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Advisory Announcement

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2022 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #18

Summer Update #8, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The Chinook salmon run is more than 90% complete in the lower Yukon. Current projections are showing that the drainagewide and Canadian-origin Chinook salmon runs are well below the lower end of the forecast ranges and likely to be the smallest ever observed. The drainage-wide and Canadian origin run sizes are so small that escapement goals may not be met in any tributaries. Counts of Chinook salmon at each individual assessment project are all well below average.

The cumulative end of season Pilot Station sonar count for summer chum salmon is the second lowest on record and is less than 500,000 fish. Summer chum salmon may be continuing to pass Pilot Station sonar into the start of the fall season, however further counts will not be enough to meet the drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 to 1.2 million salmon. Summer chum salmon escapements past the Anvik assessment project are very low and will not meet the escapement goal.

The fall chum season started in the Lower Yukon Area beginning on July 16. Lower Yukon assessment projects are transitioning to fall season counts.

Due to these very poor run sizes, salmon fishing remains closed throughout the drainage. Fishing for nonsalmon, pink and sockeye salmon remains open, with gillnets restricted to 4-inch or smaller mesh and 60 feet or shorter length. We thank and appreciate the people along the river for your continued conservation and stewardship in these difficult times.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) are held Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. This year the calls focus on relaying assessment and management updates and local concerns. There is important fisheries research being done and the YRDFA teleconference is a great way to discuss all aspects of Yukon River fisheries and to connect with other communities, research projects, and managers all the way up the Yukon River. To participate, call 800-315-6338 and enter code: YUKON# (98566#).

Summer Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)/ ADF&G and YDFDA

LYTF operations for summer season concluded July 15.

The cumulative Chinook salmon set gillnet CPUE was 6.21 The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site was 109.62, which is well below the historical average of 367.76. The Middle

Mouth cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet was 13.90 and the combined Chinook salmon drift CPUE was 47.06.

The combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites was 788.86, which was well below the historical median of 6,708.00.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

Beginning July 19, chum salmon passing Pilot Station sonar are considered fall chum salmon at the sonar (though it will continue to be a mixture of summer and fall chum).

Water levels are continuing to drop with moderate debris. Sonar and test fishing operations have been proceeding as planned. As of July 18, cumulative Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 43,261 ± 6,876 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is well below the historical cumulative average of 176,486 based on normal run timing years, and 149,732 fish based on late run timing years. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 437,032 ± 24,285 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is well below the historical cumulative median of 1,626,239 fish based on late run timing years.

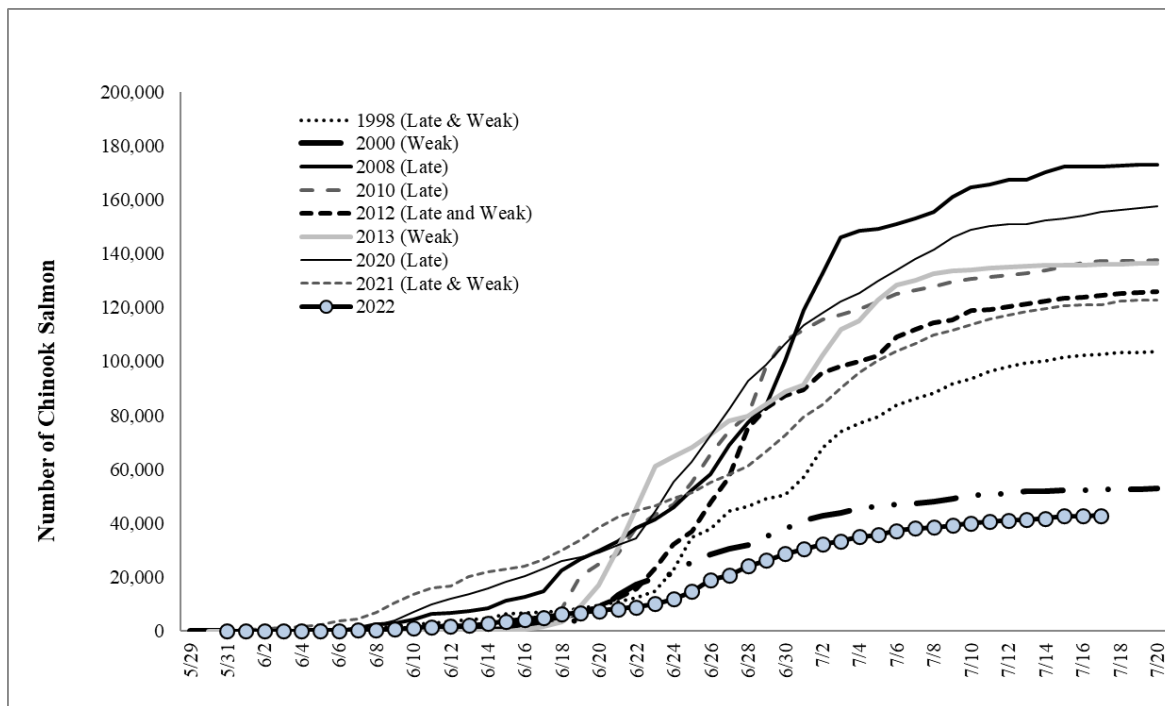


Figure 1. 2022 Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

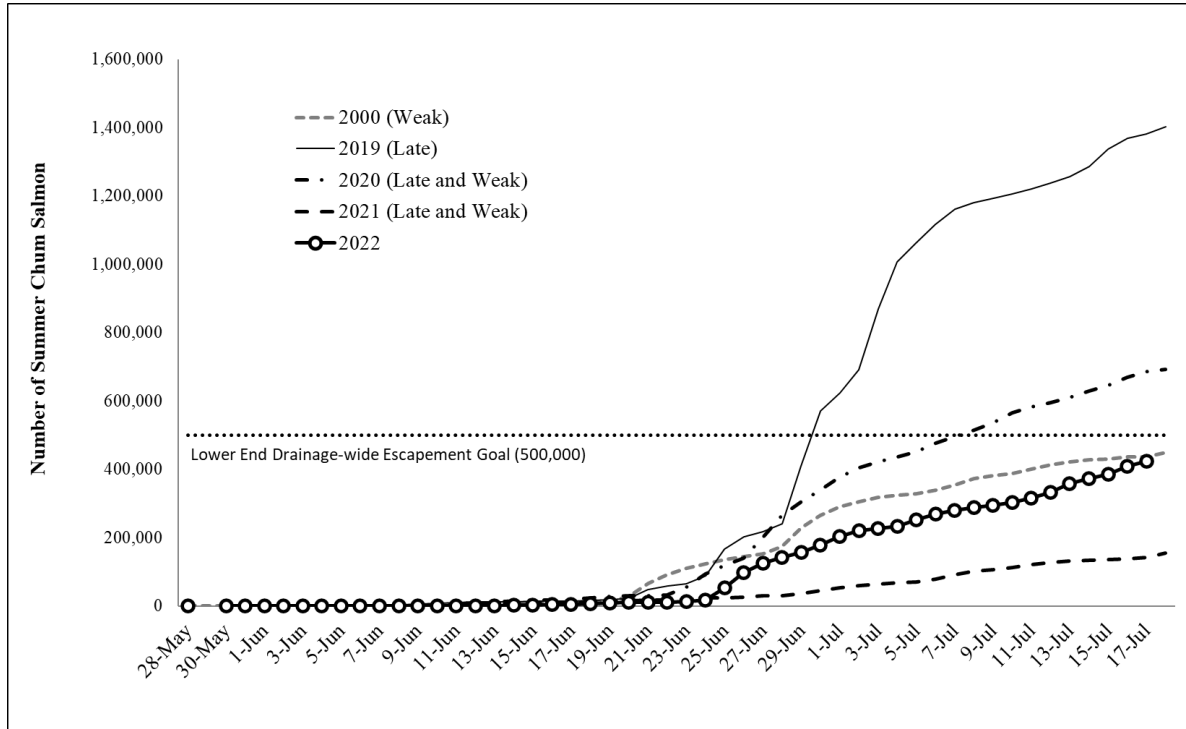


Figure 2. 2022 Cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to recent late and weak years. The horizontal dotted line represents the lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal for summer chum salmon.

Anvik River Sonar Project/ ADF&G

As of July 18, cumulative passage is 35,801 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 381,545 fish for this date.

Gisasa Weir/ USFWS

As of July 18, cumulative passage is 288 Chinook salmon which is below the average cumulative passage of 1,462 fish for this date. Summer chum salmon cumulative counts are 1,983 fish, which is below the median cumulative passage of 33,797 summer chum salmon for this date.

Chena River Tower (ADF&G)

Counts began on July 2. As of July 18, cumulative passage is 145 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 3,324 fish for this date; and 112 summer chum salmon, which is below the median cumulative passage of 468 fish for this date. Counts are visual due to issues with the sonar unit.

Salcha Tower (ADF&G)

Counts began on July 2 but high water has prevented the ability to count since July 10. Cumulative passage is currently 12 Chinook salmon, which is below the average of 3,704 fish for this date; and zero summer chum salmon have been counted to date. Counts are visual due to issues with the sonar unit.

Eagle Sonar/ ADF&G

As of July 18, cumulative passage is 1,918 Chinook salmon, which is below the average cumulative passage of 14,752 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish. The goal is assessed post-season using the Eagle sonar count minus the estimated U.S. and Canadian harvest of Chinook salmon above the sonar.

Henshaw Weir (TCC) was not operated this year due to necessary repairs. East Fork Andreafsky weir (USFWS) was not operated due to forest fires early in the season and high water that delayed installation.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon (Stratum 1, sampled from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery June 7 to June 27) indicated that $64\% \pm 6\%$ (90% Credible Interval) of this group of fish were of Canadian-origin. Samples from June 28 to July 5 (Stratum 2) indicated that $34\% \pm 7\%$ (90% Credible Interval) were of Canadian-origin. Currently the projections for the Canadian-origin run indicate a run size well below the lower end of the preseason outlook of 41,000 to 62,000 fish.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 289 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 6 was 11% age-4, 36% age-5, 47% age-6 and 7% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 and age-7 fish and the percentage of females (54%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than the recent 10-year average and the average length of 721 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 737 mm.

The age composition of 93 Chinook salmon sampled from the set and drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 4 was 5% age-4, 26% age-5, 62% age-6 and 5% age-7 fish. The percentage of age-6 and age-7 fish and the percentage of females (56%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than average, with the exception of age-4 fish. The average length of 764 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 792 mm.

The age composition of 273 summer chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through July 4 was 51% age-4, 48% age-5, and less than 1% age-6 fish. This compares to an average of 51% age-4 and 46% age-5 summer chum salmon. The age-4 fish average length of 536 mm and the age-5 average length of 550 mm are both record small when compared to average (1981–2021). The percentage of female summer chum salmon are also low at 48% compared to a historical average (1983–2021) of 57%.

Fall Assessment Projects

All projects that handle fish (fall season LYTF; Mt. Village Drift Test Fishery; Pilot Station and Eagle sonars) are making efforts to reduce salmon mortality and distribute test fish catches to community members. Any salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to community members by Tribal councils or on a first come first-served basis from a public dock.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing / ADF&G, YDFDA

Fall season operations began on July 16 using 6-inch mesh gear to target fall chum and coho salmon. As of July 17, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 6.78 which is below the average of 58.34 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

Fall season operations began on July 18. Due to the continued high water, test fishing is only occurring on the right bank at this time.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station will transition to fall season counts on July 19.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar (USFWS)

This sonar project typically begins August 8 to count fall chum salmon.

Sheenjek River Sonar (ADF&G)

This sonar project typically begins counting fall chum salmon the second week of August. The project on the Sheenjek River is being reinstated and has historical escapement counts from 1974 through 2012.

Fall Season Management Strategy

The 2022 fall chum salmon run size is anticipated to be very poor, similar to this season's summer chum salmon run. The fall chum salmon preseason projection, based on the historical relationship between summer chum salmon and fall chum salmon run sizes, is less than the lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 300,000–600,000 fish. According to the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, the preseason projection does not meet the threshold of 300,000 fish needed to allow subsistence, personal use, sport, or commercial fishing. With this low run size, it is unlikely escapement goals and treaty objectives will be met. Therefore, subsistence fishing for salmon will remain closed at the start of the fall season. Selective gear will remain open to target pink, sockeye, coho, and nonsalmon while requiring the release of chum and Chinook salmon. The Coastal District and Districts 1 and 2 have transitioned to fall season management. The remaining districts will transition to fall season management once the fall chum salmon reach those areas. The department began monitoring the fall chum salmon run on July 16 in the Lower Yukon (see fall season assessment project section).

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Subsistence salmon fishing has been closed to protect Chinook, summer chum, and fall chum salmon as they migrate upriver. The opportunity to harvest nonsalmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets is available during salmon closures; however, 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Fishermen should fish this nonsalmon gear in areas where resident species are more likely to be encountered.

Due to the low run sizes, we are encouraging fishermen to target nonsalmon and to release Chinook and chum salmon alive from nonsalmon gear types to protect future salmon runs. Pink and sockeye salmon may be retained. As districts transition to fall season management, coho salmon may be retained and manned fish wheels may be used while releasing chum and Chinook salmon alive. Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole, up to and including the Nulato River, while all Yukon River districts may use hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, and spear. The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has concurrently issued an Emergency Special Action 2-FC-01-22 to close Federal public waters to the harvest of fall chum in the Coastal District, District 1, 2, and 3 (for the same effective dates as this announcement). Fishermen must be Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest coho salmon in Federal public waters. To read the Federal Emergency Special Action, go to this link:

<https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/fsa-02-fc-01-22-coast-y1-2-3-fall-chum-close.pdf>

Coastal District, District 1, and District 2 (including Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall):

The transition to fall season management is complete, and fishing for chum and Chinook salmon is closed. Gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. **Manned fish wheels**, dip nets, and hook and line gear may be used for pink, sockeye, and coho salmon and nonsalmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately. **While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox.**

District 3 and the Innoko River (including Russian Mission, Holy Cross, and Shageluk):

The transition to fall season management begins at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, July 21. Chum and Chinook salmon subsistence fishing will remain closed. Gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of

4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Hook and line gear may be used for pink, sockeye, and coho salmon and nonsalmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately. **Once fall season management begins, manned fish wheels may also be used for pink, sockeye, and coho salmon. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox.**

District 4 (including the communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon, pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive. Hook and line gear may be used up to and including the Nulato River.

Koyukuk River (including Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles including the community of Wiseman. By regulation, gillnet gear in the permit area is closed for all species from July 1 to August 19. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (including Galena and Ruby):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon, pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

District 5 (from Illinois Creek to the U.S./Canada border and all other adjacent tributaries, including the communities of Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, and Fort Yukon):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon, pink and sockeye salmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

A subsistence permit is also required to fish for all species in portions of District 5; in Subdistrict 5-C from the westernmost tip of Garnet Island upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area); in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of Dall River; and in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Upper from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border. In Birch Creek, and the subsistence area of Beaver Creek below Moose Creek, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 3 inches.

Subdistricts 6-A and Kantishna (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Kantishna River, including the Kantishna River drainage, Lake Minchumina, and Manley):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive. Subsistence fishing

for nonsalmon within Lake Minchumina is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Subdistricts 6-B and Old Minto Area (from eastern edge of the Kantishna River upstream to the Wood River, including Minto and Nenana):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats. Note, a subsistence pike permit is required, see details below.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including Delta Junction area, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Northway, and Nabesna):

Salmon fishing is closed. Fish wheels and gillnets larger than 4-inch mesh are not allowed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Dip nets may be used for nonsalmon; however, Chinook and summer chum salmon must be released alive.

A reminder to fishermen that a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing in the Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and Kantishna River drainage). A subsistence salmon permit is not required in Lake Minchumina. A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats and for all fish species in the Upper Tanana Area.

Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office 907-459-7274 or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Personal Use Management Actions

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (Personal use fishery from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal Use salmon fishing is closed, and periods are cancelled until further notice.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing

Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (a portion of the Tanana River drainage from the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank, which includes Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction):

Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels follows the Subdistrict 6-C Personal Use salmon fishing schedule and is closed until further notice.

Fishing for whitefish and suckers in this area with other gear types remains open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, subject to permit stipulations.

A reminder to personal use fishermen that a personal use whitefish and sucker permit and current sport fishing license are required to fish for these species in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Federal Special Action

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this weekly update announcement. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS.

The Emmonak USFWS office is not open. To reach the USFWS Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager call Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.

Federal Special Actions will be posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements will be posted on www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov/ and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG.

