillnets during the final summer chum salmon commercial gillnet opening may be kept for subsistence use and must be recorded on a fish ticket as “kept but not sold”. Fishermen in District 2 should stand by for further announcements about fall commercial openings and the sale of incidentally-caught Chinook salmon.

**Subdistrict 4-A Commercial** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point including the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Commercial fishing is open for 24-hours a day, seven days a week. A commercial fishing period will consist of 24 hours from midnight to 11:59 p.m. each day. Commercial fishermen should confirm their market before they fish.

Fishermen must use commercial fish wheels that are manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in commercial fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. Chinook salmon caught and released must be recorded on a fish ticket as “kept but not sold”.

**Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C** (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Commercial fishing will be open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week on the following schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays, until noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays, until noon Wednesdays**

Commercial fishermen should coordinate with the buyer on a daily basis regarding scheduling deliveries. Commercial fish wheels in District 6 are not required to be manned. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. Chinook salmon may not be sold. All Chinook salmon caught but not sold must also be recorded on the fish ticket. Other fish species caught but not sold must also be recorded on the fish ticket. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Fishing schedules, test fish catches and sonar counts are available 24 hours a day at (866) 479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387.

If you have any questions, please call ADF&G in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320, the ADF&G office in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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