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Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 9th 2022 Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held Tuesday, August 2, 2022. Call lasted 83 minutes. 54 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:

KYUK - Olivia Ebertz
KEAA - Ann Millard

Political Representatives participating:

Samuel from Senator Sullivan's Office

Communities participating:

Whitehorse
Dawson
Eagle
Beaver
Holy Cross
Pilot Station
Mountain Village
Nunam Iqua

Management Reports:

Bonnie Borba - ADF&G Yukon River Area Research Biologist

- In Fairbanks, heading to Emmonak soon
- Fall chum salmon run projection is below 300,000 fish, usually averages above 1 million
- LYTF are well below averages and tracks with 2021 numbers
- Age composition of 25 fall chum salmon consisted of 58 percent are age 4 and 42 percent age 5
- Average length 558 mm, larger than chum in 2020, well below historical average of 592 mm
- Pilot Station test fishery transitioned to fall season on July 19 with around 90,000 fish

- Last year was the worst run on record, this year is a bit better
- Midpoint of sonar is August 9
- Genetic sampling are headed to lab this week, next week should have results
- Escapement goal is 300000-600000 fish at the upper drainage
- Eagle sonar will transition to fall count in Mid August
- Coho enter in mid August, first fish were caught July 27 and July 29. Goal is to tag 350 Coho salmon.
- Report additional information at this meeting in the future.

Christy Gleason- ADF&G Yukon River Area Fall Season Manager - We're at the historical $\frac{1}{4}$ point of the fall chum salmon run and we're still not seeing many fall chum come into the Yukon River. We are tracking the 2020 fall chum salmon run, which was the second lowest run on record. Coho salmon are starting to trickle in at the mainstem Yukon River sonar near Pilot Station this past week. Pink salmon (humpies) have still been present in the Lower Yukon since the end of June for a total of 144,000 counted at the sonar so far this summer.

The closures for fall chum salmon will continue because we are below our drainage wide escapement goal of 300,000 to 600,000 fish. It's important to make sure we get enough fall chum salmon to spawning grounds this year to ensure a salmon run for future generations. Fall management is occurring along the coast up to District 4. Selective gear is open for non salmon, and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon, but chum and Chinook must be released alive. 4" gillnets remain open 7 days a week. Fishermen in Subdistrict 5-A, B, C are transitioning to fall management later this week.

One new item to share this week is information about CARES ACT funding. The application period is now open for subsistence and commercial fishermen. This is the second year of Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act funding that supports states and tribes with coastal and marine fisheries who have been negatively affected by COVID-19. The deadline for postmarking applications is October 31. We shared the link on the ADF&G Yukon River Fishing facebook page. You can also call 888-517-7262 if you have questions. It is strongly recommended that remote villages and communities request applications in bulk to be mailed to a community leader or tribal liaison.

Holly-US Fish & Wildlife Service Yukon River Area Manager- I don't have much to add. I will stand by for questions and conversation at the end.

Fred West - ADF&G Yukon River Area Research Biologist

transitioned to the fall season in the lower river. Now looking at the upper river for chinook. On August 3rd we expect the $\frac{3}{4}$ point to be at the eagle sonar. Cumulative counts at eagle are below average and the lowest since 2005. 42,500 will not be met. Summer chum is 2nd lowest on record of 300,000 and we did not meet the escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 mill. The summer chum that passed anvik were also very low. *Added stats about other counts* (assuming this will all be on their weekly report). As of August 1st the cumulative count of Chinook is 5808 in Eagle.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Erica Gillis - Biologist Stock Assessment team.

- Porcupine river sonar - As of July 31, 335 Chinook counted. Well below average of 2500 fish. Water levels are dropping, Water temps are around 15 degrees Celsius. 175 Chinook counted, well below average of 1500 fish (what sonar?)
- Weir installed in Tikichi river.
- Looking ahead to the arrival of the first fall chum in Canada.
- Quick environmental update conditions - Record high water levels this year, slowly decreasing since. Continual glacial melt

Jaelyn Kendall- Yukon Fishery Manager - Key priority remains conservation. With Chinook, there will not be an allocation to First Nations. With the low fall chum numbers, it is not anticipated that the season will start with an allocation to the First Nations Subsistence fisheries.

Canadian Management:

- The key priority for management in Canada is to ensure as many Canadian-origin salmon reach their spawning grounds as possible.
- With the current Chinook abundance estimates into Canada there will not be an allocation to the First Nation subsistence fishery.
- Based on the summer/fall Chum relationship, fall Chum spawning escapement goals are unlikely to be met in Canada for the Yukon River mainstem or Fishing Branch stocks, it's not anticipated that the season will start with an allocation to the First Nation subsistence fishery.
- Over the coming weeks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will rely on information collected by assessment programs at Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Pilot Station Sonar and Eagle Sonar to inform management decisions in Canada.
- DFO will continue to maintain closures in the public angling (recreational) commercial, and domestic (non-indigenous food fishery) fisheries throughout 2022.

Community level reports:

Whitehorse: Elizabeth MacDonald- Not too much to report, weather has been overcast and scattered rain. Overall bad weather, people aren't out on the river fishing along the main stem. Usually they fish with a net on the river. Instead they go for lake fish, whitefish, with a 4" net or smaller. People are depressed with the numbers, worried about extinction, and worried about the Eagle test fishery numbers.

Dawson: Karlie Knight - Fish and Wildlife Manager Trondek Hwech'in. August 1st we saw 9 salmon come through and 184 cumulative. 12% of historical average. Water levels are dropping. Chinook spawning surveys showed 4 chinook in the river and zero reds. We are worried about extinction. Trondek Gwich'in passed another year of no fishing.

ALASKA

District Y5abc&d:

Eagle: Ruby - Nothing important going on. Everyone is busy with gardens and Caribou season is about to open. Excited to work on projects besides fishing. No fishing activity. Topic that is on everyone's minds. River levels are dropping, average for this time of year. Cloudy. Fluorescent orange pollen on Roses, then Rose hips have become soft and mushy, people are worried they

won't be edible. Cranberries came out early and larger than average. Willows are dying back, completely brown, and didn't turn yellow. Not sure what is going on there. That is all.

District Y3:

Holy Cross: Ronald Demientieff -This is my first time on this teleconference. What do you mean by reports?

Catherine: What are the conditions, is there fishing, anything related to what is going on in your community.

Ronald: All I can say is that we see Humpys and white fish in our 4" nets. Is Area M open to fishing while we are closed down?

Deena - I don't know if they are open right now. They were closed for a certain amount of time. They have different runs and stocks, and so they have different management based on salmon going to different areas.

Ronald: I've been a fisherman my whole life, we just can't believe this is happening. Area M is a problem and I wonder if they are fishing in May and June when our fish are trying to come back. Never in my fathers wildest dreams did he think that our fish would disappear like this. So, do they fish then?

Bonnie: Yes they fish in June and yes they did fish this year.

Ronald: Besides trawlers, they are the biggest problem to this river. I think it is shameful. There are a lot of people that count on this. We are forced to eat someone else's fish with freezer burn. How we are treated along this river and in these villages, like my dad says, is very shameful. When nothing is being done about it, they are part of the problem.

Karen Gillis - BSFA- I did want to address a couple of issues related to Area M. YR DFA and BSFA sent letters asking for emergency action to be taken during the month of June. They begin fishing June 10th. There were some modifications to the early part of their season. Otherwise they have been fishing like normal. I am meeting with the governor on the 29th. There were 15 organizations that asked for a meeting with the governor and we will all be meeting this month. There are ways to mitigate the fishing in Area M and as of now we've had little success. So I thought you'd like to know about our current efforts.

District Y2:

Pilot Station:

Martin - Nothing to report. Nothing going on. Last week I wanted to mention the article on Fukushima study. It's called West Coast Tuna on the NOAA website.

Mt. Village: Stan Sheppard - Not too much to report, water levels are staying steady. Cooler weather, overcast, rain off and on. Barely any activity out on the river. People are geared for picking berries. Haven't touched bases with the person doing the test fishery here. Don't know what is being caught at Middle Mouth. Lately to get things going, things are stalling, we don't get any definite answers on the situation in False Pass and Area M. We've been getting salmon in

the rivers all these years. False Pass is a gateway for all West Coast Alaska fisheries. When was it last year, the year before when 2.4 million fish were caught in False Pass, and we have a low return on fish this year, people aren't looking at that, only looking at the Yukon. It's not the Yukon problem, it's out there, and we aren't seeing any fish on the river? Sarah Palin is for subsistence, what has she done on the Yukon for salmon? Next time we have a teleconference, get her on the conference to see what she will do. Thank you.

District Y1:

Nunam Iqua: Joseph Afcan - Not too much to share today, weather has been wet. Lots of people are going salmon berry and blueberry picking. Mostly concentrating on berry picking. Salmon - Alaska salmon treaty with Canada has not been met. This needs to be addressed one way or another. Prefer to ban trawlers in the Bering Sea. Declare salmon, halibut, crab, and other endangered species that make their way to Yukon, Kuskokwim regions, so that they won't be harvested unless they become plentiful again. Speaking to YRDFA, recommending filing a Class Action lawsuit to protect the food resource in the sea and inriver. Rivers I'm referring to, all the tributaries. Politics and research, endorses candidates on this platform. Good way to make change. The Governor has the ability to appoint people to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. That or our way of life may be depleted. Important as to who we put into those offices. Address our dire need for the salmon to return to the Yukon. People who hold management positions in ADF&G, US Wildlife Service, those fond of research, speak of historical and below average, makes me think they don't know as much, I know my people would say to save the salmon for the people upriver. The research needs to be expanded to cover sonar stations in all the tributaries, Anvik, Tanana, Chena, Salcha, so that the minimum amount of fish can escape and feed the people of the Yukon wherever they live. I don't know what other solutions people may suggest, but one way is feasible. Thank you.

Additional Speakers:

Martin Kelly - I had one comment - I wanted to address that our wild salmon, Fish and Game had something to say about planting boxes at the top end of tributaries to help spawning salmon. From my point of view I would know that we are the last river with wild salmon, I know that implanting salmon would affect our natural cycle of salmon. Hearing other people here, people in Holy Cross about salmon being donated, salmon were freezer burnt, salmon donated from Mike Dunleavy's office, people were saying they didn't want any salmon from there. I'm reaching out to people to get some help with dog food. We don't have ASPCA, I wanted to use my salmon to sacrifice my dog instead of watching it suffer. Something has impacted the cycle, it might not be evident right now, but we've talked and talked about it, it's a broken record and nothing is really being done. Campaigners are talking a lot but not doing anything, get them on this conference. My point is that I don't believe in farmed salmon, or disrupting a natural cycle of wild salmon.

Rochelle Adams - Clarify about the farmed fish he is mentioning on the Yukon river?

Deena Jallen- ADFG - I don't know a whole lot about farmed salmon, there is a draft talking about planning hatcheries on the ADF&G website, I will send it to Catherine and it will be sent out from there.

Rochelle Adams - There is no fish farming on the Yukon right now right?

Deena Jallen- ADFG - Martin mentioned that about egg boxes and hatcheries and egg raising, there is a small hatchery in Whitehorse, on the Yukon in Canada

Rochelle Adams- I learned something new today, thank you. Also thank you to Rob. Can someone give us information on the Area M commercial fishing, and what they are taking? I tried to educate myself the best I can, but I can appreciate more info. I didn't realize there was commercial fishing on the Yukon. How much fish is being taken on the commercial fishery? I'm asking that question as a person looking to be informed.

Deena Jallen- ADFG - Contact # 907-383-2066 Area M biologists that can answer more specific questions on what they do and where they fish at, Commercial harvest report, will get the link and send the report out. There is no fishing on the Yukon itself.

Rochelle Adams- Area M fishery includes fish that are destined for the Yukon River?

Deena Jallen- ADFG - Genetic sampling report will be out this river to find out.

Rochelle Adams - That is useful information, I would like more information shared out. Glad that this was brought up. If it affects our river then we should know about it. Take these comments and get these points every phone call, continuously build upon this knowledge, appreciate that people continue to share their comments on this call. I know not a lot of people shared this week, I know a lot of people don't know what to say anymore, what else can we say or do? What is really beneficial is that we can look beyond our job description, look at the whole ecosystem of fish, including in the ocean and internationally. Doing what is needed to find solutions. I encourage the managers to do what you can, we can work together to find solutions. No solution is harmful.

Stan Sheppard - Sidetracked, I forgot to mention that last week on the 29th Kwik'pak brought up 40 cases of salmon. I forgot to ask what region those fish were from. I haven't had any fish yet, I haven't tasted it yet, so I wouldn't be able to tell if they were freezer burnt. I made a public announcement for anybody who wanted chums or silvers to come up and pick some up. I was out there distributing the boxes, with the amount of people and households, we came up with the number of 6 chums per household. When I was handling them some of them were bright, some of them were water colored, surprised where they got them. I would have to call Kwik'pak to find out where they got them. I agree with Martin and the (egg boxes) hatcheries. In 1999-2008, I worked in an Anchorage restaurant, a Japanese restaurant. A cook, a chef, and a lot of salmon was ordered, they say it was king salmon. It was not king salmon, it was farmed fish. Farmed fish have king salmon head, coho tail. When I go home I'll take a photo of king salmon and show you. Farmed fish is not the way to go. If they could keep the farmed fish away from the Yukon, that would be good. That's all, thank you.

David Walker- We got water that came up down a little bit, but it's going back down. Fall chum, [the water] usually raises when the fall chum comes. I am not going to expect any fish. I did go dip netting for pink salmon for my dogs. I think I got 60-70. They swim along the shore. I just learned that they are not native to the Yukon, they are planted. It's a big change in life. I look around my house for something to snack on, usually there are strips, and that's not there anymore. It takes the wind out of the sail. A lot of people are hurting and without jobs. There has been some assistance with the tribe, they've been helping all they can. I hear stories about the

trawlers and Area M. I wonder if there has been studies on pirate/foreign vessels intercepting our fish. I hear they have miles and miles of nets that they set out. I've been attending the conferences over the summer. I see it. We aren't getting any results. We are getting negative results, somewhere else. And the people on the Yukon are suffering. It's nice that we could get together and BS.

Christy Gleason- ADFG -I don't have information on pirate ships and how they're managed, but I wanted to say thank you. I heard Lower Yukon is happy to get these pinks for their dogs, happy to hear they are getting fed.

Call ended 2:23 pm