Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 6th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held on Tuesday, July 7, 2015.

**Background:** Yukon River salmon management teleconferences are held annually on every Tuesday in June, July, and August for fishing communities and fisheries managers throughout the Yukon River drainage to discuss fishing conditions and management strategies as the salmon run is occurring. Funded by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

**Communities participating this week:** Kotlik,Nunam Iqua, Saint Mary’s, Marshall, Pilot Station, Russian Mission, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Ruby, Rampart, Fort Yukon, Fairbanks, Old Crow

**Subsistence Reports:** (reports may be from one individual or a few depending on who participated in the call this week and reflect the participant on the call at the time)

Kotlik reported that they were receiving fish from Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the fish were scarred up and were not healthy. Beaver dams were brought up and asked about doing something to get rid of them.

Saint Mary’s said 75% of the fish are still in good shape. There are still some bright large ones. Most subsistence users are done with meeting their subsistence needs. Pilot Station was concerned when there were concurrent subsistence and commercial openings for people or families that rely on one boat. The water is down, no debris and it has been windy and rainy. Marshall reported that 3 people went subsistence fishing and many went commercial.

Russian Mission reported that the fish are changing color and there are some with sores and puss. People are commercial fishing because the quality is poor for subsistence at this point and people are holding off until fall chum.

Kaltag reported there was a big rainstorm and the river went up. They had an opener on July 3 and they have been able to enjoy eating chum salmon that were of good quality.

Nulato said that it was still smoky and some people tried to go out and get a few. They would like another 4 hour opening.

Koyukuk said some people got some small jacks.

Huslia on the Koyukuk River reported that it is smoky people got a couple good chum. It is starting to rain now so people cannot go out.

Galena said it was confusing over the weekend. They were not sure of the regulations and some were no ready to fish yet some did get a couple of king salmon. They appreciated the opening but it was expensive to cover the gas for 1-2 king salmon that were small. They would like to fish the chums.

Ruby reported that a subsistence opener yesterday with 6 inch gillnets led to harvest of a few whitefish and some chum and two jacks. Others were able to harvest about two dozen Chinook salmon. It rained last night and cleared up some of the forest fire smoke.

Rampart reported dense thick smoke and cannot see across the river. Traveling now would be dangerous. Tremendous unmet need here and people cannot afford to buy a new net. Rampart does not want the poor quality fish that is trying to be given away. A lot of people were forced out of their villages in the interior and cannot get their subsistence fish because of the fires and the mesh size. To continually change the mesh sizes and have openings and closings not based on local conditions is not appropriate. Not everyone has a radio in their house to hear the constant schedule changes. The bycatch in the Bering Sea is really the problem and we want to catch our own fish. Did not like to hear that the lower river people were going to go commercial fishing when in Rampart they have not even gotten their subsistence. The social problems associated with low to no fishing activity were brought up.

Fort Yukon reported they had a closure on Friday as the first pulse went through. Water was real variable and going up and down. 10 fish harvested before the closure. People are disgruntled as they see the nice good-looking fish go by and then we get the scraps at the end of the run and we have similar feelings like Kotlik.

Old Crow said the water is high, and there is not much debris. People getting good amount of whitefish, a few nets in water and water is dropping slowly now; 11 salmon were caught.

Dennis of Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee and they made a recommendation to the minister and they thank people in Alaska and appreciate the hardship and sacrifices that people are making. We want all fish that come up here to go to the spawning grounds.

**Public comments, questions, and answers:**

People asked various questions on the topics of: fish size, what gear they can use and what their fishing schedules are in the different districts.

Concern was raised about the amount of fish caught in the test fisheries in the lower river. Management explained that they have tried to lower their effort without compromising their data and that they release all the kings that look healthy. Rampart continued to express concerns about salmon by-catch and other problems affecting salmon productivity. Both ADF&G and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans expressed concern over the decline and there are projects going on to learn more about predators, marine issues, outmigration and juvenile productivity. There is a lot changing and there is a ray of hope the runs will improve.

Concern was raised about lower river people fishing commercial while the upriver has not fished for subsistence. Others expressed that there are many families that rely on chum salmon for income and need the money to keep family food stored with being able to pay their energy bills.

Someone brought up putting salmon on the endangered species list and someone else said this was not a good idea but it will kill off the people on the river.

**Salmon Fisheries Research and Management:**

For Alaskan research and management information, please visit:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

*OR* he subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call(907) 459-7387

For Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada updates, please visit:

http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/yukon/fmcountingfac.htm

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3131 or look for us on the web at www.yukonsalmon.org.

Please join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).