

Yukon Fisheries News

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

FALL 2018

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME (ADF&G)

2018 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary

BY HOLLY CARROLL, AREA MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST, AND
DEENA JALLEN, ASSISTANT AREA MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST

This article summarizes most of the 2018 Yukon River Chinook and Summer Chum salmon fisheries. All data reported here are considered preliminary.

The "Summer Season" is May through July 15th in District 1; where the ADF&G management and research staff are based in Emmonak; assessing and managing summer chum and Chinook salmon runs. Data presented in this summary applies to "Summer Season" species only.

2018 Management Outreach

The summer season management team consists of ADF&G area management, research biologists, research assistants, subsistence resource specialists, and the manager & assistant manager from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). To help improve outreach with communities, area staff visited Alakanuk, Kotlik, Tanana, Rampart, and Eagle. The area manager and the ADF&G commissioner joined a trip sponsored by Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) to attend meetings in Russian Mission, Grayling, Holy Cross, Shageluk, and Anvik.

Daily test fish counts and news releases were posted on the "Yukon River Fishing-ADF&G" Facebook page, magnets with the fishery hotline number were distributed, and updates were provided through the YRDFA Tuesday Teleconferences, ADF&G News Release list-serve, ADF&G web page, and ADF&G daily Yukon Area assessment data list-serve.

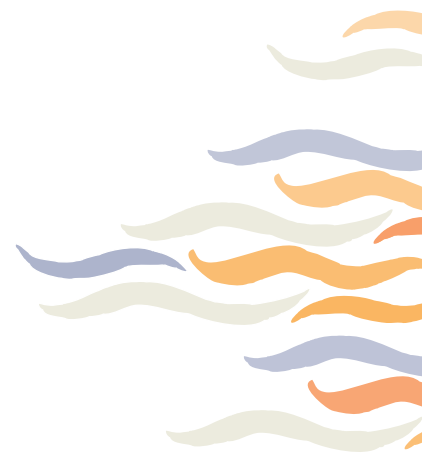
2018 Preseason Outlook

Chinook Salmon 2018 Outlook = run size of ~173,000-251,000 fish

- Similar to, or slightly smaller than 2017. This run size would meet escapement objectives with a surplus for variable harvest. Due to outlook uncertainty, a cautious management approach was taken to ensure meeting minimum escapement objectives.

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Ext. 5 for membership
information or go to
page 15, fill out the
form, and mail it in.



Protecting and
promoting all healthy
wild fisheries and
cultures along the
Yukon River drainage.



continued on page 4

Yukon River Region Calendar

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Meeting

December 4-6, 2018
Galena, AK

Yukon River Panel Meeting

December 9-12, 2018
Anchorage

Alaska Board of Fisheries Comments Due

January 2, 2019

Alaska Board of Fisheries Meeting

January 15-19, 2019
Anchorage

Western Interior Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting

February 20-21, 2019
Anchorage

Eastern Interior RAC Meeting

March 5-6, 2019
TBD

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC Meeting

March 12-13, 2019
TBD

American Fisheries Society Meeting

March 19-21, 2019
TBD



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Yukon Fisheries News is published by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
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Funding for this publication provided by the USFWS through the Restoration & Management Fund

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Message from the Director



WAYNE JENKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I continue to be amazed by how engaged Yukon River fishers and managers are.

We see it through efforts of the YRDFA Board. We see increased involvement by Yukon River fishers and organizations in the Board of Fish process. We hear it on the in-season Teleconferences held weekly from June through August. We witness it at the annual Preseason Planning meetings where last year nearly 100 fishers and stakeholders from the river and fishery managers and researchers worked a full day for preparing for the fishing season. We see the extra effort by ADF&G and Alaska State leadership in their summer visits to Yukon River communities to listen and discuss fisheries and other issues. We welcome increased involvement led by the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission, the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association, the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, the Yukon River Panel, and others.

People are working together to address difficult and complex challenges on the Yukon River. It's a bit of an unsung success story and you should feel proud of your part in it.

If this sounds like a pep-talk, well...it is.

Despite all of the efforts of fishery managers, the diligence, and sacrifices of Yukon River fishers, and the hard work of fishery researchers; the Chinook salmon runs have not recovered and the truth is, no one knows if or when they will.

We need a pep-talk. We need to celebrate our success. We need to stay the course. We need to keep the goal of returning the Chinook salmon to runs that support subsistence needs, nutritional health, and cultural identity, upper-most in our hearts and minds. At this time, all along the Yukon River, you could say, this is our calling, our duty to current and future generations. We will do this.

But, we must do it together. Success will not be had by harvesting more than the runs can give. Or favoring our community or region over others. It is a hard thing, but more sacrifice may be called for.

Stronger runs are never guaranteed.

So, continue to engage with other fishers, managers, and scientists. Attend meetings. Call in on the Teleconferences. Contact fishery managers directly with your concerns and information. Keep the growing connectivity up and down the river going. Question, disagree, share... but be a part of the cooperative effort to bring back the mighty Yukon River King salmon.

It will take all of us. 🐟

Wayne

2018 Preliminary YR Summer Season Summary... continued from front page

Summer Chum Salmon 2018 Outlook = run size of ~2.5 million fish

- This would be above the average run size. Thus, providing for escapements, an average subsistence harvest, & a surplus for commercial harvest.

2018 Inseason Run Assessment Overview

Inseason run assessments include;

- test fisheries,
- sonar passage estimates,
- subsistence and commercial harvest reports,
- age, sex, & length (ASL) data,
- And tissue samples at the Pilot Station sonar project to determine stock contribution.

Assessing salmon runs in the lower river is critical to applying an inseason management plan throughout the drainage.

***Managers use information from all inseason assessment projects and fishermen reports to make daily management decisions and adjustments to fishing schedules based on the best currently available data & projections.**

The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) program assesses salmon run timing and consists of two Chinook test fisheries. These test fisheries provide relative catch data and Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) which gives an index of abundance and indicates the presence of large groups of fish or “pulses” entering the mouths of the river. 2018 was a later than average run timing. This season, 538 Chinook were released alive from the LYTF & 1,007 Chinook were distributed to locals in mostly lower Yukon communities.

The Pilot Station sonar project provides abundance estimates for Chinook and summer chum. The test fishery at this site allocates the daily sonar counts by species and samples the salmon runs for ASL and genetic data. The

cumulative passage estimate at Pilot Station sonar was ~161,900 Chinook and ~1.6 million summer chum. The Chinook run was three days later than average and the first two pulses were weaker than expected. This triggered restrictive management actions but the later part of the run came in stronger & restrictions were relaxed a bit.

2018 Subsistence Fishery Management Overview

Managers expected to provide some restricted subsistence harvest opportunity for Chinook and liberal subsistence and commercial opportunity for summer chum. Managers waited for increased Chinook catches at the LYTF before restricting the subsistence gillnet fishery.

While the Chinook run was late, the summer chum run had average run timing, causing the two runs to overlap more than usual. This meant large numbers of summer chum were passing at the same time as Chinook. This can have a self-limiting effect on the Chinook harvest for fishers in Districts 1-4, particularly when 6-inch or smaller mesh gear is the maximum mesh size allowed.

The low passage of Chinook counted at Pilot Station sonar triggered cancellation of one fishing period per week in most districts to protect each pulse of fish and to spread the harvest across all pulses. Fishing remained on half the regulatory fishing schedule with 6-inch and smaller mesh gillnets and fishwheels through most of the run.

The Yukon River fishers have exhibited incredible flexibility in complying with schedule changes and gear restrictions. The department acknowledges and appreciates the continued commitment made by fishers to conserve and share the Chinook salmon resource. Managers rely heavily on input from fishermen about how management strategies worked and didn't work for this area.

2018 Commercial Fishery

The commercial fishery was conservatively managed to minimize the impact to the Chinook salmon run. This season, 3 processors purchased chum in District 2 and one processor returned to District 4. No commercial periods targeting Chinook were allowed. Sale of incidentally-caught Chinook was prohibited and no sales of Chinook were allowed during fall commercial fishing.

Lower Yukon Districts Commercial Fishery (Districts 1 & 2)
Dip nets and beach seines were used for a large part of the season. Chinook were required to be released alive from selective gear types. Selective gear commercial periods were open around subsistence fishing periods and based on processing capacity. Combined harvest with selective gear types was 243,811 summer chum, with 11,928 Chinook reported released alive. Use of gillnets in summer chum



commercial fishery was delayed until about 94% of the Chinook run had passed through District 1. The cumulative commercial harvest for all gear types was 446,381 summer chum in Districts 1 & 2.

Upper Yukon Districts Commercial Fishery

Fishing opened in District 4 on June 26 with live-release fish wheels. Fishermen were required to continuously monitor fish wheels and immediately release any Chinook salmon alive until July 21. Less than 300 Chinook were encountered and released alive. Summer chum harvest was 126,892 fish in District 4.

***Total 2018 Yukon Area commercial harvest =~576,700 summer chum salmon.**

2018 Fishing Effort and Ex-vessel Value

Fishing was open with selective gear for more hours than in previous seasons, however, overall fishing efficiency (harvest per hour of fishing) in the lower river was low. Lower Yukon fishers received an average \$0.60/lb. for summer chum and estimated \$1.7 million for their summer chum harvest in 2018. Upper Yukon fishers received an average of \$0.33/lb. for summer chum for a total value of \$217,064.

2018 Age, Sex, & Stock Composition

Age & Sex Composition in LYTF

The Chinook age composition from the 8.5-inch mesh LYTF nets was:

- 4% Age-4
- 35% Age-5
- 60% Age-6
- 2% Age-7

Sample size = 684 fish and Females = 56% of the samples.

The summer chum age composition from the 5.5-inch mesh LYTF drift nets was:

- 1% Age-3
- 57% Age-4
- 40% Age-5
- 2% Age-6
- <1% Age-7

Sample size = 1,028 fish and Females = 61% of the samples.

Age Composition in Pilot Station Sonar Test Fishery

Chinook Salmon age composition from 513 samples—all mesh sizes:

- 1% Age-3
- 12% Age-4
- 50% Age-5
- 37% Age-6
- <1% Age-7



Age Composition in Eagle Sonar Test Fishery

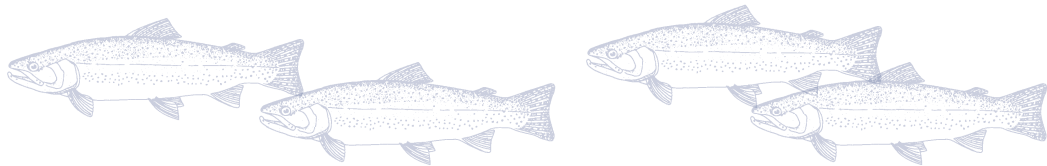
Chinook Salmon age composition from 257 samples—all mesh sizes:

- 8% Age-4
- 42% Age-5
- 48% Age-6
- 2% Age-7

This is only a partial age composition of data collected through July 25 and remaining samples are being processed.

Canadian Fisheries

The Preseason outlook was for a run size of approximately 71,000-103,000 Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. Fishery managers at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) conduct Canadian Chinook salmon fisheries based on available abundance and international harvest sharing provisions. Based on the estimated passage of approximately 58,000 Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar and a Canadian Management target of 48,750 fish, the Chinook salmon run was classified to be in the “yellow management zone”, allowing for a conservative harvest in the First Nations subsistence fishery. DFO maintained closures in the commercial, domestic, and recreational fisheries throughout the 2018 Chinook salmon run. While not all information is currently available, preliminary data indicates that First Nation harvest on the mainstem Yukon River is likely to be near or less than 50% of historical average. 🐟



EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE, JUNE 18-23, 2018

Recognizing Unity and Sacrifice

BY DANIELLE STICKMAN, YRDFA COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH DIRECTOR

The Educational Exchange was designed for people on both sides of the US/Canada border to increase their understanding of their neighbor's experiences and challenges as they relate to Yukon River salmon fisheries. This project is funded by the Restoration and Enhancement Fund under the Yukon River Panel. The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA/US-Alaska) works with the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee (YSSC/Canada-Yukon) to organize and report on each trip. There are 5-6 participants chosen and they embark on a week-long exchange—alternating from each country year to year. Five Alaskans traveled to communities along the Yukon River in Canada in 2017 and six Canadians traveled to the mouth of the Yukon River in Alaska this year.

The six participants were:

- **Karrie Brown** – First Nation Representative
- **Steve Gotch** - Canadian Yukon River Panel Co-Chair
- **Janelle Hager** – First Nation Representative
- **Steve Hossack** - Media representative and sports fishermen
- **Jesse Trerice** - Yukon Salmon Subcommittee Director
- **Geoff Wooding** - Director on the Board of the Yukon Fish and Game Association

The delegation started out in Whitehorse with a half day orientation with YSSC and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada staff, and then ventured forth to




Left to Right: Catherine Moncrieff, Karrie Brown, Steve Hossack, local fisherwoman, Steve Gotch, Janelle Hager (Back row) Geoff Wooding, Jesse Trerice. Pitka's Point, Alaska.

Anchorage where they were greeted by YRDFA staff. After a short Alaskan orientation in Anchorage, the team and Danielle Stickman, flew to Emmonak.

The group was met by a gracious host, John Lamont, and had accommodations at the Kwipak processing plant. During their time in Emmonak, they met with ADF&G summer season manager, visited the Lower Yukon Test Fishery site, observed monitoring/data collection, and received a summer season overview from the ADF&G and USFWS. Informal gatherings were coordinated with the Tribal Council and locals as well as a visit to a fish camp, trip to the coast, tours of smokehouses, and talks with Elders. A detailed tour of the Kwipak processing facility and skiff manufacturing plant was also included. It was a first for all on the trip to witness a 12-hour opening allowed for commercial fishing, which was restricted to dip nets.

After 3 full days in Emmonak, the group traveled, by boat, to Saint Mary's where they were greeted by the Alstrom's and YRDFA anthropologist, Catherine Moncrieff. They toured St. Marys and Pitka's Point and met the new fish processor. The group continued their boat journey up river to Pilot Station, where they observed the counting station and test fishery at the sonar project site, which is managed by ADF&G.

The importance of the exchange goes farther than those who participate; it's about the Yukon River people coming together to learn and connect with each other in other venues and ways than at formal meetings. We all know and understand that it is the personal connections we build that help maintain a healthy working salmon/people system. These connections can grow to improve the greater understanding of all parts of the Yukon River fishery in both the U.S. and Canada.



This project would not be possible without all of the people on the river that hosted, guided, and aided the group in many ways—along the process of planning and implementing this Educational Exchange. Thank you so much!

Testimonials from our Canadian guests:

Geoff Wooding: “It was a pleasure to be selected as a member of the Canadian contingent for the 2018 international exchange. I learned a great deal and especially enjoyed meeting the many people of the lower Yukon that depend so much on the river. Being on the river with the Chum salmon dipnetters was a real treat! I look forward to future years where we Canadians can once again harvest Chinook Salmon in the upper Yukon River due to the sacrifices being made on the entire river during these years of poor returns.”

Steve Hossack: “I’ve been fishing across Canada for over 20 years. I learned more about salmon on this ten-day trip than the rest of those years put together. Not only did I learn an incredible amount on fish but I also gained a whole new understanding and appreciation for our neighbors in Alaska; their relationship to salmon, and the sacrifices being made on both sides of the border. This is a world class opportunity to learn about a



Drying salmon in fishcamp smokehouse.

species that brings different cultures together under the same cause, to witness firsthand the transboundary conservation efforts in place. And most importantly—to educate the public about the historical significance, cultural relevance and ongoing legacy of Pacific salmon.”

What was the most valuable part or experience of your Exchange trip?

Karrie Brown: “Knowing that we have an amazing team of people on both sides, Yukon & Alaska, working to sustain salmon stocks.”

Steve Gotch: “The opportunity to meet people who live in the lower river and discuss the importance and role of salmon, as well as their understanding of how salmon fisheries are managed and why.”

Janelle Hager: “Learning about how much salmon influence the economy of the local people and how they only take what they need and no more. It was all very valuable and I really enjoyed myself.” 🐟



Group on the shores of the Bering Sea.

Yukon River Subsistence Salmon Survey Program

BY ANDREW PADILLA & SAM DECKER

It's fall and salmon fishing is winding down. As many of you know, ADF&G conducts annual subsistence salmon harvest surveys. We have been collecting subsistence salmon data since statehood and have used the same methods since 1990 providing consistency in the data. This data collection project is vital to the management of Yukon Area fisheries.

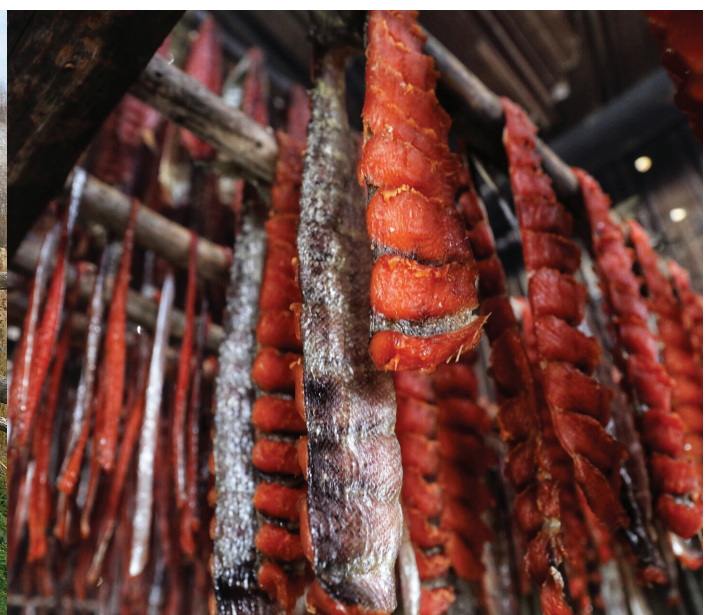
Every year, from September to the last week in October, ADF&G surveyors arrive in Yukon Area communities beginning on the coast and migrating from the Lower Yukon to the Upper Yukon with the salmon. The goal of the project is to provide reliable annual subsistence harvest estimates. Since 2004, ADF&G has partnered with YRDFA to hire local assistants who are essential to survey and data collection. Local assistants help update our household lists, community maps, and guide our surveyors around their community to locate those individuals selected for the survey. This year we visited 31 communities and contacted approximately 1,600 households.

The data collected are the subsistence harvest of all species of salmon and harvest gear used, as well as some sharing information to make sure the harvests are not double counted. We also ask about the number of dogs and the number of salmon harvested to sustain them. The survey usually takes about 15 minutes and the information given

is completely confidential. At the end of the survey there is time for the surveyor to record questions and comments which are shared with the fishery managers. When the surveys are done, surveyors return to the office in Fairbanks and enter them into a database. Once the data are entered and double checked, harvest estimates for salmon and non-salmon species for each community are finalized.

The estimates are an important piece in the salmon management puzzle. The community subsistence harvest is used together with commercial, sport fish, and personal use harvest reports. This provides a more thorough picture of the salmon run strength throughout the Alaska side of the Yukon River drainage. Salmon harvest estimates are used to help fishery managers determine the total salmon run size, forecast the strength of future runs, and help set preseason and long-term management plans.

Each spring, we mail a letter that we call "The Outlook" to Yukon River fishing households to report the managers' forecast of salmon run sizes and season management strategies, to help fishermen prepare for the season. Run reconstruction and management information are also published in an annual management report. For all state reports: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>. For any questions, please call: 907-459-7274. 🐟



YRDFA Young Adult Fisher Workshop

BY DANIELLE STICKMAN, YRDFA COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH DIRECTOR

This was YRDFA's third and longest workshop and the first one held in a rural community. It was exciting to bring 11 young adult fishers to a part of the river that some have never been to. The participants traveled from Alakanuk, Emmonak, Mountain Village, Marshall, Russian Mission, Grayling, Kaltag, and Beaver. All participants arrived to Galena on October 5th and departed on October 8th. This was also the weekend of Galena's annual Jamboree, and it was a great opportunity to talk with locals about our program, what we were doing there, and also enjoy the music!

The goal of this program is to build connections, working relationships, and improve communications along the entire Yukon River. The vision is to inspire and help young adults engage in fisheries management activities (i.e. Regional Advisory Councils (RAC), Advisory Committees (AC), YRDFA board, etc.) as well as lead the way to a sustainable fishery on the Yukon River. This program was initiated by the YRDFA board and influenced by others on the Yukon River who have made comments on how younger generations are not interested in getting involved in fisheries meetings or stepping up to lead. Many insights have been gained from all three YRDFA workshops, but one of the main discoveries is that young adults are ready to lead, they are waiting for an opportunity and some guidance and support.

Although, this was the longest of the three workshops, we still found that two days was not enough time to build relationships, learn about all aspects of the Yukon River Fisheries Management system-ranging from the U.S./Canada Salmon Agreement to State Board of Fisheries (BOF) Proposals AND talk about ways to



Pictured Left to Right: Daisy Attie, Julia Fisher-Salmon, Brandon Kameroff, Melissa Alick, Danielle Stickman, Tiffany Andrew, Katie Nick, Caleb Kameroff, Kenneth Lee, Tristan Madros.

integrate traditional/local ecological knowledge into meetings and have T/LEK acknowledged as equal to western knowledge. We did thoroughly review the YRDFA Young Fisher Workbook, the Yukon River Salmon Handbook, 1-2 State BOF proposals, the state and federal subsistence councils and committees, anthropological projects, and held several talking circles addressing some questions regarding cultural practices and values in relation to today's modern world. And the highlight of the 2 days was visiting with YRDFA Board member Fred Huntington and taking a boat trip up to Sidney Huntington's fish camp!

Overall, the two days were a great introduction to fisheries on the Yukon River but it was just the tip of the iceberg of what is a huge and complex fisheries system. We knew we would not be able to cover all the topics we wanted but our goal was to inspire the young adults to get involved or at least become interested in learning more and possibly attend a RAC or AC meeting in their region.

For me, speaking as a young adult, I have not stayed involved in fisheries because of the regulations and the systems by which we are kept, I have stayed involved because of the communities and people I work with and the connections I have made. I continue this work because of the feeling of connection I get when I am on a river or when I see fish drying on racks or when I taste salmon. That is the link that connects us and only by working together, building relationships, and continuing to educate each other, can we continue the practices we enjoy and live for.

Some of the participants mentioned that they would have liked to learn more about policies and regulations. YRDFA's Yukon River Young Fisher Group has been posting information on our Facebook page to improve education and outreach but we hope that the individuals in the group will start talking with each other and asking each other questions along with sharing information they have gained. We see this young fisher program as a catalyst to start new conversations. We hope to continue this program and look forward to future conversations and building this network of young adult fishers on the Yukon River. 🐟



Listening to YRDFA Board member, Fred Huntington, share stories and knowledge at Sidney Huntington's fish camp.

What was that Salmon Sex ID Study all about?

BY FRED WEST AND ZACHARY LILLER, ADF&G

Perhaps you heard that the ADF&G conducted a Salmon Sex Identification study this summer. Why focus on salmon sex identification? It is a reasonable question—and one that many folks have asked.

Currently, ADF&G has sex data for over TWO MILLION individual salmon from projects operated throughout the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region. These data are used for research and management purposes that assume the sex data are accurate. Those data were collected using two primary methods. The most common method is based on how the fish looks. We call this the External Method and it can be incredibly accurate when fish are sampled by experienced staff at locations close to the spawning grounds. The External Method is less reliable when used near the mouth of large rivers before the salmon's shape changes in preparation to spawn or if samplers are inexperienced. An alternative sex identification method, called the Internal Method, requires making a small cut in the belly and looking for the presence of eggs or milt. The Internal Method is the only way to be 100% sure of the sex of a salmon, but because it requires killing the fish, it is most commonly used to sample harvested salmon. Fewer than 10% of the sex data for the AYK Region are documented as confirmed using the Internal Method. That leads to a logical question: How accurate is the rest of the data based on the External Method?

The Salmon Sex ID Study was intended to address sexing accuracy using the External Method. Multiple species were sampled at the Lower Yukon River Test Fishery and the Kuskokwim River Bethel Test Fishery. These projects were prioritized because they are located near the mouth of the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers where use of

the External Method can be difficult. Chinook salmon were also sampled at the Eagle sonar project near the U.S./Canada border and the Aniak Test Fishery located in the middle Kuskokwim. These projects were prioritized because they are far enough upriver that the External Method can be used with higher confidence. Including both downriver and upriver locations was intended to provide insight to the range of accuracy ADF&G may experience when using the External Method. A subset of fish captured in the various test fisheries were sacrificed, sex was evaluated using the External Method, and then sex was confirmed using the Internal Method. All fish sampled as part of this study were distributed to local communities. A special effort was made to coordinate with other researchers to ensure that as much as possible was learned from these sacrificed fish. In particular, additional length measurements, genetic tissue, otoliths (ear bones), and eggs were collected from some fish to facilitate other organizations' research efforts.

Data review has just begun, but we do have early results to share – some expected and some surprising. As expected, accuracy using the External Method was highest at upriver projects. The accuracy for Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar was 100% and nearly that high at the Aniak Test Fishery. This level of accuracy is especially noteworthy and reflects the suitability of the method and skill of the employees operating those programs. Chinook salmon accuracy was notably higher for the Kuskokwim Bethel Test Fishery compared to the Lower Yukon Test Fishery, which may be due to differences in body shape near the river mouths and specifics of the sampling programs. Only a few non-Chinook samples have been evaluated at this



Chinook salmon harvested near the mouth of the Yukon River. Top = female; bottom = male

time, but it appears that the External Method may be more reliable for determining the sex of chum salmon compared to Chinook salmon at some lower river locations. Once complete, this project will provide insight into the quality of the salmon sex data collected by ADF&G. This project may provide guidance for how to improve sampling programs in the future and how best to use the sex data collected using the External Method.

ADF&G would like to sincerely thank all those involved with this project. We could not have done this without the help, support, and expertise of the field crews. We would like to thank all those that assisted with the distribution of salmon sacrificed for sampling. We received excellent input from many stakeholders, both supporting and challenging the premise of the study – all were appreciated and we are better off for your input. ADF&G takes the responsibility of sacrificing salmon for research purposes very seriously. We will continue to analyze the results of this study and report out through written reports and upcoming meetings. This was a one year study and will not continue in 2019. 🐟

For questions feel free to contact:

Fred West, Summer season Yukon Area
Research Biologist: (907) 267-2237,
fred.west@alaska.gov

Zachary Liller, AYK Research
Coordinator: (907) 267-2135,
zachary.liller@alaska.gov

In-Season Survey conducts 466 interviews in 2018

BY CATHERINE MONCRIEFF

The YRDFA In-season Salmon Harvest Survey Program is an important communication tool. It qualitatively informs managers how fishers, in key locations throughout the drainage, are doing in-season, enabling managers to make timely decisions allowing the maximum number of fishers to meet their subsistence needs. Our surveyors gather information directly from fishermen during the fishing season, providing managers with weekly information about fishers' concerns, observations, and their ability to harvest salmon throughout the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage. These reports are also shared on the YRDFA In-Season Salmon Management Teleconferences for the benefit of managers and other fishermen and women.

This year one of our goals was to expand outreach and ensure the fisher interview list represents each community in balanced way – including all the fishing families and fishing areas. Our surveyors worked to accomplish this and were able to conduct 466 interviews with 139 households in 10 communities along the Yukon River and its tributaries.

Participating in this weekly survey is a way to participate in management of YOUR fishery and to have your voice heard. The information fishers share with their surveyor helps managers know how fishers are doing and what challenges they may be having during the fishing season. This information allows managers to adjust their strategy to meet the needs of the fishery. The program begins in each community as the king salmon are arriving and runs for 6 weeks or until king salmon has ended. 🐟



From left to right - Pamela Cook, Andrew Firmin, Eugene Landlord, Jon LePue, Norma Evan, Sherry Kruger, Lisa Bifelt, Myra Thumma (observer), Rachael Kangas

THANK YOU to this year's surveyors!

COMMUNITY	SURVEYOR
Alakanuk	Pamela Cook
Mountain Village	Eugene Landlord
Marshall	Norma Evan
Russian Mission	Basil Larsen
Anvik	Sherry Kruger
Ruby	Rachael Kangas
Huslia	Lisa Bifelt
Tanana	Ariella Derrickson
Fort Yukon	Andrew Firmin
Eagle	Jonathan DePue

Thank you to the
USFWS Fisheries Resource
Monitoring Program for
funding this program.

And thank you to
the fishers and
fishing families who
participated in the
surveys, sharing
information about
their experiences and
making their voice
heard in Yukon River
fisheries management.

YRDFA begins new project in Draanjik River basin to document salmon and whitefish areas

BY CATHERINE MONCRIEFF, YRDFA ANTHROPOLOGIST



Cabin on the Owl Creek located in the Draanjik River basin, from interview with Albert Thomas, Fort Yukon, August 2018.



YRDFA Anthropologist, Catherine Moncrieff, standing on the banks of the Yukon River in Fort Yukon.



Yukon River riverbank in Fort Yukon, August 2018.

In August of 2018, YRDFA began a new project focused on traditional knowledge of salmon and whitefish areas in the Draanjik or Black River basin, a tributary of the Yukon River near the Canadian border. This project, in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and funded by the USFWS Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, will take place with knowledgeable hunters and fishers in Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Venetie, and Fairbanks. In this project, YRDFA Anthropologist, Catherine Moncrieff, will travel to these communities and work with the tribal councils and a local research assistant to identify knowledgeable people who can talk about where they have seen salmon and whitefish.

The goal of this project is to provide information critical to the management of salmon and whitefish species and the habitat that supports them. This will be accomplished through Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) interviews and mapping activities with knowledgeable fishers and hunters to document areas in the Yukon Flats and Draanjik basin with salmon and whitefish spawning and rearing areas. This will then be verified by helicopter and river boat field work and finally nominations of new areas will be submitted to the anadromous waters catalog (AWC). *The Catalog of Waters Important for the Spawning, Rearing, or Migration of Anadromous Fishes* and its associated Atlas specify which streams, rivers, and lakes are important to anadromous fish and are afforded protection, under AS 16.05.871., to be protected, water bodies must be documented as supporting some life function of salmon, whitefish, etc.

Fieldwork has begun for the 2018 season. Catherine traveled to Fort Yukon with Debra Lynne of TCC in August where they were able to introduce the project and begin the interview and mapping activities. Travel to Chalkyitsik and Fort Yukon, scheduled for October, was rescheduled and new plans are being made to travel to these communities and as well as Venetie with Nicole Farnham, of TCC, for interviews and mapping. Additionally, Nicole was able to travel to the Draanjik River basin in September for initial helicopter and river boat field work.

We thank the communities for their support in conducting this important work and look forward to traveling to Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon later this year or in 2019.

For more information about this project please contact:

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catherine@yukonsalmon.org

Brian McKenna, TCC
907-452-8251; 3318
brian.mckenna@tananachiefs.org

Alaska Board of Fisheries AYK Meeting: January 15-19, 2019

The Board of Fisheries (BOF) is responsible for considering and adopting regulations to allocate resources between user groups; establish fish reserves and conservation areas, fishing seasons, quotas, and bag limits size restrictions, means and methods, habitat protection, stock enhancement; and to develop commercial, subsistence, sport and personal use fisheries.

Every three years the Board of Fish makes decisions on fisheries related proposals and seeks public input through their meeting process. Concerned fishers should review proposals that may affect their fishery and work with their Regional Advisory Council, YRDFA, YRITFC or other organizations or individually to support the best decisions by Board of Fish.

The Board of Fisheries Process

The Alaska Board of Fisheries will be meeting at the Sheraton in Anchorage, January 15-19, 2019 to discuss and vote on Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) proposals. You can view the proposals, meeting agenda, and other information, and listen to the meeting when it's in progress on-line on the Board of Fish site at: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2018-2019/proposals/2018-2019_proposal_book_digital.pdf

The Board of Fisheries process includes staff reports, public testimony, committee meetings,

and board deliberations. The full Board of Fisheries meeting is open to the public. Public testimony is taken at the beginning of the meeting, for all proposals. Sign-ups for public comment and committees take place at the beginning of the board meeting.

How to Participate

Training opportunity:

Tuesday, January 15 (first meeting day). Boards Support Section is hosting a training course, How to Navigate the Board Process during the lunch break in the main meeting area. The training will occur roughly ten minutes after the noon break and last approximately one hour. All are welcome. Call Boards Support, 907-465-4110, for more information.

Attend the Board of Fisheries Meeting, January 15-19, 2019 in Anchorage at the Sheraton

- Public testimony is usually taken starting midway through the first day of the meeting and continuing into Day 2. Be at the first part of the meeting if you wish to provide testimony.
- If your travel budget or time is limited, it's most important to be there towards the beginning of the meeting if you wish to provide testimony or participate in the committees.

Submit Written Comments

- Written comments should be received two weeks before the meeting—by January 2, 2019—to be included in the Board's materials.

- If you are providing written comments:
 - List the proposal number.
 - State whether you support or oppose the proposal.
 - » If you support the proposal with a change, say you "support as amended" and provide a short description of the change you support.
 - Briefly explain why you support or oppose the proposal.
 - If you are submitting comments on more than one proposal, list them in one letter.
- Page limits:
 - Before January 2: 100 single-sided pages total (for all proposals).
 - After the comment deadline, but before deliberations begin: 10 single-sided pages total (if at the meeting must provide 25 copies).
 - Once deliberations have begun: 5 single-sided pages total, must provide 25 copies.
- Send written comments to:
ATTN: BOF COMMENTS
Boards Support Section,
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526,
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
Phone: 907/465-4110
Fax: 907/465-6094

Index of Board of Fish Yukon River 2019 Subsistence & Commercial fishery proposals

[DOES NOT INCLUDE SPORTFISH PROPOSALS]

PROPOSAL 86

Allow subsistence fishing for non-salmon fish with hook and line gear in District 4 of the Yukon Area.

PROPOSAL 87

Allow subsistence fishing for salmon with drift gillnets in the entire Yukon River.

PROPOSAL 88

Require fish wheels to be closely attended during times of conservation for any species.

PROPOSAL 89

Allow retention of king salmon for subsistence purposes, by emergency order, during times of king salmon conservation in the Yukon Area.

PROPOSAL 90

Reduce the amount of time prior to opening of the commercial fishing season in Districts 1-3 and Subdistrict 4-A of the Yukon Area when subsistence fishing for salmon is prohibited.

PROPOSAL 91

Reduce the amount of time prior to opening of each commercial fishing period in Districts 1-3 of the Yukon Area when subsistence fishing for salmon is prohibited.

PROPOSAL 92

Restrict gillnet mesh size to a maximum of 6 inches in Districts 4, 5, and 6 subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries.

PROPOSAL 93

Repeal the requirement to remove the tips of the tail fin of subsistence-taken salmon in Districts 1-3 of the Yukon Area.

PROPOSAL 94

Allow the taking of the first king salmon entering the Yukon River for religious and ceremonial use.

PROPOSAL 95

In the Yukon River between the marker at Waldron Creek and Hess Creek, require a minimum distance of 300 feet between units of set gillnet gear and limit the amount of net gear that may be deployed in an eddy to 350 feet.

PROPOSAL 96

Allow subsistence fishing for fall chum salmon in District 5 without time restrictions if commercial fishing for fall chum salmon is open in other Yukon River districts. Yukon Commercial Fisheries (8 proposals)

PROPOSAL 97

Divide District 2 of the Yukon Area into two subdistricts.

PROPOSAL 98

Decrease gillnet depth in Districts 4–6 of the Yukon Area.

PROPOSAL 99

Allow use of beach seine gear to harvest salmon during open commercial fishing periods in Districts 1 – 3 of the Yukon Area.

PROPOSAL 100

Adopt maximum size and depth restrictions for fish wheel baskets.

PROPOSAL 101

Open and close the commercial fishery for fall chum and coho salmon in the Yukon Area by emergency order.

PROPOSAL 102

Include the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers in District 1 of the Yukon Area.

PROPOSAL 103

Repeal closed waters within 500 yards of the mouth of the Pastolik River and the Pastoliak River.

PROPOSAL 104

Repeal closed waters in the lower three miles of the Pastolik and Pastoliak rivers.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTR. / SEAT #	REPRESENTATIVE	COMMUNITY
Coastal	Lester Wilde	Hooper Bay
1	Aloysius Unok	Kotlik
Y-1	Allen Hansen	Alakanuk
Y-1	Michael James	Alakanuk
Y-1	Bill Alstrom	St. Marys
Y-2	Nick Andrew, Sr.	Marshall
Y-2	Mike Peters	Marshall
Y-2	Alfred Demientieff	Holy Cross
Y-3	Fred Huntington, Sr.	Galena
Y-4	Richard Burnham	Kaltag
Y-4	Charlie Wright	Tanana/Rampart
Y-5	Stan Zuray	Tanana
Y-5	Tim McManus	Nenana
Y-6	Victor Lord	Nenana
Y-6	Pollock Simon	Allakaket
Yukon Flats/5-D	Andrew Firman	Fort Yukon

ALTERNATES

DISTR. / SEAT #	REPRESENTATIVE	COMMUNITY
Coastal, Alt. 1	Aloysius Aguchak Sr.	Scammon Bay
Coastal, Alt. 2	Clifford Kaganak Sr.	Scammon Bay
Y-1, Alt. 1	Joe Afcan	Nunum Iqua
Y-1, Alt. 2	Camille Augline	Alakanuk
Y-2, Alt. 1	Stanislaus Afcan	St. Marys
Y-2, Alt. 2	Duane Thompson	Mountain Village
Y-3, Alt. 1	Basil Larson	Russian Mission
Y-4, Alt. 1	Dick Evans	Galena
Y-4, Alt. 2	Robert Walker	Anvik
Y-5, Alt. 1	Vacant	—
Y-6, Alt. 1	Candace Charlie	Minto
Y-6, Alt. 2	Dorothy Shockley	Manley Hot Springs
Koyukuk River	William Derendoff	Huslia
Flats, Alt. 1	Jan Woodruff	Eagle

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Cover art: Sunset over the Yukon River in Galena.

