

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF September 21-27, 2014.

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The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report posted on the Office of Subsistence website by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

The Yukon River weekly summary will be the last report distributed for the remainder of the 2014 season. The remaining summary authors have signed off for the season. Contact information from other weekly summary authors is available in previously posted updates.

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The Emmonak Field Office is closed for the season.

Fall Season Outlook

The fall chum run is over in the lower Yukon River is nearly over in the Alaskan portion of the upper Yukon. The current in-season assessment estimates the total run size is near 813,000, based upon the reconstructed Pilot Station sonar estimate, and indicates the drainage-wide fall chum escapement will fall within the goal range of 300,000 and 600,000 fish after harvest is removed from the total run. This season's fall chum run is expected to meet all tributary escapement goals, with the exception of the Fishing Branch River in Canada, provide for a normal subsistence harvest, and provide for commercial fishing opportunities. Fall chum take 30 days to travel from the mouth to the Canadian border and longer in the Tanana River so managers will continue monitoring the fall chum run into October and November.

Fall Season Assessment

Assessment projects in the lower Yukon are finished for the 2014 season. Through September 20 the fall chum Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) tracked well above average. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) finished operations on September 9 and ended below average. The Pilot Station sonar finished operations on September 7 and passed an estimated 650,400 fall chum, which is slightly above the average passage of 615,127 fall chum. The LYTF, MVTF, and Pilot Station detected six pulses of fall chum entering the lower Yukon with the fifth pulse passing over 250,000 fall chum salmon.

Upper Yukon assessment projects are finished or nearly finished for the season. The Rapids test fish wheel project ceased operations on September 20 and the water adjusted CPUE ended below average. The Chandalar River sonar estimated passage of 203,000 fall chum through September 25 is on average and has surpassed the upper end of the escapement goal. This project will cease operations on September 28. The Tanana River test fish wheel at Manley ended on September 23 and tracked above average. The Eagle sonar has passed 119,000 fall chum through September 25 and is between the mid-point and $\frac{3}{4}$ point of the run. The minimum mainstem border escapement goal has been met, and additional fall chum to meet our harvest sharing agreement with Canada should also be met. The Porcupine River sonar is indicating a below average return the Porcupine River and Fishing Branch stocks.

Fall Season Management Actions

A total of 115,500 fall chum and 104,500 coho were harvested in the commercial fishery for the 2014 season.

Subsistence fishing was returned to the normal regulatory schedules at the end of the summer season. Subsistence salmon fishing in District 4 and Subdistrict 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was relaxed to 24 hours per day, seven days per week to allow additional opportunity on the projected surplus of fall chum and to make up for missed opportunity on Chinook salmon,. Furthermore, upper Subdistrict 4-A was opened to drift gill net fishing six days early.

Coho Salmon

Coho salmon overlap with the second half of the fall chum run and the strength is well above average at this time. The LYTF ended the season above average for coho salmon on September 20; the Mt. Village Test Fishery ended below average; and the Pilot Station sonar estimated passage of 247,000 coho salmon through September 7 (the last day of operations), which is almost twice the average. The reconstructed Pilot Station sonar passage through September 7 is 336,000 coho which indicates the 2014 coho salmon total run size is near the largest on record. The current total commercial harvest of 104,500 coho is the second highest on record since 1961 and subsistence fishermen have reported no shortage of coho salmon in their harvest. The Tanana River test fish wheel at Manley ended well above average for coho salmon. The only established escapement goal for coho salmon within the Yukon River is for the Delta Clearwater River and assessment will be by boat survey at a later date when fish are on the spawning area.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>