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

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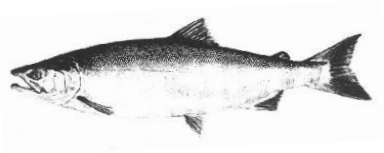

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2016 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 23
Fall Update # 3, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The 2016 fall chum salmon preseason run projection, based on the summer chum to fall chum salmon run size relationship, is for a run size between 800,000 and 900,000 fish. This level of abundance should be sufficient to provide for escapement, an above average subsistence harvest, and a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes. The estimated fall chum salmon run size (based on the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station and the downstream harvest) through August 7 is 584,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 338,000 fish for that date. The fall chum salmon run is near the midpoint, which is August 5 for early run timing and August 9 for average run timing at the mainstem sonar. The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 18 and is expected to be near Rampart on August 9, Hughes around August 12, Fort Yukon around August 15 and the Canadian border around August 22. The second pulse of fall chum salmon entered the river on July 30 and is expected to be near Kaltag on August 11, Tanana around August 18 and the Canadian border around September 2. High water may slow the passage of fish and delay timing slightly from these dates.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average to above average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements of 2012. Few coho salmon have entered the Yukon River so far based on the commercial fishery but the majority of the run typically begins building in early August.

Fall Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Fall Drift Test Fishing/ADF&G, YDFDA

The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 7 was 517.08 fall chum salmon, which is below the historical median of 601.44 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council
The cumulative CPUE for the project through August 7 was 1,491.77 fall chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 806.72 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G
The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 7 was 447,600, which is above the median passage of approximately 270,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 7 was 3,084 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 7,635 fish for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season/ADF&G
The preliminary fall chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run so far is dominated by age-4 fish, which is typical. As expected based on last year's run composition, this year's age-4 component is above average. The 2016 preliminary proportion of age-4 and age-5 fish is 78% and 22% respectively compared to the average of 61% age-4 and 38% age-5 fish based on a samples size of 428. Females represent 48% of the 445 fish sampled and the average is 56%.

Stock Identification
Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the strata from July 19–25 that passed the mainstem sonar, which included the first large pulse, contained approximately 48% summer chum and 52% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon components were dominated by the Tanana summer at 24%, followed by lower summer at 14% with the middle Yukon stocks at 10%. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 24% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 25% Canadian and 4% Tanana. The fall chum samples for the second pulse will be analyzed this week.

Fall Season Management Strategy
The Coastal District, Districts 1, 2, 3, and Subdistrict 5-D as well as the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers and have been placed on their full regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedules for the fall season. As a result of the Chinook salmon restrictions put in place in the Yukon Area this season, the department is increasing the opportunity to harvest fall chum salmon for subsistence use. Subsistence salmon fishing has been liberalized to seven days per week, 24 hours per day in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C. Subsistence fishermen may use gillnets with 7.5 inch mesh or smaller during the fall season.

Summer Assessment Project
Eagle Sonar / ADF&G
The Eagle sonar project began operations on July 1, which is one of the earliest start dates since the project began in 2005. Approximately 70,000 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project as of August 7, which is above the historical cumulative average of 54,400 for this date. Chinook salmon passage has exceeded the Interim Management Escapement Goal into Canada (42,500 – 55,000 fish) and provides a sufficient surplus for the Canadian Total Allowable Catch harvest share.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedules

Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to Point Romanof and including all state marine waters):
Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

District 1 (including the Black River) and **District 2:**
Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after commercial fishing periods.

District 3:
Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

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

Subdistrict 4-A (from ¾ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point, which includes all adjacent tributaries and the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

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

Drift gillnet fishing is open **only in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A upstream from the mouth of Stink Creek.** Drift gillnets may not exceed 25 fathoms in length.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek, which includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby):

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

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

District 5 (from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek to the U.S./Canada border, including all adjacent tributaries and the communities of Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Eagle):

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

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations:
Between the western tip of Garnet Island and the Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B is open for two 42-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

The Kantishna River is open on its regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule of 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

The Old Minto area is open on its regulatory schedule of five days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels.

Subsistence fishermen are reminded that a subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence fishermen fishing in the upper portion of Subdistrict 6-B, from three miles upstream of the mouth of Totchaket Slough to Wood River, are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Upper Tanana Area (the Tanana River from the confluence with the mouth of Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank upstream to the Tanana River headwaters, including the communities of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, and the Tok area):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Fishermen may use fish wheels and gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish in the Upper Tanana River Drainage.

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

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

A reminder to fishermen that a personal use salmon fishing permit and a sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 PM Thursday** each week by contacting the department at **(907) 459-7388**. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Commercial Fishing:

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing
The fall chum salmon commercial fishing season is open in Districts 1 and 2. It is expected that each district will fish a two-period per week schedule through most of the season. However, commercial fishermen should be on standby as the scheduling of periods in either district may be adjusted when pulses of fall chum salmon are moving through each district.

In the Upper Yukon Area, Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C will open today, Monday, August 8 at 6:00 p.m. District 6 commercial fishing is currently under summer management and will transition to fall management in the coming week. It is anticipated that commercial openings will be announced for District 6 later this week.

District 1, including the Set Net Only Area Commercial Fishing Schedule:

Period #8: **SET NET ONLY AREA**: 12-hour period from 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. Monday, August 8. **Remainder of District 1**: 9-hour period from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Monday, August 8. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 1 through August 4 is 83,271 fall chum and 2,440 coho salmon.

District 2 Commercial Fishing Schedule:
The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 2 through August 3 is 69,532 fall chum and 596 coho salmon.

Subdistrict 5-B, and 5-C Commercial Fishing Schedule:
Effective 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 8, commercial fishing in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week until further notice. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with 6 inch or smaller mesh size.

District 6 Commercial Fishing Schedule:
Commercial fishing in District 6 is open for two 42-hour fishing periods per week on the following schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- 6:00 p.m. Mondays, until 12:00 p.m. noon Wednesdays
- 6:00 p.m. Fridays, until 12:00 p.m. noon Sundays

Commercial fishermen must confirm their market prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274. All salmon harvested during commercial fishing operations must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of sale. All Chinook salmon kept for personal use from commercial gillnets and fish wheels must be recorded on the fish ticket as "caught but not sold" as well as other fish species.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at **(866) 479-7387** (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call **459-7387**.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADF&G office in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320, the ADF&G office in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

This is an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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