



Advisory Announcement

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2022 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #11

Fall Update #6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The Emmonak ADF&G Office closed for the season on Saturday, August 27. Please contact the Fairbanks ADF&G Office at (907) 459-7274 for the remainder of the year.

The 2022 fall chum salmon run size is critically low. Genetic mixed stock analysis applied to the passage estimates at the Yukon River mainstem sonar near Pilot Station indicate 206,000 fall chum salmon are in the river as of August 28 (Figure 1). The fall chum salmon run is nearing conclusion. The projection based on inseason assessment projects indicates a run size below 300,000 fish. The projection does not meet the threshold of 300,000 fish needed to allow subsistence fishing according to the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan. In addition, the projection is unlikely to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, tributary escapement goals, and Canadian treaty objectives. Therefore, subsistence, personal use, and commercial fishing for fall chum salmon remains closed.

Coho salmon arrived slightly later than average in all the Lower Yukon River assessment projects. At the mainstem Yukon River sonar project near Pilot Station, 61,000 coho salmon were counted as of August 28, compared to a historical cumulative of 111,000 for this date (Figure 2). The coho salmon run is approaching the three-quarter point. This year's coho salmon run size is projected to be near 100,000 fish, which is well below the historical average of 233,000 fish.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association are conducting a cooperative radio tagging project on coho salmon operated out of the community of Russian Mission. Please report any tagged coho salmon observed or harvested within the Yukon River drainage to help us all gain knowledge on their migration. Contact andrew.padilla@alaska.gov or call (907) 459-7274.

The last inseason salmon management teleconference hosted by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) will be at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 30. The call focuses 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#).

Fall Assessment Projects

All projects that handle fish (fall season Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Mt. Village Test Fishery, Pilot Station, and Eagle sonar) are making efforts to reduce salmon mortality and distribute test fish catches to community members.

Healthy salmon are released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities are distributed to community members by Tribal councils or on a first-come first-served basis from a public dock.

Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed in this section can be accessed online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

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 August 28, the fall chum salmon cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) was 526.99, which is below the average of 1,427.96 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 37.44, which is well below the median of 329.56.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

Fall season operations began on July 18. As of August 28, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 524.86, which is below the average of 1,786.09 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 187.27, which is well below the median of 758.75. The three-quarter point of the coho salmon run is typically around August 30 at this project.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season counts on July 19. As of August 28, the cumulative passage was approximately 293,000 chum salmon. This compares to a median cumulative passage of 661,000 chum salmon for this date. Chum salmon genetic stock proportions were applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 206,000 fall chum salmon that have come into the river since July 19 (Figure 1). As of August 28, the cumulative passage of coho salmon is approximately 61,000 fish, which is below the median of 111,000 fish through this date (Figure 2).

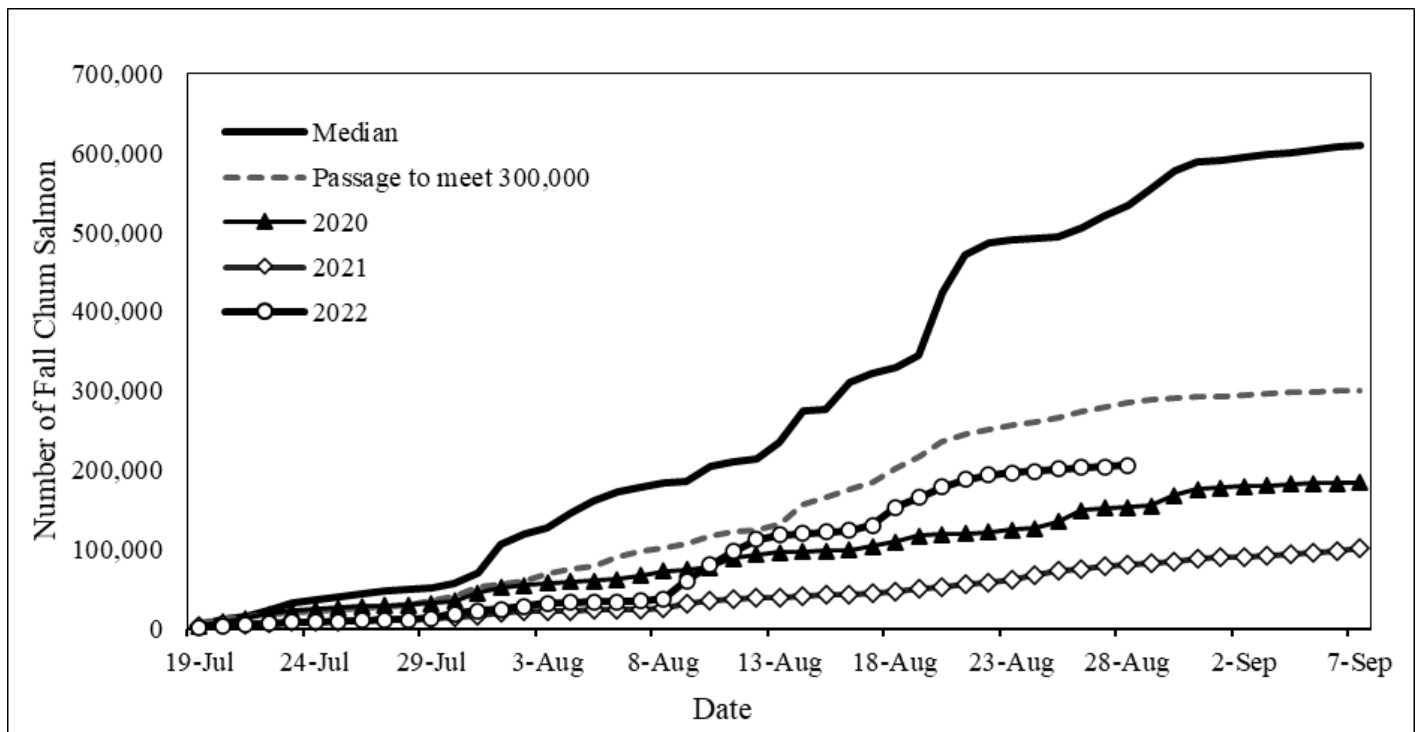


Figure 1. Cumulative passage of fall chum salmon at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2022 compared to historical median, 2020, and 2021. The dashed line is the passage required to meet the minimum management requirement of 300,000 fish to allow subsistence fishing.

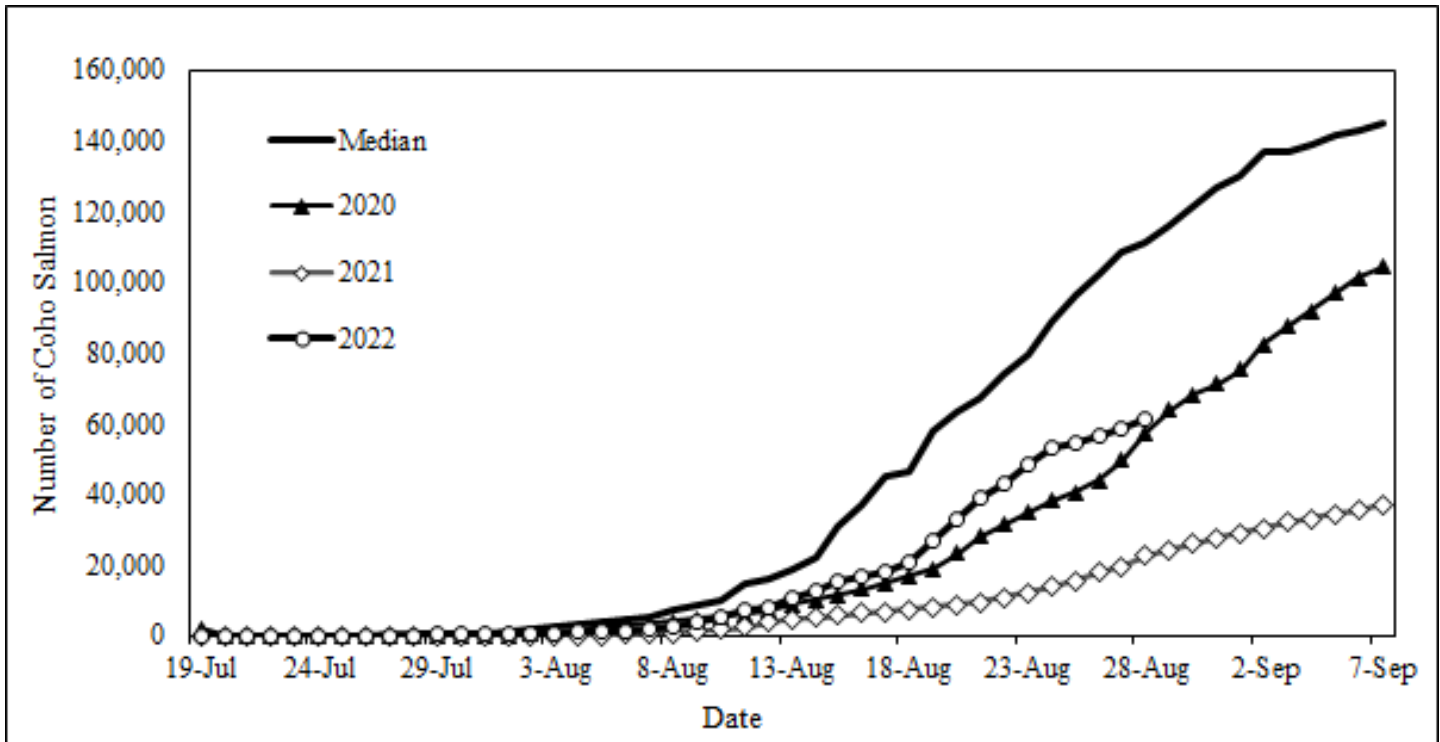


Figure 2. Cumulative passage of coho salmon at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2022 compared to historical median, 2020, and 2021.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began counting fish on August 8. As of August 28, the estimated cumulative passage of fall chum salmon was 7,287 fish, which was below the median passage of 27,600 for this date.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar project began operations on August 8. As of August 28, the estimated cumulative passage was 1,112 fall chum salmon, which was below the median passage of 7,000 for this date.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

This project transitioned to counting fall chum salmon on August 22. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon as of August 28 was 635 fish, which was well below the average passage of 2,900 fish for this date.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project transitioned to counting fall chum salmon on August 7. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon as of August 27 was 813 fish, which was well below the average passage of 3,500 fish for this date.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project will count fall chum salmon sometime in late August or early September.

Fall Season Management Strategy

The 2022 fall chum salmon projection remains critically low and below the 300,000 threshold in the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan to allow any subsistence fishing at this time. Subsistence fishermen should plan for continued fishing closures to conserve fall chum salmon. Every subdistrict has transitioned to fall season management. Subsistence salmon fishing is closed, except for the use of selective gear to target nonsalmon and

salmon other than chum and Chinook salmon. The coho salmon run continues to arrive in the Lower Yukon Area. Nonsalmon subsistence fishing gears remain open.

Summer Assessment Projects

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

Operations switched to fall season starting August 22. Cumulative passage was 12,025 Chinook salmon, which is below the average cumulative passage of 54,026 fish for that date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canada-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 site.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon that passed the mainstem sonar from August 15–23 indicated approximately 12% were summer chum and 88% were fall chum salmon. The fall chum salmon stocks consisted of 18% Border/US (Teedriinjik, Sheenjek, and Draanjik), 8% Canadian, and 62% Tanana Fall stocks. For fall chum salmon this represented 91% U.S.-origin and only 9% Canada-origin stocks. On average more than 95% of the fish are fall chum salmon for the remainder of the run.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 136 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 12, consisted of 66% age-4 and 34% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2021 historical averages of 64% age-4 and 35% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through August 28 was 54% which is below the historical average (1986–2021) of 58%. The average length of 566 mm (n=359) is well below the historical average of 592 mm from 1981–2021. The percentage of female coho salmon through August 28 was 46% which is average (1986–2021) for this date. For coho salmon the average length of 546 mm (n=33) is well below the historical average of 575 mm from 1981–2021.

The age composition of the 108 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Eagle test fishery through August 10 was 6% age-4, 42% age-5, 49% age-6, and 4% age-7 fish. The percentages of age-6 and age-7 fish were above average. The average length of 760 mm is below the recent 10-year historical average of 776 mm.

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. All Yukon River districts may also use hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seines, and spear.

The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has concurrently issued Emergency Special Actions 2-FC-01-22, 2-FC-02-22, 2-FC-03-22, 2-FC-04-22, and 2-FC-05-22 to close Federal public waters to the harvest of fall chum in the Coastal District and districts 1–6. Fishermen must be Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest coho salmon in Federal public waters. The Federal Emergency Special Actions can be found online at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions>.

Coastal District, District 1, District 2, District 3, and the Innoko River (including Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, and Shageluk):

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 nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox.

District 4 and Koyukuk River (including Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Ruby, Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

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 nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox. Hook and line gear may be used up to and including the Nulato River.

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 may not have mesh in excess of 3-½ inches. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

District 5 (including Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

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 and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox. In Birch Creek and the subsistence area of Beaver Creek below Moose Creek, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 3 inches.

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. If you are outside the permit area, contact the Fairbanks office at 907-459-7274 for a subsistence harvest calendar.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (including the Kantishna River drainage, Lake Minchumina, Manley, Old Minto area, Minto, and Nenana) **and the Upper Tanana Area** (including the Delta Junction area, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Northway, and Nabesna):

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 and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon; however, chum and Chinook salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum and Chinook salmon may not enter a livebox.

Legal gear types to take nonsalmon include 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets 60 feet or shorter in length, handline, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seine, and spear. Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon within Lake Minchumina

and the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats, is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

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

Salmon Fishing

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

Personal Use salmon fishing remains closed.

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 remains closed. 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. As a reminder, only whitefish and suckers may be retained in this fishery.

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 or Delta Junction offices 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 advisory announcement. Fishermen must be Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest coho salmon in Federal public waters. 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.

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.

ADF&G subsistence fishing permits are available at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store

