



2017 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook

The 2017 Chinook salmon run is expected to be below average and similar in size to last year. While most escapement goals for Chinook salmon have been met in the previous three years, continued conservation measures will be necessary to meet Chinook salmon escapement objectives and rebuild the run to historic levels.

2017 Run and Harvest Outlook for Yukon River Salmon

	Chinook	Summer Chum	Fall Chum*	Coho
Projection:	Below Average	Above average	Above average	Average to above average
Escapement:	Potential to meet goals	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goal
Subsistence:	Restrictions necessary	Expect to provide for normal harvest	Expect to provide for normal harvest	Expect to provide for normal harvest
Commercial:	No fishery	Up to 1.5 million available	Up to 850,000 available	60,000 to 200,000 available

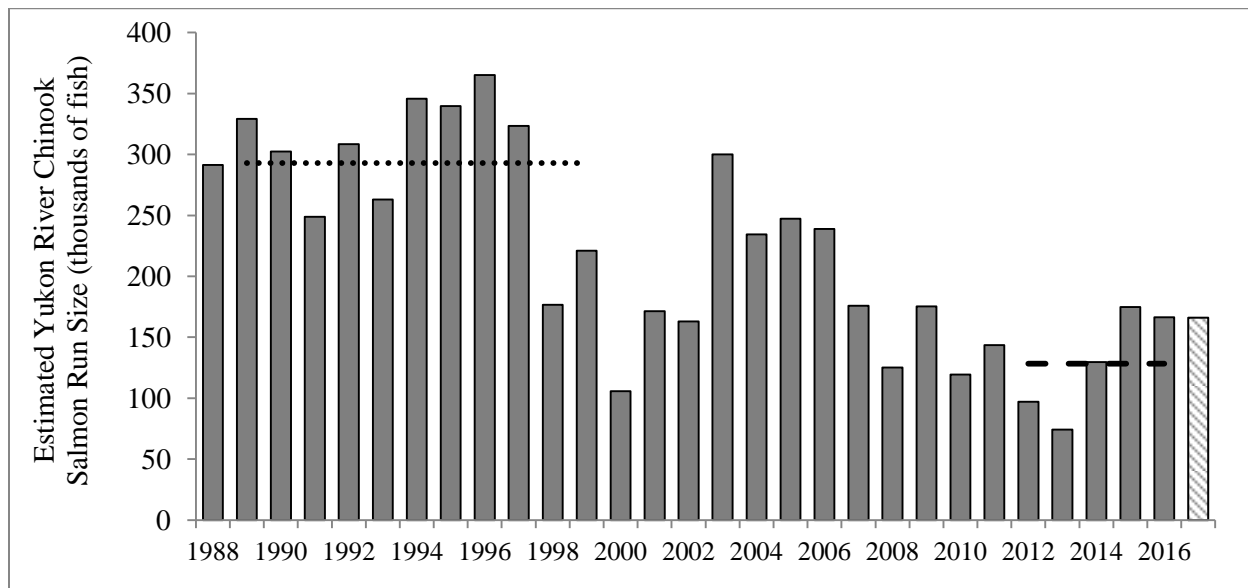
* Fall Chum projection and harvestable surplus totals will be revised in early July based on summer chum salmon run size.

Management Strategies

- Before Chinook salmon enter the river, subsistence fishing will be open 24 hours a day 7 days a week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.
- As early Chinook salmon enter each district, subsistence salmon fishing will be provided on a reduced regulatory schedule with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.
- By regulation, fishing will close just before the first pulse of Chinook salmon enters each area.
- One day after salmon fishing with gillnets closes (just before first pulse is present), subsistence opportunity will begin with selective gear to target summer chum salmon. This opportunity will be offered up through subdistrict 5-C based on migration timing. Selective gear includes dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels and requires the immediate release of all Chinook salmon alive.
- During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fishing is allowed with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length. While this mesh size is to target non-salmon species, any salmon caught in this mesh size can be kept.
- When confidence is high that the Chinook salmon run is adequate and escapement goals are likely to be met, the use of 6-inch gillnets on a reduced regulatory schedule will be considered, as well as short openings with 7.5-inch gillnets. Fishermen are reminded that whenever gillnets are allowed, they may choose to use *smaller* mesh gillnets than specified.
- Commercial fishing for summer chum will begin with selective gear, based on inseason run assessment.
- The sport fishery for Chinook salmon will begin the season closed (effective May 1) throughout the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage, excluding the Tanana River drainage. Chinook salmon may not be retained or possessed. Management actions for the Tanana River drainage will be announced in early June.

The 2017 drainage-wide Chinook salmon outlook is for a run size of 140,000 to 195,000 fish. The upper end of this range is greater than the run observed in 2016, but will require subsistence harvest restrictions in order to assure minimum escapement objectives are met. However, management strategies may change based on inseason run assessment information.

The following chart shows the historical estimated Chinook salmon total run size in the Yukon River, illustrating the decline in production beginning in 1998. The cause of decreased run sizes remains largely unknown.



Note: The 2017 shaded bar represents the approximate midpoint of the projected outlook range of 140,000 to 195,000 Chinook salmon. The dotted line represents the historical average run size and the dashed line is the recent 5-year average run size.

For 2017, the U.S./Canada Yukon River Panel has established Canadian Interim Management Escapement Goals (IMEG) of 42,500–55,000 Chinook salmon and 70,000–104,000 fall chum salmon. These goals are assessed at the mainstem sonar program operated near Eagle. The Fishing Branch River IMEG of 22,000–49,000 fall chum salmon is based upon the historical weir data. Porcupine River chum salmon production has been consistently underperforming compared to other Yukon River fall chum salmon stocks. Therefore, subsistence salmon fishermen intending to fish in the mainstem Porcupine should expect some level of fishing restrictions in 2017, similar to 2016.

For additional information:

Subsistence fishing schedule: 1 (866) 479-7387 (toll free); in Fairbanks, call: (907) 459-7387.

This year, news releases will also be posted on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

ADF&G: Holly Carroll (Chinook and summer chum), Anchorage office: (907) 267-2324;

Jeff Estensen (fall chum and coho), Fairbanks office: (907) 459-7217;

The Emmonak ADF&G office will open June 1: (907) 949-1320.

USFWS: Fred Bue, Fairbanks: (907) 455-1849 or 1-800-267-3997; or contact the Emmonak USFWS office: (907) 949-1798.