



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

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Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 7th 2022 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, July 19, 2022. Call lasted 152 minutes. 71 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:

KAEE Eagle

KZPA FORT YUKON

KYUK- Olivia Ebertz

Communities participating:

Teslin

Old Crow

Eagle

Yukon River Bridge

Rampart

Tanana

Nenana

Huslia

Anvik

Russian Mission

Marshall

St. Mary's

Mountain Village

Emmonak

Nunam Iqua

Kotlik

Management Reports:

Bonnie Borba - Fall Season Research Biologist

Summer chum run size is second lowest ever, a 2 million average. Fall chum salmon run size below 300,000 while they average over 900,000. Using an in-season project to see if the run improves. On July 16 - switched over in the lower Yukon.

July 18 we started test fishery. Midpoint of season at Pilot Station is around August 8.

Kuskokwim salmon runs are also below average. Haven't looked into Norton Sound run. New project: August 10th Russian Mission radio tags put out in the river. Contacts and questions can be directed to the Fairbanks Fish and Game office.

Christy Gleason, Fall Season Yukon River Manager - ADFG

In the Emmonak office at the mouth of the river. Happy to be here. First chance look at salmon. Share obs. Caught 4 fall chum at Lower Yukon Test Fishery. Saw first fall chum looking fish. Larger, brighter silver color. More of a fat layer as compared to summer chum. Appreciate hearing from fishers. Call the Emmonak office.

Management actions - prediction for less than 300,000 fish. Based on the management plan, all fishing must be closed to start fall chum season. Closures for Chum and chinook. Critically low fall chum run this year. Allowed for 4", dip nets for all districts. Hook and line up to Anvik river. Additional gear of manned fish wheels. Retain pinks, sockeye, silver, humpies.

Management for fall season - coastal through district 2 in fall chum. Transitioning as we move up river. Monitor and make adjustments as needed.

Holly Carroll - Yukon River Area Manager

Fish and Wildlife service has been working with Fish and Game managers, our management plans look identical. Difference in Fall management plan is that it is limited to Federally Qualified Users in Federal Waters, when silver salmon run opens up, only open to Federally Qualified Users. Issue if you are not a resident around these Federally Managed waters ie. Anchorage. But you can help process these fish, just not catch them. May not affect many fishermen except coastal waters.

Coastal people do not have a C&T use determination for coho. They are not federally qualified users at this time.

This proposal might be looked at this upcoming winter. Contact me if you have any questions.

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

Update on summer season - some of the summer season assessment has wrapped up.

Fred West - Summer Season Research Biologist -

Bonnie Laid out expected salmon run, under the run of expected 500,000 chum salmon. For Chinook, 90% of salmon have already passed the lower river. Smallest observed run. Run sizes are small, escapement goals will not be met in any of the tributaries. As Deena mentioned, the lower river test fishery has transitioned to the fall season. Indexes are below average. Last push of chum would have passed the sonar by now. Project at pilot: current count of Chinook is 43,000, plus or minus 6,000 fish. 149,000 late timing years. For summer chum, the last day 437,000 chum, plus or minus 27,000. Anvik: 35,000-36,000. For Eagle, cumulative passage 100,918, below average for passage for this date.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Jaclyn Kendall - Acting Fisheries Manager, DFO

First part of the Chinook run in Canada. 3 monitoring projects going on . Porcupine - in Old Cross- since July 7 - 243 Chinook to this date.

-Tracdec Gwich'in on the line? - Their assessment project - Klondike Sonar near Dawson - passage is close to average - 70 total. Far below the historical average of 300. Middle River - counting weir - first fish passing there soon. Takhini River sonar - being constructed, first fish soon. Whitehorse fish ladder are waiting for fish.

Environmental Conditions: Environmental update - high waters have begun to decrease. Very little snowpack to melt. Gradual drop in water expected.

Yukon Main Stem at Dawson - above average but within historical range

The Yukon River temps around 70 degrees. Better conditions for Chinook.

Canadian Management: Key priority - reaching spawning grounds. Maintain closures in all fisheries. No allocation to First Nation subsistence. Chum - low projections - no allocation to First Nations to start the season. Over coming weeks, this may change.

Community level reports:

CANADA

Teslin: Carl - Not representing Teslin but I am from there. YSSC representative. Lots of rain. Water has dropped 1 meter and ½ or 4.5 feet. Not much happening. Usually people fish on Teslin Lake but due to high water, nowhere safe to launch boats. Temps have cooled off a bit.

Old Crow: Unknown - Porcupine river - water has been extremely low for over a month. Consistently low for the last two years. Temperatures are getting warmer, a lot warmer than last year, by 1 degree. Few salmon that are going by. One caught that was healthy. No fishing. Closure.

ALASKA

District Y5abc&d:

Eagle: Ruby - Absolutely no one fishing here, even with 4". Quiet, rainy and cool which has been nice after the heat. Willows are all turning brown here. They didn't turn yellow this year, just turned brown. Some folks may get 4" nets next week.

Yukon River Bridge: Unknown - A lot of debris. Lots of whitefish coming out of the river. Water is still high.

Rampart: Brooke - No fishing activity to report, feeling a huge sense of loss. Struggling to feel my worth, depressing that our tribes are completely shut down for two years and there is no solution or hope yet. No hope from sonar numbers at Pilot Station, what I'm seeing at Eagle is concerning. Shutting down the tribes is not the only solution.

Tanana: Stan Zuray, Rapids teleconference report:

- Water stable but still somewhat high. Very little drift in the river.
- Very little fishing activity in Tanana/ Rapids area.

- Still getting reports of reduced whitefish catches from most fishermen. Not unusual anymore to get 1 to 5 humpback whitefish in a check of the net at times.
- Some fishermen are still hoping for enough of a run of fall chum to put up some food for themselves and the few dogs left in the village - but most also realize it probably will not happen .
- Visible Ichthyophonous disease seen in about 30 % of the king caught in 4” subsistence nets that I and others have checked. So far that is similar to last few years for this first half of run.

District Y6abc:

Nenana: Victor - Listening to all the reports, doesn't sound good. We started cultural camp today here in Nenana. Cutting fish, but the fish is from Bristol Bay, For the kids. Gotta do what we gotta do. River levels dropped a bit, not too high. Confusing reports.

On that disaster stuff, we need one of those... The river system here has it covered. But out there past the 3 mile limit where the subsistence fish lose their priority. Do we really know where they go and what turmoil they run into out there? Micro chips or something.

Deena - what was the question?

Serena - do we know where the fish go in the ocean?

Victor- once they leave the river.

Deena - Katie Howard might be best to respond to this. She could talk about the migration patterns in the Bering Sea. It's hard to put taggers on the little tiny fish.

Fred- similar to Deena, not the best person to speak to it. Recommend dedicated discussion.

District Y4a&c:

Koyukuk River:

Huslia: Zoe - Reporting for Lisa Bifelt - No reported fishing due to the closure. A few people fished for sheefish but not sure if anyone caught anything. Water dropped the past few days.

District Y4a:

Anvik: Robert Walker - Alberta is working. High water is dropping. Talked to people who came from the river. Heard about 35,000 chum going up the Anvik river. Seen 7 that came through.

Assessment data added. Since there's no fish up the Anvik, bears are coming to our dump now.

Usually it doesn't happen until October. Bear tracks through town. Will be a concern for us. Gas is 8\$ a gallon here. Listening to others discuss this - watching channel 2 news, watching people

fish in Kenai and Russian rivers, catching a lot of fish, having a great time and spending a lot of money to do that. Read in the Anchorage paper that Bristol Bay has a record number of salmon.

For the last 5, 6 years, the state never declared a disaster for the salmon run on the salmon.

Everyone used to gather 100, 200 pounds of fish for the winter. Talking to people, they depend more on store food than ever before. Knowing the village that people don't make a lot of money

and the price of food is up 30-45%. In Anchorage recently, looking at Copper river salmon,

they're 40\$ a pound, lobster, red crab, up 40\$ a pound. Spending more money on food than ever before. We don't have that bump of salmon to feed us. More people are using credit cards and

wondering how they're going to pay that off. Wondering how this will go in the next couple of years. OSM and the state should step up more. We need more of a food bank, we don't have a

food bank here. Anchorage food bank. Everything is being depleted, they say it is a renewable resource, but is it? Not anymore. Text from a lady in Nulato says she's tired of Sheefish every

day. Go to OSM and have a discussion with them. Say these people are running out of food- we don't want food stamps, we want our way of life. Too far gone where we are now. Thank you. Serena - Thank you for your words. We have been trying to paint that picture that you just said. We requested a meeting with the Governor and we have not heard back yet.

Holly Carroll - Echo what Serena is saying. You are talking about not just loss of fish but so many things in rural communities that are making basic survival a lot harder than it is in urban communities. I have heard this for weeks and years. As biologists, we have very limited authority. The kind of stuff you are talking about is far more systemic. Why does a pack of chicken cost \$50? Why is there not a system to subsidize this? Outside of the purview of my position. Most of you understand why fishing is closed now. We are trying to prevent this run from collapsing. Why is there no food bank in each community? What can be done? Who are the heads of agencies who can get involved and do something?

Robert - This is going to come out one day. Passing info on to different organizations. Just a matter of time before someone gets a hold of this. Run for governor and use it for a platform. There are ways of doing things. Just to bring it out to the other tribal people to bring it to their tribes. So we can all get on the same page. This would be like, not just one tribe, but form a coalition. This could be a start. TCC - bring it up there at the fall meeting in October.

Alberta - There is no fishing going on around here. Haven't seen any boats out except some people went out sheefishing on the Anvik river and caught a few. That's just about it.

District Y3:

Russian Mission: Basil - Quick update - switch from south to north wind, cold and rainy since, might change soon. Water levels dropping steadily, mud stinks, indicating spawners in the water. Lots of pinks, some bears. No food bank on the Yukon river, we are the most efficient people around, we live off the land. Seasonal food, fish, bears, birds, berries. That is our food bank. When that's gone it's pretty sad. Little fishing activity. My brother has dogs. Humpies are still running, enough for 2 days of dog feed. They were healthy, all the others passing aren't as healthy looking. He cooks every morning for his dogs. Half the humpies have pus inside them. Pretty noticeable. \$6.59\$ a gallon. Renovating 52 plumbing units on houses. Very little fishing activity. Berry season, folks are starting to make aguduk. Need whitefish for it. Can get 50 in no time. Raspberries are abundant. Some got a couple of gallons. Some aren't ready. Mud is sticky and stinking. Lots of bear activity. Running into them while berry picking. Tribe pushed out another stimulus check. Fresh produce for elders passed out. Thanks.

District Y2:

Marshall: David - 2 weeks ago I asked about water quality. Reports of discharges into the water system that may affect spawning fish. Mines. People worried about mines affecting fish with discharge. Encountered a beaver dam that was 20 feet high. During our research gathering, everyone is monitoring water quality, how it affects fish on their spawning grounds. Want to voice my support for Mary Peltola on the upcoming election. Working with the Intertribal Fish Commission on Kuskokwim, has good knowledge.

Serena - This is a teleconference not a meeting. Suggest that you bring this back to your tribal council. We did have YRITWC give a presentation last week. Our summary will provide those notes. You can also contact YRITWC and talk to Dr. Mutter 907-258-3337

St. Mary's: Bill Alstrom - Listening in, got in late. I totally agree with all of Anvik. Out here trying to survive with these prices, which are skyrocketing. Our local store here. In every other

village, the first part of the month, we get an influx of customers in the store. With food stamps and filling up their carts. Me and my wife are both retired, reaching out to these people who fill their carts with junk food, really disheartening. They should fill it up with something nutritious for their family. Water is dropping rapidly here. Haven't been out to the Yukon. Can't afford to go run around, the boat is high and dry, and hasn't touched the water. Price of gas. Fuel supplier Crowley. Whatever price they bought it for, we're shocked by prices, closer to 9\$ a gallon. Getting gas at Kwipak. Looking for gas to support our other activities. Gathering berries. We have to look for other ways to try and survive. Social security, making sure it lasts throughout the month. Our fuel supplier and heat supplier, out of this world. All seem to target the small villages, out in the rural area. Why are we paying these huge prices? Why are they picking us, we are struggling to meet our needs. Heating fuel is over \$9 a gallon with no subsidies. It's a vicious circle. Lot of driftwood and logs came down the river thankfully. Helped support our heat throughout the winter. We don't know what winter will bring. We have an election coming up. Putting out the word. Dividend won't last. We don't need handouts, but tribal entities can help. Weather is kind of cold, overcast, rain, and water is dropping. Hopefully everyone goes out to get berries. We are older in our 70s, we can't go out on the tundra.

Randy and Edna Crawford - Boreal Fisheries - People in Y2 know that Boreal has been shut down. Although we are not there physically we are very concerned about what is happening. We have reached out to Senator Murkowski to help pay the rent so that we can keep our facility so that when the fish do come back, we can be a valid buyer. We really care about the people and we care about what is happening. Our hearts go out to everyone involved in this fishery.

Mt. Village: Nita - no one has gone fishing. Most everyone is picking berries, no one is fishing. Water is dropped. Able to get our spring water down by the river now that the water has dropped.

District Y1:

Emmonak: John Lamont - In a recent news article, the commissioner had another study done in Area M. Ms. Woods referred to that. We have been studying this and studying this. There is nothing else we can do. Who is taking the brunt of this, the end user in Alaska and Canada. Understanding a \$77M commercial fishery trumps subsistence users on the Yukon River. Our delegation really can't do anything more with the factors involved. Billions of hatchery released hatchery fish. Catcher vessels and pollock. Everyone I have listened to today has been right on. On the Yukon, we are the fish people. We have depended on that salmon for millennia. Really really sad, not so much when we had to stop fishing for Chinook, but with the system where we had to stop fishing for everything. Our commercial fishery used to maintain our way of life. The actual secretary of the Interior, that 99% of the fishers at the mouth of the Yukon were Indigenous. Now I can't even go home and set a 4" net. \$9 / gallon gas. I feel for everyone at home. My soul and body is back home. Wasilla, this isn't my home. My home is on the Yukon River. We have been studying this and studying this. Mr. Basil Larsen, our food bank is on both the north banks and the south bank of the Yukon. It used to be in the Yukon River too. We need strong voices somehow to make sure things are done right.

Nunam Iqua: Joe Afcan - At home, listening to all the wonderful comments. Still waiting for the Feds to enforce the protection area. Last year I heard that the coast guard had made some arrests and confiscated some equipment out in the Bering Sea. Wondering if that could still be enacted by our federal enforcement officers out in the Bering Sea.

Holly - Can you repeat the question?

Joe - Waiting for feds to protect our subsistence resources. Last year I heard the coast guard doing enforcement of salmon laws out in the ocean. I wanted clarification of laws out on the sea.

Holly - Two areas in the ocean, right off the coast - state waters for 3 miles. The high seas that are beyond 200 miles.

Joe - Referring to 3 miles.

Holly - Commercial fisheries that occur between 3 miles and 200 miles. Managed by the NPFMC. Last week we had an extensive report on this and how it is managed.

Joe - That doesn't do too much for the people of the Yukon River or in Canada. Would like to do something right off the bat to be able to fish for our families.

Holly - Bering Sea fisheries vs In River fisheries are different topics. In River management has very clear jurisdiction and management. If there are enough fish, we allow fishing. When there is not enough fish for future generations, then we have to close fishing.

Joe - report from YR DFA, presented about the salmon resources.

Serena - Teleconference summaries?

Joe - most everyone is a part of this association. To help us solve our issues.

Serena - summaries are on our webpage and Facebook page.

Joe - happy that people are going after salmon berries.

Kotlik: Paul - Yupik Enterprises - Salmon here in Kotlik have been a low run. Never hear of anyone catching chum or king. I support the Elders who really get their needs from subsistence. Our low runs have really affected our Elders and our young people who really rely on salmon. Guy from Anvik mentioned how come no food bank during this disaster? Does anyone know if our governor..... Declared a disaster?

Serena - The Governor has not declared a disaster. Any tribe or org can request the Governor to declare it and if he does, his declaration would go to the Department of Commerce. We are waiting till the end of the season to see if we should ask for another one this year.

Lorena Prince - I have a question - I was wondering if anyone did any studies on where the salmon run - we have a landfill near the river, I went to go throw trash, I saw our landfill was in bad condition. All that trash and plastic affecting the river, the salmon go through that. I wondered if anyone did any studies about landfills on the riverbanks of the Yukon. Set up a special meeting tomorrow with the corporation to discuss that. Kotlik Yupik corporation operated that with a commission through the city. They used to keep it clean all the time, like last year. Now I can't believe its condition. When I was a child they threw trash onto the river when the ice broke, we didn't have a landfill. We threw them in the trees in winter. They closed one near the Bering Sea because it was impacting the river. Another landfill wasn't approved because it was too close to the river. My question is if anyone has done studies here on landfills. Might be affecting salmon too with trash in the river.

Serena - It might be a good idea to talk with the Intertribal Watershed Council. They have done a lot of landfill operator trainings. Another place to get in touch with is CEC. Communities have inspections of their landfill and have to meet certain criteria. Even meet with ANTHC, see how they could help. 9072583337. Talk with Edda or Executive Director Theresa Clark.

Additional Speakers:

Darryl Vent - Huslia - Current management system and how it's been operating over the last 20 years. It's about what we are going to do to get the fish back in the water. Right now we cannot say we are subsistence users. We are trying to find ways to put these in words. How do we define management? There is a real lack of information in how we define management. If we

dont we won't have any more fish. What are we going to do to stop this? We are not going to be able to be called subsistence users. In the villages, 60-80% rely on subsistence. State needs to learn how to support subsistence users. They need to step up to the plate and help us with this problem. We need to start getting on board with how the state manages. It's not our management, it's just a starting point.

Victor - A guy went to Japan and lived with them for a while. He came to our meeting one time. He even went to Whitehorse and stayed with them. The only boss is Obama. Wonder if Biden has anyone like that. Debra Hall was at Tanana Chiefs. Another drop like we've had for the last 3-4 years and the fish will be gone.

Joe Afcan - Two points - CDQ is about economic development. Since the price of fuel is so high, those could make applications to CDQ management in the office to initiate fuel stations at lower prices. 5\$ is more reasonable than 10\$ a gallon. Could fall under the CDQ program. Another point about fuel is at one time Fairbanks had a refinery, the water table there is high, Chena river comes into the Tanana, Tanana goes into the Yukon. The water was contaminated, I was wondering if there were any studies on that impacts?

Diane, in Marshall - Nothing really new to report. Saw people that I surveyed, taking their nets out, with a lot of humpies. Nothing really new else to report from Marshall.

David Fitka - Comment about the research - wondering what information is being gathered, people can see what information they have. Is there data we might be able to see, a report?

Serena - Are you talking about what the federal government or state is doing?

David - I would like to see an overall report from each entity. Who is doing what? What information is being collected?

Serena - There is a lot of research being done. We try to give information during our meetings. Most meetings, information sharing, happens during the winter. If you are interested, I encourage you to stay engaged because that is when a lot of it is presented. Stay engaged. The AYK Cycle is happening. Research is being done and you can just look at our website, attend meetings when you can. You may be interested in staying engaged.

David - curious about new information. Everyone keeps calling for more research.

Holly - We could fill 3-5 Teleconferences to cover all the research being done on the Yukon. Even just the assessment update of all the data we are collecting on this Yukon River run fills 40 pages. Symposiums, Salmon summits last year. Whole multi day seminars where each presenter will present for 15 minutes. It is a lot, what you are asking. If it was Yukon River research, maybe we could highlight at the end of the season. This is so much, we wouldn't be able to cover it right now.

Deena - Jan 14-18 in Anchorage - Board of Fish AYK cycle.

Bill Alstrom: Hatcheries - Are the hatcheries that pump out all the fish impact the western Alaska salmon?

Holly - Virgil Umpenour is often trying to raise awareness about this issue. Salmon caught are often from Japan and Asia - there are marine biologists working hard on this issue - Sabrina Garcia. We don't have super clear evidence on these impacts. But there are multiple studies to talk about that. UAA, NOAA, etc.

Bill - Thank you Holly. A few years ago before the pandemic, the Bering Sea fisheries put out a meeting concerning hatcheries, after passage in 1998 about hatcheries being feasible on the Yukon.

John - Tomorrow, international Year of the Salmon, high seas survey starts tomorrow at 1pm Alaska time. Really good job in updating us on the research they are doing out in the North Pacific. Contact number is 888-788-0099. 855-703-7985(?) 673908 passcode.

Bill - Which outfit is putting that on?

John - the pacific salmon commission.

Robert - *For Holly*- Professor from University of Washington who did a presentation in Anchorage about 20 years ago about the crash in the Yukon River in 1918. I know the fish rebounded after a while. There was no commercial fishery. Subsistence fishery but no commercial. Holly can you look this up? Effects on the local people and who they had to bring in reindeer herds to help subsidize their food. If you could find someone in OSM or somewhere to bring them back up to do that again.

Holly - I can look into this. When I worked at ADFG I had a report about the 1920s. This crash was partially caused by commercial fishing because they actually strung a net across the whole river. I think they learned that you cannot damn up a whole river and take all the fish.

Robert - I heard it impacted people across the whole river, the whole ecosystem in turmoil. Ask people at UAA or OSM.

Holly - We will do that. Thanks for the suggestion.

Virgil - Carlile Cannery. Take the train out, follow the ice. Hudson Stuck, the Archdeacon of the Episcopal Church, testified in front of DC. That's what stopped the commercial fishery. Transcript of that available online. Fairbanks AC. Tells all about what happened back then. Every year salmon is dumped back into the ocean. It doesn't make sense, no common sense. Same with caribou. They didn't want a huge crash.

Robert - I appreciate that. I think that YRDFA should have a presentation in communities.

John - did we have a report from Scammon Bay or Hooper Bay?

Serena - Let's see, looks like I missed calling them but they have had low participation. I will try to get them involved and participating.

Call ended 3:32 pm