



Advisory Announcement

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2020 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #12

Fall Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2020 fall chum salmon inseason projection is for a run size of less than 300,000 fish, which is the second lowest run size since the year 2000. Mixed stock analysis was applied to the passage estimates to remove summer chum salmon and resulted in an estimate of 81,000 fall chum salmon in the river as of August 10. The mid-point of the fall chum salmon run at the mainstem sonar operated near Pilot Station typically occurs on August 11. The projected abundance is below the level needed to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000-600,000 fall chum salmon, tributary escapement goals, and Canadian treaty objectives (see management strategies below). Fall chum salmon are typically dominated by age-4 fish however, the 2016 parent year that produced that age class has shown extremely poor survival in chum salmon runs throughout the state.

The peak day of migration from the group of chum salmon that entered the Yukon River on July 19 is expected to be approaching Huslia/Tanana August 10, Stevens Village August 15, Fort Yukon August 20, and U.S./Canada border August 31. The pulse that entered the river on July 28 would be approaching Galena August 11, Rapids August 17, Fort Yukon August 26, and U.S./Canada border September 5. A small group entered August 5 with a larger group entering soon after on August 8 and will be approaching Holy Cross August 15, Koyukuk August 21, Huslia/Tanana August 27, Fort Yukon September 6, and U.S./Canada border September 16. Some Tanana summer chum salmon stocks may be in the first group, but in subsequent pulses most of the chum salmon should be fall stocks headed to the upper Yukon River.

Coho salmon typically enter the Yukon River in mid-August with the bulk of the run passing through the LYTF between August 13 and 24. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2016. An average run size of coho salmon is approximately 243,000 fish. Coho salmon so far were picked up later than average in all three lower Yukon assessment projects.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE through August 10 was 682.53 for fall chum salmon, which is below the historical average of 719.43 for this date. The mid-point for fall chum salmon is typically on August 10 for this project. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 19.28, which is well below the historical average of 68.28 for August 10. The first quarter point for coho salmon is typically on August 12 at this project.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative CPUE through August 10 was 406.01 for fall chum salmon, which is below the historical median of 1,051.44 for this date. The mid-point for fall chum salmon is typically on August 10 for this project. The

cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 15.15, which is below the historical average of 119.24 for August 10. The first quarter point for coho salmon is typically on August 16 at this project.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 10 was 149,000 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 325,000 fish for this date. The mid-point for fall chum salmon is typically on August 11 for this project. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 10 was 6,100 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 12,500 fish for this date. The first quarter point for coho salmon is typically on August 16 at this project.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) River sonar project operated by USFWS will not be operating this season.

Age Composition Fall Season / ADF&G

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets through July 31 consists of 38% age-4 and 59% age-5 (n=244) this compares to the average of 59% age-4 and 40% age-5. Females represent 50% of the fish sampled (n=354), which is below the average of 56%, as of August 9. The average length is 597 mm from a sample of 366 fall chum salmon, which is above the 10-year (2010–2019) average of 583 mm.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification / USFWS, ADF&G

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on chum salmon from July 19 to August 2 that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar operated near Pilot Station, contained approximately 55% summer chum and 45% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon stocks in the sample contained primarily Lower River stocks at 37%, Middle River stocks at 7% and Tanana River stocks at 11%. The fall chum salmon stocks in the entire sample consisted of 28% Border/US (Teedriinjik/Sheenjek/Black), 11% Canadian and 5% Tanana Fall stocks. For fall chum salmon this represents 75% U.S.-origin and 25% Canadian-origin stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Within the Yukon River Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a threshold of 300,000 fall chum salmon is needed to allow any fishing for fall chum salmon in the Yukon Area. The current inseason projection is below that threshold, therefore subsistence, commercial, sport, and personal use fishing for fall chum salmon are closing in the mainstem Yukon River until further notice. In addition, the projected abundance would not achieve the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, and likely not achieve any of the tributary escapement goals, and/or Canadian treaty objectives.

Although subsistence fishing for salmon is being closed at this time, subsistence fishing for other important species such as whitefish and pike will remain open seven days per week, 24 hours per day with use of 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Fish wheels may not be used to fish for whitefish and other non-salmon species during closed subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The fall chum salmon run will continue to be monitored throughout the season to determine if any surplus becomes available for subsistence opportunities. Fishermen should watch for advisory announcements regarding changes to the subsistence salmon fishing schedule.

Summer Season Management Overview

Districts 1-5 have transitioned to fall season management. The use of 4-inch and smaller mesh gillnets is being reinstated in Subdistrict 5-D lower and middle and will be added in 5-D upper once the Chinook salmon run has mostly completed passage through that subdistrict, based on migration timing. Because of the poor summer chum salmon run, fishing will remain on half schedule for the remainder of the summer season in District 6 (Tanana River).

Summer Assessment Projects

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, through August 10, is estimated to be 28,928 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 55,400 fish for this date. Based on timing, the 2020 run is more than 95% complete at the Eagle sonar. The right bank sonar unit needed replacement and was removed on August 8. Estimates beginning 8/9 include passage for the left bank only and are therefore partial estimates. Passage estimates will be interpolated post season to account for the period of time missed before the sonar was replaced. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish. The goal is assessed post-season using the Eagle sonar count minus the estimated U.S. and Canadian harvest of Chinook salmon above the sonar. Based on current passage and run timing, it is unlikely that the lower end of the escapement goal will be met.

ADF&G, USFWS, and TCC projects that did not operate in 2020

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions or funding concerns, these projects did not operate: East Fork Andreafsky Weir, Anvik River Sonar, Gisasa River Weir, Henshaw Creek Weir, and Salcha River tower/sonar.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Coastal District (Naskonat Peninsula to 1 nautical mile south of the Black River, which includes Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

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

Effective 6 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, subsistence salmon fishing in the Coastal District will close until further notice.

Districts 1-3 (Black River, and communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Previously announced subsistence salmon fishing periods are cancelled until further notice.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species. Fish wheels may not be operated during the closures.

Innoko River:

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

District 4 (Grayling, Anvik, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Previously announced subsistence salmon fishing periods are cancelled until further notice.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species. Fish wheels may not be operated during the closures.

Koyukuk River (Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

Fishing is open 24-hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Effective 6 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River drainage will close until further notice.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, subsistence salmon fishing will open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a reduced fishing schedule of two 24-hour periods per week from:

6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays

6:00 p.m. Fridays to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays

Fishermen should standby for announcements.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species. Fish wheels may not be operated during the closures.

Subdistrict 5-D Lower and Middle (from a fish and game regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to 22 Mile Slough, including the Porcupine River and all other adjacent tributaries, and the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Fishermen should standby for further announcements.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species. Fish wheels may not be operated during the closures.

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes the communities of Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed. **All 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets must be removed from the water. Fishermen should standby for announcements.**

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, including Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing is open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a reduced regulatory schedule of two 24-hour periods per week from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

6 p.m. Mondays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species. Fish wheels may not be operated during the closures.

Kantishna River:

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 open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of one 5-day period per week from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, only gillnets with 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target non-salmon species. Fish wheels may not be operated during the closures.

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):

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

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (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 with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels only on a reduced regulatory schedule of two 24-hour periods per week from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

6 p.m. Mondays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays

Subdistrict 6-C Whitefish and Sucker Personal Use Fishing

Fishing for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, subject to permit stipulations.

In the Tanana River up to the Wood River (Kantishna River and Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B) a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use permit is required to fish for salmon from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Salcha River (Subdistrict 6-C).

A subsistence permit is also required for all species in the “Upper Tanana River” area 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. A personal use permit is required to fish for whitefish and suckers in the Fairbanks Non-Subsistence area (from the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank). A subsistence permit is required for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats.

Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office (459-7274) or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks call 456-0406.

Announcements will be shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG



COVID-19

Under Alaska’s Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska’s Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.