



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

> A United Voice for Downriver and Upriver Fishermen

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CONSIDER NATURAL WEALTH OF YUKON KING SALMON

by John Lamont

The following is John Lamont's testimony to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council at its April 2008 meeting in Anchorage. The Council is currently considering management measures to reduce salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

I am a salmon fisherman on the mighty Yukon River. I also serve on the Yukon River Panel as an alternate from the Lower Yukon River.

I would like to thank the Panel for trusting that I will bring a message to the body that regulates our Bering Sea fisheries. It will be a simple message.

I would like to take this time to explain in my own terms the impact that salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery has on the people of Western Alaska and the Yukon River in Alaska and Canada .

Traditional commercial and subsistence fishermen on the Lower Yukon River have depended on salmon, especially Chinook, for the past 900-plus years (this history is from my immediately family only). There is no money value that can be placed on it.

Every early summer, I take my family to Bugumowick, our fish camp at mile 17.7 on the south mouth of the Yukon River.

Money cannot express the looks on all my children's faces when they see the first king salmon that is pulled into the boat each summer.

Money can't explain the feelings I have within myself when I head and gut that first king salmon and begin cutting it into strips, splitting the head and boning the back bone.

Money can't explain the feeling of soaking the strips in a salt brine nor can it explain this: the strips hanging on drying racks next to our coldsmoke smokehouse, the silver-skinned and redmeat strips that reflect the evening sun, the glazed dark brownish orange as they are hanging amidst light blue smoke in our smoke house and finally the rich taste of those strips in the middle of winter with a piece of Sailor Boy pilot bread and a hot cup of Labrador tea.

How much is that worth?

Imagine more than 40,000 of our aboriginal people from the Bristol Bay drainage, Kuskokwim River drainage, Norton Sound, Kotzebue Sound, Canada and Alaska Yukon River drainages go through this ritual on an annual basis.

There is no money value that can account for all the annual traditions, sustenance, cultural and

"It is time to take a different look at how our pollock fishing fleet can be regulated to harvest the highest amount of pollock with the least

amount of salmon bycatch bound for Western Alaska..."

spiritual activities that all our people take into account when the salmon return at that cycle in our seasonal rotation of this spacecraft we call Earth.

Now you have scientists that understand the biomasses of many species of fish out in the Bering Sea. You can regulate that fishery with simple rules. You can stop it when the Steller's sea lion is at risk.

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EMPLOYEE DIRECTORY

JILL KLEIN, Executive Director Phone: 907-272-3141, ext. 102 Email: jill@yukonsalmon.org

BECCA ROBBINS GISCLAIR, Policy Director Phone: 907-272-3141 ext. 106 Email: becca@yukonsalmon.org

ALICIA DE LA CRUZ, Finance Manager Phone: 907-272-3141 ext. 104 Email: alicia@yukonsalmon.org

CATHERINE MONCRIEFF, Anthropologist Phone: 907-272-3141 ext. 107 Email: catherine@yukonsalmon.org

BOB DUBEY, Science Director Phone: 907-272-3141 ext. 103 Email: bob@yukonsalmon.org

JASON HALE, Communications Director Phone: 907-272-3141 ext. 105 Email: jason@yukonsalmon.org

LAUREN SILL, Program Coordinator Phone: 907-272-3141 ext. 101 Email: lauren@yukonsalmon.org

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725 Christensen Drive, Suite 3-B, Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: (907) 272-3141 / Fax: (907) 272-3142 • TOLL-FREE 1-877-99-YUKON (98566)

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

by Jill Klein, Executive Director

The topic of how the fish are doing is still at the top of everyone's minds as the season winds to a close and the ice is solidifying on the Yukon River. While there are a few glim-

> mers of positive news from the river this year, it is mainly clouded by the fact that we did not have enough king salmon return to the river, into the harvests and

most importantly into their spawning grounds in Canada. While the Canadian border is extremely far away for many Alaskan Yukon River residents, it is a place that is particularly important for many reasons.

After sixteen years of negotiations, the Alaskans and Canadians living along the Yukon River came together to agree on a way to share the salmon resource and to try to protect it for future generations. The result of this agreement is to try to work together to achieve common goals, one of them being that Alaskans send a specific amount of fish up to the Canadian border.

Historically, approximately 50 percent of the king salmon returning to the Yukon River come from Canadian stocks. U.S. fishers harvest these Canadian fish, but it is also our responsibility to allow enough to pass into Canada for harvest and spawning needs. If we don't allow enough fish to pass into Canada to spawn, the future of the run will be in jeopardy.

There were many hardships along the Yukon River this season. Due to the late arrival of the king salmon and also the low numbers, there were restrictions on subsistence activities and it was harder for people to meet their needs. There was no directed commercial fishery on kings for the first time in six years. Fortunately, the summer chum came into the river with better numbers and enabled people to harvest them for both subsistence and commercial markets, thanks to the efforts of processors to build up the chum market. This led to a small influx of cash into the economy at various locations along the lower and middle river. Another bright moment was the harvest of a 40 pound Chinook salmon in Pelly and the sight of bigger salmon at the fish ladder in Whitehorse.

As people are preparing for winter with the harvest of animals and stocking up of wood, people are already talking about how to prepare for next summer if there aren't enough salmon to be harvested. Managers will review their data and analyses before coming out with the pre-season projection, but we are hearing that it should be another poor year. In light of this, we should continue looking at how we can keep the valuable salmon resource returning to the Yukon River, so that people can continue fishing and living along the Yukon River. There are many external issues impacting Yukon River salmon, such as bycatch in the pollock fishery, and we must continue to address these issues. Also importantly, it is time to look inward at our own actions as fishermen and see where we take and where we can give. Remember the people above and the people below. Most importantly, remember the salmon. This is the challenge of the Yukon River.

Yukon River Fisheries Meetings Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION
November 17 - 21	North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission	Seattle
November 20 - 22	Pacific Marine Expo 2008	Seattle
November 23 - 25	BASIS Symposium	Seattle
December 8 - 11	Yukon River Panel	Anchorage
December 8 - 16	North Pacific Fishery Mgmt Council (NPFMC)	Anchorage
December 10 - 12	Tanana Chiefs Conference Salmon Meeting	Fairbanks
January 13 - 15	Federal Subsistence Board	Anchorage
January 20	NPFMC Salmon Bycatch Workgroup Meeting	Anchorage
February 2 - 10	NPFMC	Seattle
February/March	YRDFA Annual Meeting	Hooper Bay
February 18 - 19	Western Interior RAC Meeting	Galena
February 24 - 25	YK Delta RAC Meeting	TBD
March 13	Tanana Chiefs Conference	Fairbanks
March 17 - 18	Eastern Interior RAC Meeting	TBD
March 30 - April 7	NPFMC	Anchorage
March/April	Yukon River Panel	Whitehorse
March/April	Federal Subsistence Board	Anchorage
May 29 - June 1	River Rally	Baltimore, MD

REVITALIZED COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN KALTAG: A SUCCESS STORY

by Richard Burnham, Fisher & YRDFA Board of Directors Co-Chair

The following are notes related to the revitalized commercial fishery in Kaltag from local fisher Richard Burnham, who relays the positive impact a small commercial fishery can have on a village.

1997

This was the last time there was a successful commercial fishery in Kaltag.

2000

A new fish plant was built with help from a HUD Block Grant. This was just a building without the processing equipment.

2007

With some help from YRDFA and fishery revitalization money from the State of Alaska, the plant was operated with very basic equipment – an ice machine, chiller room, electrical hook-up, and some basic processing equipment furnished by newly contracted fish processors.

Only one fisherman, who was from Nulato, had a fish wheel ready to fish. 10 people were hired for a short time to help process product.

2008

The fishery was conducted much more successfully. Seven fishers participated – 5 from Kaltag, 1 from Nulato, and 1 from Galena. The fishery was located in close proximity to Kaltag to reduce transportation costs.

At one point 35 people were employed for processing, not counting the fishers who hired an average of three people for each of their operations.

Pride levels in people who were finally able to be involved with a commercial fishery were very noticeable and significant.

Meanwhile, the City of Kaltag had been applying for a grant to get newer, more efficient processing equipment since 2007. That application was successful, but the grant was not received until June 2008. Those monies will be used for the 2009 fishery.

The City of Kaltag was also released from restrictions from the HUD Block Grant program because of the number of people hired in the 2008 fishing season. The City was not able to apply for a new \$250,000 HUD grant until they could show that jobs were created by the initial HUD grant, which helped build the new fish processing building in 2000. The new grant will go a long way toward building a badly needed new community building.







Top Left – Local workers process fish at the Kaltag seafood processing center. Left – Shaylene Nicholas works a fish wheel with her father Robert Nicholas. Above – A fish wheel with 3 baskets made by Robert Nicholas.

VOICES FROM THE RIVER *Yukon River Fishermen Speak Out*

"How can fishers become more involved in management?"

In the fall of 2008, YRDFA Communications Director Jason Hale had a chance to ask this question of fishers from up and down the Yukon. Here are their thoughts...

JACK WHOLECHEESE, HUSLIA

...by electing fishermen, not people that don't fish. Don't elect officials that don't have a net in the water; I'm a fisherman, a subsistence fisherman, and I have concerns. Elected officials don't know what the concerns of the fishermen are. Unity should be our main goal to get problems solved.

PHILIP TITUS, MINTO

Make your voice heard. Not hearing from you tells management everything is okay for you, whether it is or not.

LARRY LUJAN, EMMONAK/ANCHORAGE

When the feds were [managing the fisheries] they changed everything around. Now the state is there and they are trying to clean things up, but it's a mess. What can we do about senior subsistence fishers? The thing is that gas is high, windows are in effect, and seniors have to pull nets and waste all that gas. I think seniors should be exempt from windows. I'd like to be able to help them.

LESTER WILDE, HOOPER BAY

Get fishermen to attend the meetings where we give out information about the fisheries, like the work we do at the YRDFA board. Fishermen don't have many options. They can get involved with YRDFA or one of the subsistence councils.

JEFFREY DEMIENTIEFF, HOLY CROSS

The main way is to become the managers themselves – get educated, get their degrees, and manage their own fisheries on the Yukon River. If they can't do that, get involved with a fisheries organization. Lastly, participate in the weekly teleconferences.

Marshall Test Fishery - A Cooperative Project Providing Useful Run Data

by Robert DuBey, Science Director

In cooperation with Ohogamiut Traditional Council and ADF&G, YRDFA managed the Marshall Cooperative Chinook Salmon Drift Test Fishery Project this summer. The project collects run timing and assessment information for Chinook and chum salmon. It also provides a positive stewardship experience for local residents and students.

From June 11 through July 15, a three person crew from the village of Marshall set nets at established sites and gathered data throughout each day. In the morning they would set an 8.25" drift net for 20 minutes on the north bank of the river, then pull in the net and move to the south bank to repeat the process. The crew would take their morning catch back to shore and take a count of the Chinook salmon harvested. Next they would sample the fish for age (scale samples), sex, and length information. Once this was recorded, they would donate the fish to local subsistence users. In the afternoon, they would do it all over again.

The information they gathered was relayed to ADF&G and YRDFA daily. This information was used to establish run strength and migratory timing of Chinook salmon. It also aided in the management of both Canada and U.S. Chinook salmon stocks.

Recent declines in Yukon River Chinook and chum salmon abundance have made optimal harvest management of these stocks especially difficult. The subsistence fishery has priority use of these resources, but subsistence opportunities must be available throughout the length of the river. The fish pass through the major harvesting areas in the lower river before they arrive into the upper regions, where about half of the subsistence harvest traditionally occurs. Therefore, fishery managers are challenged to quickly and accurately assess run timing and abundance inseason to ensure that sufficient numbers of salmon pass through the lower river to provide for subsistence needs and adequate escapements to Alaskan and Canadian streams. The best way to assess run strength in river is to have projects distributed throughout the river. When the data from these projects are combined, a more complete and reliable picture of run strength is available for managers to use.

The information generated in the Marshall Test Fishery can be used to cross-check Pilot Station sonar timing and passage estimate of Chinook salmon with the Lower Yukon test fishery and vice-versa, thus providing more information to further increase managers' confidence in run strength assessment. In addition, this test fishery provides a measure of relative abundance upriver from the lower river districts.

This project was designed to foster research in the form of data collection and analysis that directly contributes to the assessment of the current state of knowledge of Chinook salmon for inseason management. This project also provided an opportunity to build community capacity and stewardship for local residents/students in a work experience and promote training, teaching, and learning in the areas of fisheries research and management. An established project like this one provides information for resource management and facilitates communications between various community and government entities.

YRDFA assumed administration of this project from the Association of Village Council Presidents this year at their request.

YRDFA's work on the Marshall Test Fishery is funded under contract number URE-05-08 from the Yukon River Panel Restoration & Enhancement Fund (R&E). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of agencies related to R&E.

HOW THE PILOT STATION SONAR WORKS

by Bruce McIntosh, ADF&G AYK Regional Sonar Biologist

To make decisions that protect salmon for future generations, and at the same time provide for the needs of people today, fishery managers must rely on a number of different sources of information about salmon run strength from along the Yukon River. Both before reaching their spawning grounds. The sonar site is also one of the better locations where the river is both narrow enough to reach the area the salmon travel though, and the bottom is flat enough for the sonar beams.

Over the last few years, the project has



Mathew Joseph, ADF&G Technician, checking the sonar chart output.

management agencies, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have escapement projects on several of the rivers that feed into the Yukon. However, by the time the salmon arrive in those tributaries they are far beyond the reach of most fishers.

Down at the mouth of the Yukon there are test nets that give the managers a good idea of run timing and the relative strength of the pulses moving into the river, but with the multiple channels and the effect that weather patterns have on fish entry, it is hard to convert those results into the actual numbers of fish that managers need. For this reason, ADF&G has run a sonar project near Pilot Station since 1986.

The location at Pilot Station was chosen for several reasons. First, the location is far enough upriver to avoid the multiple channels and tides found near the mouth, but still close enough to make estimates while the fish are available to most of the fishers. The only major river between the sonar site and the mouth of the Yukon is the Andreafsky River, so the majority of salmon have to pass by the sonar started right after breakup and operated until the end of August. In 2008, the season was extended a week longer (until September 7th) to get a better estimate of the fall chum and coho salmon. During the summer the crew is busy seven days per week, from 5:15 a.m. until 12:45 a.m. the next day. During this time the crew alternates between operating the sonar to estimate the number of fish going by, and then drifting gillnets to identify which species the sonar is seeing.

Two types of sonar are used at Pilot Station – split-beam sonar and DIDSON. The splitbeam sonar is a powerful, long-range sonar capable of reaching out over 250 meters (820 feet) into the river, and can be configured for the various water conditions the river presents over the course of the summer. The DIDSON is a short-range sonar that uses multiple beams to generate an actual image of the fish as they swim by. Sonar is installed on both banks of the river. On the left (south) bank DIDSON is used to get a clear picture in the shallow waters near the bank where the silty bottom is always changing shape, and split-beam sonar is used for fish further offshore in the deeper water.



Bathymetric map of the Yukon River at the Pilot Station sonar project. Depth is in feet, with the shallower areas shaded lighter. Pilot Station is downriver of the sonar camp.



Pilot Station sonar daily passage estimates for 2008.

On the right (north) bank only split-beam sonar is needed because the rocky river bottom drops off so steeply.

Although the sonar can be used to roughly estimate the size of a fish, it cannot accurately tell us what species it is. For this reason, gillnets are drifted twice a day through the same areas where the sonar operates. To capture all the various species that may have been counted (from small whitefish up to Chinook salmon) the nets range in size from 2.75" to 8.5". Knowing the amount of fishing time for

each net, and how relatively efficient each size net is at catching each fish type, we can estimate the percentages of the various species that are going by that day. We then apply that percentage to the sonar estimate to get an estimate for each day's passage by species. For instance, if we count 1,000 fish on the sonar,

and our nets tell us that 10% of the fish are Chinook salmon, then $1,000 \ge 10\% = 100$ Chinook salmon.

Since this project started in 1986, a lot has changed. The sonar equipment we have today is more powerful and accurate at detecting fish, and the way we use it has evolved and improved. For instance, at one time the sonar had to be pointed either downstream or upstream so that we could tell what direction a fish was swimming. This resulted in a year in the early 1990s that some people still refer to as having the sonar "pointed in the mud." What actually happened was that for a time the sonar was pointed too far downstream to detect all the fish.

With the new equipment we have been using since 2000 (and especially with the new DIDSON) we can now tell the travel direction with the sonar itself, so today we aim the sonar straight out from the bank. Since starting to use DIDSON in 2005, we can also accurately see fish swimming right up against the shoreline in shallow water. The type of long-range

"The sonar equipment we have today is more powerful and accurate at detecting fish, and the way we use it has evolved and improved." sonar that we use can be adjusted for up-close work or for detecting fish further offshore. In the past, this meant we often had to focus on the offshore area to cover the majority of the salmon. Today, with the combination of the two types of sonar, we can monitor both areas at the same time. The Yukon River

presents new challenges every season, and the effect our work has on the users on the river is very important. Each year we add to our knowledge and strive to make any improvements needed to get the best information for the fishery managers to use.

Bruce McIntosh oversees the sonar projects in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) region. These include sonar projects at Pilot Station, Anvik, Eagle, Sheenjek, and Aniak.

YRDFA SUMMER INTERN FINDS VALUE IN FISHERIES WORK

by Allison Huntington, Intern

My name is Allison Huntington. I am 21 years old and from Galena. My parents are Margaret and Gilbert Huntington. I was a summer intern with YRDFA as a part of the First Alaskans Institute internship. The majority of my time here at YRDFA was spent working on the Middle Koyukuk River Fish and Traditional Place Names Atlas and the weekly fisheries teleconferences. This was a great learning experience for me since I have grown up spending time on the Yukon River and now I can take the things I learned and understand the fishing process a whole lot better when I am home.

Now that the internship is over, I am starting my fourth year of school with the University of Alaska Anchorage with a major in Human Services. Once school is over I plan to move home to Galena to work for a bit and then see where life takes me from there.

YRDFA's summer intern project was funded under award number NA07NMF4720091 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies.



Allison Huntington with her grandfather Sidney Huntington in Galena.

2008 EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE -YUKONERS VISIT THE U.S.

by Jason Hale, Communications Director

On a chilly, misty day in June, five Canadians from the Yukon Territory climbed down the steps of the Emmonak city office and ambled toward the ADF&G bunkhouse for breakfast. They were accompanied by a few children on bicycles, the occasional passing four-wheeler, and a mass of grey clouds. Conversation centered on the wonderful hospitality and sharing they had been met with at local fish camps the previous day. Many hours later, as they crawled into bed, they would look back fondly on a tour of the local fish processing plant, a friendly bush pilot, a visit to the sonar project at Pilot Station, and a traditional community celebration in Tanana. They traveled from Canada to understand more about the people, fisheries, and cultures of the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River, and they were well on their way.

The Yukon River Educational Exchange has taken place five times, always with the same goal: to provide an opportunity for diverse groups of people involved in salmon fisheries along the Yukon River to experience regional and cultural differences regarding fisheries issues, understand fisheries management techniques, and appreciate the various concerns of people that rely on Canadian-origin king salmon and fall chum salmon. Canadians visit Alaska, and the next year Alaskans travel to Canada.

This year's Canadian participants included Linch Curry, a commercial and subsistence fisher from Pelly Crossing; Madeleine Jackson,



(from left to right) Linch Curry, Coralee Johns, Martin Moore, Noreen Hirtle, Jeffrey Peter, and Madeleine Jackson pose for a photo at the mouth of the Yukon River.

an important fisher from Teslin; Noreen Hirtle, executive director of Selkirk Renewable Resources Council from Pelly Crossing; Coralee Johns, a fisher and environmental technician from Whitehorse; and Jeffrey Peter, a fisher and Parks Canada employee from Old Crow. Each person brought a passion for the salmon resource, a strong sense of curiosity, an adventurous spirit, and a friendly disposition that made passing of knowledge easy



Linch Curry measures the length of a king salmon at Stan Zuray's fish camp while Coralee Johns looks on.

everywhere they went. They were accompanied by Jason Hale of YRDFA, who had made all the arrangements for the journey.

The eight day trip started in Fairbanks with a tour of the Bureau of Land Management office and participation in the weekly Yukon River inseason management teleconference. Afterward, participants visited Interior Alaska Fish Processors Inc. and spoke with Yukon River Panel advisor Virgil Umphenour about the history of the Yukon River Salmon Agreement. Then the group went to an orientation dinner to discuss what they hoped to learn in the remaining seven days of the trip and get to know each other better.

The next day they traveled to Emmonak where they learned about U.S. fisheries management from ADF&G and USFWS. They were ready with question after question, and after hours of discussion they pulled themselves away and found their beds, ending 20 hours of learning and travel.

Day three began with a boat tour of local fish camps provided by Martin Moore, a respected elder and fisherman from Emmonak. At the camps, fishers and participants discussed everything from the drying techniques to the role of commercial fishing in the local economy, and at each stop Madeleine Jackson gave away a bag of fresh caught lake trout from the headwaters of the Yukon. That evening participants dined on fresh king salmon and met more members of the community. Then, 2007 Educational Exchange participant Dora Moore invited the group into her home, where she shared her canning and drying techniques and presented each person with a jar of rich king salmon. Participants were amazed by the high oil content of the fish at the mouth of the river, and they looked forward to sharing it with people in their communities.

As earlier described, on the fourth day they visited the local fish processor – Kwikpak – and then toured the ADF&G sonar at Pilot Station. The day ended in Tanana with the Nuchalawoyya festival. Participant Coralee Johns was selected to judge the traditional regalia competition, and the village welcomed the group with open arms.

On day five participants enjoyed the festival for a few hours, and then boated to Stan Zuray's fish camp and research center at The Rampart Rapids. During the following 48 hours they learned about Stan's fish wheel, visited area fish camps, discussed the salmon run and subsistence activities in the middle river, ate well, and enjoyed the hospitality of Stan's camp. YRDFA science director Bob DuBey was in the camp, working with Stan on sampling techniques, and he gave participants a handson biology lesson. Within an hour everyone was dissecting fish, recording data, looking for signs of fish disease, and having a great time.

On the seventh day, participants traveled back to Fairbanks, cleaned the river and the salmon from their bodies, and went out to one last dinner together. They reviewed what they had learned and talked about how they would share it in their home communities when they returned home the next day. Presentation tactics and personal visits were discussed, phone numbers were exchanged, and everyone marveled at how much they had learned and shared along the way.

YRDFA's work on the Yukon River Educational Exchange is funded under contract number CC-04-08 from the Yukon River Panel, Communications Committee. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Yukon River Panel or any related agencies.

PARTICIPATION IN 2008 INSEASON MANAGEMENT TELECONFERENCES HIGHER THAN EVER

by Jason Hale, Communications Director

Every Tuesday from the first week of June to the first week of September, record numbers of people called in to the weekly teleconferences, facilitated by YRDFA, to discuss and learn about the salmon runs. An average of 19 Yukon River communities participated in the call each week. That's a whopping 37 percent higher than the average of the previous 5 years!

Typically, the number of people who called in to listen was two times the number of people who participated. In other words, if 20 people were actively participating in the call, another 40 people were silently listening. As usual, management agencies, processors, and other interested parties were regularly on the line, as well. At its peak – June 24, near the midpoint of the run in the lower river – 31 communities were active on the call and 114 phone lines were dialed in.

As in past years, management, processors, and other interested parties introduced themselves at the beginning of the call. Following that, fishers from throughout the drainage gave subsistence reports. Then management provided updates on their actions. Lastly, there was a question an comment period, during which

people spoke their minds and shared their ideas.

There was a good deal of interaction between management and stakeholders this year. Several times managers asked fishers in different districts for input on the best way to implement restrictions to make these restrictions as sensible as possible. Also, on virtually every call fishers and processors gave managers input regarding needs and concerns in their regions.

The king salmon run was poor this year. In such times good communication between all stakeholders along the entire river is more critical than ever. The goal of the teleconferences is to help fill this need. Using participation as a benchmark, this year's calls were a success.

After the teleconferences were over for the season, YRDFA staff surveyed some of the regular participants to find out ways the calls could be improved. Most liked the flow of the teleconferences in general, but thought it would be more efficient to skip the agency roll call and get straight to the subsistence reports. As such, next year's agenda will be changed to reflect this sentiment.

YRDFA would like to thank all those who participated in the 2008 calls and would like to encourage anyone with an interest in the summer or fall fishers in the Yukon River drainage to join us next spring. For more information, contact Jason Hale at YRDFA.

YRDFA's work on the Inseason Management Teleconferencest is funded under award number 701818J698 from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM); and contract number CC-01-08 from the Yukon River Panel, Communications Committee. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of OSM, the Yukon River Panel, or any related agencies.



2009 Yukon River Summer Season Outlook

From the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

The outlook for 2009 will be prepared after escapement information and age composition analysis are completed over the next several months.

Preliminary analyses suggest the 2009 Yukon River Chinook salmon run will be below average. Based on average productivity, the run is expected to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. However, despite good parent year escapements, the 2007 and 2008 runs were poor and the escapement goal in Canada was not met. It is therefore prudent to enter the 2009 season, which also has good parent year escapements, with the expectation that conservation measures may be required in an effort to meet the Canadian border passage goal.

In these years of poor returns, every fish counts. Since nearly half the Yukon Chinook salmon that are harvested in Alaska are spawned in Canada, it is very important to keep Canadian escapements healthy. Conservation of our fisheries resources by all users is extremely important for ensuring future salmon runs. **S**

2008 PRELIMINARY YUKON RIVER **SUMMER SEASON SUMMARY** Fast Facts from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

The article provides a preliminary summary report for the 2008 Yukon Area Chinook and summer chum salmon fishing season from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). All harvest and escapement data for 2008 are preliminary.

SUMMER SEASON OVERVIEW Chinook Salmon

The 2008 preliminary total run was approximately 151,000 Chinook salmon and below average. The 2008 run was approximately 36 percent below the recent 5-year (2003-2007) average of 235,000 Chinook salmon and 21 percent below the 10-year (1998-2007) average of 190,000.

Summer Chum Salmon

The Pilot Station sonar project summer chum cumulative passage estimate through July 18 was 1,665,667 fish. The run was adequate for escapement and subsistence use and a harvestable surplus for commercial was available.

2008 SUBSISTENCE FISHERY

In response to the poor Chinook run, alterations were made to the regulatory subsistence fishing schedule in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon. Subsistence fishing time was reduced by half for approximately two weeks throughout the mainstem of the Yukon River. The reductions were implemented chronologically with the Chinook salmon migration. Also, mesh size restrictions were implemented in the lower river districts. Fishers were affected from the mouth of the river to Canada. Fishers reported harvesting as little as 40 percent of their needs in some locations in Alaska, and the Aboriginal Fishery in Canada harvested less than half of their average take.

2008 COMMERCIAL FISHERY SUMMARY Chinook Salmon

Due to the uncertainty concerning the Chinook salmon run strength after the first pulse of fish, management of the Chinook salmon commercial fishery was conservative. No commercial periods targeting Chinook salmon were allowed in 2008. A total of 4,348 Chinook salmon were incidentally harvested during the summer season in eleven periods targeting summer chum restricted to six inch or smaller mesh size in Districts 1 and 2.

The total commercial harvest was 4,641 Chinook salmon for the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage. This includes 293 fish harvested during openers targeting fall chum. This range of commercial catch for Chinook salmon is 88% below the 10-year (1998–2007) average of 39,367 Chinook salmon.

Summer Chum Salmon

The total commercial harvest was 151,796 summer chum salmon for the Yukon River drainage. The summer chum salmon harvest was 206% above the 1998-2007 average harvest of 49,675 fish. Additionally, a total of 14,100 pink salmon were harvest in Districts 1 and 2.

2007 FISHING EFFORT AND EXVESSEL VALUE

A total of 457 permit holders participated in the Chinook and summer chum salmon fishery, which was 24% below the 1998-2007 average of 599 permit holders. The Lower Yukon Area (Districts 1-3) and Upper Yukon Area (Districts 4-6) are separate Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit areas. A total of 444 permit holders fished in the Lower Yukon Area in 2008, which was 23% below the 1998-2007 average of 577. In the Upper Yukon Area, 13 permit holders fished, which was 48% below the 1998-2007 average of 25.

Yukon River fishermen in Alaska received an estimated \$718,000 for their Chinook and summer chum salmon harvest in 2008, approximately 71% below the 1998-2007 average of \$2.5 million.

2008 ESCAPEMENT Chinook Salmon

Based on available data, it appears that the lower end of the BEGs in the Chena and Salcha rivers, the largest producing tributaries of Chinook salmon in the Alaska portion of the drainage, were met. However, the Canadian Interim Management Escapement Goal (IMEG) of >45,000 Chinook salmon based on the Eagle sonar program was not met. The preliminary estimated escapement into Canada was approximately 32,500, or 28% below the goal.

Summer Chum Salmon

The drainage wide optimum escapement objective of 600,000 summer chum salmon for the Yukon River based on the Pilot Station sonar was exceeded with a total estimate of 1,665,667 fish.

CANADIAN FISHERIES

Based on the projected total U.S. harvest

of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon in 2008 and the harvest sharing arrangements defined in the Canada/U.S. Yukon River Salmon Agreement, it was expected that the total border escapement would be at least 55,000 Chinook salmon as measured by the Eagle sonar program. However, similar to 2007, there was a shortfall in the run into Canada. The preliminary Eagle sonar estimate is 38,097 Chinook salmon. Because of the weak run strength, the Canadian commercial and domestic fisheries were not allowed in 2008 for Chinook salmon. Effective July 11, restrictions in the recreational fishery included nonretention of Chinook salmon. Additionally, all recreational fishing was closed in Tatchun Creek and in the Yukon River near the confluence of Tatchun Creek within a designated area. No restrictions were placed on the First Nations' fishery, but voluntary measures were implemented to reduce their Chinook salmon harvest to 4,000 fish – approximately half of the recent average of 8,000. As of September 16, an estimated 2,761 Chinook salmon were harvested.

For more detailed information about the 2008 Yukon River Summer Season, contact ADF&G. To view the 2008 Yukon Summer Season Summary please visit the ADF&G Yukon Management Area website at: http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php

2008 PRELIMINARY YUKON RIVER FALL SEASON SUMMARY Fast Facts from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

This article provides a preliminary fall season summary report for the 2008 Yukon Area fall chum and coho salmon fishing season from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). All harvest and escapement figures for 2008 are preliminary.

FALL SEASON OVERVIEW

The 2008 Yukon River fall salmon season may have ended below expectations, but the run provided an adequate abundance of both fall chum and coho salmon for drainage-wide escapement objectives, subsistence and personal use opportunities, and it provided for an above average commercial harvest. The preliminary run size estimate is approximately 730,000 fall chum salmon. This is below the 1974-2007 average of 880,000 and below the recent 5year average of 1.1 million, but it is above the 1974-2006 even year average of 680,000. The coho salmon run came in with normal run timing and the Pilot Station passage estimate was slightly below average.

SUBSISTENCE SUMMARY

Subsistence and personal use harvests for the 2008 fall season are not available at this time. However, subsistence harvest information was reported in-season through a variety of sources including the YRDFA teleconferences. Throughout much of the Alaskan portion of the drainage, fishermen reported adequate catches of fall chum and coho salmon with some subsistence fishermen in the middle river and Koyukuk River reporting difficulties in catching their desired amount of fall salmon.

COMMERCIAL SUMMARY (Alaskan Portion of Drainage)

- 120,000 fall chum
- 108,974 fall chum harvested in Lower Yukon Area
- 10,412 fall chum harvested in Upper Yukon Area
- 37,000 coho salmon
- 33,192 coho salmon harvested in Lower Yukon Area
- 3,268 coho salmon harvested in Upper Yukon Area

All salmon in the lower river districts were sold in the round while sales in the upper river districts also included salmon roe sold separately. The 2008 fall chum salmon commercial harvest was more than double the previous 10-year average (1998-2007) and the harvest of coho was well above the 10-year average. The total value of the commercial fishery is not yet available. However, the end of season prices paid for salmon in the lower river were above average with prices near \$0.75/lb. for fall chum and \$1.00/lb. for coho salmon.

FALL SEASON ESCAPEMENT

Escapement was near 500,000 fall chum drainage wide (goal range is 300,000 to 600,000).

The Delta Clearwater River has the only coho salmon escapement goal within the Yukon River drainage and that goal is expected to be achieved for the 2008 season.

For more detailed information about the 2008 Yukon River Fall Season, contact ADF&G. \leq

YRDFA/USFWS INSEASON SALMON HARVEST INTERVIEWS

by Lauren Sill, Program Coordinator

Managing the Yukon River fisheries is a complex undertaking. Subsistence fishermen are located throughout the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River and harvest five different species of salmon using different gear types. Information about subsistence fishing is needed inseason to assist in making the best management decisions. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has conducted post-season subsistence harvest surveys for over 40 years. While very useful, this information is typically only available after the fishing season has finished. The YRDFA/USFWS inseason salmon harvest interviews project collects real-time subsistence harvest information from subsistence fishermen for use in inseason management decision-making.

This project began as a pilot project in 2002 by collecting information in three villages. The project expanded to six villages in 2003 and 2004. In 2005, YRDFA partnered with USFWS to increase the number of villages involved. This past season, the project included 10 villages: Emmonak, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle.

Interviews were conducted by village residents who were familiar with subsistence fishing practices and subsistence fishing households in their villages. Information was collected during the Chinook and summer chum salmon fishing season. Fall chum and coho salmon information was not collected because subsistence households were difficult to locate as they shifted priorities to moose hunting and berry picking during the fall season.

several of the subsistence fishing households in their community. The interviewer asked how many days a fisher fished, what type of gear was used, how far along a fisher was in meeting harvest goals, and how the fishing compared to last year. Once the interviewer had spoken with all the fishers, the answers to those questions were sent to YRDFA and USFWS, who compiled the data from the different communities and produced a summary. The summary was shared with Tribal Councils, ADF&G, USFWS Office of Subsistence Management, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the Association of Village Council Presidents. Additionally, the interviewers reported their findings during weekly river-wide teleconference calls.

The knowledge gained through this project helped fishery managers evaluate how the subsistence harvest was going in different parts of the river. Also, the information collected during the project could be compared to other inseason management information, such as historical data and Chinook salmon pulse timing, to better evaluate the subsistence fishing practices inseason.

This year, the 10 interviewers spoke with 207 households and conducted 499 interviews over the course of the summer fishing season. In general, subsistence fishermen reported poorer catch rates and having to fish longer as compared to the 2007 fishing season. Five of the 10 villages surveyed achieved less than 50% of their harvest goals for Chinook salmon. 💊

Each week during the summer fishing season, each interviewer contacted

YRDFA's work on the Inseason Harvest Interviewer project is funded under award number 701818J698 from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of OSM or any related agencies.

Interviewing the Interviewers: YRDFA Catches Up with Two Inseason Harvest Interviewers

In September, Lauren Sill of YRDFA had a chance to speak with Sandy Scotton of Galena and Dana Helmer of Eagle, both of whom were Inseason Harvert Interviewers this past summer. Here's what they had to say:

YRDFA: Why did you choose to be an interviewer this year?

Sandy: Because the opportunity was available, and I had an interest in catching fish!

Dana: My family has been fishing for several years now, and I was in on that. So when this job opportunity came up, I thought it would be interesting to learn more about it.

YRDFA: What was the most interesting aspect of it to you?

Sandy: It was pretty interesting to have access to fisheries information, numbers out of the sonar. Being able to explain to fishermen why things were happening certain ways – why shorten fishing periods to two 24-hour periods rather than one 48hour. To be able to effectively pass on information - people appreciated it. That extends to age-compo-



Left: Sandy Scotton, the inseason harvest interviewer from Galena,

Above: Dana Helmer, the inseason harvest interviewer from Eagle, poses with a chum salmon by the river.

sition too, why fish were smaller this year. **Dana:** Hearing ideas from different people, both in the interviews and on the teleconference.

YRDFA: Did you learn anything new about your village or fishing, etc. that you didn't know before you started?

Sandy: A lot of the age composition stuff I didn't know. It was really interesting to talk to fishermen about what their ideas were. They all had ideas of

how to limit themselves, unfortunately that didn't work with what managers wanted. I learned a lot from people who have been fishing so long. Dana: Working for YRDFA definitely helped me appreciate the need for rules and regulations when it comes to fishing. So many times it is easy to become frustrated when you are not able to fish for whatever reason. But if you want fish in the river next year, you have to think ahead and be wise stewards.

YRDFA: What was the biggest challenge you encountered?

Sandy: Probably just getting people to feel free to be open with me, that there wasn't an ulterior motive for the questions. And finding everyone who was fishing.

Dana: Getting in contact with people to interview them... most of the time they were out fishing!

YRDFA: Do you think you'll continue as an interviewer?

Sandy: Sure. I enjoyed it.

Dana: I hope so! It was a nice summer job! 💊

ANOTHER TERRIFIC YEAR FOR LOCAL HIRES

SUBSISTENCE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM

Each fall for the last five years, YRDFA has hired assistants in villages up and down the Yukon River drainage to work with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) surveyors who come to their communities to conduct a post-season subsistence salmon survey. Each year, our local assistants never fail to be outstanding. Both YRDFA and the ADF&G survey crew (Deena Jallen, crew leader and Michelle Gillette and Seth Wilson, surveyors) would like to thank all the people who did such a terrific job this year! Special appreciation goes out to those assistants who work so hard year after year (we've put an asterisk beside their names).

Our gratitude goes out to:

Felix Aketachunak (Kotlik), *Denis Shelden (Alakanuk), Gertrude Hootch (Nunam Iqua), *Marvin Aguchak (Scammon Bay), *George Moses (Hooper Bay), *Linora Night (Hooper Bay), *Augusta Westdahl (St. Mary's), *Agnes George (St. Mary's), Luther Aguchak (Mountain Village), Evan Kokrine (Mountain Village), *Rita Paul (Holy Cross), *Julia Nick (Pilot Station), Kevin Workman (Shageluk), *Jack by Lauren Sill, Program Coordinator

George (Marshall), *Simeon Housler (Russian Mission), Marissa McCarty (Ruby), Sandra Scotton (Galena), *Wayne Nickoli (Kaltag), Mary Ann Sam (Huslia), Margaret Williams (Hughes), *Deborah George (Stevens Village), *Blanche Edwin (Tanana), *Janis Carrol (Fort Yukon), Jordan Jones (Fort Yukon), Kerry Jones (Fort Yukon), *Craig Edwards (Beaver), *Carol Thomas (Chalkyitsik), *Pollock Simon, Sr. (Allakaket)

FISHERY TECHNICIANS PROGRAM

Many thanks are also due to YRDFA's Fishery Technicians! Their hard work contributes to the success of many fisheries projects. This year we had five fish techs working on ADF&G and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fisheries projects:

- Noreen Mountain (Nulato) Sampling of subsistence Chinook salmon in District 4
- Dennis Argall (Nenana) Sampling of Chinook salmon in District 4
- Marissa McCarthy (Ruby) Sampling of Chinook salmon in District 4
- Regis Heckman (Pilot Station) Sampling

for Icthyophonous, Chinook salmon weight and girth, commercial and subsistence harvest sampling and Lower Yukon test fishery

• Tom Fogg (Tanana) – Tozitna River Fish Passage Project

INSEASON HARVEST INTERVIEWERS

YRDFA and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service would like to express their sincere appreciation for the hard, worthwhile work of this year's Inseason Harvest Inverviewers. As the article on the opposite page explains, the work of these individuals is a critical component to the management of salmon fisheries on the Yukon River.

Our gratitude goes out to:

Ted Hamilton (Emmonak), Jack Wholecheese (Huslia), Norma Evan (Marshall), Rita Paul (Holy Cross), Robyn George (Nulato), Sandy Scotton (Galena), Catherine Henzie (Allakaket), Albert Carroll Jr. (Circle), Garry Webber (Fort Yukon), Dana Helmer (Eagle)

YRDFA's work with the Subsistence Assistants program is funded under award number IHP-09-065 from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game(ADF&G). YRDFA's work with the Fisheries Technicians program is funded under award number 701817C295 Mod. #1 from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM); award number COOP-08-109 from ADF&G; and award number URE-07N-08 from the

SPOTLIGHT ON ALATNA

In each issue of Yukon Fisheries News YRDFA highlights a different village. We hope these descriptions will give readers a glimpse into life and history in different areas of the Yukon River drainage.

Approximately 30 people reside in Alatna,

just across the Koyukuk River from Allakaket, their Koyukuk Athabascans neighbors. The two communities were once incorporated together as a city, but today, although adjacent, they are separate entities with independent tribal councils.

The old site of Alatna was a traditional trading center between Athabascans and Eskimos. The Alatna population mainly descends from Kobuk Eskimos who migrated to the Koyukuk River around 1900. Residents are active subsistence participants relying on whitefish, salmon, moose (and caribou when available), bear, small game and berries for food sources.

Flooding has been a problem in the community. Ice jamming





caused a large flood in 1964, and again flood waters rose in 1994, sweeping away nearly all homes and buildings in the community. Residents rebuilt near the old site of Alatna, but some have moved across the way to Allakaket.

YRDFA PREPARES TO RELEASE MIDDLE KOYUKUK RIVER ATLAS

The staff at YRDFA is working hard on the final edits to the *Middle Koyukuk River of Alaska* – *An Atlas of Fishing Places and Traditional Place Names.* Upon completion of the atlas later this year, staff will distribute it to project participants, partners, and communities along the Koyukuk River.

The atlas was developed to present the information learned through interviews with fishers in Allakaket, Alatna, and Hughes. Our partners and the communities also thought it would be a good place to showcase traditional place names for the same area, which have been documented by Eliza Jones over the past decade. Together this information shows the connection people have to the land. As Eliza Jones described, "land is so important to people. Their connection to the land is so important. It is our spiritual heritage."

In August, YRDFA staff traveled to Allakaket and Hughes to present a draft version of the atlas to the community members. Two community meetings were held. Many people attended and reviewed the draft, making important comments and suggestions. In addition, YRDFA staff went to elders' homes to share the atlas draft with those who were unable to attend the meetings. We also collected picby Catherine Moncrieff, Anthropologist

tures for use in the atlas, and we are grateful to everyone who lent us their old photos.

YRDFA would like to thank the project participants and the communities of Allakaket, Alatna, and Hughes for supporting this project and sharing their knowledge. We also want to thank Eliza Jones, Stanley Ned, Caroline Brown, and Dave Andersen for editing a draft version of the document. In addition, we are very appreciative of the contributions our summer intern, Allison Huntington from Galena, made to this project. Finally, we would like to thank the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Kanuti Wildlife Refuge, and Lannan Foundation for funding this project. **S**

This atlas was prepared by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association under award number NA07NMF4720091 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; agreement number 701818J554 from Kanuti Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and funding from Lannan Foundation. The statements,

findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; Kanuti Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or Lannan Foundation.







YRDFA THANKS OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS, WELCOMES NEW

by Lauren Sill, Program Coordinator

Over the summer we completed the Fiscal Year 2009 board election process. The following is a summary of the changes to the YRDFA board.

OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

YRDFA recognizes these outgoing board members, who displayed excellent leadership skills and offered their guidance to the organization. We thank them all for their dedication and the valuable offering of their time.

Frank Alstrom, Alakanuk (Y-1, Seat 3) Alexie Walters, Sr., Mountain Village (Y-1, Alt. 2) Abraham Kelly, Sr. Pilot Station (Y-2, Alt. 2) Carl Walker, Grayling (Y-4, Seat 1) Bill Derendoff, Huslia (Koyukuk, Alt. 1)

NEW AND RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS FOR FY 09

We would also like to recognize and welcome our incoming board members, who are new for this term.

Ephrim Thompson, Mountain Village (Y-1, Seat 3) Aloysius Unok, Kotlik (Y-1, Alt. 1) John Ayunerak, Alakanuk (Y-1, Alt. 2) Paul Beans, Mountain Village (Y-2, Alt. 2) Benedict Jones, Koyukuk (Y-4, Seat 1) Stanley Ned, Allakaket (Koyukuk, Alt. 1) 💊

Yes! I want to support healthy salmon runs for generations to come!

Double your donation for a 2-year membership.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible annual gift of:

□ \$25 □ \$50 □ \$100* □ Other: \$ □ \$5 *lifetime membership for river residents

Indicate your fishing district:

□ Coastal □ Y-5 □ Y-1 □ Y-6 □ Y-2 □ Flats/Y-5d □ Y-3 □ Koyukuk □ Y-4

Harvest type:

□ Commercial □ Subsistence □ Sport \Box N/A Member name: Address: Village/City: State: Zip code:

Phone: E-mail/fax:_

Today's date:

YRDFA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

by Lauren Sill, Program Coordinator

Welcome to our newest members and thanks to all those who renewed their YRDFA memberships this summer:

Fred Alexie (Kaltag)

- Robin Boulding (Manley Hot Springs) Mike Carson (Nenana) Jude Henzler (Fairbanks) Knut Kielland (Fairbanks) Paul Kleinschmidt (Nenana) William Newman (Holy Cross) Gerald Oldman (Hughes)
- Ray Oney (Alakanuk) Joseph Redington, Jr. (Manley Hot Springs) Mike Sager (Eagle) Carol Schlentner (Lake Minchumina) Ed Sommer (Galena) John Stanfill (Nenana) Walter Stickman (Nulato) Jack Wholecheese (Huslia)

If there's someone you think would like to be a member, let us know. Also, we always welcome comments and suggestions to help us serve you better.

YRDFA SEEKS FINANCE MANAGER

NE-1109

YRDFA seeks an organized and detail-oriented, self-motivated individual to manage YRDFA's finances and human resources in its Anchorage office. The Finance Manager is responsible for internal accounting, financial tracking and reporting, budget development and tracking, administration of human resources, benefits, and other non-profit compliance matters. A college degree is required. This position requires at least three years of financial and administrative experience, knowledge of accounting software including Quickbooks, and experience working with non-profits and federal grants. Salary DOE. YRDFA provides excellent benefits including paid holidays; vacation and sick leave; health, dental and vision insurance; a health savings account and retirement.

To apply, please contact Jill Klein at YRDFA.

"NATURAL WEALTH..." continued from front page

But now let me ask you, can you stop it when hundreds and thousands of people are at risk of losing their main food source? Neither Money, nor anything else, can replace that salmon in the spawning grounds or all the traditional and cultural processes that go along with its harvest for the survival of our people.

You can stop a fishery when the spectacled eider is at risk. You can also close that fishery when one or two short-tailed albatross are accidentally caught in the hooks of a long line.

Why can't you put severe enough caps on the pollock fishery when Western Alaska salmon, especially the Yukon River king salmon, are at risk?

I know you can put a stop to the bycatch of salmon, but what would it do for the pollock fleet and fishermen? Well, simply put, they will learn how not to catch Chinook and chum salmon in their trawls or other fishing gear.

You can implement sector and fleet hard caps on individual fishing vessels and areas. You can regulate the amount of salmon bycatch that the total fleet is allowed to harvest in its pollock fishery. You can also do nothing and let the fleet continue to impact the salmon bound for Western Alaska and the Yukon River drainages in this state and Canada.

STAY TUNED

Data suggest that the 2009 Yukon River Chinook salmon run will be below average.

YRDFA will be working on what this means for fishers on the river.

Stay tuned for more details.

www.yukonsalmon.org

I don't think that would be a popular choice, but you have the authority to do that through regulation as it stands now.

It is time to take a different look at how our pollock fishing fleet can be regulated to harvest the highest amount of pollock with the least amount of salmon bycatch bound for Western Alaska and Yukon River drainage in Alaska and Canada drainages.

It can happen, and sooner than we all think.

I would like to thank you for allowing me this time to make my plea on behalf of all the users of salmon in all the Western Alaska and Yukon River drainages both in Alaska and in Canada.

I would like to relay a message from a mem-

ber of the Selkirk First Nation People in Canada who said "the importance of salmon management at the head waters of the Yukon River is what maintains their (salmon, especially king) returning on a yearly basis and the impacts of intercepting them in the Bering Sea pollock fishery can kill off a whole spawning area with an A or B season incidental bycatch."

Working together we – fishers, managers, regulators and predators – must figure out how best to stop the incidental bycatch of salmon bound for Western Alaska and other drainages.

To learn more about salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, contact Becca Robbins Gisclair with YRDFA. €

What You Can Do to Reduce Salmon Bycatch

By Becca Robbins Gisclair, Policy Director

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council/National Marine Fisheries Service will be accepting public comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Chinook salmon bycatch reduction measures from December 5, 2008-February 3, 2009. You can download the EIS or request a hard copy at http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/. You can also request a copy by calling the National Marine Fisheries Service at (907)586-7228. The Council will be taking final action on the measures at their April 2009 meeting which will take place at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage from March 31 to April 7, 2009. You can give public testimony in person at the meeting, attend a regional meeting prior to April or send written comments to the address below. Letters must be received by March 25, 2009. The agenda for the April meeting will be available on the Council website in early March. The Council website is http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc.

Written comment should be sent to: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252, or Fax: (907) 271-2817.

YRDFA's work on Bycatch is funded under award number NA07NMF4720091 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies.



Becca Robbins Gisclair provides public comment to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Panel at their April 2008 meeting in Anchorage.