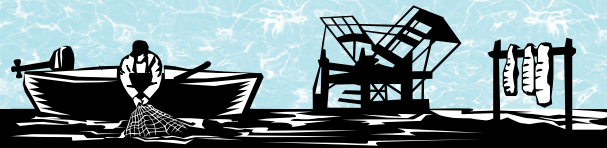


YUKON FISHERIES NEWS

A Publication of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association



SPRING 2014

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

A United Voice for Yukon River Fishers

Your Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Guide to 2014 Summer Season Management

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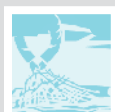
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It was an early break up on the Yukon River this year. That means the summer fishing season is beginning a bit earlier than the last several years. As we did last year, we decided to put together a FAQ guide of what to expect for the 2014 summer season management.

Unfortunately, the preliminary outlook for Chinook salmon is looking similar or even worse when compared to the poor run observed last year. The extremely conservative management measures implemented last year and fishermen's voluntarily harvest reduction resulted in the smallest subsistence harvest on record. However, with such a small run size we still fell short of several escapement objectives. So in 2014 we're looking at another summer in which we will be challenged to meet our escapement goals.

We have been talking with many Yukon River fishermen in the last couple of months at numerous meetings and over the phone for RAC and AC meetings. The official preseason outlook was released in May 1 and can be found at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/401593148.pdf>

The following FAQ guide is not meant to be an exhaustive list of concerns and questions – just a few of the more common ones. Please refer to the official outlook mentioned above for further details on the upcoming summer season or feel free to call the Emmonak ADF&G office with any questions or concerns at 907-949-1320.

Can I harvest Chinook salmon this summer?

There will be no directed Chinook salmon subsistence fishing this year. Opportunity will be provided to harvest other species using gear

types that do not target Chinook salmon or allow for release of Chinook salmon. However, every effort to reduce the incidental harvest of Chinook salmon will be necessary to meet escapement goals.

Will I be able to subsistence fish for other species of fish during the summer season?

Fishing opportunities will be provided to harvest non-salmon such as sheefish, pike, and whitefish early in the season prior to the arrival of Chinook salmon. As a precautionary measure a 6-inch or smaller mesh restriction will be in place in the Lower Yukon to harvest non-salmon species while conserving Chinook salmon.

Once Chinook salmon have entered the river and then migrate up the river, there will be subsistence salmon fishing closures to protect Chinook salmon. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, non-salmon fishing opportunities will be provided with 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length. This opportunity will be provided in Districts 1-6. However, no targeting of Chinook salmon with this gear type will be allowed. This opportunity to harvest non-salmon species will be discontinued if this gear is used to target Chinook salmon.

Fishermen in the Lower Yukon districts should be prepared to target summer chum salmon with dip nets and beach seines for subsistence and commercial purposes. No Chinook salmon may be retained using dip nets or beach seines. It is likely that subsistence and commercial fishing times will be overlapping in Districts 1 and 2.

"Summer FAQs Guide..." continues on page 10

YR DFA reserves the right to include or omit any submissions to the *Yukon Fisheries News*. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of YR DFA.

associate members

Interior Alaska Fish Processors Inc.	Beaver Village Council
Boreal Fisheries	Birch Creek Tribal Council (Dendu Gwich'in)
Holy Cross Traditional Council	Nulato Tribal Council
Koyukuk Tribal Council	Ruby Tribal Council
Ruby Marine	Evansville Tribal Council
City of Nulato	City of Hooper Bay
Pitka's Point Tribal Council	Louden Tribal Council
Yupit of Andreafski	Kaltag Tribal Council
Ohogamiut Traditional Council	Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal Government
Kotlik Traditional Council	Ventetie Village Council
Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council	Huslia Tribal Council
Allakaket Traditional Council	
Algaaciq Tribal Government	

board of directors

<u>District / Seat #</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Coastal, Seat 1	Lester Wilde
Y-1, Seat 1	Aloysius Unok
Y-1, Seat 2	Frank Alstrom, Jr.
Y-1, Seat 3	Michael James
Y-2, Seat 1	William Alstrom
Y-2, Seat 2	Mike Peters
Y-2, Seat 3	vacant
Y-3, Seat 1	Leroy Peters
Y-4, Seat 1	Fred Huntington, Sr.
Y-4, Seat 2	Richard Burnham
Y-5, Seat 1	Charlie Wright
Y-5, Seat 2	Stan Zuray
Y-6, Seat 1	Phillip "Jeep" Titus
Y-6, Seat 2	Victor Lord
Koyukuk, Seat 1	Pollock Simon, Sr.
Yukon Flats, Seat 1	Andrew Firmin

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www.yukonsalmon.org

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A Message From the Director

By Jill Klein, Executive Director



Of course of utmost concern these days is the low return of Chinook salmon to the Yukon River. We have seen how this impacts so many aspects of life along the Yukon River; YRDFA has always explained to others how the Yukon River Chinook salmon provides for food and culture (and they used to provide for income too). This is all true and when this rich and valued salmon resource is not providing for the food and culture anymore, it really is devastating. As an outsider looking into the world along the Yukon River, I can only try to understand the cultural significance that harvesting, processing, sharing and eating salmon means to the people living along the Yukon River. I have seen families living life first hand at fish camps and multi-generational families working, living and playing music alongside one another. People from all along the Yukon River have welcomed me into their homes and fish camps and for that I am forever grateful. It is these first hand experiences with people along the Yukon River in Alaska and also in Canada that shows me how generous and rewarding life along the Yukon River can be, yet also how challenging life can be too. For people of the Yukon River who cannot travel to all the villages to see what life is like, the next best thing was coming into Fairbanks to enable people to meet face to face with each other during an international summit.

This international summit enabled people to share stories, show pictures, tell about fishing practices and also communicate about how their fishing has changed and in some places ceased altogether. Life in Alaska and life in Yukon can be similar to each other and yet very different. Everyone along the Yukon River depends on the king salmon. But, there are different governance structures and different perspectives depending on where you live along the Yukon River and what you have seen in your lifetime; especially what you continue to see today or what you do not see today anymore.

Teslin community members gave a significant presentation. The group included a grandma and also a grandson who talked about the

pains of not being able to teach the younger generations how to fish and take care of fish, but also the younger generation not having fished for about ten years and thus not growing up with their culture to guide them. With the ability to decide that they will voluntarily not fish, the Yukoners were some of the first ones to see the lower salmon returns to the headwaters. The Yukon River hosts probably the longest salmon migration in the world. With summer and fall chum and also

whitefish and coho salmon, the people in the lower river see an abundance of salmon go by. They heard first hand of the headwaters people's experiences and their efforts to protect the salmon.

Regardless of where you live along the Yukon River, everyone is realizing that it is so important to work together and have the relationships to sustain the challenging work ahead. ☺

Yukon River Fisheries Inseason Management Teleconferences

EVERY TUESDAY
May 27 through August 26
1:00 pm Alaska Time | 2:00 pm Yukon Time

1-800-315-6338
Participant Code YUKON# (98566#)

Get Involved
Discuss fishing conditions & management strategies with managers and fishers throughout the Yukon River Drainage

Tracking the run, one week at a time!

Agenda

- Subsistence Reports
- Management Update and Strategy
- Local Input, Questions, and Closing Comments

Subsistence Questions

- How far along are local fishers in their subsistence harvests? (are they 25% done? 50% done? 100%?)
- What is your assessment of run strength?
- What is the quality of the fish?
- What are the current river conditions? (water level, clarity, amount of debris)

YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
Facilitated by YRDFA · yukonsalmon.org
Sponsored by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Gwitchyaa Zhee Gwitch'in hosts YRDFA's 24th Annual Meeting

By Wayne Jenkins, Deputy Director

YRDFA held its 24th Annual Meeting in the Gwitchyaa Zhee Gwitch'in (Fort Yukon) community, lying at the confluence of the Porcupine and Yukon rivers in the vast Yukon Flats area. A majority of YRDFA's Board of Directors and Alternates traveled from nearly the full length of the Yukon River to represent their villages and concerns relating to fishing, subsistence and culture. Daily meetings were held in the Chief Esias Loola Cultural Center, named in honor of the beloved leader whose remains were finally returned to his home village in 2013; 56 years after his death and internment in Seattle.

As with all our meetings, and especially so in the Yukon River's remote villages, we depend enormously on local folks to assist us with finding lodging, transportation to and from the meeting each day, food preparation and social gathering. Our host's went all out in making sure all were well taken care of, despite the sub-zero temperatures and delayed shipments of food and important documents. The huge wood stove in the middle of the Cultural Center was kept stoked and the meetings were well attended by community members who shared their views and concerns on important issues.

First Chief Nancy James welcomed everyone and the YRDFA Board delegation, led by

Co-chair Victor Lord of Nenana got down to working through a very full agenda of which a few highlights follow.

Alaska Department of Fish & Game's (ADF&G) Dr. Stephanie Schmidt and Brenna Apgar-Kurtz reviewed the 2013 fishing season covering Canadian origin Chinook escapement, historical Chinook salmon numbers, reproduction at barely replacement levels, multiple causes of decline and thus a very conservative management approach for the 2014 fishing season. The first pulse will be closed by regulation and subsequent pulses most likely closed, but determined in season. It was suggested that subsistence harvesters will be directed to use alternative gear such as beach seines and dip-nets and live manned fish wheels for fishing as these approaches enable incidentally caught Chinook salmon to be released unharmed. Fishers were also encouraged to fish for other species, such as sheefish and whitefish. The summer and fall chum salmon runs were excellent last year and forecast to be very good in 2014 allowing a strong subsistence and commercial harvest.

The public comment period was well used as Fort Yukon leaders and villagers shared their views on the Chinook salmon crash, management constraints and effects on their way of life. Emotions and concerns were strong

in the face of a 'no relief in sight situation' and it was acknowledged that the whole river is now affected by the current decline of returning Chinook salmon and subsequent conservation management.

Further presentations from ADF&G personnel covered Artic-Yukon-Kuskokwim salmon stock status, a summer chum radio tagging project, subsistence and YRDFA's anthropologist Catherine Moncrieff briefed the Board on a customary trade project, starting this summer.

Four Board of Fish proposals were discussed and voted on (see separate article on actions), Senator Mark Begich called in to discuss his legislative agenda related to the Yukon River, the Chinook salmon decline and other topics and took questions from the Board.

The YRDFA Board then discussed and approved five resolutions, which will be shared with the appropriate tribal councils, agencies, legislators and individuals (see resolutions in this newsletter).

In closing the YRDFA Board choose Russian Mission as the site for the 2015 Board meeting with Holy Cross as an alternate. Due to financial changes in funding, the YRDFA board may need to reconsider these locations and will keep the public posted as it works through its planning for river wide fisheries meetings.

Following on the heels of the last meeting day, everyone enjoyed a huge community dinner, including a wonderful moose stew, fry bread and salmon, a raffle and music and dancing by local musicians and youth dancers.

Deep appreciation to the people of Fort Yukon for hosting, sharing and taking such good care of each YRDFA member, staff and visiting agency personnel was expressed by each board member and the formal meeting ended. Everyone had a most meaningful and enjoyable stay in Gwitchyaa Zhee Gwitch'in and we look forward to our next visit! 🐟

For further details you can see a summary of the meeting on our website; www.yukonsalmon.org or request a full copy at info@yukonsalmon.org or by calling Wayne Jenkins, toll-free, at 877/999-8566.

Reproduction of youth artwork from Pilot Station cultural fish camp for youth project



Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Board Delegation Actions on Board of Fisheries Proposals - February 12, 2014

Proposal 371: No Consensus

Lower river fishermen expressed that the 5-foot diameter would stay but the small square net is dragging. The fishermen with bigger skiffs and motors are not doing as well and the smaller boats with the smaller nets are doing better.

Upper river fishermen wanted to know about what the current limits are and why? They wanted a limitation of no bigger than 6 feet as an idea and felt that there needs to be a limit and definition of what this is.

Other board members felt that it is up to the ADF&G to test out new sizes of dip net gear.

Concern was expressed for mortality associated with the handling of king salmon and any changes in the size of the dip net should consider this.

There was no consensus to support the proposal. A handful of board members supported the proposal, but there were concerns that there was no upper limit to the size of the dip net.

Proposal 372: Support

Fishermen discussed that the lead is a part of the fish wheel. A lead may be pulled if there is a lot of drift coming down or water levels change. But they leave the lead in otherwise.

There was concern about the length of the lead and if there should be a limit on the length?

Fishermen discussed that the lead goes from the bank to the fish wheel and is as long as the spur log. The fish wheel always had a lead and in the past if families needed a break from cutting fish, they would take out the lead.

There was consensus to support the proposal.

Proposal 373: No consensus

There was concern that the king salmon can be harmed from the dip net and this may impact the ability to release them unharmed back to the water.

It was discussed that Yukon River people have honored the return of the king salmon, the first catch and the person who caught

this was distinguished. It was divided up and given to the elders. The fish have a spirit. To have our native people discuss proposals that come before appointed people on the Board of Fish that make decisions about the way we live...with that in mind, if a king salmon is accidentally killed, they are sure the person who killed it will enjoy the fruit of it and share with others. With that in mind they opposed this wording.

Only one person supported the language and most all the others did not, so the motion had no consensus to support it.

Proposal 377: No consensus

There was a lack of support for the use of monofilament in this type of gear. There was one supporter from the lower river, but most of the board members did not support this leading to no consensus. ☹

YRDFA 2014 Resolutions

24th Annual Meeting: Fort Yukon, Alaska - February 10-13, 2014

01 – Gratefully thanking the people of Fort Yukon for their generosity and hospitality

Therefore be it resolved that the YRDFA Board Members, delegates and staff of YRDFA gratefully thank the various organizations and the people of Fort Yukon, including the Native Village of Fort Yukon, the cooks, the drivers, the hosts, the school.

02 – Open summer chum salmon fishing when Chinook salmon fishing is closed

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA supports allowing the harvest of Yukon River summer chum salmon during the Yukon River Chinook salmon run, regardless of Chinook salmon run strength, if the means and methods of harvesting summer chum do not add additional pressure on the Chinook salmon stocks.

03 – Approving the Submission of a proposal to the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) for development of a language immersion fish camp program

Therefore be it resolved that the YRDFA Board of Directors unanimously supports the submission of a proposal for funding to the Administration for Native Americans (Native Language Preservation and Maintenance) under funding opportunity number HHS-2014-ACF-ANA-NL-0778 with a due date of 4/15/2014 and subsequent years of 2015, 2016, 2017.

04 – International Cooperation

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA will continue its efforts to work with Canadian First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Salmon Sub Committee, state and federal fisheries management agencies and Alaska's tribes for international cooperation and understanding between the United States and Canada for the good of the Chinook salmon and fishers of the Yukon River and its tributaries.

05 – Equality of fishing time for Chinook salmon

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA will work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and communities along the Yukon River to determine how to equitably reduce fishing time for Chinook salmon during times of low Chinook salmon returns to the Yukon River.

06 – Magnuson Stevens Act Reauthorization

Therefore be it resolved that YRDFA supports the following changes to the Magnuson Stevens Act:

1. Provide for subsistence/tribal representation on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) by:
 - Adding a voting member to the NPFMC under 16 USC §1852(b).

“YRDFA 2014 Resolutions...” continues on page 9

2014 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook

The 2014 Chinook salmon run is expected to be extremely poor and could be the worst on record. Drastic conservation measures are necessary in an attempt to meet escapement objectives. This information sheet describes the anticipated management strategies for the 2014 salmon fishing season.

Run and Harvest Outlook

	Chinook	Summer Chum	Fall Chum	Coho
Projection:	Extremely poor	Average to above average	Average to above average	Average to below average
Escapement:	Insufficient to meet all goals	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goals
Subsistence:	No fishery anticipated	Expect to provide for normal harvest	Expect to provide for normal harvest	Expect to provide for normal harvest
Commercial:	No fishery anticipated	300,000 to 500,000 potentially available for harvest	300,000 to 540,000 potentially available for harvest	40,000 to 80,000 potentially available for harvest

Management Strategies

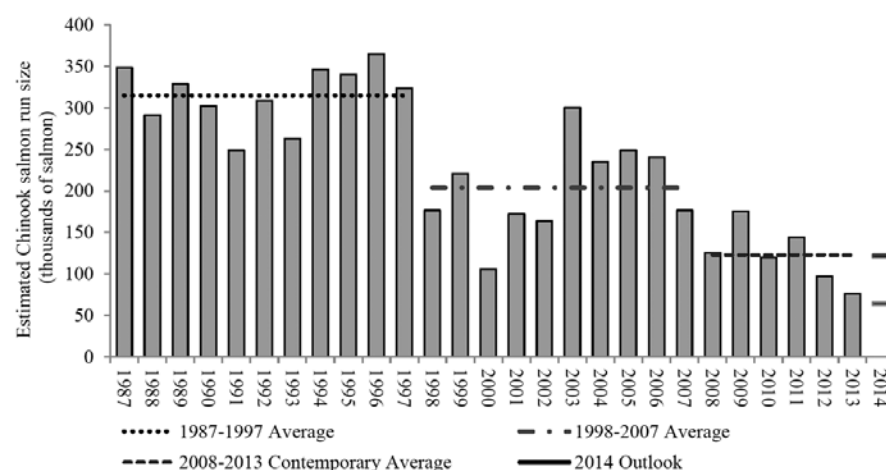
- Before Chinook salmon enter the river, subsistence fishing opportunity for non-salmon species will be provided and gillnets may be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.
- As Chinook salmon arrive in each district, subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon will be closed. The closure is expected to be in place for most of the run through each section of river. Fishermen in the Coastal District, Koyukuk, Innoko, and Tanana Rivers should expect some closed fishing time to protect Chinook salmon in those areas. Closures will be initiated in the Coastal District and District 1 when assessment information indicates that the first Chinook salmon have begun their migration along the coast and into the river. This closure will be similarly implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing.
- During subsistence salmon fishing closures, non-salmon species may be harvested using 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length. However, no targeting of Chinook salmon with this gear type will be allowed. This opportunity to harvest non-salmon will be discontinued if this gear is used to target Chinook salmon.
- When summer chum salmon become abundant, subsistence and commercial fishing opportunities will be provided with selective gear such as dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels. Fishermen must carefully and immediately release Chinook salmon alive when encountered in these gear types.
- Fishermen are strongly encouraged to avoid fishing when and where Chinook salmon may be encountered.
- Subsistence restrictions will be relaxed after the Chinook salmon run has passed through each section of river. If confidence is high that the Chinook salmon run is much better than anticipated, the use of 6-inch gillnets may be considered to allow for summer chum salmon harvest.
- The sport fishery for Chinook salmon will be closed in the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage (including the Tanana River drainage). Sport fishing for Chinook salmon, including catch-and-release fishing will be prohibited. Chinook salmon may not be retained or possessed.
- The fall chum salmon run is anticipated to be of sufficient size to provide for full subsistence opportunity and a surplus for commercial harvest.

- The fall chum commercial salmon fishery is expected to begin in the Lower Yukon in the middle of July.

The 2014 Chinook salmon outlook is for a run size range of 64,000 to 121,000. The lower end of this range is slightly below the run size observed in 2013 and would not provide any available surplus for subsistence harvest. As in recent years, initial management will be based on the expectation that the 2014 Chinook salmon run size will likely be near the lower end of this range. However, management strategies may change based on inseason run assessment information.

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

Estimated Yukon River Chinook salmon total run size, 1987-2013 and 2014 projection.



For 2014, the US/Canada Yukon River Panel agreed to continue Interim Management Escapement Goals (IMEG) in Canada of 42,500-55,000 Chinook salmon and 70,000-104,000 fall chum salmon based upon the Eagle sonar program. If escapement objectives are expected to be met and there is a surplus of Chinook salmon and fall chum salmon, additional Chinook salmon and fall chum salmon will need to cross the border to fulfill harvest sharing commitments specified in the US/Canada Yukon River Agreement. The Fishing Branch River IMEG of 22,000-49,000 fall chum salmon is based upon the historical weir data and the Porcupine River chum salmon fishery will likely be unrestricted unless the run comes in lower than expected.

For additional information:

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

ADF&G: Eric Newland, Anchorage 907-267-2217; Jeff Estensen, Fairbanks 907-459-7217; or contact the Emmonak office 907-949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office is expected to be open by May 30.

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

Summer Chum Salmon Telemetry Project

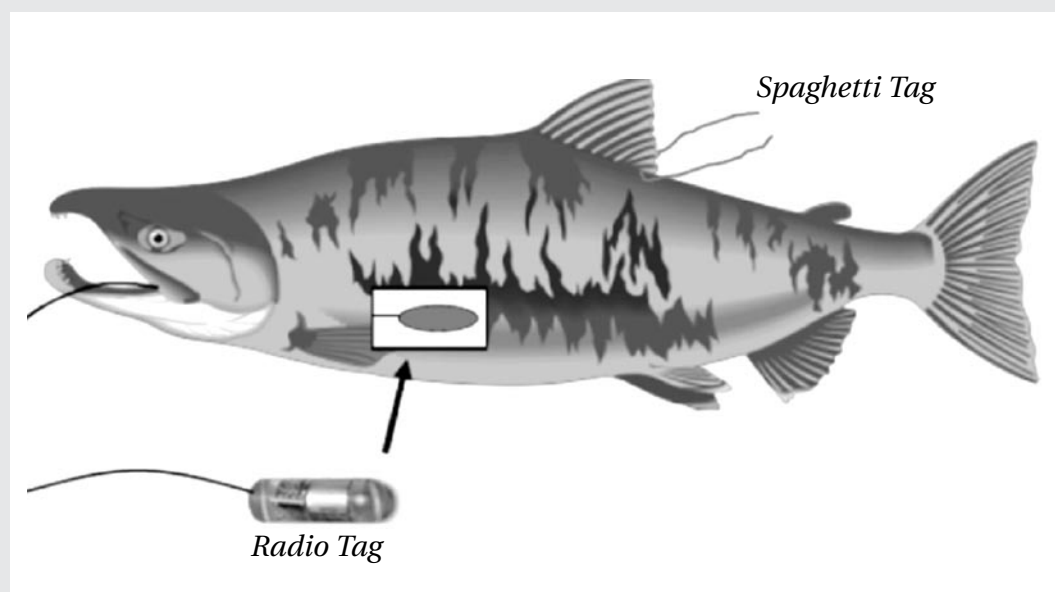
by Sean Larson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game,
sean.larson@alaska.gov

Where do summer chum travel and spawn on the Yukon River? When do different stocks enter the river and how fast do they swim to their spawning locations? Answers to these questions are important to be able to manage the summer chum fishery effectively. In order to answer these and other questions, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) will begin a radio telemetry study for summer chum salmon in 2014.

Community members and ADF&G staff will work together to tag over 1000 summer chum salmon in June and July near Russian Mission. Chum salmon will be given a white spaghetti tag (attached at the base of the dorsal fin) and a radio tag (inserted through the mouth into the stomach). Radio tagged salmon will be noticeable because they will have a long metal antennae sticking out of their mouths. These tags send out a unique signal that allows researchers to track salmon as they travels upriver to their spawning stream.

Researchers need to know where each tagged salmon ends up this summer, whether that is a spawning stream or a smoke house. Even tagged fish that are caught in the fishery can provide valuable information on stock characteristics. So, if you catch a tagged summer chum salmon this year, please keep the tag and send it to ADF&G with a description of where and when that salmon was caught. Anyone who returns a tag will be given a custom chum salmon project hat and will be entered in to a cash prize lottery and have a chance to win up to \$500! Information on where to mail tags and contact information for project leads will be printed on the tags.

Through this study we hope to gain a better understanding of summer chum salmon spawning distribution and abundance in the Yukon River. Having the ability to monitor specific stocks through time is hugely important in fisheries management, especially on the Yukon River, given its enormous size and numerous salmon stocks. Good luck fishing and please keep an eye out for tagged summer chum salmon this season! 🐟



Thank You

YRDFA would like to thank all of our members, recent donors and funders for their support of our work along the Yukon River.

Your support helps us to protect the Chinook salmon and the culture that depends on it, while we also promote fishing for the healthy fisheries in the Yukon River and the culture that depends on these.



Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch Revisited: Further Reductions up for Discussion in Nome in June

By Becca Robbins Gisclair, YRDEFA Sr. Fisheries Policy Advisor

Remember back in April 2009, when the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (the Council) took action to set the first cap on salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery in the history of the Americanized fleet? Amidst a room so crowded the meeting had to overflow into the adjacent meeting room, the Council adopted a multi-tiered approach including an overall hard cap, industry incentive plan agreements and a performance standard. Under this approach, called "Amendment 91" the overall cap is set at 60,000 Chinook salmon, and if a sector exceeds their part of the cap, they are shut down from fishing for pollock. The industry incentive plan agreements and performance standard (set at 47,591 Chinook salmon – the industry can exceed this level only twice in any 7 year period without penalty) serve to drive bycatch down below the cap. However, Western Alaskans have expressed concern with the high level of the overall cap, which is almost twice that requested by Western Alaskans at the time of 32,500, since it was adopted. Those concerns have multiplied in recent years, as Chinook salmon throughout Western Alaska have experienced continued dramatic declines, with resulting severe restrictions on subsistence fisheries and elimination of directed commercial fisheries.

At their meeting in Anchorage last October, the Council received a paper which looked at bycatch performance, Western Alaska Chinook salmon stock status and impact analysis. They heard extensive presentations from the pollock industry describing the specific mechanisms of their incentive plan agreements. And the Council heard from Western Alaskans deeply concerned about the health of the Chinook salmon stocks on the Kuskokwim, Yukon and in Norton Sound. Despite strong advocacy from the well-funded and well-represented pollock industry that Amendment 91 "is working," the Council chose to look further at Chinook salmon bycatch reductions. The rationale expressed by several Council members, including Commissioner

of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Cora Campbell, was that while Amendment 91 was certainly creating reductions in salmon bycatch, given the state of Western Alaska Chinook salmon stocks more was necessary. The Council's action in October, (see the November 2013 Yukon Fisheries News for more detail), asked for a discussion paper, which is the first formal step for the Council to address an issue. If the Council wishes to take further action they will eventually move from discussion papers to a formal analysis and ultimately take action based on the analysis. The discussion paper for the June meeting will outline an approach which includes changes to the industry incentive plan agreements, as well as additional regulatory approaches to further reduce bycatch. Specifically, the paper will look at ways to reduce bycatch in September/October when Chinook salmon bycatch is known to be high, and to ensure that vessels with consistently high bycatch are penalized and change their behavior. The paper will also look at changing the accounting year for salmon bycatch, which would place the high value winter roe fishery at the end of the accounting year. In addition, the discussion paper will look at an approach to include chum salmon bycatch measures within the current incentive plan agreements, providing a means to reduce chum salmon bycatch without inadvertently increasing Chinook salmon bycatch. The Council did NOT ask for the discussion paper to look at the overall cap level, but rather is focused on methods for reducing bycatch outside of the cap level. As with any management measure, however, they can chose to expand the set of options at any time.

The discussion paper will be posted on the Council's website in mid-May – visit <http://www.npfmc.org/> for details. The Council will discuss this agenda item at their meeting in Nome June 2-10, 2014. This specific agenda item is scheduled for Friday, June 6 through Saturday, June 7 at the Council (the Scientific Statistical Committee will discuss it on Tuesday, June 3 and the Advisory Panel on Thursday,

June 5). Note that scheduling for all agenda items is subject to change and can be taken up ahead of or behind schedule.

Fortunately, Chinook salmon bycatch has remained relatively low in recent years compared to historical averages. In 2013, 13,033 Chinook salmon were killed as bycatch in the pollock fishery, and 11,344 Chinook salmon in 2012. So far in 2014, 11,328 Chinook salmon have been killed as bycatch, with the second half of the season still to come. Since Amendment 91 went into place in 2011, all participants in the pollock fishery have been required to carry at least 100% observer coverage, and catcher processors and motherships have to carry 200% observer coverage. In addition to providing accurate bycatch numbers, this observer coverage has also made it possible to have good sampling for genetic stock identification work. We now have recent genetic stock identification work which shows a consistently higher proportion of Western Alaska stocks than we previously thought. From 2010-2012 the proportion of Western Alaska stocks (including the lower, middle and upper Yukon River, the Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay and Norton Sound) ranges from 67-73%. This means that 67-73% of the Chinook salmon caught as salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery are of Western Alaska origin.

While we are very glad to see that Chinook salmon bycatch has been low in recent years relative to historical averages, as in-river fishers face increasing restrictions on subsistence fisheries, and Chinook salmon runs struggle to recover, it is imperative that bycatch is reduced even further. Western Alaskans have an opportunity to work towards additional reductions in salmon bycatch in Nome at the June Council meeting.

How to Make Your Voice Heard

- Send in comments: Comments are due Tuesday, May 27. You can also submit comments to the Council yourself after the deadline – just make sure to

bring 25 copies for distribution to the Council. Make sure to reference the agenda item in your comments. Send letters to:

North Pacific Fishery Management
Council
605 West 4th Ave, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501
Email: npfmc.comments@noaa.gov
Fax: (907) 271-2817

- Attend the Council meeting: The Council takes public comment on every agenda item. The agenda is posted on the Council's website at: <http://www.npfmc.org/2014-council-meetings/>. Salmon bycatch is scheduled to be discussed at the Council on Friday, June 6 through Saturday, June 7 (the Scientific Statistical Committee will discuss it on Tuesday, June 3 and the Advisory Panel on Thursday, June 5).
- Listen to the meeting online: You can also listen to the Council meeting streaming on-line – access via the Council's website when the meeting is in session.

For more information or for talking points please contact Becca at Becca@yukonsalmon.org or (907)272-3141x6. ☺

This article was prepared by YRDFA under grants from the Oak Foundation, Alaska Conservation Foundation's Alaska Native Fund and Patagonia Environmental Grants program. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funder.

Reminder:

Inseason Management Teleconferences— Every Tuesday!

details page 3

“YRDFA 2014 Resolutions” *continued from page 5*

This member will be nominated directly by Alaska's tribes and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce.

- Include tribal subsistence in the list of user groups amongst whom the Secretary must maintain a balanced apportionment under 16 USC §1852(b)(2)(B).
2. Amend the MSA to include subsistence, along with commercial and recreational fisheries and fishing communities, throughout.
 3. Mandate reductions in bycatch by strengthening National Standard 9, which currently only requires bycatch reduction “to the extent practicable.”
 4. Remove the \$25,000 annual limit on bycatch fines for North Pacific fisheries conservation (16 USC §1862(g)).
 5. Amend disaster relief provisions to include subsistence fishery failures and allow Tribes to request and receive disaster relief directly (16 USC §1861(a)).
 6. Extend the CDQ program to provide economic development opportunity for all Yukon River communities. ☺

A Request for the Yukon River Tribes to Join YRDFA by Bill Alstrom, YRDFA Lower River Co-Chair

Bill Alstrom; Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association: Co-Chair

My name is Bill Alstrom from Saint Mary's, located on the Lower Yukon River. Victor Lord from Nenana and I co-chair the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA). I am a subsistence fisherman and also a member of my Tribal entity, the Yupiit of Andreafski, which has been a member of YRDFA for a number of years.

Earlier this month I attended a one day Alaska Pre-season Fishery Meeting, hosted by YRDFA to discuss the status of Chinook salmon restrictions for the summer of 2014. Also included was a two-day International Summit with the First Nations people of Canada in Fairbanks. The Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee hosted the international summit and the Yukon River Panel funded both meetings.

The meeting consisted of fish users from the coastal mouth of the Yukon River to Canada's First Nations in the headwaters. It was the first meeting of its kind where people from the entire Yukon River were able to talk amongst themselves about the Chinook salmon decline, its impact on our culture and compare ideas on possible solutions. One Canadian fisherman said they've been waiting years for a meeting like this. We have too.

Only some of the Tribes along the Yukon River are members of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. I would like to invite the remaining Tribes to join us so we have a united voice representing the fishermen and issues we're faced with. YRDFA always has the traditional fisheries of the Yukon River and the cultures of the people who live along the river at heart. It is the long-standing fishermen of the Yukon River who have worked tirelessly to sit together to make this organization work and to find ways to address the most pressing issues such as salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery and also low Chinook salmon returns.

The number to call to be put on the membership list for tribes is 907-272-3141, extension for Wayne Jenkins or go to the YRDFA website www.yukonsalmon.org. We also encourage cities, corporations and individuals to join.

As the lower river co-chair of YRDFA, I invite you to join me. Together we can make a difference! ☺

“Summer FAQs from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game” *continued from front page*

In Districts 4 and 6, subsistence and commercial fishermen who intend to harvest summer chum salmon should be prepared to man their fish wheel to carefully release the Chinook salmon alive and immediately to the water.

It is uncertain how much opportunity will be provided to target summer chum salmon in District 5. Summer chum salmon are less abundant in many portions of the district. If opportunity is provided, it would likely be limited the harvest of summer chum salmon is likely to be minimal. Fishermen in District 5 should be primarily prepared to wait until later in the season to harvest fall chum salmon.

It is unlikely that the traditional 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will be allowed to harvest summer chum salmon if the Chinook salmon run is as poor as projected. Unlike dip nets, beach seines, and fish wheels with live chutes, this gear type still catches and kills Chinook salmon. This option will only be considered after the vast majority of the Chinook salmon run has passed.

Can I keep the Chinook salmon that I incidentally catch when I am targeting summer chum salmon or other species of fish?

Chinook salmon, by regulation, must be released alive when using dip nets and beach seines. Safely returning a Chinook salmon caught in a dip net back to the water alive is relatively simple. However, the department plans to coordinate with fishermen to ensure safe handling practices are being exercised when releasing Chinook salmon caught in beach seines. Fishermen can start thinking about what fishing locations would best fit these gear types.

If fishermen catch a Chinook salmon while fishing for non-salmon in either the 6-inch gear during the early season or in the 4-inch mesh gear type they would be allowed to keep them. However, again we hope that fishermen will try to avoid Chinook salmon at all costs when fishing for non-salmon species.

I have never used a dip net or beach seine. How do they work? Will I even catch fish?

While changing to new gear types or fishing

practices is challenging, Yukon fishermen are leading the way in finding ways to harvest the fish resources that are abundant while conserving Chinook salmon.

Fishing with a dip net was very successful last year. The commercial harvest of summer chum salmon in the Lower Yukon fishery was the largest recorded in several decades, partly due to the success of the commercial dip net fishery. The dip net gear seems to work best where summer chum salmon were the most concentrated. Fishermen in the lower river commercial dip net fishery were able to release Chinook salmon quickly and easily back to the water when encountered in their dip nets.

What if I don't have the allowable gear types?

We understand that some fishermen do not have dip nets, beach seines, fish wheels with live chutes, or 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets, and buying new gear is expensive. However, we hope that people can find ways to work collaboratively within their community to share gear and harvest. If you don't have the gear, do you know someone else in your community who does and you could work with them to share it?

Why are the Chinook salmon runs so low right now?

This is a great question and one that is being asked by many scientists across Alaska and even researchers outside of Alaska. Despite adequate escapement in past years, Chinook salmon runs on the Yukon continue to decline. This is due to local production – or the number of fish coming back from each spawner that makes it to the spawning grounds. The cause of this low production is not certain. However it is likely that many factors acting together are contributing to the decline in Chinook salmon. It could be caused by changes in the marine environment, such as changes in water temperature or changes in predators or food availability, and much more. It could also be caused by changes in the freshwater environment, such as changing water temperatures, increased flooding events, changes in predators or food, and much more. There are several research initiatives

aimed at understanding the decline in Chinook salmon in the Yukon River and across the state of Alaska. More information on what those initiatives are researching can be found at:

State of Alaska Chinook Salmon Research Initiative

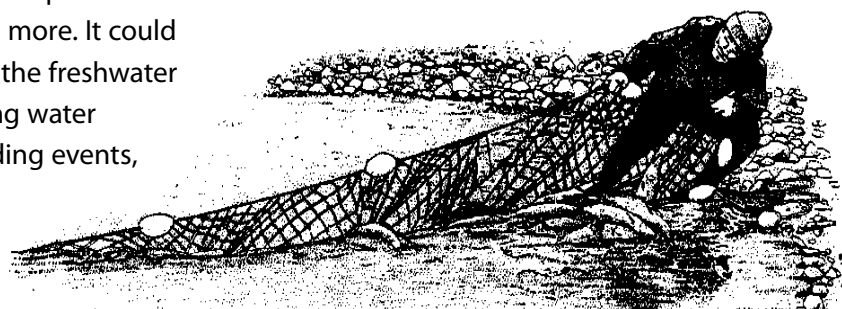
A state funded research program aimed at understanding Chinook salmon declines across the state of Alaska. Over the next several years, up to \$30 million will be spent studying 12 indicator stocks in Alaska. One of those stocks includes Yukon River Chinook salmon. Studies vary from stock to stock, but for the Yukon River, some of them include research on: juvenile Chinook salmon as they are leaving the river and entering the marine environment, Chinook salmon freshwater spawning and rearing habitat, trends in harvest patterns and subsistence fishing, and local and traditional knowledge.

Website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=chinookinitiative.main>

Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative (AYKSSI) – Chinook Salmon Research Action Plan: Evidence of Decline of Chinook Salmon Population and Recommendation for Future Research

AYK SSI, a collaborative native-state-federal salmon research program, assembled a Chinook salmon expert panel to review and synthesize available information on the declines and to identify the most likely causes of decline for Chinook salmon in the AYK region. Seven hypotheses were identified as potential stressors or drivers in the decline of Chinook salmon. The research action plan will help guide future calls for research proposals in the coming years.

Website: <http://www.aykssi.org/aykssi-chinook-salmon-research-action-plan-2013/>



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Yukon River Panel Meeting, Spring 2014

A Press Release from the Yukon River Panel

The management of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada is the joint responsibility of American and Canadian governments and is overseen by the Yukon River Panel (yukonriverpanel.com). The Yukon River Panel held its spring 2014 annual meeting in Anchorage to review pre-season outlooks, management strategies and anticipated conservation measures for Canadian origin Yukon River Chinook salmon. The Panel re-confirmed the Canadian border interim management escapement goals for the 2014 season (originally endorsed in March 2013), which included goals for Chinook salmon, upper Yukon fall chum salmon, and for Fishing Branch River fall chum salmon. The Panel also focused particular attention to discussing the anticipated poor return of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon forecast for 2014. Additionally, the Panel approved the final list of Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund project proposals that have been selected for funding in 2014.

The Yukon River Panel, established by the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement, met in Anchorage, AK from March 23 through 27 to discuss 2014 run outlooks and review proposed management strategies for Canadian-origin Chinook and fall chum salmon. The Panel re-confirmed the three year commitment to the Canadian border interim management escapement goals adopted in March 2013 that include: 42,500 to 55,000 Chinook salmon and 70,000 to 104,000 upper Yukon

(mainstem) fall chum salmon as determined by the Eagle sonar program, and 22,000 to 49,000 fall chum salmon in the Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River.

Based on data compiled by the Panel's Joint Technical Committee, the 2014 Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run is anticipated to be poor. Given this outlook, it is possible that an insufficient number of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon will return to the Yukon River watershed to realize the interim Canadian border escapement goal range of 42,500 to 55,000 fish. Recognizing this situation, the Panel determined that the implementation of conservative management measures during the 2014 season is warranted.

With respect to administrative support to enable Panel operations, the Panel confirms the engagement of two contracts for administrative support services resulting from "Request for Proposals" issued in 2013. Following the proposal evaluation process, the Yukon River Panel:

1. Renewed its contract with the Pacific Salmon Commission to serve as the Yukon River Salmon Restoration and Enhancement Fund Administrator for a three-year period effective April 1, 2014.
2. Engaged the services of Ms. Sue Thomas for the position of Executive Secretary for a one-year period effective March 10, 2014.

The Panel approved more than \$US 1 million of funding for 28 project proposals for salmon and habitat Restoration and Enhancement Fund projects in Alaska and Yukon (below). The Panel has allocated more than \$US 12 million since 2002 to projects supporting the management and restoration of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada. Proponents of projects selected by the Yukon River Panel will be individually notified by the Yukon River Salmon Restoration and Enhancement Fund administrator (Pacific Salmon Commission).

In addition, the Panel revised the near-term priorities for the Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund to support the 2015 call for proposals. To provide sufficient time for the development of conceptual project proposals, the Panel will issue the annual Restoration and Enhancement Fund call for proposals in late June 2014. As in past years, the deadline for submission of conceptual proposals for the Panel's consideration will be the first week in October. This change will result in an additional two months of time for proponents to develop and submit proposals to the Restoration and Enhancement Fund.

At its post-season meeting, scheduled for December 7 – 11, 2014 in Alaska, the Panel will review the outcome of the 2014 Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon returns as well as management actions employed in both Alaska and Yukon. The Panel will also consider Restoration and Enhancement Fund conceptual project proposal submissions for 2015.

Contact: Sue Thomas
Executive Secretary
Yukon River Panel
yrrp-sue@suethomas.ca

Approved Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund Project Proposals (2014)	
1.	Blind Creek Chinook Salmon Enumeration Weir
2.	Chinook salmon radio tracking and genetic sampling in the Porcupine River, Canada
3.	Chinook Salmon Sonar Enumeration on the Big Salmon River
4.	Collection and Analysis of Yukon River DNA Baseline Samples in the Alaska and Canada
5.	Collection of genetic material from adult Chinook Salmon in the North Big Salmon watershed
6.	Exploration of potential early life mortality in Canadian-origin Chinook salmon eggs due to
7.	Fox Creek Salmon Restoration Project
8.	Genetic stock identification of fall chum salmon in commercial harvests, Yukon River, 2014 9.
10.	Mainstem Teslin River sonar project – 2014
11.	McIntyre Creek Salmon Incubation Project
12.	McIntyre Creek Stream Bank Stabilization
13.	Michie Creek Salmon and Habitat Monitoring Project – 2014
14.	Porcupine River Chinook Salmon Sonar Program
15.	Porcupine River Chum Salmon Telemetry – Year 2
16.	Rampart Rapids All Season Video Monitoring, 2014
17.	Restoration of Chinook Salmon – Upper Mayo River
18.	Salmon Stewardship Coordinators for Yukon Schools
19.	Temperature monitoring of Yukon River Chinook Salmon spawning and migration habitats in
20.	Tr'ond'k Hw'ch'in First Fish Culture Camp
21.	Whitehorse Rapids Hatchery Stewardship
22.	Yukon River Chinook Salmon Mainstem Outplant Program Spawning Success Evaluation
23.	Yukon River Chinook Salmon Subsistence Sampling: (Anvik, Galena, Ruby, Fort Yukon)
24.	Yukon River Educational Exchange Trip
25.	Yukon River In-Season Management Teleconferences
26.	Yukon River North Mainstem Stewardship
27.	Yukon River Pre-Season Planning Process
28.	Yukon River Salmon Stock Identification

Chinook Salmon Research Initiative

Chinook (king) salmon have been returning in fewer numbers to many Alaska rivers, requiring painful restrictions on fisheries that harvest these stocks. Widespread shortfalls became apparent during the 2007 fishing season, but scientists date the onset of the declines with the poor survivals of the offspring from 2001. Chinook salmon have a life span of 3 to 8 years, with 5 and 6 year olds being especially important to the health of a Chinook salmon population.

In October of 2012, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) hosted a research symposium to “identify key knowledge gaps and assemble a list of research priorities” to better understand the factors affecting Chinook salmon abundance in Alaska.

Following this symposium, a team of ADF&G scientists and biologists, in collaboration with federal agencies and academic partners, developed a research plan with recommended studies to address the questions identified in the gap analysis. The first phase in the implementation of this plan was funded by the Alaska Legislature during its 2013 session. The core of the plan is stock specific, life history-based research focused on 12 indicator stocks from across Alaska. For more information see the Chinook Salmon Stock Assessment and Research Plan on the ADF&G website.

This research will cover multiple years and produce a large body of findings and reports. Research efforts fall into four general categories.

- Stock assessment programs targeting specific knowledge gaps on individual, indicator stocks.
- Compilation of local and traditional knowledge regarding Chinook salmon trends in abundance, distribution, and physical appearance.
- Research on juvenile Chinook salmon in the near shore marine environment, which is thought to be a critical life history stage, and one little studied.
- Life history process studies intended to examine a range of environmental factors affecting Chinook salmon growth and productivity.

The department recognizes the Alaskan public has a keen interest in the Chinook salmon research being conducted and ADF&G has developed this special section of its website, where information will be provided about the Chinook Salmon Research Initiative. The Chinook Salmon Initiative section of the website will change as new information is added and you may want to bookmark this section of the website so you can return to it easily to check for new information.

These are the four funded projects specific to the Yukon River.

Yukon River Juvenile Chinook Salmon Abundance

Overview: Long term monitoring of juvenile Yukon Chinook salmon abundance and ecology in the Northern Bering Sea can improve our understanding of factors affecting early marine survival, growth, and may improve run forecasts. Abundance indices for juvenile Yukon Chinook salmon have been estimated since 2002 (excluding 2008) by NOAA from surveys employing large vessels and large pelagic trawls. In this project NOAA and ADF&G are teaming up to calibrate juvenile

Chinook salmon abundance indices from these large trawl platforms to a smaller and more economical survey platform, enabling long-term sustainability of these surveys and continuity of these important data.

Location: Northern Bering Sea near the Yukon River

2014 Project Cost: \$85,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,709,000

Project Dates: January 2014 - December 2017

Project Type(s): Juvenile abundance

Life Stage: Juvenile

Stock: Yukon River Chinook salmon

Project Partners: NOAA-Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Yukon River Patterns and Trends in Subsistence Fishing for Chinook Salmon

Overview: The goal of the study is to identify variables associated with changing subsistence salmon harvests at the household level in six Yukon River communities and to improve managers’ understanding of how Yukon River subsistence fisheries are structured. In the first phase, a database of post-season household surveys from 1995-2012 will be developed. Pending funding, a formal analysis of the data set will develop household harvest histories and explore patterns and trends in harvest levels. In addition, a random sample of fishing households will be interviewed to identify factors that influence year to year continuity and variation in harvests in the subsistence salmon fishery.

Location: Yukon River near Grayling

2014 Project Cost: \$37,000

Total Project Cost: \$112,500

Project Dates: December 2013 - December 2015

Project Type(s): Subsistence harvest and trends

Life Stage: Adult

Stock: Yukon River Chinook salmon

Yukon River Inseason Estimates of Subsistence Harvest of Chinook Salmon

Overview: In two phases, the project will test methods for in-season collection of subsistence harvest data for Yukon River Chinook and other salmon using door-to-door surveys with specific reference to local research assistant capacity and staff oversight, financial cost, and community response. The first phase will occur in Grayling in 2013. After an interdivisional review, phase two will test a revised method in three communities in summer 2014. The project will conclude with an assessment of the overall feasibility of an in-season data collection program and compare findings with the existing post-season survey program.

Location: Yukon River near Grayling

2014 Project Cost: \$55,000

Total Project Cost: \$165,000

Project Dates: June 2013 - January 2015

Project Type(s): Subsistence harvest

Life Stage: Adult

Stock: Yukon River Chinook salmon

Yukon River Local and Traditional Knowledge of Chinook Salmon

Overview: In five Yukon River communities, a sample of subsistence harvesters will be interviewed to collect observational and experiential knowledge about biological and environmental factors important to the freshwater aspects of Yukon River Chinook salmon migration, spawning, and larvae/juvenile survival. Areas associated with spawning grounds and rearing habitats will be mapped. Information will be compared to the results of area enumeration projects and the Anadromous Waters Catalog.

Location: Yukon River near Grayling

2014 Project Cost: \$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$300,000

Project Dates: January 2014 - June 2015

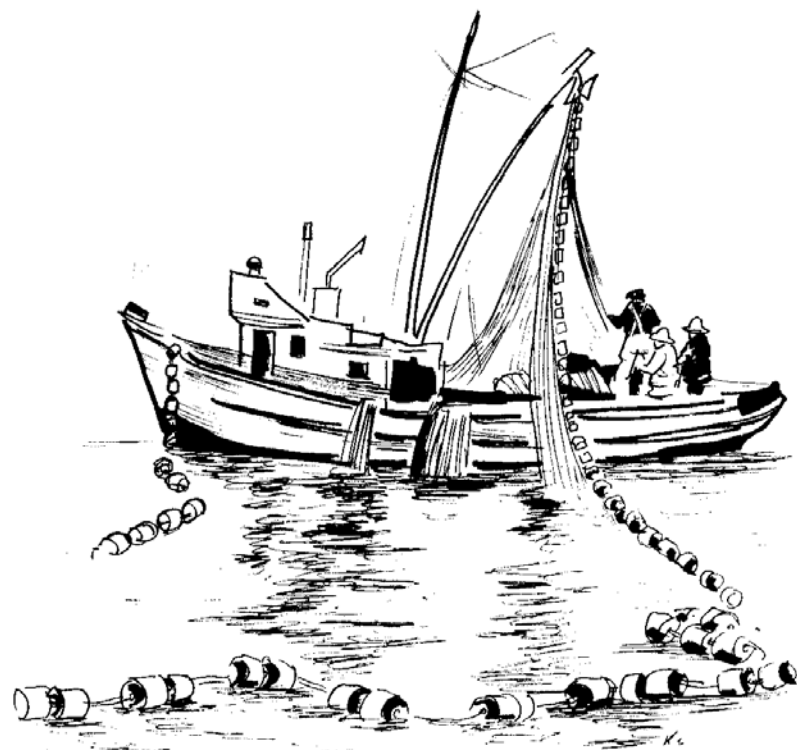
Project Type(s): Local and Traditional Knowledge

Life Stage: All

Stock: Yukon River Chinook salmon

Project Partners: Study communities and partners to be determined

This article from the ADF&G Chinook Salmon Research Initiative website; http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=chinookinitiative_yukon.main



clipart provided by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, www.ankn.uaf.edu

International Salmon Summit

by James McDonald of the Council of Yukon First Nations

A first of its kind, International Salmon Summit, was hosted by the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association and the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee at Pike's Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks, Alaska, on April 9-10, 2014.

Approximately 140 delegates met, half of which were affected Yukon residents and half were affected Alaskan residents, and over two full days discussed issues relating to the decline of Yukon River Chinook Salmon stocks.

Representatives came from everywhere along the entire Yukon River drainage, including Nunam Iqua and Emmonak, Chalkitsik, Eagle, Dawson City, Mayo, Pelly Crossing and Teslin. The International Salmon Summit had as its main objective to address key issues relating to poor king salmon returns. The overall goal was to increase awareness, transfer knowledge and build relationships and cooperation among king salmon users on both sides of the Alaska-Yukon border. In order to do that, an in-person summit was required and a lot of focus and thought was given to

the agenda and break-out sessions during the planning phase.

Delegates had the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and came to a better understanding of each other's struggles, at the community level, in relation to recent poor king salmon returns. Presentations were delivered by John Lamont from Emmonak, Orville Huntington from Huslia, Roberta Joseph and Mikaila Blanchard from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Kathryn Porter and Dakota Hogan from the Teslin Tlingit Council.

Presenters used photographs, video and personal stories to share their experiences. Participants had an opportunity after each presenter to ask questions, which resulted in rich conversations about similarities between communities far from one another, ranging from shared experiences of hardship due to decreased king salmon abundance, to similarities in cultural beliefs and activities.

Key themes over the two-day summit included threats to healthy salmon stocks, non-compliance to fishing

restrictions, harvest data, successful salmon management, stock restoration, Traditional Knowledge and youth and culture. Participants at the International Salmon Summit also identified challenges, successes and opportunities in relation to Yukon River king salmon.

Post-meeting survey results showed that the majority of the participants who attended felt the International Salmon Summit was a success and that future such meetings need to take place in order to help educate users about common struggles brought about from low king salmon returns.

The International Salmon Summit was funded by the Yukon River Panel's Restoration and Enhancement Fund and the final report will be posted on the Yukon River Panel's website upon its completion in the coming weeks. The hosts want to thank everyone who committed their time to helping stage the Summit and everyone who gave up their time with their families to participate in this important initiative.

We Hear It All the Time: Your Voice Matters

There Is No Doubt That It's True

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is developing two large Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for the Central Yukon & Utility Corridor and the Bering Sea Western Interior planning areas in Alaska.

The Central Yukon planning area (to the left) encompasses 59 million acres and BLM manages 16 million of those acres. The Bering Sea Western Interior planning area (below) is 62 million acres in size and BLM manages 10.6 million acres. These vast areas take up about a third of the state of Alaska, touch the shores of the Beaufort Sea and extend all the way to the Bering Sea in the west. Combined, these planning areas are the size of California and Oregon put together and include over 90 communities and at least five distinct Alaska Native peoples.

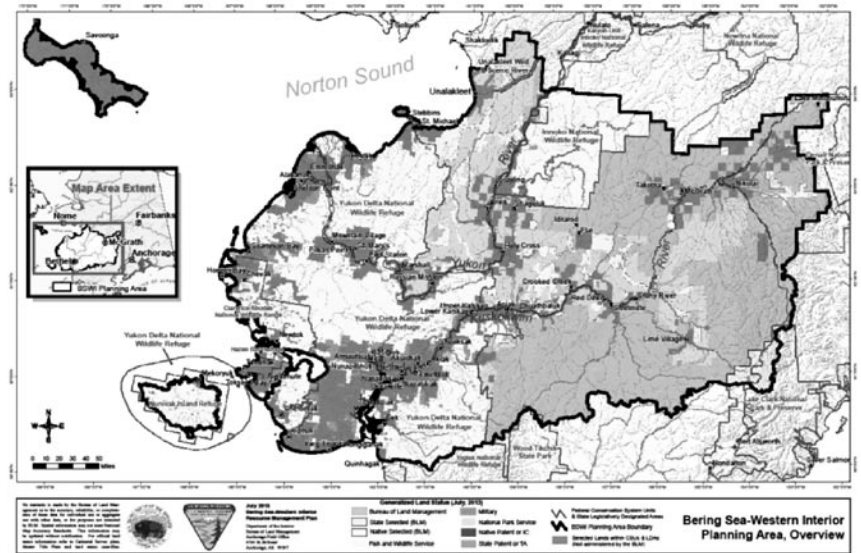
BLM's Resource Management Plans set the management framework for every use of these public lands. The Resource Management Plans are written in a collaborative way that encourages local, state, and tribal governments, the public, user groups, and industry to work with the BLM to identify appropriate uses of the public lands.

The planning process is a long one usually taking 3 to 4 years from start to finish. BLM

recently closed the public comment period for the first part of the planning process called 'Scoping' for these two plans. In the Scoping phase, BLM gathers information about what issues the public, governments, industry and other groups think should be considered in the planning process. With the close of the Scoping phase, BLM will be working to create a Scoping Report and Draft Resource Management Plan for each of these large planning areas to be released in early 2015. After the release of the draft plans there will be an opportunity for public comments on those draft plans. The final BLM Resource Management Plans are expected to be completed in 2017 for both planning areas and the plans will determine how the BLM lands will be used, developed or protected for the next 20 to 30 years.

Issues that had been identified for consideration in the resource management planning process include:

- Government to Government Consultation
- ANCSA (d)(1) Withdrawals
Section 17 (D)(1) in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) authorized the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw and reserve public lands for study and classification. The ANCSA (D)(1) withdrawals, placed restrictions on development for millions of acres of BLM land until claims could be settled. BLM must determine whether to eliminate or retain these development restrictions.
- Wild and Scenic River designations
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
- Research Natural Areas
- Subsistence and Non-Subsistence Uses of BLM Land



- Special Recreation Management Areas
- Climate Change

Citizens, governments, corporations and stakeholders are welcomed by BLM to contribute to creation of these important land use plans. **Encourage your community to get informed and involved. Take this opportunity to participate in the BLM land planning process so your community will have a say in how lands important to you are managed. This is the time when your voice matters.**

BLM - Central Yukon & Utility Corridor Plan

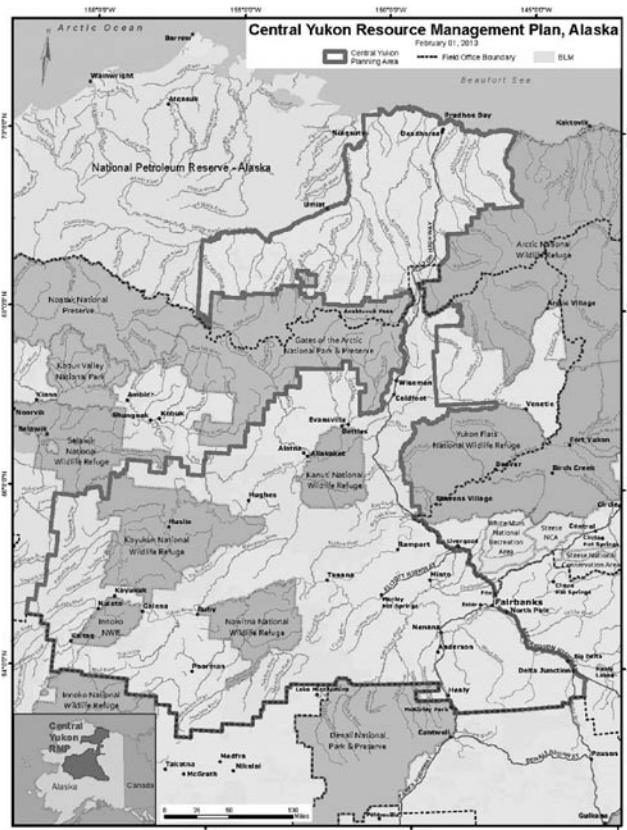
BLM Alaska Eastern Interior Field Office;
1150 University Avenue;
Fairbanks, AK 99709
(907) 474-2200 or 1-800-437-7021
http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/Central_Yukon.html

BLM - Bering Sea Western Interior Plan

Anchorage Field Office
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http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/bering_sea_western.html

Planning Schedule

- 1) *Initiate planning effort / public scoping (complete)*
July 18, 2013-January 17, 2014: Public Scoping Period
Winter 2014: Publish Scoping Report



2) *Inventory and Data Collection*

2013-2014: Gather and analyze new data for the Draft RMP/EIS

2013-2014: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data collection

3) *Analysis of the Management Situation*

2013-2014: Describe existing situation, current management, and opportunities for change

4) *Formulate Alternatives*

2014: Formulate a range of alternatives to analyze in the Draft RMP/EIS

2014: Internal and cooperator review of Draft RMP/EIS

5) *Draft Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*

2015: Release Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment

2015: Host public meetings and ANILCA 810 Hearings

2016: Analyze public comments and prepare Proposed RMP/ Final EIS

6) *Proposed Resource Management / Final Environmental Impact Statement*

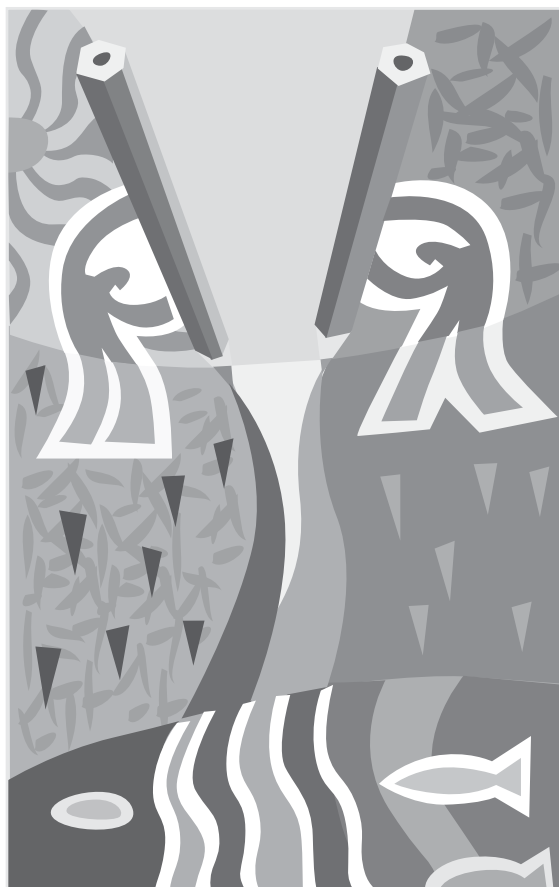
2017: Release Proposed RMP/ Final EIS

2017: Initiate Governor's Consistency Review

2017: 30-day Protest Period

7) *Record of Decision and Approved RMP*

TBD: Issue Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan 🐟



СОХРАНИМ ЛОСОСЕЙ ВМЕСТЕ!

КАМЧАТСКИЙ РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫЙ ФОНД

April 8, 2014

TO: People of Yukon River watershed, Alaska, USA

Dear colleagues!

Kamchatka and Alaska are two regions in the world, where wild stocks of all Pacific salmon species are still saved for the mankind. And there are reasons for this: you and we still have intact main spawning grounds for natural reproduction of salmon, including the king-fish – chinook.

At the same time, people of Kamchatka are increasingly concerned about the state of chinook stocks and dramatic decrease of its size over the past ten years, while there is sharp increase of spawning runs of all the other salmon species on Kamchatka – sockeye, pink, chum, coho. Harvest levels of these species were at the historical maximum in recent years.

Situation with chinook stocks in the Bolshaya (Big) River and Avacha River watersheds, located in the most populated part of Kamchatka, is particularly tragic as these watersheds are easily accessible for the mass poaching and trafficking of fish and salmon caviar (famous delicacy in Russia and Asia). Currently, Kamchatka communities make active efforts to combat this ugly socio-economic phenomenon.

We know that Yukon River watershed is the traditional habitat for the main Alaska chinook stocks. But according to the possibly incorrect information we have, the status of Yukon chinook is not that good lately, though there is no mass poaching in your state; at the same time, chinook runs are lower each year, and like ours, chinook gets much smaller in size, compared to ten or fifteen years ago.

Russian scientists have linked the degradation of Asian chinook stocks to Japanese and Russian salmon drift-net fishing in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation. But, as we know, large-scale driftnet fishing of salmon is not conducted in the exclusive economic zone of the United States. Therefore, it is quite possible that there are other, unknown to us yet, processes affecting the status of Russian and American chinook stocks.

If we are wrong and chinook stocks in Alaska are in good condition, then we would like to learn about your experience in low impact chinook fishing and habitat conservation, which would be useful in Russia with our efforts to restore historical stocks of chinook and defeat the mass poaching.

For us it will be invaluable to learn about your experience (that you have been accumulating from generation to generation) in relations between local and indigenous communities, government, and business, addressing sustainable fisheries management issues, and conservation of aquatic biological resources.

Sincerely, and with great respect,

Sergei Vakhrin

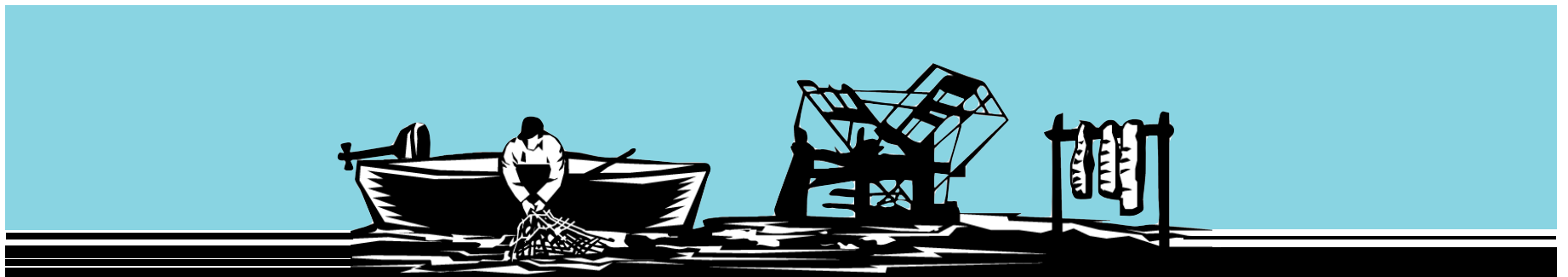
President, Kamchatka Regional NGO "Saving Salmon Together"

Leader, Kamchatka salmon conservation exchange group to Alaska 🐟



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