

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2017 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 3  
Summer Update # 1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery  
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2017 salmon season has begun on the Yukon River. Based on above average temperatures and an early ice out, the Chinook salmon run was predicted to be early this year. The first subsistence-caught summer chum salmon was reported on May 21 and the first subsistence-caught Chinook salmon was reported on May 26. The first summer chum and Chinook salmon were caught in the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) on May 26 and May 31, respectively, and catch rates have remained relatively low for both species. Based on the first fish detected in the LYTF and historical migration timing, as of today, early summer chum salmon should currently be between Russian Mission and Holy Cross and the first Chinook salmon should be approaching Russian Mission.

The department would like to extend gratitude to the lower Yukon River subsistence fishermen who have shared harvest information. These reports are instrumental in directing management actions during the early part of the season. Please remember to track your harvest on subsistence calendars and continue calling the ADF&G office to provide harvest reports.

The Yukon River Inseason Salmon Management Teleconferences hosted by Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, starting June 6, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. To participate, call (800) 315-6338, and enter code: YUKON# (98566#).

**Assessment Projects**

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

The 8.25-inch drift gillnet test fishery for Chinook salmon has been fully operational at the Big Eddy site since May 25. The cumulative CPUE as of June 4 is 9.23, which is slightly below the historical average of 17.69.

The 8.5-inch set gillnet was operational on May 29 at the Big Eddy site in the South Mouth of the Yukon River. High water and large amounts of woody debris has delayed deployment of the 8.5-inch set gillnet Middle Mouth site. Chinook salmon catches at Big Eddy continue to be low and the catch efficiency has likely been affected by large amounts of woody debris in the river. The cumulative CPUE as of June 4 is 0.42, which is below the historical average of 0.70. Operations at LYTF have been altered from previous years, so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates.

The 5.5-inch drift gillnet test fisheries for summer chum salmon at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites have been fully operational since May 25 and June 4, respectively. The cumulative CPUE for both drift sites as of June 4 is 88.70, which is well above the historical median of 12.61 for this date.

Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets and injured salmon will be distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils. Fewer set net sites are being fished than in the past to reduce Chinook salmon mortality.

#### Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station began partial operations on May 31 and has been fully operational since June 1. The project is operating well and has not experienced any issues from debris or equipment malfunction. Chinook salmon passage as of June 4 is estimated to be 2,039 fish which is above the historical cumulative average of 671 Chinook salmon for this date. Summer chum salmon passage as of June 4 is estimated to be 22,334 fish which is well above the historical cumulative median of 834 summer chum salmon for this date.

#### **Management Strategy**

A precautionary management approach will be taken this season given the below average return of Chinook salmon expected in 2017. As early salmon move up river, Districts 1 through 5 are beginning their standard fishing schedule with gillnet mesh size being restricted to no larger than 6 inches. Once subsistence reports and test fishery catches indicate that the first pulse of Chinook salmon has entered the river, fishermen should expect management actions that will close the lower river to subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets. These closures will be implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing.

The 2017 summer chum salmon run is expected to be above average. Fishing opportunities to harvest summer chum salmon with selective gear such as dip nets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels will be provided. Lower Yukon Area fishermen should be prepared for liberal subsistence and commercial opportunity using selective fishing gear to harvest summer chum salmon, however, these gear types may not be efficient until strong pulses of summer chum enter the river.

#### **Current Management**

As a reminder, during salmon fishing closures, fishermen may use gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh of 60 feet or shorter length. Fishermen may retain any Chinook salmon harvested in gillnets and fish wheels.

**South Coastal District** (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude):

Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

This year the Northern portion of the Coastal District will be managed the same as District 1. The Northern portion of the Coastal District extends from 62 degrees North latitude north to Point Romanof and includes all coastal and state marine waters up to 3 miles off shore.

**District 1 (including Black River and North Coastal District):**

Fishing is open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on the regulatory salmon fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week:

- **8 p.m. Mondays until 8 a.m. Wednesdays**
- **8 p.m. Thursdays until 8 a.m. Saturdays**

**District 2:**

Fishing is open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on the regulatory salmon fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week:

- **8 p.m. Wednesdays until 8 a.m. Fridays**
- **8 p.m. Sundays until 8 a.m. Tuesdays**

**District 3:**

Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets.

**Effective 8 a.m. on Tuesday, June 6, subsistence fishing will close.**

Effective 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, fishing will re-open with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on the regulatory salmon fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week.

- **8 p.m. Wednesdays until 8 a.m. Fridays**
- **8 p.m. Sundays until 8 a.m. Tuesdays**

**Subdistrict 4-A Lower:**

**Effective 6 p.m. on Friday, June 9, subsistence fishing will close.**

Effective 6 p.m. Sunday, June 11, fishing will re-open with 6-inch or smaller mesh set and drift gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory salmon fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week.

- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**
- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**

**Subdistrict 4-A Upper:**

**Effective 6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 13, subsistence fishing will close.**

Effective 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 14, fishing will re-open with 6-inch or smaller mesh set and drift gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory salmon fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week.

- **6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Fridays**
- **6 p.m. Sundays until 6 p.m. Tuesdays**

**Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers:**

Subsistence fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

**Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels until early salmon reach these subdistricts.

**District 5:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels until early salmon reach these subdistricts.

**Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels until early salmon reach these subdistricts.

**Subdistricts 6-C (Personal use fishery):**

Personal use salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week, from 6:00 p.m. Friday until 12:00 noon Sunday, and from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 12:00 noon Wednesday. Fishermen may use fish wheels or 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

**Old Minto Area:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

**Upper Tanana Area:**

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

Fishing schedules, test fish catches and sonar counts are available 24 hours a day at **(866) 479-7387** (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call **(907) 459-7387**.

If you have any questions, please call ADF&G in Emmonak at 949-1320, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Emmonak at 949-1798.

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