



Advisory Announcement

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2022 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #18

Fall Update #11, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The Yukon River fall chum salmon run is projecting to be the third lowest on record (1974–2021), while the coho salmon run is projecting to be the second lowest (1995–2021). The fall chum salmon run is projected to be 240,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 1 million fish. The coho salmon run is projected to be near 100,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 234,000 fish. According to the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, the inseason projections do not meet the threshold of 300,000 fish needed to allow subsistence, personal use, or commercial fishing. The fall chum salmon run is unlikely to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000–600,000 fish, tributary escapement goals, and Canadian treaty objectives. Fall chum and coho salmon runs are nearly finished entering the Yukon River in large numbers and therefore fishing restrictions will be lifted in the mainstem river. However, as fall chum salmon move into their spawning tributaries, closures will remain in effect in those areas and these closures will last through December, similar to 2021. Fall chum and coho salmon assessment projects are close to completion in the upper Yukon River drainage. Spawning surveys to enumerate fall chum and coho salmon will occur in the Tanana River drainage in October through early December.

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. 349 Coho salmon were tagged out of the community of Russian Mission and aerial surveys are tracking the coho salmon as they migrate throughout the Yukon River drainage. Please report any tagged coho salmon observed or harvested within the Yukon River drainage to help us gain knowledge on their migration. To report a tagged coho salmon, contact andrew.padilla@alaska.gov or call (907) 459-7274.

Fall Assessment Projects

All projects that handled fish (fall season Lower Yukon Test Fishery; Mt. Village Test Fishery; Pilot Station and Eagle sonars) made efforts to reduce salmon mortality and distribute test fish catches to community members. Healthy salmon were released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities were 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

This project concluded operations on September 10, 2022. The cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) was 574.30 for chum salmon, which is below the average of 1,519.19 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 43.43, which is well below the average of 395.49 as of September 10.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

This project concluded operations on September 12, 2022. The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 610.00, which is below the median of 2,035.33 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 259.00, which is well below the median of 1,084.03 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The project concluded operations on September 7, 2022. The preliminary cumulative passage chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through September 7 was 325,202 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 707,000 fish for this date. Chum salmon genetic stock proportions were applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 237,000 fall chum salmon that came into the river after July 19. As of September 7, the cumulative passage of coho salmon is approximately 92,101 fish, which is below the median of 145,000 fish through this date.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began counting fish on August 8. As of September 25, the estimated cumulative passage of fall chum salmon was 64,700 fish, which was well below the median passage of 185,000 for this date. Historically the fall chum salmon run is 90% complete by this date at this project. The sustainable escapement goal for this system is 85,000 to 234,000 fall chum salmon and will not be achieved.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon is 16,230 fish (including a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on September 25 through October 9), this estimate is well below the median passage of 92,000 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 October 3 was 20,263, which was well below the median passage of 136,000 fish for this date. The interim management escapement goal for the Yukon River Canadian mainstem stocks, as estimated by the sonar passage minus upstream harvest, is 70,000 to 104,000 fall chum salmon and will not be achieved.

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 September 27 was 3,346 fish, which was well below the average passage of 26,000 fish for this date. The project data thus far represents 86% completion of the run based on historic timing.

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

This project began operations on September 7. As of October 3, the estimated cumulative passage was 1,999 fall chum salmon, which was well below the median passage of 21,300 for this date. The interim management escapement goal for this system is 22,000 to 49,000 fall chum salmon and will not be achieved based on the poor run size observed in 2022.

Tanana River Escapement Assessment (ADF&G)

Escapement foot surveys (primarily counting fall chum salmon) begin the first week of October in the Delta River and typically occur weekly through the end of November. The Delta River is an index of escapement in the Tanana River and has a sustainable escapement goal of 7,000 to 20,000 fall chum salmon. In 2020, the Delta River was the only fall chum salmon escapement goal achieved in the drainage. Aerial surveys will also be conducted in various other area in the Tanana River drainage for both fall chum and coho salmon in late October or early November during typical peak spawning times.

Fall Season Management Strategy

The 2022 fall chum salmon projection remains critically low and below the 300,000 fish threshold in the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan. Subsistence salmon fishing is closed for most of the drainage, except for the use of selective gear to target nonsalmon and salmon other than chum and Chinook salmon. Nonsalmon subsistence fishing gears remain open. Similar to 2021, subsistence fishing restrictions are being relaxed in the Lower Yukon Area beginning October 1 and moving upriver once the tail end of the fall chum salmon run has passed a subdistrict. Some tributaries will remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing to protect fall chum salmon spawning areas through December.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon has concluded for the season. The estimates from the entire fall season, from July 19 through September 7, that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar, contained approximately 27% summer chum and 73% fall chum salmon. The fall component entering after July 19, were comprised of 31% Border/US (Teedriinjik/Sheenjek/Draanjik), 10% Canadian, and 59% Tanana Fall stocks.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 362 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 28, consisted of 77% age-4 and 22% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2021 historical averages of 67% age-4 and 30% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through August 28 was 53% 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 48% which is slightly above average (1986–2021) for this date. For coho salmon, the average length of 547 mm (n=41) is well below the historical average of 575 mm from 1981–2021.

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 if salmon closures are still in effect in your fishing location. 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 coho, pink, and sockeye salmon, while releasing Chinook and chum salmon alive from dip nets, hook and line (up to and including the Nulato River), and manned fish wheels. All Yukon River districts may also use hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seines, and spear for nonsalmon.

Coastal District, District 1, and District 2 (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to Point Romanof which includes the Black River and the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, and Marshall):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear. All fish caught may be retained.

District 3 and Innoko River (including 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.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Friday, October 7**, subsistence fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear. All fish caught may be retained.

District 4 (including Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

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.

Effective at the dates and times listed below, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear. All fish caught may be retained.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Sunday, October 9** in Subdistrict 4-A Lower (Anvik and Grayling).

Effective **8:00 a.m. Friday, October 14** in Subdistrict 4-A Upper (Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk).

Effective **8:00 a.m. Sunday, October 16** in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (Galena and Ruby).

Koyukuk River drainage (Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, Bettles, Wiseman, and Coldfoot):

Subsistence salmon fishing remains closed through December. 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 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.

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

Federal special actions in federal public waters of the Yukon River were rescinded effective 12:01 a.m. October 1. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this advisory 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.

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

