



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

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Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

June 14, 2016

Here is a summary of the Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference #2 held Tuesday, June 14, 2016. The toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).

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. *The Teleconferences are funded by the Federal Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.*

Communities participating this week: **In Alaska:** Hooper Bay, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Pitkas Point, Mountain Village, Saint Mary's, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Anvik, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Fort Yukon, Nenana, Fairbanks. **In Yukon Territory Canada:** Old Crow, Whitehorse

Yukon River Subsistence Reports: Alaska

Hooper Bay: Catching a few chum, not many kings caught, yesterday wind from west, should be good for fish coming in.

Alakanuk: Strong pulse of chum came in, some king, high water, high wind from the west. Perhaps first big pulse. Trickle previously. YR DFA Surveyor Pamela Cook: of 19 households, 11 interviewed, 3 fished- 8 did not, No increase from last week. Comments from fishers-need more subsistence fishing. Want to use gillnets. Commercial fishing interfering with getting subsistence.

Kotlik: Big tidal surges, high water, highest he has seen in years, not going down much. Efforts on North Mouth-subsistence to Pt. Romanoff-catches low. Hard to dip net on north mouth-fish spread out into deeper channels. Large number of fish in river. Did ok commercial fishing with his boys. Released 22 nice kings. West wind bringing them in.

Pitkas Point: 3-5 hrs. commercial 798 summer chum, 1 jack, slow last week. 4-5 folks fishing same amount caught, water dropping slowly.

Mountain Village: YR DFA surveyor Stan Shepard-water dropping, a foot in 3 days. Past week-winds-rough on the water, folks dip netting for subsistence, not too good catch. Stan caught 34 chum-released 8 kings-jacks; med-size 3-4 yr. olds. Majority folks pretty well done with dry fish working on strips. Commercial-he just came up from Y1-every fisher-average catch 2-totes-couple hundred-fish are coming in.

St. Marys: Pretty rough conditions-heard folks dipping for chum for subsistence harvest. Cell service really bad-quite a few folks have no fish on the racks, lots of rain/wind. Finally 1st run showing up upper Y1 and Y2. Fishing restricted too soon in Y2.

Marshall: YR DFA surveyor Norma Evan-15 households interviewed, 8 fished-45% done with summer chum-other 0-50% done. All dip-netting, no beach seining going on, 3 foot drop in water level.

Russian Mission: YR DFA surveyor Basil Larson-water dropping-fishers having a hard time with dip nets for subsistence. Folks would like to see opener for 6" gear. 15 fish camps active-under 25% done for subsistence. Tough, water dropping fast. Nearby fire slowed down, no smoke in village.

Holy Cross: Nothing to report yet. Dip nets-like looking for a needle in a haystack-no fish hanging-everyone hoping for a getting some kings.

Shageluk: Nobody fishing, water high. What should they use?

Anvik: No fishing yet, water down a couple feet-one 4" set net for whitefish, sheefish and poor looking chum. Folks waiting for bigger nets and a good opening.

Koyukuk: Nothing to report, water stable-clearer than previous years-this time of year.

Huslia: No real report, water high, some drift.

Allakaket: Water dropping, clearer, no fish yet, some have nets out in sloughs for whitefish.

Galena: Water low and no fishing. Question, is 1st pulse of kings a little larger in size?

Ruby: Not much fishing going on, water steady and clear, waiting on fishnets-6" for next opening. YR DFA surveyor Charlene Mayo spoke with 2 fishers-fishing just beginning, hoping to get more chum for dried fish.

Tanana: River up a bit, some sticks, folks catching a lot of sheefish, some kings in.

Fort Yukon: YR DFA surveyor Andrew Firmin-not much fishing yet, getting ready-prepping fish wheels

Nenana: Victor-river steady-river should be rising, believes fish are in the river but no-one caught any yet. Getting ready

Fairbanks: Rain 2"

Yukon River Subsistence Reports: Yukon Territory, Canada

Old Crow: High water-lots of rain, no fishing. Was some fresh water fishing earlier.

Whitehorse: Fair amount of rain, water up, waiting for the fish.

Questions for managers about assessment, run strength, timing, etc... for ADFG, USFWS or DFO in Canada: Note-answers in red.

Stan/Mountain Village to Holly: Majority of folks/Elders-late 50's to mid-70s-saying good for the young people to use the dip nets-so hard for them to use. **Holly- Yes, dip nets are harder for the Elders to use. Hope family members can help the Elders get their fish.** Stan fished 7 hrs.-caught 34 chum, battling the winds and rain. If they were allowed to use 6" gear or smaller for 3-4 hrs. that would work to get their subsistence. Main thing-get the fish on the racks to dry. Have 4 or 5 questions. 1) Couple years back 6" or less for 3 hrs. was used for commercial, why not for subsistence. **Holly-Restricted commercial time-no sales and no retention of kings/dip net. Reduce commercial to 3 hr.? Any commercial fisher can also keep chum for subsistence.** 2) Regulations state to release all Chinook, regardless of size-asking, do you think small salmon are going to spawn? **Holly- Small kings spawn? Yes, they are an important component of the run. We do not have the authority to support keeping smaller kings.** 3) 4" mesh gear-areas around here-very shallow-can they use 4"-60' nets? Drift along the beach? **Holly- What we do not have the authority to do is allow different gear types for elders. Would need to have a regulation change at the Board of Fish.** 4) When fish pass Pilot Station sonar what % of the pulses are

Canadian stock? Holly-In even years 1st pulse is 48% CA, a bit less later in the runs. Odd years a little higher.

Holly-Fred's/Galena question-size of salmon 1st pulse-Holly-we don't necessarily analyze for that but hope to have some information on the next call.

Basil/Russian Mission-comment-Holly, a lot of folks here would like to see 6" harvest before flies double the work load. Holly-thanks and understand timing. Were just trying to make sure after 1st pulse and we need to wait 3 more days and hope we can have gillnet openings for chum and some kings.

Stan/Mountain Village-one question-subsistence users-4"x60' gear, can they use close to beach? # of beach seiners Y1&Y2? Holly 4" gear supposed to be for non-salmon species not king or chum. Not looking for creative ways to get king and chum. If folks are using the gear wrong may need to suspend its use. Very few beach seiners right now-very few.

Jeep-Tanana river bound fish, when will you know the numbers? Holly-we don't estimate how many are going to Tanana, might be headed other places-hard to tell which ones. Do go into the Chena by June 30. Jeep-can we fish for Chinook. Holly, too soon to say.

Andrew/Ft Yukon-like Fred's question, lowering CPUE-work to correlate to size of fish, not as many 7 or 8 yr. olds, any research in that area? Holly-test fishery counts abundance relatively but not size. Could look at scale data and compare age and size of fish. Andrew, I was thinking more or less in different size nets in test fishery. Holly-not what's occurring in lower river test fishery-only using drifts 8.5" and 8". Might work if happening at Pilot Station, using 2.75" up to 8.5" mesh. We are not noticing change in size from past data.

Eric/St Marys-any enforcement on the river now? Yes-AK wildlife in St Mary's, had some federal folks up to D-4. Eric-not seeing any planes this year. Holly-flew a recent commercial opening.

Fisheries management from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game:

For Alaskan management regulation announcements, news releases and most current updates for the fishing season, please visit on the web:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main> 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-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm>

or call toll-free 604-666-2828 or 866-431-3474 for recorded fishing schedules and information.

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.

Please join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time) and THANK YOU! For participating!

Wayne Jenkins
YRDFA Director



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
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Date Issued: 6/13/2016

**2016 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 16
Summer Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

Assessment

The 2016 salmon season is underway on the Yukon River. Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) at the LYTF sites is matching up well with Chinook and summer chum salmon passage at the sonar near Pilot Station indicating that our test fisheries are operating well. Catch rates increased last week for both Chinook and summer chum salmon in the LYTF. As of June 13, the first summer chum salmon caught in the LYTF should be near Ruby and the first Chinook salmon should be between Rampart and Stevens Village. An early group of summer chum salmon should be between Holy Cross and Anvik on June 13. Daily Chinook salmon passage estimates at the sonar near Pilot Station have been relatively high (greater than 4,000 fish per day) since June 11 which likely indicates the start of a Chinook salmon pulse passing the sonar. Though it's too early to determine run timing, on average, the first quarter point for Chinook salmon at the sonar near Pilot Station is between June 14 (for an early run) and June 19 (for an average run). The average quarter point for summer chum salmon at the sonar near Pilot Station is June 22.

Fishermen are reminded that the Yukon River Inseason Salmon Management Teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Alaska time. Dial (800) 315-6338, and enter participant code: YUKON #.

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ ADF&G and YDFDA

The combined cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites as of June 12 is 10.55, which is above the historical average of 4.47. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE at the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site as of June 12 is 186.36, which is above the historical average of 82.37. The combined cumulative summer chum

salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gill net at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites as of June 12 is 1,280.05, which is well above the historical median of 408.22 for this date.

Operations at the LYTF for both Chinook and summer chum salmon have been altered from previous years so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets and injured salmon will be distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils. Fewer set net sites are being fished than in the past to reduce Chinook salmon mortality.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station has been fully operational since June 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since 1995. The project is operating well and has not experienced any major issues from debris or equipment malfunction. Chinook salmon passage as of June 12 is estimated to be 23,865 fish which is above the historical cumulative average of 16,498 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage as of June 12 is estimated to be 136,411 fish which is well above the historical cumulative median of 27,003 summer chum salmon for this date.

Management Strategies

A conservative management approach is being taken early in the summer season because of the below average return of Chinook salmon expected in 2016.

Closures for subsistence Chinook salmon fishing have been implemented from the Northern Portion of the Coastal District up through District 4. These closures will be implemented in upriver districts and subdistricts based on historical migratory timing prior to the arrival of Chinook salmon. The intent is to protect the early fish and first pulse of Chinook salmon as they make their way upriver.

Restrictions are expected to be in place for most of the Chinook salmon run. However, management strategies may change based on inseason run assessment information. It is still too early in the season to assess the strength of the 2016 Chinook salmon run. Therefore, current management actions are being based on the preseason Chinook salmon outlook.

Fortunately, the 2016 summer chum salmon run is expected to be average to above average. Fishing opportunities to harvest summer chum salmon with selective gear such as dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels have been provided. Yukon Area fishermen should be prepared for liberal subsistence and commercial opportunity using selective fishing gear to harvest summer chum salmon while releasing Chinook salmon safely to the water. These gear types may not be efficient until strong pulses of summer chum enter your fishing area.

The 2016 season is expected to be another challenging year for Yukon River fishermen. ADF&G and USFWS would like to extend thanks and appreciation to the fishermen of the Yukon River for their continuing efforts to conserve Chinook salmon.

General Management Reminders:

- When subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon is closed, fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from dip nets, beach seines, and fish wheels. Fish wheel users must closely attend their wheels and immediately release Chinook salmon alive from the livebox. The requirement to release Chinook salmon alive from all selective gears will be strictly enforced. Great care must be taken to assure Chinook salmon are released quickly and unharmed so that they can swim the long distance upriver and spawn successfully. Fishermen are also strongly encouraged to avoid fishing where Chinook salmon may be encountered.
- Beach seine gear may not exceed 150 fathoms in length, 100 meshes in depth, and 4-inches stretched measure. Beach seines may not be constructed of monofilament webbing. All Chinook salmon must be released alive from beach seine gear.
- During subsistence salmon fishing closures in the Yukon Area, gillnets 4-inch or smaller mesh of 60 feet or shorter length may be used for non-salmon species. All salmon caught in 4-inch gillnets may be retained, but fishermen are reminded not to target salmon as this gear is intended for non-salmon species. If it is determined that fishermen are using gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh size during Chinook salmon closures, enforcement may seize these illegal gear sizes and the opportunity to use 4-inch gillnets to target non-salmon may be removed.

Current Management

Southern Portion of the Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets until further notice.

Northern Portion of the Coastal District (from 62 degrees North latitude to Point Romanof and including all state marine waters):

Subsistence salmon fishing is closed until further notice.

District 1 (including the Black River):

Subsistence fishing is currently closed one hour before, during, and one hour after commercial periods. Subsistence salmon fishing will be open with dip nets and beach seines on the following schedule:

- Tuesday, June 14, from 4:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 15, from 4:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, June 16, from 4:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

- Friday, June 17, from 4:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.
- Saturday, June 18 from 4:00 a.m. until further notice.

All Chinook salmon caught in dip net and beach seine gear must be released alive immediately.

District 2: Subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets is closed. Subsistence fishing with dip nets and beach seine gear is open for 24 hours a day to target summer chum salmon.

Effective 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, June 14, subsistence salmon fishing will close. Following this closure, subsistence fishing will be closed one hour before, during, and one hour after commercial periods. Subsistence salmon fishing will be on the following schedule:

- 1:00 a.m. Wednesday, June 15, until 11:00 a.m. Thursday, June 16
- Starting at 1:00 a.m., Friday, June 17, open 24 hours a day, seven days per week until further notice.

District 3: Subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets is closed. Subsistence fishing with dip nets and beach seine gear is open for 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon. Fishermen are reminded that Chinook salmon caught in dip nets and beach seines must be released alive.

Innoko River: Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Fishermen should be prepared for management actions that restrict subsistence salmon fishing when the first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to migrate into the Innoko River.

District 4:

Subsistence Chinook salmon fishing is currently closed. This includes drift gillnets in waters adjacent to the Federal Management Units within Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. Fishing with dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon.

Fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from dip nets, beach seines, and fish wheels. Fishermen are also reminded they must closely attend the fish wheel and Chinook salmon must be immediately released alive from the livebox.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use gillnets with mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should be prepared for management actions that will restrict subsistence salmon fishing when the first pulse of Chinook salmon is expected to be migrating into the Koyukuk River.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek upstream to the ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately two miles downstream of Waldron Creek, including the communities of Tanana and Rampart as well as the area near the Yukon River bridge):

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week and fishermen may use fish wheels and 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Thursday, June 16, subsistence salmon fishing for Chinook is closed.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Friday, June 17, subsistence fishing will reopen with dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels 24 hours a day, seven days per week to target summer chum salmon.

Fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from dip nets, beach seines, and fish wheels. Fishermen are also reminded they must closely attend the fish wheel and Chinook salmon must be immediately released alive from the livebox.

District 6: By regulation, the subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when Chinook salmon start moving into the Tanana River.

Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open five days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. Fishermen should anticipate fishing restrictions when Chinook salmon start moving into the Old Minto area.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area): Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Commercial Fishing:

Fishermen requested at pre-season management meetings that the department provide an alternating schedule rather than concurrent subsistence and commercial periods for lower river districts in order to reduce competition among fishing sites. The department is endeavoring to accommodate these requests along with any limitations the processor may have when scheduling commercial periods.

Early commercial openings in District 1 indicated that fishermen were catching good numbers of summer chum while incidentally catching and releasing relatively few Chinook salmon. Subsistence fishing in both District 1 and District 2 will be closed one hour before, during, and one hour after commercial periods this week.

District 1 (including the Black River):

Effective Monday, June 13, commercial fishing for summer chum salmon in District 1 is open for the following periods:

- Monday, June 13, from 3:00 p.m. until Tuesday, June 14, at 3:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 14, from 3:00 p.m. until Wednesday, June 15, at 3:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 15, from 3:00 p.m. until Thursday, June 16, at 3:00 a.m.
- Thursday, June 16, from 3:00 p.m. until Friday, June 17, at 3:00 a.m.
- Friday, June 17, from 3:00 p.m. until Saturday, June 18, at 3:00 a.m.

District 2 Commercial:

Effective Tuesday, June 14, commercial fishing for summer chum salmon in District 2 will be open for the following periods:

- Tuesday, June 14, from 12:00 p.m. noon until 12:00 a.m. midnight
- Thursday, June 16, from 12:00 p.m. noon until 12:00 a.m. midnight

All Chinook salmon are required to be released alive from dip net and beach seine gear and must be recorded on a fish ticket. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Fishermen are reminded that great care must be taken to ensure Chinook salmon are released unharmed so that they can swim the long distance upriver and spawn successfully.

Summer chum salmon catches and incidental catches and releases of Chinook salmon from these commercial periods will be evaluated to determine additional commercial openings.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at **(866) 479-7387** (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call **(907) 459-7387**.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADF&G office in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Emmonak at (907) 949-1798.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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