



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

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Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 7th, 2020 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, June 30, 2020. Call lasted 153 minutes. 110 callers participated

Background: Yukon River salmon management teleconferences are held annually every Tuesday in June, July, and August for managers and fishers throughout the Yukon River drainage to discuss fishing conditions and management strategies in real time as the salmon run is occurring. Funded by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

Media participating: None

Political Representatives participating: None

Communities participating this week: 23

Hooper Bay
Alakanuk
Emmonak
Mountain Village
Saint Marys
Marshall
Russian Mission
Anvik
Nulato
Koyukuk
Galena
Ruby
Tanana
Beaver
Ft. Yukon
Eagle
Minto
Nenana
Fairbanks
Old Crow
Dawson
Teslin
Whitehorse

Coastal District 1-Lower Yukon

Hooper Bay:

Lester Wilde - So far not much, we just started fishing. One thing that we've never had is closures. When our fishing schedule is open, we rarely have tides that come at the same time that we want them to.

Alakanuk:

Ted Hamilton - I've spoken to 4 fishers this past week. No one has fished due to recent fishing closures. We are starting to see humpys that people caught with beach seines. People are saying that it is too much work to fish with dip nets.

Emmonak:

Paul Andrew- The water level is low. The commercial opener yesterday with 24 hrs was very low numbers and very hard work. Yesterday's subsistence - no one caught anything. No one was fishing because there were so many humpies. People have not gotten their subsistence needs, the smokehouses are empty. There is no orange on the racks. People are wondering, what is going on with management? Why are we being over regulated? There are pictures on facebook of people in the interior holding up their fish and being very happy. We have to let them go because someone else wants them. I want everyone to overlook this management system and get a Katie John approach.

Carl Bird - I have been going out on this subsistence schedule and I have zero fish on my rack. Why do some people up river get to use nets and we don't?

District 2-Coastal/Lower Yukon

Mt. Village:

Nita Stevens - I spoke with 10 fishermen, only 1 fished. Most people do not have fish on their racks. Out of the fish I caught, there were 4 chums with dip net. Most people did not fish due to mechanical and other reasons. There were recent deaths who came home to get buried. Water is still high, not much drift as before.

St. Mary's:

Bill Alstrom - No reports, just listening in.

Marshall:

Norma Evan - This week I spoke with 10 families and 8 fished, long hours dipnetting. 20 per 6 hours. I've caught 15 chum. All 8 families said fishing was worse than the previous week. Marshall is a small community, 400 people. We do not over fish. Many years in the past there was a lot of escapement in Marshall. Many unfished opportunities. The water is still high, we have no beach, it dropped less than a foot. We had a lot of rain and it's been pretty chilly. There was a break today. The humpies are showing up. 5 were caught. Families are starting to worry about food security, especially for the winter. I see the posted sonar passage, is that enough for escapement? Most bigger families are 50% done with chum harvest and 0% of king harvest. Please consider Marshall for an additional opening. Marshall has not been commercial fishing for the past couple years due to no buyer. And people do not have nets.

Mike Peters - Saving questions till the Questions and Discussions.

District 3-Coastal/Lower Yukon

Russian Mission:

Basil Larsen - 20 chums had to get thrown away because they were infected with puss.

Everyone was worried and hoping for more dipnet hours. The water has been high. one elder in town got all their fish stolen, they're happy there's a chance to get more chums.

District 4a-Upper Yukon

Anvik:

Ken Chase - Nothing to report as far as fishing, water is still coming up, lots of drift. Doesn't look too good.

Alberta - I spoke to 10 fisherman this week, no one has been fishing. They've been asking when the fishing season will be open? Some families haven't even fished yet, they need to feed their families. No one has been fishing since the closure.

Nulato:

Arnold Demoski - There were a couple of fish harvested before we got shut down. We are happy to be open. Not sure if the water is dropping. It seems high and there is likely a lot of drift.

Koyukuk:

Ben Jones - Nothing to report but water came up 4' since last week. We would like to have 7.5 openings on Saturday if possible.

Huslia:

Bill Derendoff - High water, lots of sticks floating down. The fishing is slow. We don't know the count in Koyukuk because last year we had a major catastrophe with the heat. Hope to get some numbers upriver or at Gisasa to see if we still have a bunch of chum salmon coming up or if we are getting low. Now there is hardly any fishing going on. Sheefish are coming in.

Clarification: There was a media post on Facebook of someone holding a King. That was from last year NOT this year.

Zoe - Not much to report, a couple more households have put more nets out. I believe one household did catch one king salmon. But I haven't heard any more than that.

Districts 4b & c-Upper Yukon

Galena:

Fred Huntington - No one is fishing. We were shut off last week. Water is really high and there is a lot of drift. I doubt if anyone is going to be doing anything but getting their nets tangled.

Howard - 3 days ago the drift showed up and it is running heavy with large debris. The low areas are starting to flood. It's 53 degrees. No activity and I doubt there will be any.

Ruby: Racheal Kangas- The water is high and still steadily rising. No beach which is pretty extreme for our area. Everything is into the willows. Steadily raining on and off, and it hailed last night. No one is fishing due to closure. Even with 4" mesh, no one has that type of net. The Ruby Tribe is very thankful for the opportunity to fish this evening and this weekend.

Districts 5a, b, c & d

Tanana:

Stan Zuray - The water has gone up and is way into the bushes. Water crested yesterday and drift is slowing today. There are 7 fish camps that I survey. There's another 6 that I get constant information from. There's been no fishing in the last week except for 4" whitefish in the last few days. Those nets did bad with drift but caught some whitefish. Fishermen greatly appreciate being able to fish during closures. Some have left camp, some are waiting to see if it is worth it to go to camp. The driftwood will prohibit most from fishing tonight. I expect better conditions next opening. COVID-19 protocols are not clear. The airlines require tribal council approval and local stores require masks.

Beaver:

Rhonda Pitka - No one has been fishing. The wind is high and the water is really high, plus, it is closed. We are waiting for the opener this week.

Fort Yukon:

Paul Herbert - I am listening in and I will ask questions later when authorities get up there.

Eagle:

Ruby- I don't have a report but general update, we still have very high water, more high than normal. Heavy silt load coming down. Large and small debris and no beaches anywhere. Everyone I have spoked with is really concerned about the king run and are taking a very conservative approach if we do get to fish. The Eagle Sonar crew is here and getting set up.

Districts 6a, b & c

Minto:

Phillip Titus - Just listening.

Nenana:

Victor Lord - We had some high water all last week, it went a little down last night. I talked to one fisherman and he moved his wheel down river, but the water came up and now he wishes he didn't. There were some 70 foot logs going down river at about 10 miles an hour.

Fairbanks:

Dorothy Shockley - Just listening in...

Stephanie (YRITFC) - Not on the river, been hearing the same as you are hearing. The water is high, folks have not met their needs. Pretty clear that this salmon run is late. Fish are on their way and hopefully the water will go down, you need to just wait.

Virgil - I think Victor summed up Tanana river. We keep getting thunderstorms in the PM, just had one that dumped a lot of rain.

Canada

Old Crow:

Stan Sr. and Erica - There is high water, same as last week. It's an average high for this time of year. There is small debris and no drift. Fishermen are waiting to fish for the summer season to prepare for winter. It's been raining so water is going to stay high. We have a huge traditional territory, we have Chinook chum and Coho coming up here. It's very pristine and we are waiting for salmon.

Dawson:

Sebastian Jones - The water has started to drop. Forecast says that it will get better. People are accepting that they will not get much Chinook but now are starting to worry about the Chum. That is likely the only salmon that people in the Yukon will be able to access.

Teslin:

Emmy - We obviously don't have fish yet in Teslin. Just wanted to say hi. Water seems to be going down here in the headwaters. We do have some research going on here in the community. Teslin has not fished for many years with the small openings here and there. My family fished last year and got maybe 10. We are looking forward to some fishing this year, the Chinook and Chum. By the time they get to us they are in no condition to eat. Usually our community will fly in some fish from another watershed to be able to feed our elders and practice cutting them. This year, due to COVID-19, we will not be able to do that. I want to say to communities at the mouth, I know it is tough, but we have been there for 20 years. Your conservation efforts are not going to waste. We need to survive off this fish. For food, for sustenance. We are all in this together.

Whitehorse:

Al - I went to Carmacks, and the water is back in the bush. There are big lakes we have to fill up. We have lots of water. This year is going to be a high water year and the effects on the salmon. It will have some sort of effect. At least the water is not going to be too warm.

Management Reports Agenda:

*Holly Carroll, ADFG YR Summer Season Manager; call 907/267-2324

(Jeff Estensen with ADFG will give a fall report as the fall season will begin on July 15 /16 in the Y-1 lower river district)

Fred West- ADF&G Fisheries Biologist - Current projections for Chinook have improved.

Genetic results indicate a strong Canadian portion. Average for normal run timing is June 24.

Most likely we have passed the midpoint. Sonar project near Eagle is setting up and will be up by July 1. First pulse of the Chinook should be at Grayling. Second pulse is at Pilot. Third pulse coming. There are Chum near Kantishna, the first large group should be near Holy Cross.

June 7-22, 62% were of Canadian origin which is higher than we expect.

As far as the assessment - because we have been dealing with high water for LYTF, and we just had that storm, we had to skip a couple of drifts a few days ago. Back to fishing with all our nets, and the catches have slowed down. We should be seeing decent passage at Pilot for both species. And for the Sonar, the water levels remain high. There are 98,851 Chinook, the historical average is 131,000. For Chum there are 304,500 fish, which is below the historical 1 million. The passage closer to cumulative passage at this date in 2019. This estimates through yesterday. Eagle is setting up and we hope to be operational by tomorrow July 1. Chena river Tower / sonar deployed but high water caused them to pull out. Hope to put gear back in water soon. Remember that because of COVID-19, a bunch of sites are not operating, including Gisasa. Hope to do some aerial surveys soon.

Holly Carroll- Yukon River Summer Season Manager - Fred painted the picture of where we are now. It's great to say things are not as bad as last week. We need to stay cautious however. There is a small harvestable surplus, it is small. This is more similar to 2016 or 2017. Fish Commission put out a post that explained it well. People can fish but will not be able to meet

their needs. People are having a hard time catching Chums. We have started to provide gillnet opportunities in every district. Some people in the lower river made comments about not being able to use gill nets, the news release states that all districts will get to use gillnets. Everyone is restricted to 6", to direct Chum opportunities and some Chinook. Typically, they get less and smaller kings. Fish wheels are legal but reminder that a lot of openings will be worthless. With the drift and high water, it may not be worth going yet. Sit tight and see if next openings will be better. Fish are distributed weirdly with an extended trickle. People in the upper river are not going to see a lot of kings. I misspoke on a last call, the Eagle Sonar was supposed to start on the fifth, but we didn't have the funding. Districts 1, 2, 3 harvest 50-60,000 Chums to feed their families. To hear all the people in the river saying they don't have fish on the racks, they're talking about kings. Hopefully this opportunity with the openings will give more chums. We are highly aware that people haven't met their subsistence needs but we need to keep the economic side of the river alive. I hope people understand why we are taking a conservative approach to the harvest.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Gerald Maschmann - Acting Yukon River Federal In-season Manager- We've been working with Holly and her crew all summer. It's an unusually late run like Holly and Fred said. A normal pulse we see at Pilot station on the 15th, this time it was the 23rd. Have some patience and we're gonna keep our eye on it.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Jesse Trerice - Fisheries Manager - We are currently working on the 2020 Canadian Management Strategy and it is expected to be finalized in late June. The overarching objective is to respect the conservation. We recognize the low run and counts have created difficulties for subsistence fishers and we're glad to see the improvement at Pilot. Like ADF&G were gonna pay really close attention to Pilot. We're excited to hear about Eagle starting up. We really enjoy seeing the updates on a daily basis. The information collected at Pilot is used to make adjustments to management. Given the below average Canadian Chinook salmon count we are going to keep a conservative approach.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Diana Stram - Salmon is caught as a bycatch at the Pollock fishery. Salmon caught in the Bering Sea fishery is not allowed to be sold. The Chum and Chinook are caught as bycatch. The observer program is in place and there are 2 people on each boat. Like the 2011 census, every salmon is counted. With the genetic samples on subset, every year council is provided with genetics for the Bering Sea. In general, about 44% goes to Western Alaska. 4% of the fish caught at Pollock are older fish. The Chinook that are caught in Pollock fishery are 3, 4, and 5 years old. There is a very low percentage of older fish. Since 2011 the Pollock fisheries are managed with hard limits on the amount of chinook they can catch. Each sector has an incentive plan agreement to encourage less chinook caught. Since 2015, additional incentive programs are set for September and October, because chinook catches are higher that time of year. Provision - at low levels for chinook abundance. The 3 river index. sum of Kuskokwim, Yukon and Norton sound, if it goes below 250,00, THEN Pollock fisher goes to a lower cap. This did happen in the 2019 fishery, because of the level of abundance. In 2020 abundance was over limit so there was a higher cap. This is determined every fall. 2020 A season chinook season bycatch (winter fishery), B season is in the summer. 18,690 fish - which is slightly higher

than last A season. Last A season there were 16,000 fish. Overall, including the B season, there are about 20,000 fish. Which is similar to the bycatch last year. We're just starting the B season now. I understand the questions about males to females. Last season, the lengths we're similar to previous seasons. Between the ages 3, 4, 5, there was about 50% male female ratio. Happy to answer questions or give you more specifics about the management system.

Questions and discussion:

Q// Carl - Were those 18,000 fish all Chinook?

A// Diana Stram (North Pacific Fishery Management Council) - Those were all Chinook. We haven't run into the Chum run yet in 2020. The Chum numbers in previous years were about 295,000, but it waivers back and forth. Pollock fishery operates on priority to avoid Chinook over all other species.

Q// Carl - Last week someone indicated that there were two Belugas hanging out at mouth and that Chinook would not enter the river with them there. Please update.

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Can local fishermen address this?

John - We still see Belugas out at the coast here.

Stanley Pete - Numan Iqua - Last night there was a very large pod of whales hanging out near Flat Island, etc. The pod stretched from Munson Island to Tin Can point. About 1 mile of whales lingering around.

Q// Lester Wilde - Hooper Bay - question for Fred West from ADFG - This is the first time that Hooper Bay has ever had a closure, it is hard to catch fish when the tide is out. When it's closed and the tide comes in, we have a whole period of time when we are unable to catch fish. Why was regulation changed this year for the first time in a long time?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Last week we had run projections that indicated that there were no harvestable surplus of King salmon. We are totally aware of conditions that you have at the coast. We are aware that we should not restrict your fishing in the same way that we restrict others. If you listened last week you heard that everyone in the river was restricted before the Kings got there. We know that your community relies mostly on Chum. Just because we haven't done it before doesn't mean that we shouldn't. I'm grateful that the run has improved enough to allow some harvest.

Lester Wilde - Hooper Bay - The village of Hooper Bay takes the least amount of King salmon when they are available. There are a lot of complaints from the village. We haven't even got one salmon yet. Last year we caught only 1 whitefish in the bay. Last year I only caught 1 king. The water in the bay is getting shallower. We have never been restricted before and I do not understand why we would ever be restricted. And I don't understand why our openings were during low tide when we cannot even catch fish. Is there anything you can do? Hooper Bay is different from other villages.

Q// Stan Julie - Old Crow - Here, we have more office space than people. For Diana - Temperature in the ocean, in Pollock fishery, what is temp compared to other years?

A// Diana Stram (North Pacific Fishery Management Council) - The conditions are warm, and for the past several years, the ice cover has been less. There's been an oceanic heat wave the last couple years, affecting fishing patterns. The Pollock fishery is significantly offshore. Well

out past shelf break and near pibilofs and further North. We have been seeing different patterns in the last couple years due to environmental conditions.

Victor Lord - Nenana - Thank you Diana for your report. And for mentioning bycatch on Kings is 3, 4, and 5 year olds. 2007 record bycatch, 2004, 2005, 2007, our larger 7 year old king salmon started disappearing on the river. I don't know the answer but the time frame is about the same. Harvard fish camp degree tells me that the Chinook are passing fish camps. It's important to get early tricklers to spawning grounds, and the integral part to the spawning. Listening to my fish camp degree.

Joseph Afcan - Thank you Diana for your report from the high season about intercept fisheries. I would like to ask Holly about the very efficient fishing that happened in the past, like fish trapping and fish wheeling that happened in the South East and crept up to the Yukon. I would like a report about the efficiency of fish wheels in the Yukon. I started fishing when I was 13 years old. There were so many Chinook salmon that went up the Yukon river. People were taking what they needed and kept the fishing industry going on the delta. I would like to see numbers come up that resemble that amount of fishery.

Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - The run size used to be so much larger, there was enough for people to get what they needed and a commercial fishery. Today's run sizes are so small or they fluctuate at a level that does not support a commercial industry. Some years there is not even enough for subsistence. When it comes to the fishwheels. There are fishermen who prefer the fish wheel but you need the perfect spot. You have to have a lead that will direct fish into your wheel. There is nothing about the wheels that makes them so efficient. There used to be more fish wheels in the lower river. Now they don't start until District 3 or 4 and have become more efficient in the upper river. Only 2% of fishermen are using wheels.

Joseph Afcan - The amount of fish going to Canada, minimum was 40,000. If that number is detrimental to the species, I think any small number of fish, Chinook salmon or Chum salmon, all depends upon that small amount of fish to keep the species going. Fishermen up on the Yukon required a big raft to transport the fish wheel to their hometown. I was worried about the amount of fish that can escape when caught by a fish wheel?

Q// Stan Julie - Old Crow - Question for Diana - The chinook bycatch, genetics of those stocks and results of that, how long does it take to get that info?

A// Diana Stram (North Pacific Fishery Management Council) - We do genetics of all the Chinook catch in Pollock fishery. Reports lag a year. There's a lengthier process working on streamlining it. Usually at our annual April council meeting we receive genetic reports on a 2 year lag. In 2019 we get a report for 2017. Because of COVID-19, we had to cancel the April council meeting. I hope to work with the lab to get a report but it will be for 2018. Every 30th fish we take genetics. Roughly 4% returns to the Upper Yukon. The other population is difficult to resolve separately. The percentage is of Upper Yukon, the coastal Alaska group, etc.

Q// Victor Lord - Nenana - Is your April council meeting always in Anchorage?

A// Diana Stram (North Pacific Fishery Management Council) - Traditionally yes, we usually have that in Anchorage. The June meeting is usually in an Alaskan community. We meet 4 times a year. One meeting a year in Seattle and Oregon. It's likely our next council meeting will be virtual. April meetings are always in Anchorage.

Q// Bill Alstrom - St. Mary's - I notice we have subsistence fisheries open tomorrow, with 6" gear, does this include dip nets?

A// Holly Carroll(ADF&G) - This is confusing. Dip nets are now, ever since the last board cycle, a legal subsistence salmon gear. You can use it at anytime. But you cannot fish with that dip net when it's closed for salmon. When it's open for salmon fishing, you can use your dipnet, subsistence only.

Q// Allen Hansen - Alakanuk - Is it possible to use dip nets while we are gill netting?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Yes, throughout the Yukon River, except near Fairbanks. Every District except 6C. Camped out by Munson Island and there is a pod of Beluga whales, and I've heard a school of fish hit black river.

Q// Joel - Because of COVID-19, the prices of meat and anything store bought are going to be so super high. Can we relax the closures to fill fish racks?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Store bought meat is too expensive and I understand that. This King run is small and we have to conserve it for future years. So we ask people to focus on Chum.

Q// Benedict - Koyukuk - I want to know when the next opening will be? And what is the sonar passage of Kings?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - 6pm Tuesday to 6pm Wednesday. Saturday there will be openings for 6" gillnets until Kings have passed through.

Q// Don - Emmonak - Are we able to go out and use a 6" mesh now? Last night I was reading on facebook that we could not.

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Unfortunately we like to give 24 hrs notice. The left part of the dip net opening in place. That's because it was previously announced. It ends today at 2pm. There is an opening with gillnets today at 2pm. 6" or smaller for 18 hours.

Q// Daryl - Huslia - Can you clarify fishing gear for Koyukuk river? I know it's open for 24 hrs.

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - It is limited to 6" or smaller gill net or dip nets.

Daryl - Drift net okay too?

Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Call me and I will check regulations.

Carl - Something has been bothering me for a long time. I am on the Yukon Salmon Sub committee, the Tlingit council member. My heart goes out to those people who are actual subsistence people who depend on the river. I've been doing this for 20 years. I know that there are people who totally depend on the salmon. What bothers me the most is the subsistence license. Almost anyone who moves to Alaska can get themselves a subsistence license. I was born and raised here in Teslin. I was raised on salmon and I know what it's like to not have it. The government should change that license.

Victor - Thank you Carl.

Q// Martin - We logged on a little late. Comment for Diana- I wanted to find out about the incidental bycatch in Pollock fishery. Is there an inspector or enumerator counting the salmon being thrown over? I have a question for Holly as well about putting subsistence after commercial fishery? Timing is so important for drying our salmon. We had 20 chums hanging on the fish rack that already showed some mold. Disheartening to put so much effort into a

subsistence lifestyle when we know that it will be wasted. Especially in times of COVID-19 and food security issues.

A// Diana Stram (North Pacific Fishery Management Council)- The enumeration of salmon is on an offshore fleet. There is 100 % coverage of observers, also cameras, all places that fish come on board is recorded, every single salmon is counted (census).

Paul Herbert- Fort Yukon - I'm wondering about the fish wheel? It's hard to catch fish with the fish wheel here. The current here is 8 mph, it'll turn a thousand times before we catch a fish. I like the idea of taking the Katie John stand. There should be no commercial opening. I think this is all about money, just saying.

Paul- Emmonak - Your management is hurting our living. This whole river is hurting. You have put us into a disaster. Call the higher ups, we need something done. Or else I'm gonna start telling people to file a lawsuit, I'll be using the Katie John example.

Q// Fred- Mountain - There is subsistence fishing tomorrow. The numbers are high, can we split the period into 7.5 and 6"?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - We are not going to change the currently announced opening to include 7.5". We know people would prefer that but we are trying to limit the number of Kings. If numbers continue to be good at Pilot there might be change. Hang tight and hope for the best.

Q// Norma Evan- Marshall - Estimation, how big was the first pulse for King salmon?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - 28,000 fish, but trickled in longer than normal. We started to count the 2nd pulse which is about 36,000.

Q// Phillip Titus - Minto - % canadian bound at the sonar?

A// Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Proportion of first samples showed 62% which is pretty good for an even year.

Mickey Stickman - I am concerned with the fishing time and for the Kings being cut in half, there's no way we'll be able to fill our fish houses. I'm worried about the fall chum. Here in Y4 A we don't harvest Kings, we mainly do the fall Chum harvest and a lot of whitefish. Somewhere along the line we changed our style and Chinook became the targeted fish. I'm hoping the department is really careful with the fall chum, that's what will save the people on the river. It's gonna save us again as long as we don't over harvest them.

Paul Herbert - Fort Yukon - The chum here are not good to eat. They are skinny, 2 inches wide and look like zebras. That is why we are after Kings. The 6" net is too small. It kills a lot of fish and then they fall off the net after they die. Guy talking 7" or bigger, that's a good idea. A smaller net kills a lot of fish that never get harvested.

Q// Paul- Emmonak - What is the margin of error on the sonar count?

A// Fred West (ADF&G) - Sonar uses a 90% confidence interval.

Paul - What is the margin of error? give us a number.

Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Most seasons estimated at pilot will be plus or minus 30,000. This is the best assessment tool we have.

Paul - Ever since the sonar came in, things have crashed.

Q// Dorothy Shockley - What needs to happen in order for our relatives in Canada to fish some Chinook?

A// Holly Caroll (ADF&G) - Up to 55,000 fish for escapement goal, should always get 23%. 2014-2018 we exceeded those goals. This is a very small run but we calculate everything, it should be possible on a run this size.

Jack - Kotlik - Do you remember what happened, May of 1961 up North? According to ADN, a group of 138 men, women, and children held a harvest of ducks, a duck in, and they asked to be arrested. In support of a hunter who was arrested. Do we need to do that? We need all the fish we can get for the winter. This past winter it was so cold that everyone needed to rely on their subsistence harvest. We have a voice. It's just Fish and Game, they are not there to help us. They are there to hold onto a job. You and me, we need to put our subsistence food away. Ever since they got that sonar, things have not been good. What do we need to do to not be arrested to put food away for the winter?

Emmy - Teslin Tlingit Council - I am listening to comments. I've been a manager for First Nations for the last 20 years. I've also been a fisher my entire life. I think it's really important, in the middle of a pandemic. Our elders are telling us that we need to prepare for a different lifestyle. The management agencies on both sides of the border have their ways. We need to change as managers, we need to change how we do things. The last 30 years we've been managing in a crisis. I'm a First Nations person and I take my knowledge from my elders. It's time for us to take responsibility for future generations, so my grandchildren can fish and learn my way of life. We need to have respect for traditional knowledge. We need to start managing the fishery not just for our pots but for future generations.

John King - Numan Iqua - bycatch - We catch so much, we had to change our ways for getting fish for ourselves from using gill nets to dip nets. The commercial fishery sounds like they catch lots. That Pollock fishery, they could change their ways, so they can only get Pollock, like we did so we can have kings swim up the river. This has been happening for so many years.

Bill- St. Mary's - I've been listening every week, a lot of people waving at Fish and Game for all their troubles - high water, etc. They don't have any control over that. We have a good management plan. If anyone else has a better management plan, we 'd like to hear about it. Jeez they are just doing their best with what they've got to do. It's impossible to forecast, they try. They have an outlook and they use necessary tools that they have in their bag. If you have a better plan, put it out there. I would like to compliment the ADF&G for doing a good job.

Holly Carroll (ADF&G) - Thanks Bill.

Tiffany Andrew - Right now the Yukon River is our eating table. And all the food is getting set up there but we need to remember that there is a long line of people waiting to get to that food.

Arnold Demoski - Nulato - I'd like to reiterate what Bill said. I know it is a frustrating time for everyone. I see a lot of pointing fingers at the department and Pilot Station Sonar. The department does not set the escapement goal. Their job is to make sure that we meet that escapement goal. That sonar is the best tool we have. If we didn't have it, we wouldnt know how many fish were passing by.

Q// Jack at Kotlik - Bycatch, is that from one boat or all the boats?

A// Diana Stram (North Pacific Fishery Management Council) - Bycatch is at 20,000. It hasn't been at those kinds of levels that you were talking about in 2007 nor would it ever reach those levels again because there are caps. Salmon included. mechanism in the pollock net that allows the salmon to swim out.

Jack - Who monitors the bycatch count? Someone from the government or from the boat?

Diana Stram - The fleet is 100% observer covered, so there is a federal observer on each boat and they are filmed. they are very precise counts.

Jack - Is there anything that would stop the people from bycatch, a fine or something?

Diana Stram - The program is a hard limit, if they were to reach their limits, they would have to stop fishing for the year. There are mechanisms in place that get boats to move off hot spots, and there fines for any vessels that are not complying. People are highly conscious of avoiding Chinook while they are fishing in the Bering Sea.

Jack - Could we have a moratorium for say, 5 years? To see if that would allow the Chinook numbers to come up on the Kuskokwim and Yukon River? They did that for Moose.

Diana Stram - The Council can take up any proposal put before them. At the end of each Council meeting there is an opportunity to present a proposal.

Jack - Would it help to have a petition?

Diana Stram - You can always bring comments to the council, however, I don't know if that's an issue they would take up.

Jack - Do you have a teleconference?

Diana Stram - They're open to the public.

Victor Lord - Nenana - Is the public comment, is that the meeting in Anchorage in April?

Diana Stram - Yes.

Email diana.stram@noaa.gov for any further questions