

The top half of the image shows a close-up of teal-colored water with gentle ripples and reflections, creating a textured, shimmering effect. The bottom half of the image is a solid, dark teal color that serves as a background for the text.

# Yukon River Federal Fishery Disaster Process & Update

ADF&G Program Coordinator - Darion Jones

# How is a determination made?

## Determination Request

- An eligible entity will request a fishery disaster determination. This generally goes to the Governor's Office and ADF&G will evaluate whether the request meets the disaster criteria. The Governor will send a request to the Secretary of Commerce with ADF&G's compiled data and recommendation.



## Evaluation

- NMFS/NOAA will evaluate the fisheries and information provided to determine if there is a qualifying fishery disaster. The Secretary of Commerce will announce the determination. A positive determination may result in appropriation of funding.




## Funding

- Congress may now appropriate funding for that fishery. Once there is a funding appropriated, ADF&G begins seeking public comments and drafting spending plans that will go to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) for grant application, and once the grant is approved, PSMFC can begin the fund distribution process.

# Request for Determination Letter

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001  
907-465-3500



550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1700  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-269-7450

Governor Mike Dunleavy  
STATE OF ALASKA

2022 DEC -9 AM 10:10  
09 EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
Secretary  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: State of Alaska Federal Fishery Disaster Request

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

In accordance with Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and Section 308(b) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA), I am writing to request you declare a fishery disaster determination for the 2022 Yukon River salmon fishery.

On February 1, 2022, you approved a fishery disaster determination for the 2020 and 2021 Yukon River salmon fisheries. Although all salmon fishing was closed on the Yukon River in 2021 and 2022 and heavily restricted/closed in 2020, the 2022 total number of Chinook salmon returning to the Yukon River was estimated to be the lowest on record. The 2022 summer chum salmon run was less than the minimum escapement goal and was the fourth lowest on record. Similarly, the minimum escapement goal for fall chum salmon is unlikely to be met. Continued revenue loss to commercial fishery permit holders and loss of employment to local processing employees from the 2022 fishery closures has resulted in severe economic harm to the region. The loss of subsistence salmon fishing opportunities for the third year in a row has created food security concerns and prevented residents from sharing cultural and traditional practices.

- Here is an example of a Request for Determination. This request was made November 29, 2022, for the 2022 Yukon River fishery disaster.
- Similar letters were sent in March 2021 and September of 2021 to request disaster determinations for the 2020 and 2021 Yukon River salmon fisheries.

# Determination from the SoC



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Secretary of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20230

December 1, 2023

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy  
Governor of Alaska  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

Thank you for your letter requesting a determination of a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster for the 2022 Yukon River salmon fishery in Alaska.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service evaluated information from the impacted fishery. Upon further review, I have found that the request meets the requirements under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

In order to have a positive determination, there must be a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery disaster from an allowable cause under the MSA. The disaster was due to the impact of warming in the Bering Sea. The commercial fishery revenue loss for the Yukon River salmon fishery was 100%. Therefore, I concluded that this loss qualifies as a fishery resource disaster due to the poor returns of both summer and fall-run chum salmon stocks that caused the fishery to be closed for the entire 2022 season.

This determination now makes this fishery eligible for fishery disaster assistance. In the near future, using funds Congress has already appropriated for fishery disasters, the Department of Commerce will allocate disaster assistance for these fisheries. In addition, with this determination, eligible businesses and other entities in the State of Alaska may be able to access other loan/funding programs through other Federal relief programs (e.g., Small Business Administration loans). Programs within the Department (e.g., Economic Development Administration grants) may also be available.

Should you have any questions, please contact Susie Feliz, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663 or SFeliz@doc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susie Feliz".

- Final determination letter from the Department of Commerce showing the 2022 Yukon River disaster request was approved on December 1, 2023.
- This does not mean the amount has been decided, only that the request meets the criteria for a disaster and is eligible for funding. Congress may now appropriate funds for the fishery disaster.



# NOAA Determination Site

## 127. Alaska Yukon River Salmon Fisheries

Fishery/Area Affected: Alaska Yukon River Salmon Fisheries

Region: Alaska Region

### Disaster Assistance Request

Requester: Governor Mike Dunleavy

Request Date: 11/29/2022

[Request Letter](#) (PDF, 2 pages)

[Acknowledgement Letter](#) (PDF, 1 page)

Request Deemed Complete: N/A

### Secretary of Commerce Determination and Allocation

Determination: Approved

Determination Date: 10/06/2023

Cause of Disaster: Natural causes

[Determination Letter](#) (PDF, 1 page)

[Press Release](#)

Amount: \$1,594,841

- Once the funds have been appropriated, the Secretary of Commerce will issue a news/press release. Funding amounts will be posted on the NOAA Fishery Disaster Determination website: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/fishery-disaster-determinations>
- The screenshot of the website here shows the number (127) assigned to the fishery disaster, request letter, date of press release, and the determination letter with the amount of funding Congress appropriated.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Search

Home Fishing Hunting Subsistence Viewing Education Species Habitat Regulations

About Us Join Us News & Events Management & Research Licenses & Permits e-Library Maps & GIS Contact Us

News & Events

News & Events Home

ADF&G Releases, Notices, & News

- Media & General Interest Press Releases
- Regulation Announcements & EO Advisory Announcements
- Fishing: *Commercial, Subsistence, and Personal Use*
- Fishing: *Sport*
- Hunting, Trapping & Wildlife
- Public Notices

Hot Topics & Issues of Interest

- 2023 ADF&G Set Gillnet Study
- Federal Fishery Disasters
- Chinook Salmon
- Invasive Species
- Intensive Management & Predator Control

ADF&G Home » News & Events » Hot Topics & Issues

## Federal Fishery Disasters

The Secretary of Commerce has approved several requests from the State of Alaska for federal fishery disaster determinations in recent years. If Congress appropriates funds for disaster assistance, NOAA Fisheries determines how much funding is allocated to each approved fishery disaster. The State supports an open and transparent process for distributing disaster relief funds and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) works with affected stakeholders and NOAA Fisheries to identify funding priorities and develop spend plans for each fishery disaster.

### Guiding principles for fishery disaster spend plans:

Fishery disaster funds are intended to assist fishery participants harmed by the fishery disaster, to improve fishery information used to assess and forecast future fishery performance, and to develop management approaches that mitigate the impacts of future fishery disasters that cannot be prevented.

More information about the fishery disaster process can be found in the "Helpful Links" section at the bottom of this page. For more information about recent Alaska fishery disasters, including spend plan development, see the specific fishery disaster by species and area below. For questions, comments, or to be added to our contact list for a specific fishery disaster, please e-mail: [dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov) or call Darion Jones: (907) 267-2593

### Fishery Disasters by Species and Area:

#### Salmon


##### Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim

- [2022 Yukon River salmon fisheries](#): \$1,594,841
- [2021 Kuskokwim River and Norton Sound salmon fisheries](#): \$1,268,317
- [2020 Norton Sound, Yukon River, Kuskokwim River, Chignik, and Southeast Alaska salmon fisheries, and 2021 Yukon River salmon fishery](#) (Statewide Salmon): \$55,928,849

# Creating the Spend Plan

- ADF&G has a fishery disaster webpage on the ADF&G website under "Hot Topics". This webpage is updated to include positive disaster determinations and funding amounts.
- The disaster-specific links provide more information on spend plan development, listening sessions, and public comment periods. Spend Plans are primarily developed based on input from public comments.

# Final Spend Plan

ADF&G Home » Fishing myADF&G 

## 2020 Norton Sound, Yukon River, Kuskokwim River, Chignik and Southeast Alaska salmon fisheries and 2021 Yukon River salmon fishery

### Disaster Relief Fund Initial Draft Spend Plan

On January 22, 2022, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce made a disaster determination for the Alaska Norton Sound, Yukon River, Chignik, Kuskokwim River and Southeast Alaska Salmon Fisheries, 2020 and 2021 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in response to March 8, 2021, and September 14, 2021, requests from Governor Dunleavy. On May 6, 2022, NOAA Fisheries allocated \$55,928,849 million to address losses to the affected management areas.

In September 2022, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) posted an initial draft spend plan for public comment and received 27 written comments. ADF&G revised the plan based on public comments and posted a second draft plan for public comment in February 2023. Fifteen additional comments were received.

On April 14, 2023, the final spend plan was forwarded to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) for administration, and once the grant is approved, PSMFC can begin the fund distribution process.

Questions can be submitted by email to: [dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov)

#### Documents

2020 Norton Sound, Yukon River, Kuskokwim River, Chignik and Southeast Alaska salmon fisheries and 2021 Yukon River salmon fishery disaster:

- [Initial Request Letter](#) (PDF 770 kB)
- [Additional 2021 Yukon Request Letter](#) (PDF 388 kB)
- [Determination Letter](#) (PDF 182 kB)
- [Initial Draft Spend Plan](#) (PDF 449 kB)
- [Second Draft Spend Plan](#) (PDF 14,214 kB)
- [Final Draft Spend Plan](#) (PDF 4,621 kB)

- The spend plan will go through two rounds of public comment and edits (initial and second draft) before the final draft is posted.
- The final spend plan is sent to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to inform their grant application to NOAA for the disaster funds.

The final draft spend plan for 2020 and 2021 can be viewed at ADF&G's website here:  
[https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishing.2020\\_2021\\_salmon\\_disaster\\_relief\\_fund](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishing.2020_2021_salmon_disaster_relief_fund)

# NOAA Grant Approval and Award

- Once the final spend plan and grant application are submitted to NOAA, they will begin reviewing the application.
- The grant award and funds will be released to PSMFC once the spend plan is approved by NOAA and Treasury (OMB) has approved the funds for release.



# Application and Fund Disbursement

- Funds will be distributed through Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission after they review applications.
- Applications for the 2020 and 2021 Yukon River disaster are expected very soon with the grant being awarded in April 2024. PSMFC is waiting to receive the funds from that grant award before they can announce or post applications.
- The final spend plan for the 2022 Yukon River disaster will be finalized and sent to PSMFC in May 2024. PSMFC will use the spend plan to inform the grant application and submit the application to NOAA for approval.

# Contact Information

- For more information you can follow updates posted on the ADF&G and PSMFC websites:
  - <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hottopics.fisherydisasters>
  - <https://relief.psmfc.org/>
- If you have any questions or would like to be on the email distribution list, please reach out to us at:  
[dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov)