

Yukon River Salmon

2015 Winter Meeting Packet

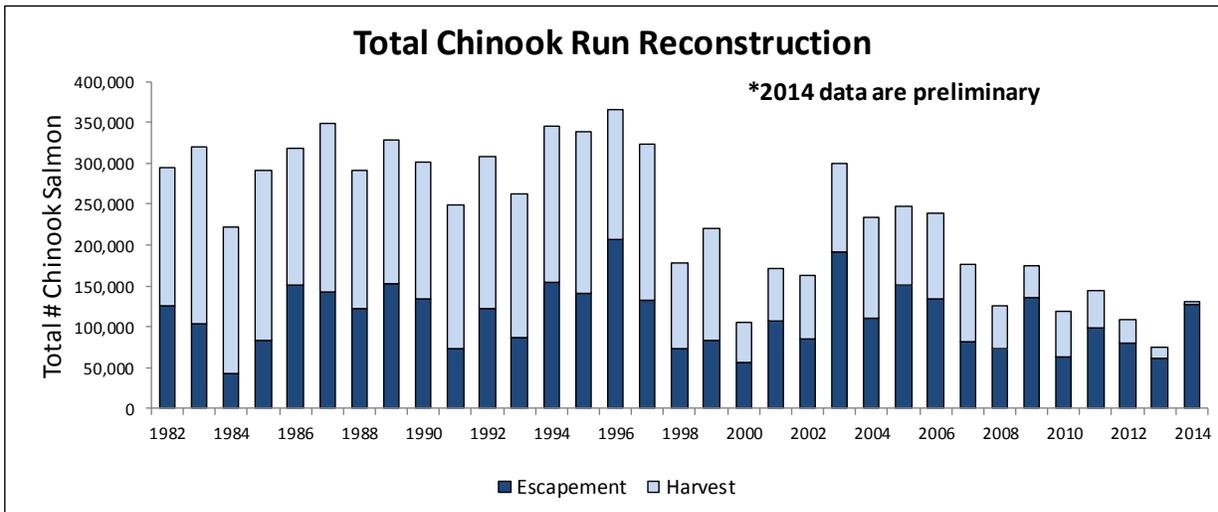
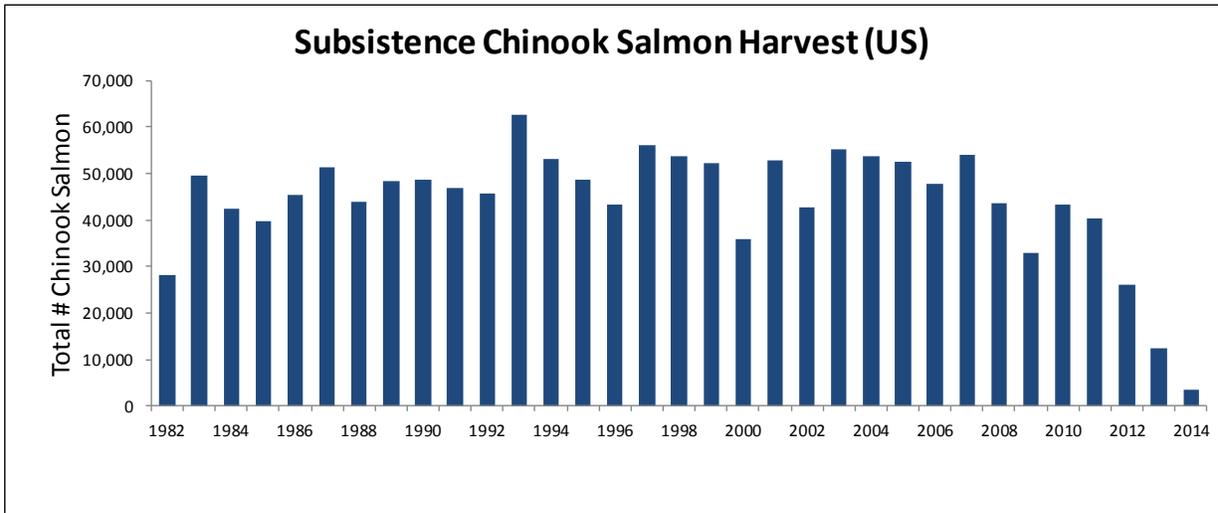
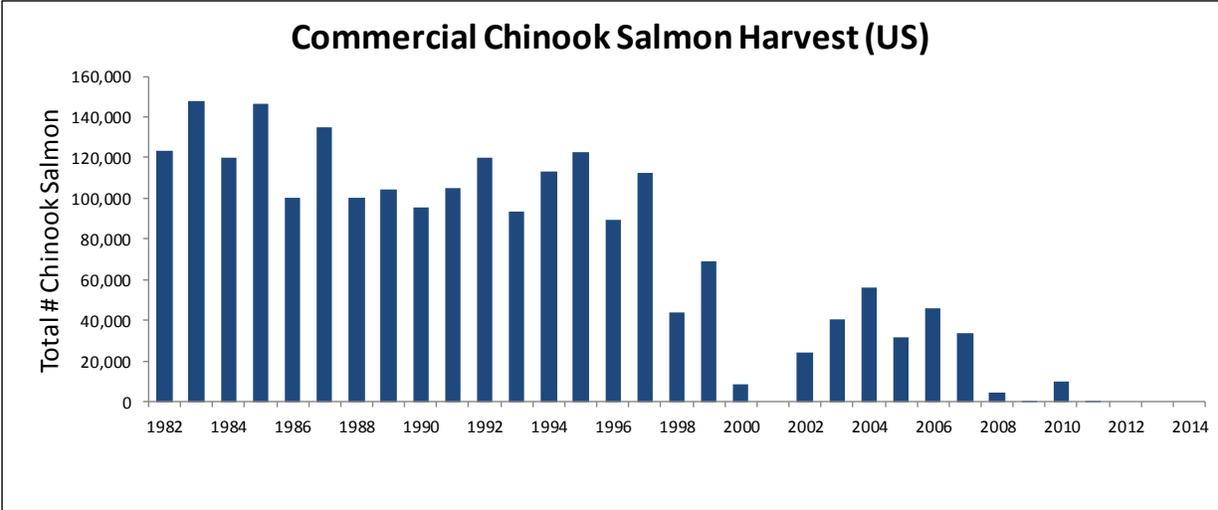


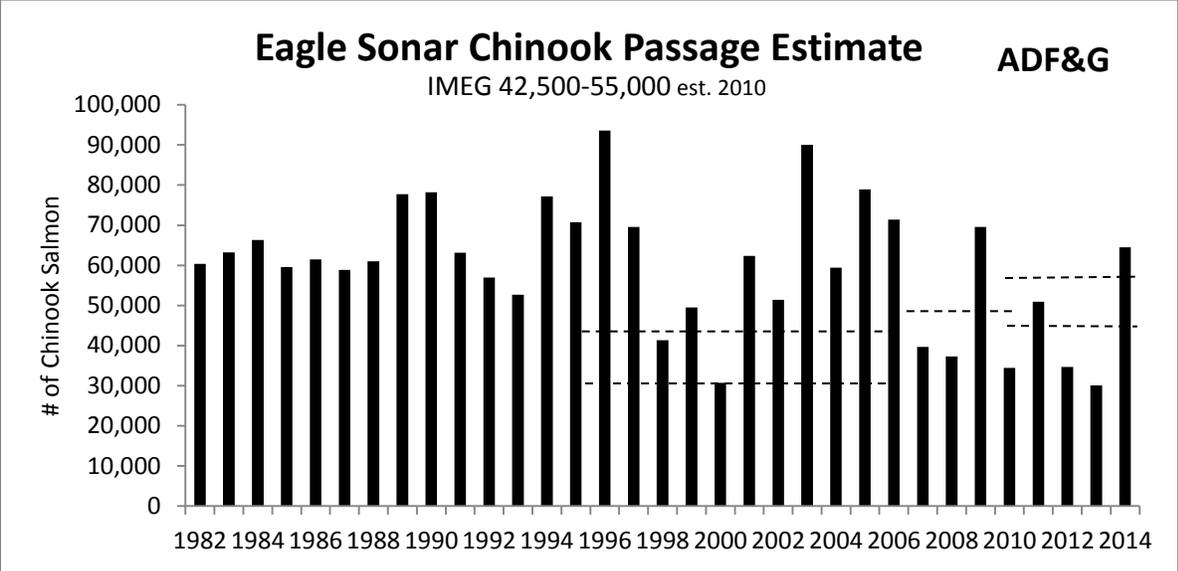
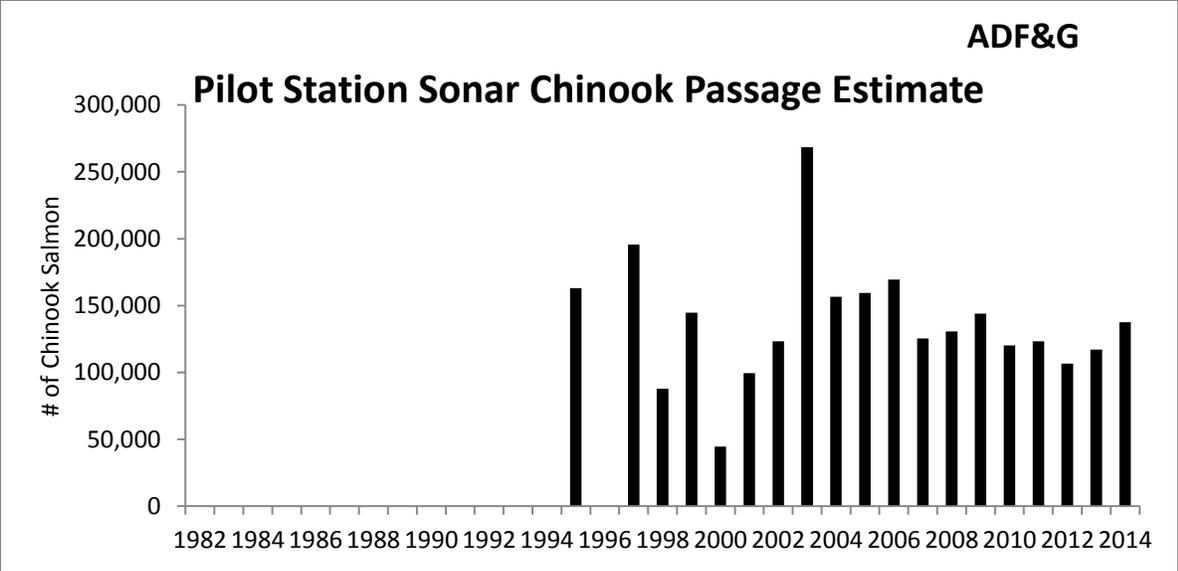
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Stephanie Schmidt, Area Management Biologist
Anchorage Area Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518
Phone: (907) 267-2217
Fax: (907) 267-2442

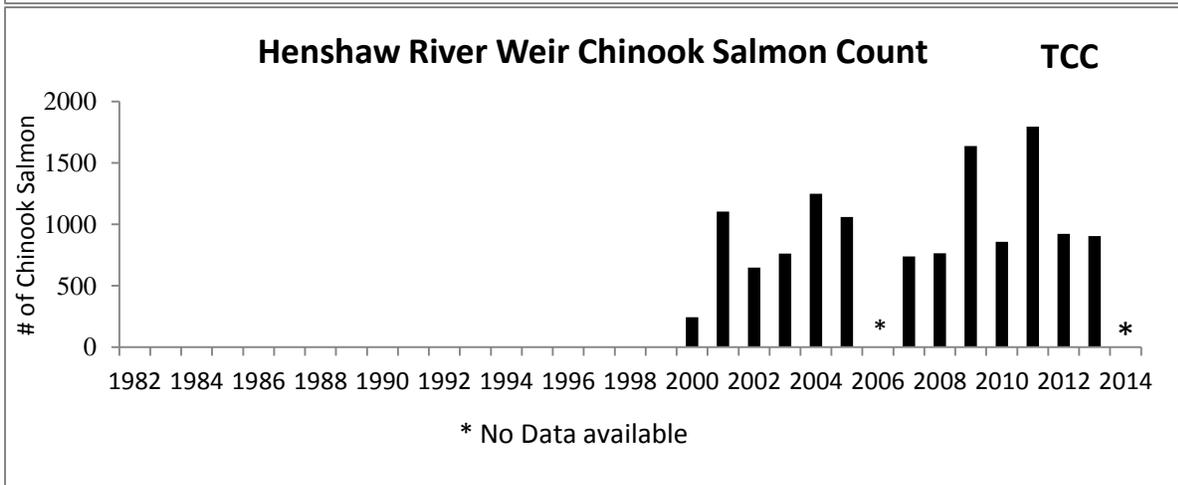
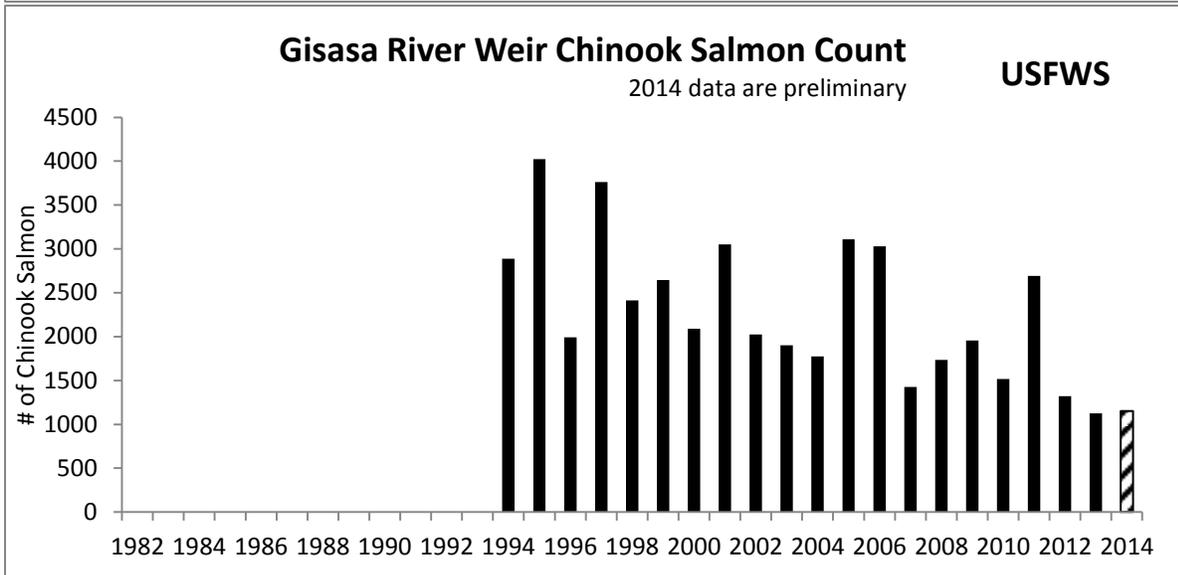
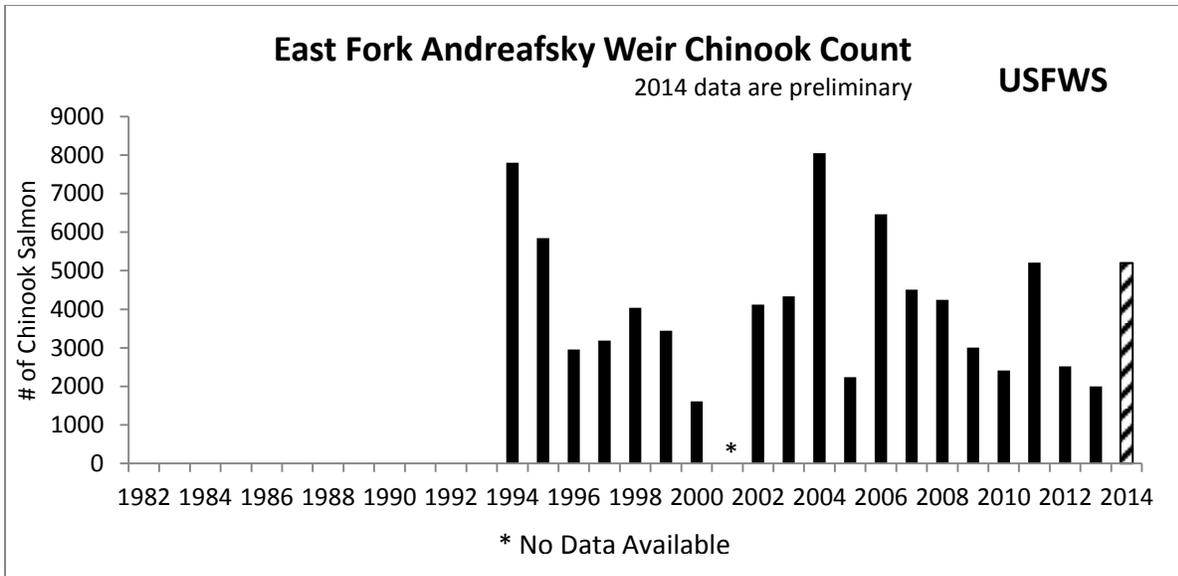
Jeff Estensen, Fall Area Management Biologist
Upper Yukon Area Office
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 459-7274
Fax: (907) 459-7271

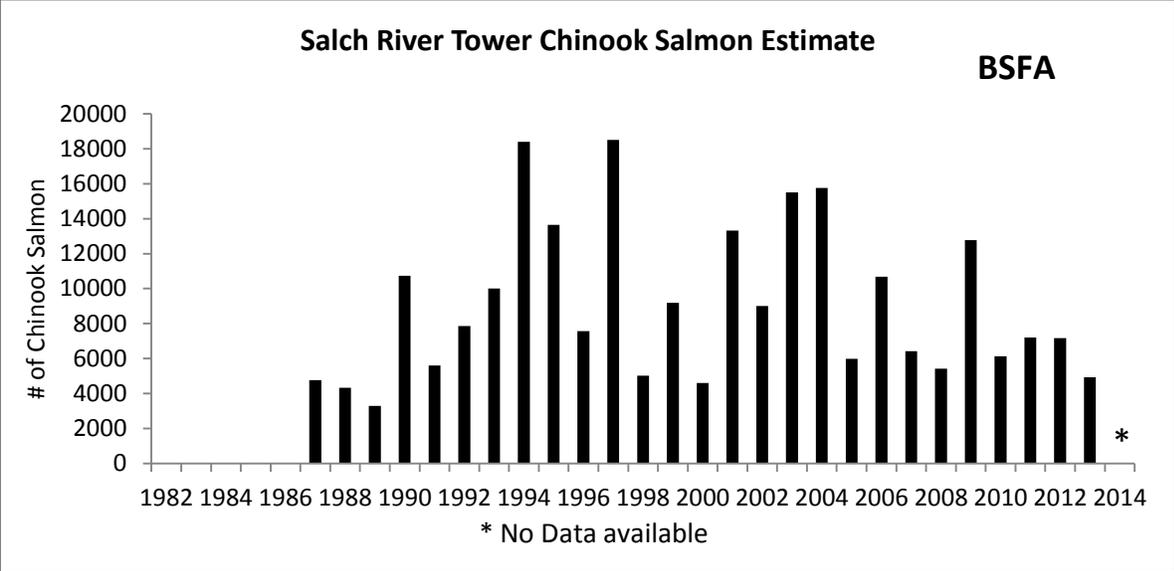
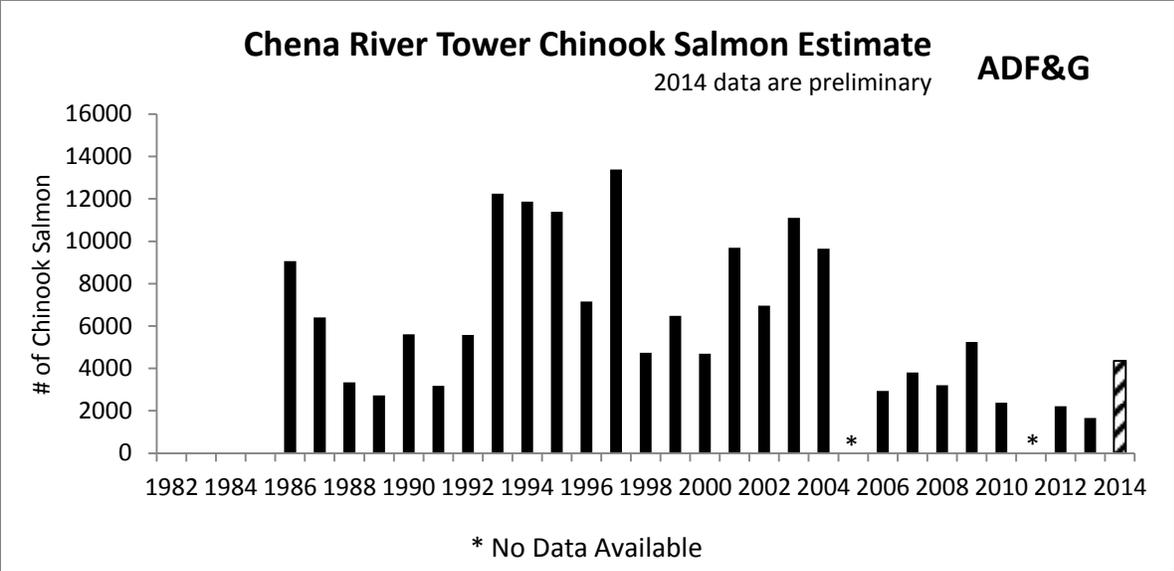


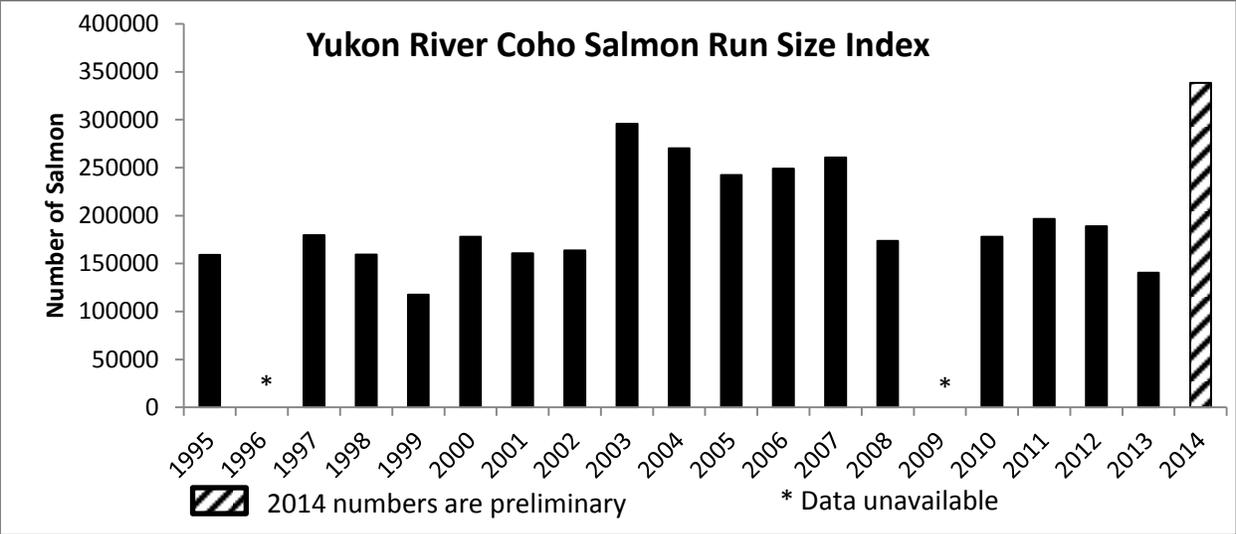
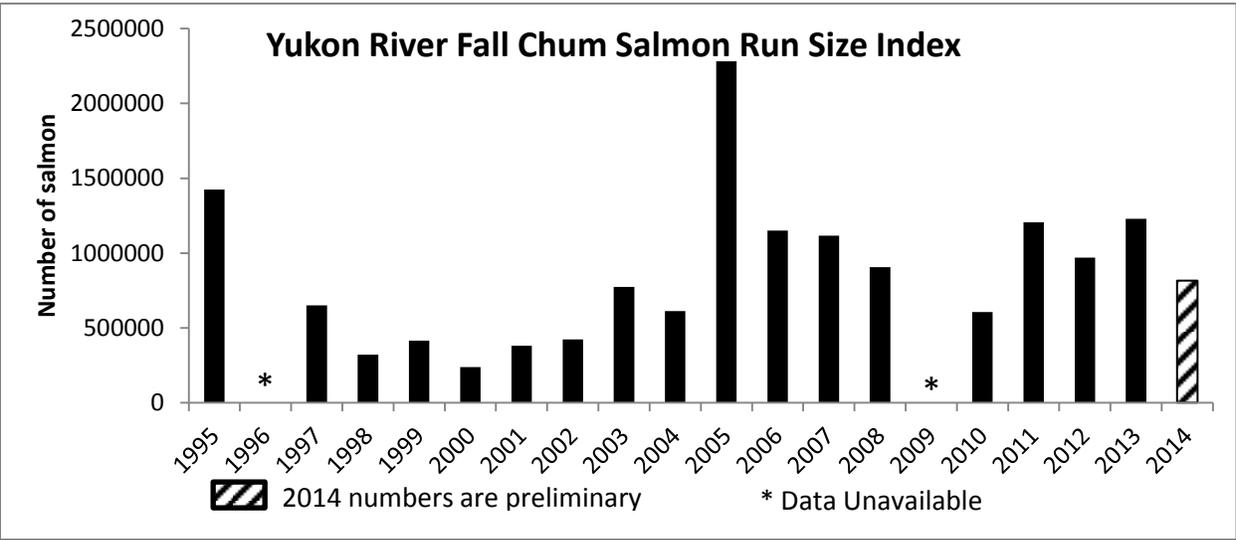
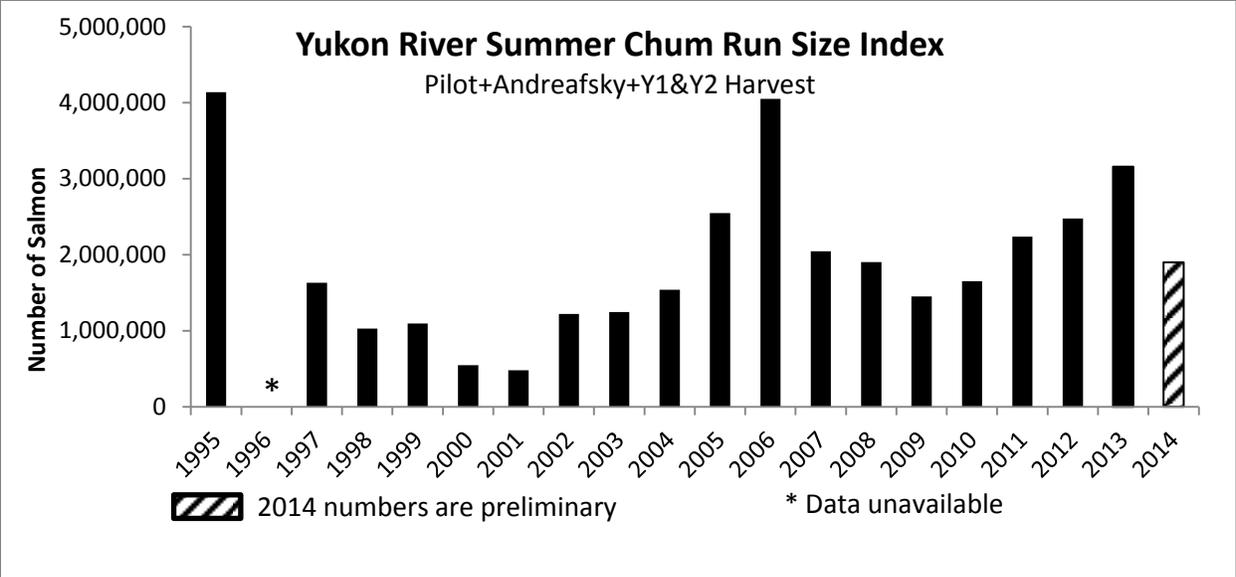
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Fred Bue, Yukon Area Inseason Manager
Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office
101 12th Avenue, Rm 110
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 455-1849
Fax (907) 456-0454

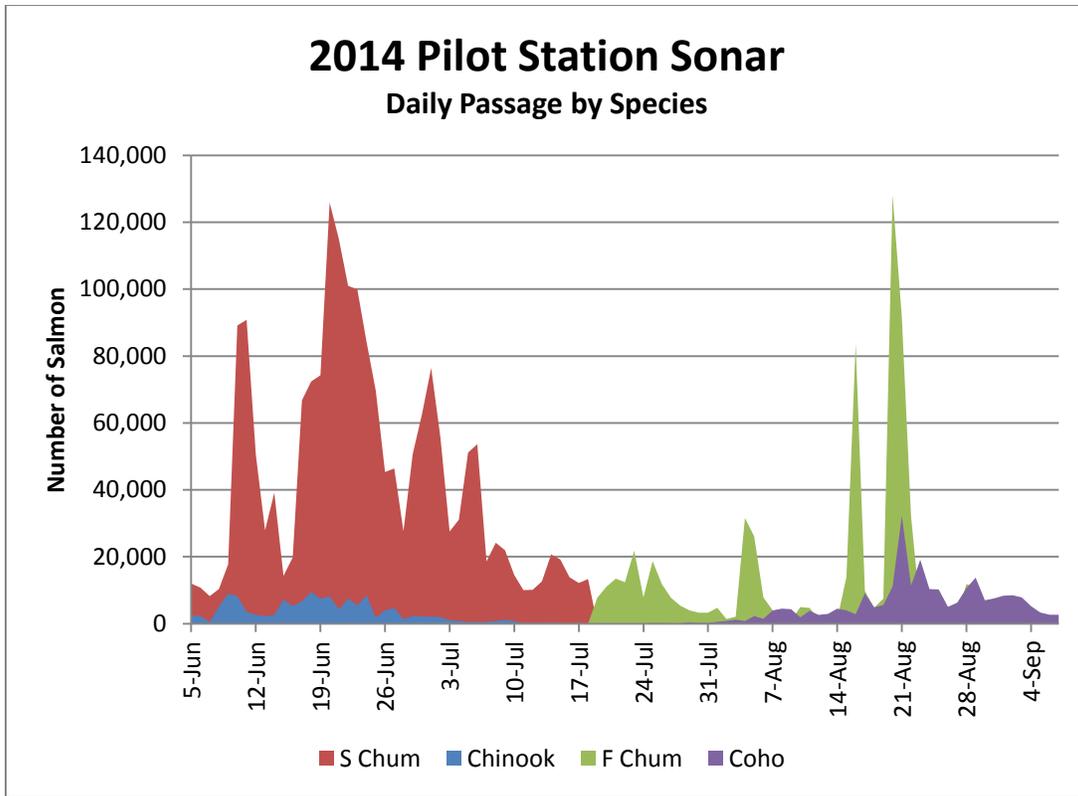




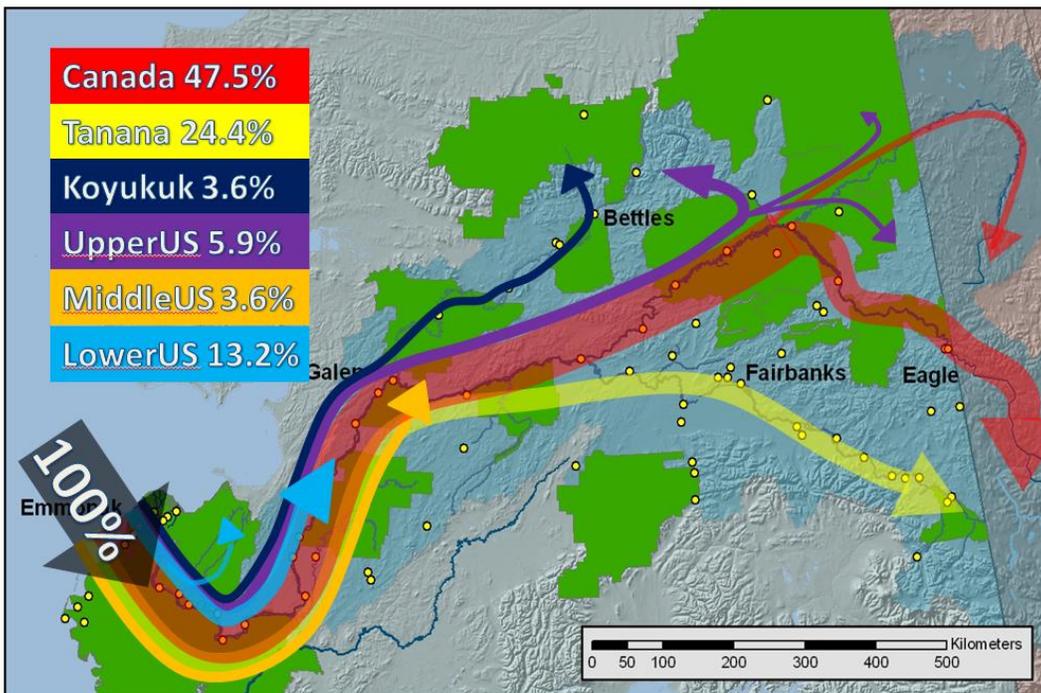


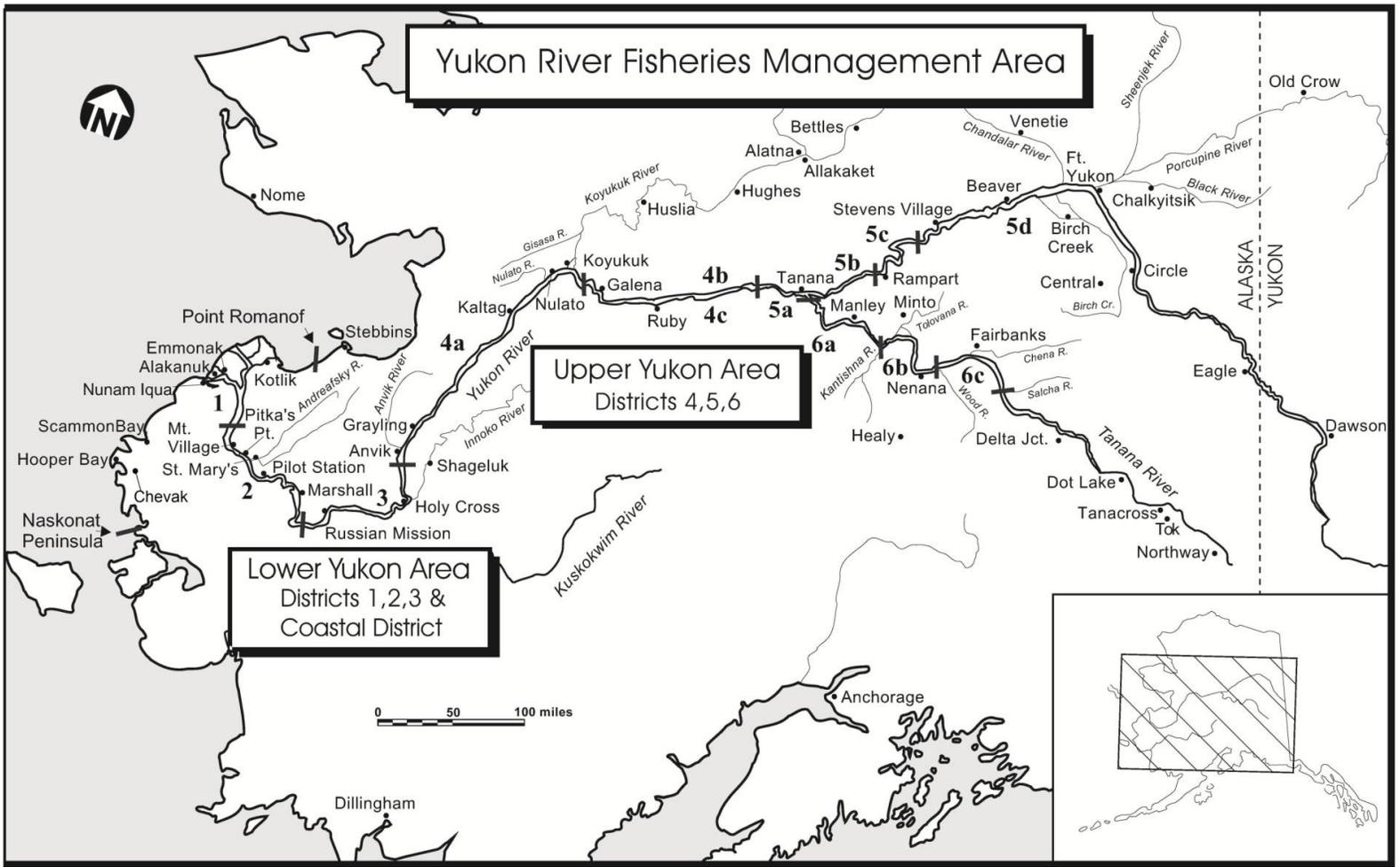






Yukon River Chinook Salmon Percent Stock of Origin based on 2004 Radio Telemetry Study





Yukon Area communities and fishing districts.

2015 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Chinook Salmon Conservation Discussion

2015 Yukon Salmon Outlook

Complete analysis and formal acceptance of the 2015 Chinook Salmon total run size will not be finalized until after the JTC and the Yukon River Panel meet later this spring. However, based on the information compiled so far, the run size may be similar to 2014, around 130,000 Chinook Salmon. A run of this size would be well below average, but could be sufficient to achieve most escapement objectives provided conservative management actions are applied in the subsistence fishery. The Summer Chum Salmon run outlook is for a run also similar to the 2014 run with a large surplus available for subsistence and other uses. The following is a list of possible management options for discussion purposes.

Management Strategy and Options

- No commercial, sport, or personal use fishing for Chinook Salmon is anticipated.
- Initiate the subsistence salmon fishing schedule soon after ice break up occurs at the delta, beginning in District 1 and implemented chronologically with the upriver migration .
- Allow early subsistence fishing opportunity to target non-salmon species, such as sheefish, with 6-inch gillnets before Chinook Salmon enter the river.
- Regulations require closed subsistence fishing on the first pulse of Chinook Salmon. Plan for additional pulse protection based on expectations of a poor season. The Coastal District, Koyukuk, Innoko, and Tanana Rivers should expect some closed salmon fishing periods to protect pulses of Chinook salmon in those areas. Closures would be initiated in the Coastal District and District 1 and similarly implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing.
- When Summer Chum Salmon become abundant, subsistence fishing opportunities with selective gear such as dip nets and fish wheels with the live release of Chinook Salmon will likely be provided. It may be possible to allow use of 6-inch gillnets if areas can be identified where chum salmon are very abundant and few Chinook Salmon are present.
- 4-inch gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length, will be allowed to target non-salmon species during subsistence salmon fishing closures. This opportunity to target non-salmon will be discontinued if this gear is used to harvest Chinook Salmon.
- Relax subsistence restrictions after the Chinook Salmon run has passed or if confidence is high that the run is much better than anticipated.
- Anticipate full subsistence opportunity during the fall season.
- Commercial Summer Chum Salmon fishery will occur when chum become abundant. Selective gear options will be used (including dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheel). All Chinook Salmon must be released alive.
- Commercial Fall Chum Salmon fishery expected to begin at the transition period between summer and fall seasons.

Management Questions

With a run outlook similar to recent years, people should not be expecting to target Chinook Salmon with large mesh nets or fishwheels. The summer fishing season will start out cautiously and follow with subsistence fishing opportunities primarily focused on harvesting other fish species using time, area, and fishing gear restrictions. The incidental harvest of Chinook Salmon will be watched closely. However, the most effective tool in conservation is public support. As part of the management process, we would like your feedback on the following questions.

1. Are there other ideas on ways to reduce Chinook Salmon mortality when targeting Summer Chum Salmon that might be effective for subsistence fishermen?
2. Are there other ideas on ways to reduce mortality of large/female Chinook Salmon when targeting Summer Chum Salmon that might be effective for subsistence fishermen?
3. The Yukon is a large river system with a patch-work of State and Federal jurisdictions due to 7 different Refuges contained within the drainage. What is this RAC's position on Federal managers restricting Chinook Salmon fishing in waters adjacent to Federal management units to only Federally qualified subsistence users this summer in order to reduce fishing pressure from people living outside the Yukon River drainage or in urban areas, thereby providing a priority for those living closer to the resource?
 - This action would only apply to about one half the area along the river which lies within or adjacent to Refuge boundaries.
 - This action would not allow family members living outside the drainage or those living in the Fairbanks North Star Borough to participate in subsistence fishing within the affected sections of river.
 - This action would only apply to fishing opportunity targeting Chinook Salmon. Since Summer Chum Salmon are expected to be abundant, this action would only apply to planned fishing opportunities targeting Summer Chum Salmon when a high incidental harvest of Chinook Salmon might be expected..