



## Advisory Announcement

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### 2020 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #2

#### Fall Update # 1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2020 fall chum salmon preseason projection, based on the relationship between summer chum and fall chum salmon runs, is for a run size of less than 450,000 fish. Adjustments to the projection may occur, particularly if the summer chum salmon run extends into the fall season as was observed in 2019. Additionally, the age composition from the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) will be important to determine if the age proportions are different than expected given that the summer chum salmon return of age-4 fish was extremely weak.

Coho salmon typically enter the Yukon River in mid-August with the bulk of the run occurring between August 13 and 24 in the LYTF. 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.

#### Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative CPUE through July 20 was 138.86 for fall chum salmon, which is below the historical average of 150.27 for this date. No coho salmon have been caught at these sites at this time.

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

The fall season project began July 18 at Mountain Village. The cumulative CPUE through July 20 was 40.01 for fall chum salmon, which is below the historical median of 198.35 for this date. No coho salmon have been caught at these sites at this time.

##### 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 20 was 18,600 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 34,300 fish for this date.

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

##### Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G

Fall chum salmon age analysis from the LYTF has not been completed at this time. Females currently represent 41% of the fish sampled (n=61), which is below the average of 49%, as of July 19.

#### Fall Season Management Strategy:

Yukon River Districts 1-3 have transitioned to fall season management and are on their regulatory fishing schedules. The remaining upriver districts and subdistricts will transition to fall season management as the fall

chum salmon migration reaches those areas. Subsistence fishermen can expect to fish on their regulatory schedules upon transitioning to the fall season. The department will monitor the run to determine if any adjustments to the subsistence fishing schedule are needed to meet escapement and treaty objectives. The preseason projection does not meet the threshold of 550,000 fish needed to allow commercial fishing. Therefore, the department does not anticipate any commercial openings to begin the fall season.

As a reminder to subsistence fishermen, dip nets are a legal gear type for subsistence salmon fishing. Subsistence salmon fishermen may continue using gillnets, dip nets, and fish wheels. Personal use fishing in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River may only use set gillnets and fish wheels. During times of conservation, dip nets may be used in 6-C, however all Chinook salmon must be released alive.

### **Summer Season Assessment**

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are complete in the lower river and management has transitioned to fall season in the lower river districts. The 2020 summer chum salmon run was weak and possibly a few days late, but has met the drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million summer chum salmon. The passage of Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar is below average, however the first pulse of Chinook salmon should be arriving within the next few days. Passage of Chinook salmon at the Chena River sonar project is well below average, and stock composition of samples from Pilot Station sonar indicate U.S. stocks may be lower in abundance drainage-wide. Therefore, subsistence and personal use fishing in the Tanana River has been closed to the harvest of Chinook salmon, and selective gear is being allowed so that fishermen can target summer chum and release all Chinook salmon alive.

### **Summer Assessment Projects**

#### Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 20, is estimated to be 7,991 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 20,745 fish for this date. 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.

#### Chena River Tower and Sonar / ADF&G

The Chena River project effectively began counting salmon on July 6. However, visual identification of salmon with the tower has not yet been possible due to high water. The counts reported here are sonar counts apportioned to species based on length. Fish larger than 650 mm are counted as Chinook salmon, smaller than 650 are a combination of Chinook and chum salmon. As of July 20, Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 530 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 4,112 fish. Fish passage of  $\leq 650$  are 323 summer chum or small Chinook. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site.

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

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

### **Stock Identification**

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group of Chinook salmon (stratum 1, sampled at the Pilot Station sonar project June 7 to June 22) indicated that 62% of this group of fish were of Canadian-origin. The first and second pulses (stratum 2, June 23–June 28) had 50% Canadian-origin fish. The third and a portion of the fourth pulse (stratum 3, June 29–July 5) had 43% Canadian-origin fish.

The second stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery (from June 29 through July 9) consisted of nearly 100% summer chum salmon, of which, 81% were lower river stocks, 13% were bound for the middle Yukon River and 6% were bound for the Tanana River. The proportions of lower and

middle stocks are near average for this time period. Genetic chum salmon samples from stratum 3 (July 8 through July 19) are headed to the lab at this time and results should be available later this week and posted in the daily update.

### **Age, Sex, and Length Composition**

The age composition of 497 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 5 was <1% age-3, 10% age-4, 47% age-5, 39% age-6, and 3% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 fish and the percentage of females (52%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than average, and the average length of 725 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 740 mm, corroborating what fishermen have been observing.

The age composition of 405 summer chum salmon sampled from the LYTF project (June 2–July 8) indicates the run is composed of 83% age-5 fish, which is higher than the recent 10-year average of 45%. The average length is 571 mm from a sample of 415 summer chum salmon, which is slightly above the 10-year average of 563 mm. The samples were 70% female, which is above the long-term average. These size and percent female trends are likely being driven by the smaller percentage of 4-year old fish in the samples.

### **Current Subsistence Management Actions**

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

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

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

Fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a schedule of two 36-hour periods per week from:

8 p.m. Mondays to 8 a.m. Wednesdays

8 p.m. Thursdays to 8 a.m. Saturdays

**District 2 and 3** (Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a schedule of two 36-hour periods per week from:

8 p.m. Sundays to 8 a.m. Tuesdays

8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays

### **Innoko River:**

Subsistence 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):

Fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a schedule of two 48-hour periods per week from:

6 p.m. Sundays to 6 p.m. Tuesdays

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

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

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

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

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

6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays  
6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

**Subdistrict 5-D Lower and Middle** (from an ADF&G 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):

**Fishing is open with fish wheels and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh for the following 84-hour period:**

10 a.m. Friday, July 24 until 10 p.m. Monday, July 27.  
Fishermen should stand by for further announcements.

**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):

**Fishing is open with fish wheels and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh for the following 48-hour period:**

10 a.m. Friday, July 24 until 10 a.m. Sunday, July 26.  
Fishermen should stand by for further 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):

**Fishing is open with dip nets, beach seines, and live release fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:**

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays  
6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays

**All Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately.**

**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:**

Fishing will open for one 5-day period with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from 6 p.m. Friday, July 17 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 22.

**Effective 6 p.m. Friday, July 24, subsistence fishing will open with dip nets, beach seines, and live release fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of one 5-day period per week from:**

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

**All Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately.**

**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):

Subsistence 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 dip nets and live release fish wheels only on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:**

**6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays**

**6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays**

**All Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately. Beach seines are not legal gear in the personal use fishery.**

### **Subdistrict 6-C Whitefish and Sucker Personal Use Fishing**

**Personal use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels is closed until further notice in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River.** Fishing with other gear for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day.

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). Fishermen may only use set gillnets and fishwheels in the Personal Use salmon fishery.

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/](http://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](https://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/>.