

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



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**2017 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 32  
Summer Update # 6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery  
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar, the drainage-wide Chinook salmon run has exceeded the upper end of the preseason outlook of 195,000 fish and is projected to be between 228,000 and 287,000 fish. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be about 97% complete at the Pilot Station sonar as of July 9. The summer chum salmon run has exceeded the upper end of the preseason outlook range of 2.5 million fish and is projected to be between 3.0 and 3.4 million fish.

Preliminary run timing dates suggest the 2017 Chinook salmon run is tracking similar to historical early run timing. If the run size materializes as current run projections indicate, this year's run would be the largest since 2005. Based on passage at Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), as of July 9, the Canadian proportion of the run is estimated to be above the upper end of the preseason outlook of 97,000 fish. An expected Chinook salmon run size of this magnitude would meet escapement goals, provide an increased subsistence harvest over 2016, and meet the harvest sharing objectives outlined in the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.

As of July 9, four Chinook and three summer chum salmon pulses have been identified at the Pilot Station sonar and their upriver travel has been tracked using average swimming speeds. The first pulse of approximately 21,000 Chinook salmon lasted five days at the sonar project and should be passing the border into Canada. A second pulse, lasting seven days, of approximately 80,000 Chinook salmon, should be between Circle and the Canadian border. A third pulse, lasting five days, of approximately 70,000 Chinook salmon, should be passing Stevens Village. The fourth pulse, lasting nine days, of approximately 55,000 Chinook salmon, should be approaching Tanana. The first pulse of approximately 820,000 summer chum salmon lasted seven days at the sonar project near Pilot Station and should be between Tanana and Manley. A second pulse, lasting five days, of approximately 950,000 summer chum salmon, should be approaching Ruby. The third pulse, lasting six days, of approximately 600,000 summer chum salmon, should be approaching Kaltag.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first strata, 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.

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**

#### Lower Yukon Test Fishery/ ADF&G and YDFDA

The combined cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnets at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites, as of July 9, is 37.99, which is above the historical average of 21.97. Only the set net at the Middle Mouth site has been used since June 29. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE of the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site, as of July 9 is 597.20, which is above the historical average of 390.36. As of July 9, the combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gill net at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 29,815.93, which is well above the historical median of 6,634.05 for this date.

Operations at the LYTF for both Chinook and summer chum salmon have been altered from previous years so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. Efforts have been made to reduce Chinook salmon mortality in the test fishery. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets and any dead or injured salmon are distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils.

#### 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. As of July 9, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 249,881 fish, which is above the historical average of 205,224 fish for years with early run timing. As of July 9, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 2,971,777 fish, which is well above the historical median of 1,591,881 fish for this date.

#### East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14. As of July 9, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 1,846 fish, which is slightly below the historical cumulative average of 1,928 Chinook salmon for this date. As of July 9, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 40,188 fish, which is above the historical median of 37,490 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. Summer chum salmon passage exceeded the escapement goal on July 9.

#### Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 15. As of July 9, the estimated cumulative summer chum salmon passage is 313,819 fish, which is above the historical cumulative median of 249,075 for this date. The biological escapement goal (BEG) for summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000 fish past the sonar project.

### Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations on June 18. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 9, is estimated to be 494 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 466 for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 9, is estimated to be 49,799 fish, which is above the historical median of 20,628 summer chum salmon for this date.

### Henshaw River Weir / USFWS

The Henshaw River weir began operations on June 26. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 9, is estimated to be 200 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 142 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 9, is estimated to be 97,085 fish, which is above the historical median of 16,209 summer chum salmon for this date.

### Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 26. As of July 9, 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 four 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 9, the estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage is 348 fish and six summer chum salmon have been observed at the tower. These counts are considered incomplete due to two 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, which is one of the earliest start dates since the project began in 2005. As of July 9, 4,064 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar, which is above the historical average of 2,476 for this date. The Interim management escapement goal (IMEG) for Chinook salmon at the Eagle sonar 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.

## **Management Strategy**

Because 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, subsistence fishing has been fully relaxed to fishing on the regulatory schedule in Districts 3-6 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a fishing permit is required in District 6, the Upper Tanana and Koyukuk Rivers, as well as the portion of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western

most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the Dall River and from the upstream mouth of 22-Mile Slough to the US/Canada Border.

### **Current Management**

**South Coastal District** (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude 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 North Coastal District and the communities of Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Emmonak, and Kotlik):

Subsistence fishing with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week. **Subsistence fishing will close 2 hours before, during, and 2 hours after commercial periods.**

**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 close 2 hours before, during, and 2 hours after commercial periods.**

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

Subsistence fishing is 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. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays**
- **8 p.m. Sundays to 8 a.m. Tuesdays**

### **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**

### **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 gillnets and fish wheels:

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

Federally qualified subsistence fishermen may fish with drift gillnets in Federal public waters of Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh during summer season open fishing periods until July 15.

**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 will open on July 11.

The preliminary commercial harvest in District 1 through July 9 is approximately 323,479 summer chum salmon with a reported 3,876 Chinook caught and released alive from dip nets and beach seines and 5,464 Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use from gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvest in District 2 through July 9 is approximately 43,650 summer chum salmon with a reported 734 Chinook salmon released alive from dip nets and beach seines.

Commercial fishing in Subdistrict 4-A began on June 25 with live-release fish wheels. As of July 8, approximately 85,845 summer chum salmon have been harvested. No Chinook salmon have been reported on fish tickets as caught and released.

Commercial openings will be announced based on buyer capacity. All commercial fishermen must make sure they have a buyer before fishing each opening.

#### **District 1 (including Black River) Commercial:**

Commercial fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will open for three 8-hour periods:

- **5 p.m. Monday, July 10 to 2 a.m. Tuesday, July 11**
- **5 p.m. Wednesday, July 12 to 2 a.m. Thursday, July 13**
- **5 p.m. Friday, July 14 to 2 a.m. Saturday, July 15**
- **5 p.m. Saturday, July 15 to 2 a.m. Sunday, July 16**

#### **District 2 Commercial:**

Commercial fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will open for two 2-hour periods:

- **6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, July 11**
- **6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, July 13**

In Districts 1 and 2, any Chinook salmon caught in gillnets during the commercial gillnet openings may be kept for subsistence use and must be recorded on a fish ticket as “kept but not sold”. Chinook salmon kept for subsistence use during the commercial gillnet openings must be marked by removing both tips of the tail fin before concealing the Chinook salmon from plain view or before transferring the salmon from the fishing site.

**Subdistrict 4-A Commercial** (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point):

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 operations 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”.**

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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