



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

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Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 1st 2022 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, June 7, 2022. Call lasted 114 minutes. 62 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 present: KUAC Fairbanks

Political Representatives participating: None

Communities participating:

Nunam Iqua
Alakanuk
Kotlik
Mt. Village
Pitka's Point
St. Mary's
Pilot Station
Marshall
Anvik
Tanana/Rapids
Circle
Minto
Nenana
Fairbanks
Whitehorse

Management Reports:

Deena Jallen - ADF&G Yukon River Summer Season Manager

Fred West- ADF&G Yukon River Area Research Biologist

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ ADF&G and YDFDA LYTF drift gillnet operations began on May 26 at Big Eddy for Chinook and summer chum salmon. As of May 30, no salmon have

been caught. Crews have been drifting fishing gear and snag nets to clear the drift zones and are no longer encountering ice from breakup. Middle Mouth drifts will begin early June for both species. LYTF Big Eddy set net will be deployed in early June. The Middle Mouth set gillnet site is not being operated to reduce Chinook salmon mortalities, but drift gillnet operations using 8.25-inch mesh have been added to obtain Chinook salmon CPUE data from that location. In the South Mouth at Big Eddy, set gillnet operations for Chinook salmon and drift gillnet operations for summer chum and Chinook salmon are unchanged. The Big Eddy Chinook salmon drift CPUE values can be compared to historical averages but the set net data from Big Eddy should not be compared to historical data because it does not include any Middle Mouth set net data this season. Any salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to community members by Tribal councils, or on a first come, first-served basis from a public dock. Chinook salmon test fish mortalities will be sampled for genetics, otoliths, liver, stomach contents, intestine, eggs, and muscle biopsy. Measurements will include age from scales, sex, length, and fat content. These samples and measurements will be sent to researchers working on understanding salmon health and body condition. In addition to LYTF, other test fish projects in collaboration with ADF&G and the USFWS are also collecting tissue samples (heart, kidney, eggs, blood draw) from Chinook salmon to test for fish diseases and other fish health related research. Heart tissues are being sampled to test for Ichthyophonus and the kidney is being tested for proliferative kidney disease (PKD). Results will be available post season.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G The Pilot Station sonar is setting up and will begin counting this week.

ADF&G and USFWS projects that will begin operations later this season when fish arrive in the area: Anvik Sonar, Eagle Sonar, Salcha and Chena River Tower /Sonar (ADF&G); Andreafsky Weir, Gisasa Weir, and Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar (USFWS).

Henshaw Weir (TCC) is not expected to operate this year due to necessary repairs.

Holly Carroll - US Fish & Wildlife Service Yukon River Area Manager

Federal Special Action The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated this weekly update announcement. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Jaclyn Kendell - A/Fishery Manager, Yukon River

Stock Assessment:

DFO technicians will arrive at the Porcupine Sonar by June 24. The Porcupine sonar is located in the upper portion of the Yukon River watershed in Canada at the community of Old Crow. It is a jointly delivered project by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government.

DFO technicians will arrive at the Eagle sonar on June 24. The Eagle sonar is located about 29 kilometers downstream from Alaska's border with Canada; it is a collaboratively delivered project with ADFG.

Environmental Conditions:

Spring has arrived. The river-level snow has melted in most of the Yukon territory, however there is still substantial snow volumes at elevation. Canadian portions of Yukon and Porcupine

drainages saw substantially higher-than-average snowfall this winter. The projection is for high water levels that will be similar (or higher) than the high water observed last year. With high water, the expectation is to see cooler water temperatures (which are good for migrating adult salmon). The intensity of flooding is yet to be determined as the high-water crest and timing will depend on environmental conditions (i.e., heat, rain-on-snow events at elevation).

Canadian Management:

- The 2022 Canadian management strategy will be finalized in late June, in advance of the arrival of the first Chinook salmon at the international border. It will be informed by the Yukon River Panel's (YRP) 2022 management recommendations, the objectives established in the Pacific Salmon Treaty's Yukon River Salmon Agreement, recommendations from the YSSC and the results of consultations with Yukon First Nation Governments and community members.
- The key priority for management in Canada will remain focused on ensuring sufficient numbers of Canadian-origin salmon reach their spawning grounds in order to sustain future returns.
- The preliminary Canadian origin Chinook forecast is 41,000 to 62,000. In consideration that it is unlikely that the run will come in at the upper end of the pre-season forecast and that the lower end of the Interim Management Escapement Goal (42,500 to 55,000) has not been achieved for the past several years, Canada's management strategy will be cautious and conservative.
- Unless in-season information strongly indicates otherwise, it's not anticipated that the season will commence with an allocation to the First Nation subsistence fishery.
- Allocations made to the First Nation subsistence Chinook fishery will align with the Canadian management plan. DFO will maintain closures in the Chinook public angling (recreational) commercial, and domestic (non-indigenous food fishery) fisheries throughout 2022.
- The preliminary Canadian origin Fall Chum forecast for Yukon River mainstem stocks is 20,000 to 37,000 and 3,000 to 6,000 for Fishing Branch River stocks. Both forecasts are well below the escapement goal ranges for those stocks (70,000 to 104,000; and 22,000 to 49,000 respectively) The chum forecast and management decisions will be revised mid-July (following the summer chum run).
- Over the coming weeks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will rely on information collected by assessment programs at Lower Yukon Test Fishery and Pilot Station Sonar to inform management decisions in Canada.

Community level reports:

District Y1:

Alakanuk: Max (read by Catherine): phone lines are out. He has been surveyed two weeks now. This past week, he interviewed 8 households and 5 of them fished. Everyone is just starting and no kings or chums were caught. They reported high water and debris. Some people caught a sheefish, Bering cisco, or pike.

The previous week, week ending May 31, Max was able to interview 27 households and 3 of them fished. Again, everyone was just starting and reported a lot of debris including moss and twigs. During the week ending May 31, some groups caught 1 king and 1 sheefish

District Y2:

Mt. Village: Stanislaus Sheppard - Mnt Village tribe. High water. Both docks are submerged under the water. We cannot pack anymore spring water because it is almost submerged. There is no more beach. Debris. Lot of north and northwest wind.

Question - focus on Area M and False pass. Years back, same problem. When I raised issue, they noted study before and put restrictions on fishers. Now they are saying they need to do another study. Canadian portion - have they come up with any language addressing area M and high seas bycatch? We sacrifice so Canadians can get their portion of escapement. Then when they open us up, the fish are gone.

Elizabeth - I can speak for Canadians. I appreciate the share. The main question I heard was what the Canadians plans are. This isn't a sacrifice on the lower river so that Canadians can fish. It is so they can go past us too so that they can get to spawning grounds. We aren't fishing either.

Serena- Canadians do participate in the NPFMC meetings.

Pitka's Point: Ivy Lamont - counting on Chinook and chum salmon, there were few households that caught. Not much. Water is high.

Julie - We had 5" net set out last week before closing. We were mainly catching ?? and had one chum. Sheefish and whitefish.

Pilot Station: Martin - River condition high. Lots of drift and debris. Extreme dry conditions. Drift has lessened but it is coming back from upriver. Has statement - I appreciate the effort by management, YDFDA, YRDFA etc to try to manage our salmon fishery. Food security and customary traditional use never used to be an issue. It was considered inherent. There was never mismanagement on the Bering Sea. Timing is really important for harvesting salmon. Haven't dried any salmon for 3 years. 4" mesh, pre hung is \$442 at Kwikpak.

Marshall: Diane - I don't have anything really to report. High water and debris.

David Fitka - voice my support for the resolution that is affecting villages. Thank you for having the teleconference with everyone invited. I would like to see all the fisheries involved with AYK bound fish, have some restraints on harvesting salmon. This is a very stressed fish year.

ANILCA should apply in this situation with far reaching effects.

62@1:57

Jaylen Fitka from Marshall - wants to invite office of the governor, commissioner's office to join us on this call. So they can understand what we are experiencing. Thank you for continued effort.

District Y4a:

Anvik: Alberta Walker - I don't have anything to report. There is no fishing going on here. Very high water and a lot of drift.

Ken Chase - Hello to everyone on the call today. I am in Mcgrath currently. I work as a resource technician with ADF&G. I try to stay on the calls all summer so I can listen and respond. We have a lot of fires right now. I haven't been to Anvik in a week or so. I would like to let you

know that I try to include the Anvik River in my reports. We've had a large fire in the Anvik river several years ago. It's a big fire season. People locally seem to be concerned about it and the habitat. Anvik river is a terminal fishery when we had open fishing.

District Y5abc&d:

Tanana: Stan told me No one is fishing. Water is very high. Not much debris at the moment

Circle: Larry Nathaniel - I was looking at the 2022 outlook, the graph looks dismal for fish entering the Yukon River. It is frustrating to know this is happening year after year and all we do is talk talk talk. By the time they get to our area there is no fishing. We depend on salmon. Other species will start declining if we don't watch what we are doing, or prepare for it. What is happening in the deep sea fisheries? Regulations say I am not supposed to fish while fish are passing by. It is frustrating.

District Y6abc:

Minto: Phillip Titus - Question - Test fishery - are live fish turned loose or what do you do with them?

Deena - any fish in test fisheries that are alive are released. If not alive, they are sampled.

Testing for diseases, muscle samples to look at body conditions.

Phillip - whitecaps on the lake so hardly anyone going boating.

Nenana: Victor - haven't been on the river, just got back from medical in Anchorage. Before I left the river was high. Couple of boats were setting whitefish/sheefish nets. Comments on fishing - Karen's proposal was good news. Subsistence priority out past the 3 mile limit. That will make a big difference in the Area M area. If it is Yukon River fish getting caught there, it is a big plus for them and the quality of their fish. They took extra special care of the fish they did put up to give respect to the fish gods. I wish we could catch one or two or three for our culture camp, just something to keep it alive. Ana basee

Fairbanks: Virgil - You and Karen did a really good job on the letter. I am planning to add some other things to that today and get it to the commissioner as well. It makes me sad to hear about people talk, like the terminal fishery on the Anvik river. I was involved in that in the beginning. And for the people in Canada, a lot of people don't realize that the same thing is happening to them. They have been sacrificing longer than we have. The run forecast and harvest projections for 2022 - {reads first paragraph} ... The water is high in Fairbanks. It is expected to remain high. We had record moisture content and snowfall in Fairbanks this winter. We had 2" of solid ice on the roads.

Bill - Sorry I came in late. Were there reports for Y1 and Y2?

Serena gave brief recap

Deena - Update for test fishery - Starting pretty slow. Drift started late May. No chum caught. Slow start.

Marvin in Kotlik - is ADFG test net fishery using chum gear?

Deena - yes, for a few days, middle mouth drift now 2 xs a day to clear out snags

Stan Zuray - Tanana/Rapids (given by Catherine) - No fishing, lots of debris, and very high water.

Jalleen from Marshall - If it is possible, we should invite others from NOAA, government and other agencies to hear our testimony first hand.

Serena - We did extend our invitation to NPMFC and other agencies that we think would benefit from your testimony.

Victor - She had a good point. Tribal governments are pretty well represented. It would be good to be talking to someone that matters.

Is the weir up the Andreafsky for Chum or Chinook?

Bill - chinook and summer chum. Few fall chum and coho. Whole bunch of humpies.

Victor - Do the chinook come in with the early run?

Bill - No they come in later.

George Donat - Fisherman on the lower river. My concern is that we are not paying enough attention to climate change. We need to be talking about that. The fish are swimming in the bering sea and it is so warm out there that they aren't eating and are starving to death. The same thing happened with the seabirds.

CANADA

Whitehorse: Elizabeth - Water is pretty low. Weather is nice. Most of the lakes are ice free. Canadians are looking towards another year of sacrificing salmon fishing. People are working hard to preserve habitats. I am hearing a lot more about passing knowledge onto youth. We now have adults that don't know how to do anything at fish camp. Elders are saying that they don't want the fish if there are some caught, they are saying that they need to give it to the youth who have never tasted salmon before.

Victor - Is there anyone on from Minto in Canada?

Elizabeth - People do camp there year round. There are only a few, and I am not sure that they have cell service to call.

Martin - I was wanting to ask, other than going to the areaM fishery, is there any other opportunity to collaborate and focus on NPMFC and NOAA and focus on pollock??

Serean - I know there is a group that gets together that prepares for the NPFMC. They are meeting. Keep in mind Jun 9, 12, 13. During those times testimony would be great. You can sign up online.

Bill - Like I said before, I came on late. Did Pilot Station sonar give a report? Deena from Emonak, what's the situation?

Deena - Pilot began June 1, and to date no salmon in their test nets. So all of their numbers are for non-salmon. She gave her report again.

Victor - So that indicates the run is kind of small?

Fred West - It is too early to tell.

Call ended 2:54pm