

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



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Date Issued: 7/24/2017

**2017 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 10
Fall Update # 1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Fall Season Assessment

The 2017 fall chum salmon preseason projection is for a run size greater than 1.1 million fish. This level of abundance should be sufficient to provide for escapement, an average subsistence harvest, and a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes. The estimated fall chum salmon run size (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) through July 23 is estimated to be 299,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 72,000 fish for that date. The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 17 and is expected to be near Kaltag on July 28, Galena around July 31, and Tanana/Huslia around August 5, Rampart around August 7 and the Canadian border around August 21.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average to above average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2013. A few coho salmon have been entering the Yukon River but the majority of the run begins building in early August.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 24 was 178.80 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 166.88 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The fall season project began July 18 at Mountain Village. The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 24 was 845.58 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 296.18 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season counts on July 19. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through July 23 was 217,000, which is above the median passage of approximately 74,000 fish for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

Fall chum salmon age analysis from the LYTF has not been completed at this time. Based on last year's run, the age-5 component is expected to be above average. Females currently represent 53% of the fish sampled (n=130), which is near the average of 51% for this date.

Fall Season Management Strategies

As noted above, the 2017 fall chum salmon preseason 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. The Coastal District, and Districts 1, 2, and 3, and the Innoko River subsistence fishing are under fall season management. In Subdistrict 4A, subsistence fishing will switch to a 5-day per week schedule on July 25, and the Koyukuk River as well as the lower river districts are open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels. The remaining upriver districts and subdistricts will transition to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration enters those areas.

Summer Assessment

As of July 23, approximately 44,000 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project near Eagle, which is above the historical average of approximately 29,000 fish. Chinook salmon passage also surpassed the lower end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal at the Eagle sonar. Through July 19, approximately 45%, or 13,000 fish, of the Chinook salmon passage at the Eagle sonar were female. On average, about 41% of the passage at the Eagle sonar consists of female Chinook salmon. The first three pulses of Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar and the fourth pulse should be passing the sonar now. The average historical midpoint at the sonar for Chinook salmon is July 20 for early run fish and July 24 for normal run fish. The 2017 Chinook salmon run is expected to surpass the upper end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal into Canada with sufficient surplus for the Canadian harvest share of the Total Allowable Catch.

The Chinook salmon escapement goal at the East Fork Andreafsky River has been met. Chinook salmon passage estimates at the Henshaw Creek and Gisasa River weirs are below average for this date. Unfortunately, high water conditions have hindered tower counts on the Salcha and Chena rivers; however, initial tower counts and sonar estimates indicate that escapement goals will likely be met. Post-season analysis is needed to confirm final passage estimates at these

projects. Aerial surveys were conducted for Chinook and summer chum salmon last week. The aerial Chinook salmon Sustainable Escapement Goals (SEG) were met for the West Fork Andreafsky River, the Anvik River, and the Nulato River.

The escapement goal of at least 40,000 summer chum salmon at the East Fork Andreafsky River weir was achieved on July 9. The escapement goal of 350,000–700,000 summer chum salmon 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.

Summer Assessment Projects

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1. As of July 23, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 260,655 fish, which is above the historical average of 219,562 fish for years with early run timing. Preliminary run timing dates suggest the 2017 Chinook salmon run was approximately three days earlier than historical average run timing. As of July 18 the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage was 3,094,350 fish, which is well above the historical median of 1,875,491 summer chum salmon for this date. Chum salmon estimates after July 18 are assumed to be predominantly fall chum salmon.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14. As of July 23, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 2,902 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 3,765 Chinook salmon for this date. As of July 23, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 53,462 fish, which is slightly below the historical median of 54,784 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 23, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 412,535 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 433,008 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 23, is estimated to be 1,005 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,886 for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 23, is estimated to be 70,074 fish, which is above the historical median of 39,026 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 23, is estimated to be 613 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,009 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 23, is estimated to be 335,850 fish, which is well above the historical median of 107,969 summer chum salmon for this date.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 26. As of July 23, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 1,516 fish and 3,961 summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. These counts are considered incomplete due to 14 days of missed counts at the project. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 fish past the tower.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 27. As of July 23, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 2,741 fish and 6,480 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 fish past the tower.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar project began operations on July 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since the project began in 2005. As of July 23, approximately 43,522 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project, which is above the historical cumulative average of 28,914 for this date. The lower end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal for Chinook salmon of 42,500-55,000 was exceeded July 23.

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 all of the second pulse of Chinook salmon (June 14-20), estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the third strata (third pulse) of Chinook salmon (June 21-25) estimated 43% of the sampled fish were of Canadian-origin.

Four strata of chum salmon genetic samples have been processed 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%. The strata from July 10–18 consisted of 98% summer chum salmon, 71% lower stocks, 18% middle Yukon River stocks, and 10% Tanana River stocks and only 1% fall stocks.

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 area 1 mile south of Black River north to Point Romanof and waters up to 3 miles offshore, including the communities of Nunam-Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, and Kotlik):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. **For the commercial period in District 1 on Monday, July 24, subsistence salmon fishing times have been adjusted; fishing closed at 11:00 a.m. Monday, July 24, and will reopen at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, July 25.**

District 2:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after commercial fishing periods.

District 3:

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

Innoko River:

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

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

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

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

Effective 6 p.m. on Tuesday, July 25, subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 4A will be open on a 5-day per week schedule of 6 p.m. Tuesdays until 6 p.m. Sundays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size set gillnets and fish wheels. Drift gillnet fishing is currently closed in Subdistrict 4A. **Effective 12:01 a.m. Thursday, August 3, drift gillnet fishing will be open in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A** (Stink Creek to the tip of Cone Point and includes Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk) for the remainder of the fall season.

Drift gillnets may not exceed 150 feet in length.

Koyukuk River:

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

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.

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing

The fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in Districts 1 and 2. Fishermen in both districts should stand by for announcements concerning commercial periods. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening. Commercial fishermen may use gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

The sale of incidentally caught Chinook salmon in the fall chum salmon directed commercial fisheries is prohibited. Commercial gillnet fishermen can release live Chinook salmon or use them for subsistence purposes. Chinook salmon retained from commercial gillnet gear must be recorded on a fish ticket as retained but not sold.

District 1, including the Set Net Only Area:

Period #4: 6-hour period from 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Monday, July 24.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 23 in District 1 is 76,977 fall chum and 423 coho salmon.

District 2:

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through July 21 in District 2 is 8,871 fall chum salmon.

Summer Season Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon is nearly complete for 2017. To date, the preliminary total harvest of summer chum salmon is 540,401 fish. Commercial fishing in District 6 will change to fall management in early August based on fall chum salmon migration timing.

The preliminary commercial harvest in District 1 is approximately 342,395 summer chum salmon with a reported 3,876 Chinook caught and released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 5,503 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use from gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvest in District 2 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. In Subdistrict 4-A, as of July 22, approximately 150,236 summer chum salmon have been harvested. To date, 50 Chinook salmon have been reported on fish tickets as caught and released. The summer chum salmon commercial fishing season in Subdistrict 4-A closes on July 25.

Commercial fishing in District 6 opened on July 14. As of July 23, approximately 2,835 summer chum salmon have been harvested. To date, 62 Chinook salmon have been released alive and 143 have been kept for subsistence use.

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 fishermen should stand by for fall season announcements and confirm their market before they fish.

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 is 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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