



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

PO Box 2618 Valdez, AK 99686

Tel: 907-272-3141 Toll free: 877-999-8566

Fax: 907-272-3142 E-mail: serena@yukonsalmon.org

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the #4 2024 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, June 25, 2024. Call lasted 93 minutes. 80 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 a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife.

Media present:

Political Representatives participating:

Communities participating: 25

Management Reports:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Fred West -ADFG Summer Season Research Biologist, Bethel, AK

The Chinook Salmon run is below average. We're close to the traditional midpoint of the 25th of June. It's tracking similar to the very poor run observed in 2022. It's too early to tell if it's late run timing or normal runtime, but it is tracking poor, one of the lowest run sizes. As expected, based on the forecast for chum, the run appears to be entering the river within forecast and is currently projected to be above the lower end of the drainage wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million. The run appears to be late, but it's too early to tell how late it is and that will determine what the outcome will be. Assessment projects, LYTF (Lower Yukon Test Fishery) CPUE (Catch Per Unit of Effort) is below average for this time of year. Over the weekend we have seen pretty strong indications of chum entering the river. We should see those numbers start to hit Pilot in a couple of days. We did see a slight push yesterday with the 19,000 daily. So those numbers should just keep climbing and that will give us a better indication of overall run timing and also what the abundance might be. As far as Pilot Station, we've got count of 13,863 Chinook Salmon \pm 4000 and that's well below the historical average of 88,000 based on all years and 43,000 based on late timing years, it's well below average. For summer chum, we are at 106,892 \pm 11,000 fish, which is below the cumulative median of 541,000 for normal or all year run timing and 175,000 for late timing but I think it's still a little early to tell how strong it's going to be in those LYTF catches we saw over the weekend. A good indication of what we should expect. The Radio Telemetry project is still going on and we've still successively been able to tag this whole time period. We're double the number of tags we put out last year so far. The Andreafski Weir is in the water, they got most of the weir set up. They're still putting final touches on, we'll probably be fully operational sometime this week. Anvik Sonar, they've been counting since the 16th of June and their cumulative passes of 760, which is below the median of just under 5000 fish. They're below average at this point, but it's still a little early. Especially if you think the run is a little bit late. We do have some Age Comp information, all this information is in the weekly update, the news release that just came out. There are more specifics, but we do have some Age Comp for Chums, the overall size of Chums this year are a little bit smaller than historical. Normally this time of year, the number of age

fours are lower than age fives, but this year a little bit lower than normal. Just see how the run progresses, but the main thing to point out is that the size at age of chum this year is a little bit smaller than average.

Deena Jallen, Summer Season Manager of Yukon River, Emmonak, AK

As folks have seen all the advisory announcements, we're following our preseason strategy pretty closely. We have announced closures of subsistence fishing in all districts and sub districts of the Alaskan portion of the drainage up to District 5 D Upper. Those closures will go into place based on Chinook salmon timing to provide additional protection for Chinook salmon. We've announced a 2-week closure of four inch or smaller mesh, a two-week period when all gill nets must be removed from the water. Those closures have been announced up through the Koyukuk River and we'll be announcing for the rest of the drainage, probably later this week. Because the summer chum salmon run is coming in and we expect it to come in within the forecast and provide for our harvestable surplus. We have started opening up selective gear for summer chum salmon in Districts 1 and 2. We've announced that for District 3. We'll announce that up through District 5 ABC where those summer chum go and then also into the Tanana River based on travel timing. Keep in mind that summer chum salmon do swim slower than kings. Those closures may or may not overlap, but we're basing it on the swim speed of the salmon species themselves. Kings swim faster, they'll get to places. So those four inch mesh closures will be based on their timing and those openings of selective gear will be based on the arrival of the first big group of summer Chum that should be pushing up. As Fred mentioned, we did see the catches at the Lower Yukon Test Fishery pick up quite a bit this last weekend, should be a really nice group of Chum heading up into District 2 and towards Pilot Station, it's just really encouraging to hear from fishermen that they're getting out. They're starting to pick away at those needs for summer chum salmon. That last year we had a harvest of I think around 30,000 subsistence for summer chum salmon. This year, we're hoping that people can get more than that and hopefully get a little bit closer to meeting their needs for summer chum salmon. We have also heard from folks that they're starting to get some appreciable number of pink salmon down in district 1, 2. So when people are fishing with their selective gear types. They can keep summer chum, pink and sockeye salmon, and must let all Chinook salmon go alive. So hopefully folks can get some of those good summer chums, pinks and sockeyes. They're coming in the river.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Holly Carroll, Yukon River Area Manager

Deena and Fred covered a whole lot of information there. But you know, we have an interesting kind of dichotomy. We got 13,000 Chinook in the river and no matter what you believe about our sonar and how good we are at counting fish. That number should be freaking everyone out. Ok? That's not a lot of kings. I'm giving real talk because it was asked for last week and that's why we've got the 4-inch closures in place. That's why we're asking people to release kings and to really focus their efforts away from kings. We do have the good news that we can fish the summer chum, but I have had quite a few calls from people who have been watching these runs much longer than I have and know a lot more about these salmon runs and they're concerned about the summer chum. They're making good points, but sometimes we don't meet the end goal and we don't meet the Andreafski goal. They're concerned that we need to take a conservative approach on the chums. I just want to assure everybody that those are good points. Last year, we did exceed the summer chum goal by quite a bit. We had almost 900,000 in the river. Our projection right now it's so early in the run. It's probably before the quarter points and so our project options are pretty unstable right now, but it is definitely clear that we're very likely to meet the 500,000 minimum drainage wide threshold for summer chum. I just wanted to point out that the summer chum harvest for subsistence that will occur with dip nets is likely to be small. We want people to try to fill their smokehouses with that species, but it is really inefficient gear. We recognize very few of the 3000 households on that river even have dip nets. We also recognize that a lot of districts like the upper part of District 3, 4 and 5 may not even find summer chum to be of good quality, and so we really won't see huge harvest of summer chums. And so I just want to assure people that it's very unlikely that providing this subsistence food for people is going to affect our summer chum escapement goals biological. So just kind of wanted to put that out there, that sometimes we

have data that people aren't seeing but I do appreciate your calls and your concerns and I want you to keep calling us. On the one hand, we do have to let the kings go by, we are pretty nervous about those, but we do want to get people some food in their smokehouses. We've also heard concerns about enforcement, and I just want to let people know that enforcement are out there and they are seeing really excellent compliance. For one, they're not seeing hardly any fishing with non-salmon gill nets in places that they're still legal, but when they are checking that they've really seen great compliance. I think that if there are people that are concerned that there's a lot of quote unquote illegal fishing going on, there's absolutely no evidence for that either. I think most people want to do the right thing and are taking the conservation of salmon to heart. I want to thank all the fishermen for that and I want to thank you for your calls, your concerns, your questions. Please keep calling. I have been interacting with the Fish Commission trying to share what the data is telling us right now and they've been sharing their concerns with me as well. So hopefully they'll hop on and speak up as well.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Jaclyn Kendall, Fishery Manager

So in terms of stock assessment, DFO technicians are in Old Crow setting up the 2024 Porcupine River sonar camp and they are making good headway with mobilization and sonars should be in the water soon. The weather there right now is hot and sunny. The Porcupine sonar is located in the upper portion of the Yukon River watershed in Canada 2 km downstream of the community of Old Crow. It is a jointly delivered project by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government. In support of the 2024 Radio Telemetry program DFO technicians will be setting up telemetry towers soon on the Yukon River downstream of Dawson City, and on the White River and Stewart River. Also this week DFO technicians made it to Eagle Alaska to meet with ADF&G staff to begin mobilization of the Eagle sonar camp. The Eagle sonar is located about 29 km downstream from Alaska's border with Canada; it is a collaboratively delivered project with ADF&G. In terms of environmental conditions, although Old Crow is experiencing hot and sunny weather right now the more Southern portions of the Yukon are wetter with continued rains. There are smoky conditions around the Stewart and Pelly areas due to wildfires burning in the area. In terms of Canadian management, I will provide just a brief summary that in light of the very low expected Canadian origin Chinook forecast, that's at 13,000 expected number. Canada will close public angling, commercial and domestic fisheries for salmon this year, and that's going to go through to 2030, which is in line with the new seven-year agreement.

Matthew Keyes, ADF&G Area Management Biologist - South Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands

We're in the final fishing period, starting today. This final fishing period will go for 88 hours in the South Unimak area and only 44 hours in the Shumagin Island area for pursuing but the full 88 hours per set gillnet. Harvest so far is a little better than it was in 2023, but still below 10-year averages, so just to kind of rattle off a few numbers. So this year so far 99,156 sockeyes have been harvested. Which is below the 10-year average of approximately 1.38 million sockeyes normally harvested in the June fishery. Chum salmon is at 283,000, which is also below the 10-year average of 363,000 and but above the harvest last year of 159,000. The same fleet is once again participating in what they have called the adaptive management strategy. They have been issuing throughout most periods when they see high abundance of chum salmon. They have been conducting voluntary closures because they're not mandated by the department. The same fleet themselves have closures in specific areas where they're seeing these high abundance of chum salmon, so they're trying to avoid that harvest as much as possible. I don't know how much folks remember as far as what border fish actions took place in 2023. We have two triggers in our in our schedule that would reduce fishing or close the final fishing period. The first one was 300,000 chum salmon on the 18th and obviously based on what I've already explained as far as the harvest of Chum salmon, we did not meet that one. The second trigger was on the 23rd of 450,000. We are not instituting any sort of closures for that final period based on Chum salmon. We are managing issuing on another areas escapement, which is Chignik, which is why we have a reduction in that final period for the Shumagin. We've also had reductions in the Shumagin by 50% time purse sein gear in the previous two openings as well, due to Chignik escapement not meeting its lower end

at this point. Other updates, law enforcement was in the area about a week ago, they reported no violations of discarding salmon. No other sort of violations that we saw a little bit of last year. I think the fleet is working and the processors are working extremely hard to be in full compliance with all of our regulations including reporting requirements and not discarding any salmon during the June fishery. They're working extremely hard on that and then one other update. There are preliminary genetic results from 2023 located on our website. It's under the Salmon Harvest tab for the Alaska Peninsula. So if folks are interested in looking at those results, I'm not a geneticist though. All I would be doing is regurgitating numbers so if folks are interested in that information, it is available for 2023.

Sgt. Dan Valentine, Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers

I just wanted to get a brief overview this afternoon about AWT's priorities for Chinook salmon enforcement on the Yukon River. It's been moved to the top of our list as far as the Fairbanks and Bethel region enforcement AWT Posts. We have already started patrols in District 1 and District 2 and our patrols will be following the Chinook Salmon gillnet closures as they move upriver all the way through the middle districts and up to Canada. So fishermen this year will be able to expect to see more of our aircrafts in the air and more of our vessels on the river this year than normal. We have brought in extra troopers to work extra pilots. We're going to be looking for stuff like legal mesh size when it's still open for gillnets. Most of the time during those closed periods, we're going to be patrolling a lot of river miles, making sure that there aren't gillnets out there and that people are also following the other legal methods of harvesting salmon.

Eva Burke, North Pacific Fishery Management Council Advisory Council

We finished our June meeting in Kodiak and we had a climate workshop that was kind of the big thing that would be relevant to our area here on the Yukon. In the climate workshop they were talking about how they were going to get climate ready. There was these cases of scenario planning and I think instead of getting into all the technical details, I'll give a little bit of real talk, like they used the snow crab as an example of something that recently crashed, and it was apparent that they were showing a backwards look at their data. What was apparent in the process to me was that even if there was some data available and scientists were having some hesitation. The Council didn't really have a process for bringing that forward and taking a precautionary approach and so in fact, they ended up increasing their total allowable catch on snow crab and then after that the population was determined overfished. One thing that really stood out for me was that even if this body is to have data. Are they using that data to make the right decision? I think it's just really important to think about that in the overall scheme of things. Also for the climate workshop, there wasn't a lot of tribal participation. I think if you have a workshop in Kodiak and doing it kind of makes it hard for our Western Alaska tribal people to make it to that meeting. We are providing feedback on that and. Working with those people to include more of how is climate change, not only in the Bering Sea, but how is it affecting our ecosystem onshore. I think that's an area where we have to keep informing the Council about the ecosystem impacts of what's happening from the salmon decline. Looking forward, there will be a special North Pacific Meeting Council meeting in Anchorage, February 3rd through the 10th, 2025. That's where they'll be selecting a preliminary preferred alternative for the chum salmon bycatch action. Our team at the Fish Commission, working with our partners are putting our preliminary alternative forward. If you weren't at the Council meeting or where I can give a little bit of a rundown of what that is. When we were at the Council meeting in April, I felt like we had a lot of great tribal participation in testimony and that it definitely helped influence the Council decision making and we were able to get the Council to modify their alternatives. They weren't exactly what we wanted as Tribal Folks, but it at least got some more things analyzed. Prior to us, they had a 200,000 cap for chum salmon bycatch. We were able to get them to analyze a lower bycatch cap of 100,000 chum and then also they were looking at in an abundant space cap kind of

how what we have in place for Chinook right now. We were able to include commercial fishing, in that abundance index and get that number increased and that's important because it would have triggered more caps in the past. I think one of the more important wins was getting a time area or conservation corridor concept analyzed and that's really important because if you're looking at what's happening in Area M, South of Unimak. It's really important to look at what's happening North of Unimak when the chum are in that area. They used to have Chinook and Chum salmon savings areas there. They're looking at a cap right now that would take place from June 10th to August 31st in this right North of Unimak Island and they're looking at a cap range of 50,000 to 200,000. That paints the picture, if you are marrying what's happening in Area M to what's happening in the Pollock fishery North. We have this concept of a conservation corridor, and that is exactly what the Commissioner has been talking about. Those are some things that we're working on and trying to get the data and look at some of the history and also work with Council staff throughout the process. As the environmental impact statement that EIS is being drafted.

Community level reports:

District Y1:

Emmonak:

Billy Charles - Yeah. Well, first of all. I think there's a lot of activity here in the river and that we haven't seen that activity in a long time. And like the earlier reports from the department that people are busy, we're a little beyond 1/3 of our goal for our smokehouse, and I think that's about the average. But there are some people that are, you know, really getting close to 100% of there goal but lot of activity, I mean really encouraging to see the displacement of the negative activity that you see around every community.

Alakanuk:

Max Agayar - Yeah, there's been a lot of activity at home. Some of the families are done fishing for Chums. That's all I have to report.

Kotlik:

Marvin Okitkun – The community was very happy for being able to go out subsistence fishing. I myself, got to go out with my son and my daughter-in-law and we got 52 chums. My boy and his wife got about 47 more Sunday, so I think we're done with chums for now. Until we make more room in the smokehouse, there's lots of subsistence people going out for subsistence here. Some or a lot of them are halfway done, but there's still several families that haven't gone out. The big hit for everyone is the price of fuel. It's about 8 bucks a gallon or so. So it's a big hit for some families. Big hit for mine. We have to combine fuel, two different incomes to go up to fill our needs. The water temperature is about 60°. Yeah, pretty good I guess, nice and cool.

District Y2:

St. Mary's:

Matty Beans - Just doing the water temperature today and the Andraefski fork water temp is 61.3°. There's a lot of people going out, getting some chums. Good to see people out, families, some families together and young kids off their butts doing something. So a lot of activity lately on the river. A lot of thunderstorms last night so that means the fish are here. So hopefully people on up the Yukon get to catch some, so thank you very much. That's it.

Bill Alstrom - Just to add on to what Matty gave to report. Although I'm not really an active subsistence fisherman know. But people are really safe for opening up the dipnet fishery targeting chums. There's a few

people going out and seems like they're coming back with a few fish. Been having mild weather. Kids been going out swimming. That's about it from this end. I haven't heard any reports from an extreme downriver community. I wish they'd open up and at least give us some kind of reports. What's going on down in the coast? Well, anyway, that's it from this end, other than that everybody have a good summer.

Mountain Village:

Nita Stevens - Our contact with each household, 65 interviewed, two refuse to be interviewed for this season this year. Some people are out dipnetting, some people are still waiting for parts for their outboard motor to go out and there's no drifting in the river.

Fred Beans - I just want to comment. Thanks for letting us have the opportunity to go out and harvest some fish. Although we need more, that's a start. So, I believe we need a little bit more. I just want to say thank you. The water is a little bit high for this opening.

Francis Thompson - I'm happy for the people going out and subsistence fishing but looking at the track record for the chum. I know it may be at the quarter, but we're getting into the midpoint and things are not looking very good. Tracking the salmon coming in, I was curious. If they've heard anything down along the coast, down towards Kuskokwim and Toksook Bay. If there's salmon migrating up this way. At what point will they declare an emergency? All things don't track well as these days go by.

Deena Jallen, ADFG Summer Season Manager of Yukon River

I'll just say that we haven't heard a lot of reports from the coast, but we have been seeing some pretty good catches from lower Yukon test fishery over this weekend. Our catches did pick up quite a bit and we've seen some pretty good sustained catches. We do expect to see more summer chum moving upriver. We've heard some good reports from dip netting and why one, but we haven't heard much from the coast or further South in that. If anyone does have some more information from out on the post that would be excellent to hear. We do think the summer term run is going to come in within the forecast and that would be enough to provide for a statement and subsistence. It's pretty low or it's it looks like the run may be as late as it has been in recent years when it's been tracking you know. Quite a number of days late, so we do have a lot of hopes.

Fred West -ADFG Summer Season Research Biologist

Yeah, I guess the assessment I've looked at from the Kusko area, it's looking like it's also late or below average for chum there. But yeah, as Deena was saying, we are getting close to the first quarter point. The chum run, there's been years where it's been late and it's picked up a lot after this period. They could go, you know, multiple directions, but the likelihood you know that it's going to go above the minimum escapement goal or the lower bound of the escapement goal is pretty high. Just based on what we're observing currently and kind of expected run timing so. Yeah, and based on the LYTF catches, we should see a pretty substantial push in the next few days at Pilot.

District Y3:

Russian Mission:

Basil Larson - We've got waters steadily dropping and there's been thunderstorms rolling through for this whole week. Just about every evening we'll get rumbling. We haven't gotten a chance to dipnet yet, but everybody's kind of hustling to get their fish camps ready, hearing all the pretty decent numbers of chums. Everybody's dipping with their dip net. So everybody's kind of excited for that. There's finally that little rejuvenated feeling going around. Doing these surveys, there is still a wide range of feelings and thoughts with everybody. When I come through, there's definitely some frustration and there's some hope and there's some lost hope and there's a lot of questions and a lot of pissed off people, but we're caught in the middle where we're not at the headwaters and we're not out in the sea where the salmon grow up. So we're kind of in the middle. Dealing with all these restrictions and that's kind of disheartening. But finally something to

look forward to. There has been some float planes landing, Fish and Game, I think that was the state, they landed here and they check everybody's nets and then reminded everybody to take their nets out at 8:00 and then took off. He was just informing precautions and informing everybody. They are doing these surveys, there's some people that express the fact that we live off subsistence and we go from season to season. We harvest what's available and with the price of groceries, the price of fuel. It's kind of a must. So everybody's getting excited. Some people went way out Yonder to downriver to pick up some dipnets. There's even a couple of families that moved away from the Yukon River to do their subsistence salmon fishing. A couple went to the Kuskokwim and a couple went way down to Bristol Bay. So that should explain how important fishing is to us. Not everybody owns a dipnet. Not everybody owns 4-inch net. Not everybody has the means to go out to fish and this and that, but if we all try to help each other out, especially the elders. There's been some drift floating down with the dropping water, but not too much. Like I said, all the logs are still way up in the land from last year's flood. For a lot of the fish camps, people are hustling to get fish camps going. A lot of them moved to in town where up, up and higher ground kind of away from flood zone. That's even after moving their fish camps away from town to town, so you know, moving again. There are some questions about, well, we're doing everything we could here in the middle of the river. There's some questions about if the hatchery on the other side of the Whitehorse dam is still in operation to help mitigate the numbers that the dam destroys. Because those fish, going the furthest in Canada are the biggest strongest fish, passing here and noticing that the fish are getting smaller and smaller. You know, just greater that question if everything is being done possible to help those salmon up, the biggest salmon where they grow, where they're born and growing up. I mean born in before they out migrate.

Holy Cross:

David Walker - Yeah, the water is dropping pretty fast. This last week, I've been using my energy to get the firewood and got all the logs pulled up and cut up. It's going to be getting muddy pretty quick and nobody fishing that I could see. The weather has been really good. The first day it's blowing out of the South today Southwest. It's pretty quiet here. I'm waiting to hear the reports and see if I can dip for few summer chum. It's about all going on here. There's all work here, there's like 4 elders houses going up and people are staying busy. So thank you, hope everybody's staying safe. Biggest one thing I guess I would say is that if we're if it's late as we might think it is, we're like you know at the like the 15th. Right below the first quarter point. So it's it's a range of different scenarios that it goes, but yeah.

District Y4a&c:

Anvik:

Sherry Kruger- Hi I just started doing my survey this week. I contacted like 6 people and surveyed like three of them. Most of the people up here are aware of the salmon closures and we have 1 elder here that's building a new fish wheel. Turning out pretty nice. Yeah, our weather up here has been hot and dry. The waters been dropping here too. Hopefully I'll have more to report next week on the fish but that's about it.

Ken Chase – I have one question for Holly. I'm confused on the goal of the Anvik River. I just wonder what's that chum counts for the Anvik River?

Deena Jallen, ADFG Summer Season Manager of Yukon River

I'm getting to the Anvik numbers right now. 2024 up at Anvik the cumulative passes so far are 760 summer chum. It's still pretty early in timing for the Anvik. The historical counts, the historical cumulative of those projects don't really start to really pick up until a little bit later in the month. So we're tracking right now very closely to the historical median. Which is pretty low at this time of year. So we would expect counts to pick up there pretty soon. But so far they've counted 760 at that project.

Ken Chase – What's the goal for escapement before we can fish it?

Deena Jallen, ADFG Summer Season Manager of Yukon River

The Anvik, we would want to project. The goal in the ASIC is 350,000 to 700,000. We would probably need to see some more days of passage be able to look at doing a projection. It's still very, very early in the passage for that system.

Ken Chase - I kind of want to make a thing on that count, you know back in the early 80s when we had the seining row on the Anvik River, that 350,000 was set for that purpose. For not overtaking that much for doing our regular fishing. So I think now that fishing partner should look a little closer, lowering that the escapement goal, that's pretty high because the high end of Anvik River you know is a million point two or three at the highest top and you're still sticking to a 700,000 at the top. So I'd like to see that changed or talked about.

Fred West -ADFG Summer Season Research Biologist

You make a good point. We've had the drainage wide escapement goal since 2016 and so we've kind of we're using that now. But yeah, that's the input or I guess the production from the Anvik has changed overtime. It used to be 50% of the time used to come from the Anvik, and it's kind of now it's into the 15 to 20% and so going through this, the escapement goal process review, which is coming up for the next board cycle, that's one of the escapement goals. I think that's under review. So yeah, we will be starting to look at that. To review it.

Ken Chase - The fish that's coming up now, the chums coming up here. This report that they're smaller, smaller than normal. What's that the three-year old fish?

Fred West -ADFG Summer Season Research Biologist

They're coming off the 2019 and 2020 brood years. They're four and five year old mainly for what we're seeing. They're a little bit smaller than average at size, size at age. So similar to what we saw a couple of years ago.

Ruby:

Rachael Kangas - We've had some extreme hot temperatures. The water is slowly dropping. There's very minimal drift in the river, at this time no one's fishing. We did have people out trying to rod and reel fish for some sheefish. Nobody has been notating on catching any sheefish. I actually had tried myself last weekend. We did go up to the Melozitna and catch a few Grayling with the kids, but otherwise there is no sheefish currently in the Melozitna and usually we could see some Chum up there in Grayling Creek going up the Canyon at the spawning grounds. We didn't see any Grayling in the river. Last year we've seen some but this year we haven't. So maybe they're late, who knows. But yeah, that's pretty much what I have for my report.

District Y5abc&d:

Ft. Yukon:

Kara'lisa Trembley - There's a few fishermen fishing, they've been catching whitefish. No Chum reported. I went out this weekend and threw a few casts in the Porcupine, caught small couple Pike. We've been having good weather here. Sunny hot, the waters been low. That's all I have a report this week.

Cheryl Cadzow - Hi, this is Cheryl Cadzow. I'm from Fort Yukon and I'm on the Doyon board. I'm on their committees where we are attending fishing meetings and hunting regulation meetings and things like that, and so we're just getting started. I also fish out of Fort Yukon, subsistence fish and I'm sure you guys heard this question a lot, but for years the subsistence fisher people along the Yukon, we've been doing our part and not fishing and hoping that more fish get to their birthing grounds. It doesn't make sense that the issue seems to be where they're entering the river. There's a lack of regulations there so that they're not getting into the river as much as they used to. So the people along the river have to pay the price. When they're coming in is a big issue. Can you speak to that?

Deena Jallen, ADFG Summer Season Manager of Yukon River

There isn't any commercial fishing in district 1 this year for summer chum. Right now we're just starting out with subsistence fishing and fishing down there is very heavily restricted. Folks are limited to just using dipnets, beach seining and hook and line gear. They may keep any summer chum, pink and sockeye salmon that they get, but they have to release all king salmon alive. This is a gear type that's not super efficient down here. It's a very big, wide-open delta. It can be hard for folks to get to the summer chum. It can take a lot of gas. And then you kind of got to think that like it takes about 80 dipnets in the water to equal the square foot of 1 gillnet. So it's quite a lot of reduction of just gear in the water. People down here are very heavily restricted and for summer chum salmon, we kind of have had almost the life cycle moratorium. We haven't fished on summer chum salmon a lot in the last few years. The fish that have come in have been able to go to their spawning grounds. We've certainly seen dips and kind of rebounds in the summer chum run before we saw it back in 2000, we saw it back in 1980 and probably just recently in the 2020s. And so we do have folks at summer chum salmon are back on the rebound and last year they came in towards the upper end of the forecast and if they come in towards the upper end of the forecast this year. You know, potentially a run of 1.8 million summer chum, which should be enough to provide for the subsistence needs and also to get a lot of summer chum to use their escapement spawning grounds. Unfortunately summer chum salmon mostly spawn in and below the Tanana River, so they just don't make it up to Fort Yukon. They don't make it up to Canada but about 900,000 summer chum salmon did go to their spawning grounds last year. And so that definitely gives us hope for the summer chum bouncing back and coming back nice and strong. Hopefully that helps answer your questions.

Eagle:

Andy Bassich - Yeah, it sounds like everybody out in the Yukon is having good weather. So are we. It's been extremely hot here. We've had very little rainfall this year so far. The river is the lowest that I've ever seen it for this time of year, for the last 30 years. So that's kind of an interesting new twist this year. Water temperature for those of you that are tracking that is right at about 60° right now. Currents pretty darn slow because of low water, almost no debris in the river at all. I'm running a little 4-inch by 30 foot net right now, just picking up an occasional broad whitefish, sheefish every now and then a Pike. But usually only one or two fish a day. Appreciate some of the comments from different folks further downriver and I think that's all I have for this week.

District Y6ab&c:

Nenana:

Eva Burke – It's Eva, I am from Nenana and Manley. I haven't been on the river since late May, because we have had to work, but the river was really low, it's come up it's normal I guess a little bit lower than usual. We have a lot of thunderstorms and fire going on right now. It's really smoky in Fairbanks. We could see the fire kicking up across the river over in 20 A, just South of the Tanana River, just South of Fairbanks kind of to the east, over by Salcha too, there's a big fire. I gotta run to another meeting, but I just wanted to say because I know Chinook is heavy and that to say that we're also working at the Fish Commission with our partners to lower the Chinook cap that's in place and there's a number of ways to do that. We've been asking through emergency petition to have a cap of zero and it keeps getting denied. The 7 of the 10 Regional Advisory Councils, there was an all RAC meeting in March of this year and there is a Chinook and Chum bycatch letter that the seven of the 10 councils put forth and wrote to the North Pacific. I believe we asked for a Chinook bycatch cap of 10,000. And so now we're starting to go back into that and also starting to look at the Chinook Salmon Savings area that used to exist. And so I don't know the timeline on these things, but I just wanted people to know that. I know this term bycatch action is happening right now and on the books, but there's some other work going on to address bycatch for Chinook too.

OTHER UPDATE:

BBAYK:

Gale Vick, Chair of the Fairbanks Advisory Committee Fisheries Sub-committee - reporting for BBAYK coalition - I'm just working on the agenda for this week. We are going to be talking about the ESA (Endangered Species Act) listing and we hope to have somebody from NOAA on next week. She wasn't available this week, but Tim Bristol from SalmonState is going to be on and we're going to have a greater discussion about what that means to the rest of Alaska, because most of you know that ESA petition right now is for the Gulf of Alaska, but it has long term ramifications. Then we're going to be talking about the several other deadlines that are coming, moving very quickly. I know you all are talking at YRDFA about having representative Mary Peltola talking about her Fish legislation. We would like to extend that as well, because we all should be paying attention to that. There's another issue on ecosystems based fisheries management road map that's due was due June 20. The commentary period is through July 31st and I think that is probably something a lot of people want to pay attention to and comment on because ecosystems based management has actually a lot to do with this gravel to gravel project on salmon issues. So those are the biggies right now. But we if you do get our agendas. They're 20 pages long or more, and there's just a whole bunch of information on there.

I wanted to add too that I was on the Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission meeting this morning, and I encourage people to listen in if they can, because we share a lot of interesting comments and they're struggling with low numbers as well. Just wanted to add that, thank you.

Open Discussion / Questions:

Call ended 2:33pm