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## **Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!**

Here is a summary of the 1st, 2020 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, May 19, 2020. Call lasted 55 minutes. 53 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: 13**

Alakanuk  
Mountain Village  
Saint Marys  
Russian Mission  
Anvik  
Nulato  
Galena  
Ruby  
Rampart  
Nenana  
Fort Yukon  
Pelly Crossing  
Whitehorse

### **COMMUNITY LEVEL REPORTS:**

#### **Coastal District 1-Lower Yukon**

**Alakanuk: Allen Hanson:** Mild breakup season. High water, a lot of debris and logs. Right now, everyone is waiting for the river to lower down to put their nets in. Reports of pike and Sheefish. Hopefully with the high water we see some Chinook.

#### **District 2-Coastal/Lower Yukon**

**Mt. Village: Nita Stevens:** High water, but it is dropping. A lot of debris in the water. Some people started catching Sheefish.

**St. Mary's: Bill Alstrom** - Not much going on. Beautiful weather. High water, slowly receding. Quite a bit of drift. Haven't heard of anyone catching any fish. A few nets out on the Andraefski.

### **District 3-Coastal/Lower Yukon**

**Russian Mission: Basil Larson**- Pretty much the same as everyone else. Thick ice, breakup was pretty exciting. A lot of trash. No one wants to filter the water with their nets. Water is staying steady, about a foot below the north bank and about level with the south bank. No fishing activity.

### **District 4a-Upper Yukon**

**Anvik: Alberta** - No people catching fish here. Water is pretty high. Ice is all gone. Lots of debris and logs going down the river. Weather is really beautiful.

**Nulato: Arnold**- River is still high. Drift from the other side of the river.

### **Districts 4b & c-Upper Yukon**

**Galena: Howard**- River is running really high, but there is no drift. A lot of water is coming down by Rampart. It's filling in the low-lying areas.

**Ruby: Don Honea**- I believe the water is standing still. The water is high and there is drift, but there is not as much drift as there was the last couple of days.

### **Districts 5a, b, c & d**

**Rampart: Stan Zuray**- Nothing at all going on as far as fishing here. A lot of people are talking about it, getting ready for fish camp. No drift in the water, but it is very high. Beaches are gone. Still lots of room before any flooding.

**Fort Yukon: Andrew Firmin** - A lot of high water and high winds. Not much fishing activity, but I am sure whitefish nets will come out soon.

### **Districts 6a, b & c**

**Nenana: Victor Lord**- The river looks good. I haven't been out there so I don't know who is fishing for whitefish. Things look good. Hoping to hear more information from the mouth. Thanks for the report, Allen. Hello to Andrew.

### **Canada**

**Pelly: Roger**- High water and a lot of debris. This year the ice forms were pretty thick when it went out. Nice weather.

**Whitehorse: Elizabeth - YSSC**- I haven't had a chance to look at the Yukon, but was low and a little shaded. The Weather has been nice, we got some much needed rain.

### **Management Reports Agenda:**

**Holly Carroll - ADFG Yukon River Summer Season Manager-**

Contact info for ADFG YR Summer Season Manager; call 907/267-2324

**Fred West:** The only update is that we got word that there are some funding issues for the Salcha tower. That won't run this year due to funding.

**Holly Carroll:** While we hate to lose a project, we do still have the Chena, and will get information from that project. Sport Fish is going through some major budget cuts. Wayne and Serena have asked for

updates, and we'd like to know about food shortages because of restricted flights, are the store shelves empty for certain foods? The other thing would be nice to know about, are you finding that family members have to have permission to travel to your communities to fish? Are there flights for them to get there? We need to know about all of this relevant information.

As to the high numbers of Chinook in Norton Sound last year - currently there is Chinook sampling to see where they were heading. Were they Yukon bound?

This summer on the coast you have an opportunity to get in on the sampling. **Contact Fred West if you are interested. 267-2237.**

As far as the management, we are looking at action similar to last year. Now you should have a weekend fishing day. 6" gear and half fishing schedule will be first. That will start with Coastal and D1. Taking a cautious approach in the early part of the run.

**Gerald Masahman-USFW** - Giasas, Andreasfski, and Henshaw weirs will not be operating. Henshaw will be repaired by the Tanana Chiefs Conference this year.

#### **Questions and discussion:**

**Victor Lord - Nenana-** Question about Tanana River and Outlook. Tanana fish travel up the Yukon for 800 miles before they turn up the Tanana. Study on fish in Fairbanks. Sportfish. What hurts me a lot is what they do is Catch and Release. In Tanana, we take care of every fish we catch, like a religion.

**Holly- ADFG-** Sport fishery on the Yukon is always closed at the beginning with a low run. Total sport fish catch is 300 fish. First group to get closed. Tanana actions get closed later. Outlook was just for general steps of how things will happen. When you are a subsistence user on Yukon, you can still use rod and reel for subsistence, up through District 4 at Nulato River. We are closed for sports fishing right now.

**Lisa Stuby- ADFG** - King salmon fishing is closed throughout the Yukon River, excluding the Tanana. Tanana is managed under a different manager. Fish will not reach Tanana until June or so. Once Chena counting tower starts at the end of June. They will see fish at the end of June, early July. Managers will be keeping an eye on the counting tower, Pilot station and rest of Yukon River.

**Victor Lord- Nenana-** when fish hit rampart, we catch them here too.

**Alfred-** Question for holly? Will you be operating test nets in Emmonak?

**Holly** - Yes. Just assessing South Mouth for king salmon, not Middle Mouth in Summer Season. This will and may change for fall season.

**Holly-** Don't forget about the Canadian Managers.

#### **Does the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans have anything they would like to share at this time?**

**Jesse- Division of Fisheries & Oceans Canada** - We are following Federal and Territory Covid guidelines. Pre-season meetings have moved to online and teleconferences. 2020 Canadian management strategy will be finalized by late June. 2020 strategy will be based on objectives established by the Yukon River Panel and Yukon River Salmon Agreement. In consultation with First Nation governments. 59,000 and 90,000 Canadian origin Chinook are expected. Covid security may be an uptick in First Nation harvest in Canada. The First Nation government will direct their fisheries.

- Key priority is to remain focused on Canadian origin salmon reaching their spawning grounds.
- The managers will be watching Pilot, Eagle, etc.
- Covid - Yukon Territory govt released their plans to reopen. No current Covid cases in Yukon

Territory. Self-isolation is required upon return from outside of territory.

- Water level - was on the Yukon River this weekend. It was a long weekend in Canada. Water level is low but we heard it is going to rise. Snow pack on porcupine is at 140%. Flooding?

**Allen Hansen- Alakanuk-** thought for the scientists. South mouth of the Yukon River is getting shallow. Nome district is getting record Chinook salmon. Maybe our salmon are mingling with them due to cold water out in the ocean?

**Holly-** Do you think some of the Chinook bound for Yukon might go to Norton Sound instead. The only way we would be able to determine that is with genetic testing. Not aware of any assessment projects that are taking genetic samples. Historically she is not aware of this but there are other areas/species that this is happening such as pollock.

**Wayne** - do you have any feelings for the timing of salmon return this year?

**Fred West** - we do have a temperature/run timing model that NOAA puts out. They are predicting a normal run timing. Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) midpoint of Chinook run would be June 19th.

**Stephanie Quinn-Davidson- Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC)** - To follow up with Holly's comments about knowing about food shortages. We are tracking funding made available for fishing through the CARES act. 50 Million has been set aside for Alaska Fisheries. Tribes are eligible. We have to document losses due to Covid-19. If communities are impacted, maybe you can't buy gas. Maybe there are food shortages due to planes not flying. Fish commission is trying to pull together this information so we can give it to our senators so they can advocate.

**Allen** - To Stephanie - Is it possible for us to get some money from the Covid 19 so we can get our outboard motor running.

**Stephanie** - Tribes have to apply, not individual fishermen. You have to be specifically impacted. ie, you lost your job and now you are no longer able to pay for motor repair.

**Allen** - I have been trying to keep my family safe from Covid 19. I want to take them away. So I need to approach my Tribal Govt and let them know their situation.

**Stephanie-** Yes, and encourage them to apply. Have them contact me if they have any questions.

**Victor-** On that broken motor... The money does go to the tribe. The lack of jobs, like in Nenana, the corporation shut down for the Covid. That aligns it, there are no jobs out there right now.

**Wayne Jenkins - Out-going Director** - This is my last call hosting the YRDFA Teleconferences and I just want to share what an honor and blessing it has been to work with you all, Yukon River fishers and managers and others. Please keep working together for a sustainable fishery. The Yukon River is a very special, one of a kind place. Take care of this God-given landscape and each other, especially during these challenging days of Covid19. God bless you all.

**Victor** - Thanks Wayne.

**Holly** - Thanks Wayne, you've been a real asset to me. asking hard questions and getting information for your fishermen.

**Allen** - make sure you text me your phone number so we can keep in contact. You've done a really good job for the Yukon River and we all appreciate you.

Contact info for ADFG YR Summer Season Manager; call 907/267-2324

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3141 or look for us on the web at [www.yukonsalmon.org](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

or call toll-free 1-866-479-7387 for recorded fishing schedules and assessment information

For Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada updates, please visit:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/yukon/fmcountingfac.htm>

Please join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).