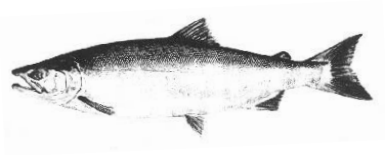
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE

Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:
Jeff Estensen, Area Management Biologist
Christy Gleason, Asst. Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 949-1320
Fax: (907) 949-1830

Lower Yukon Area Field Office
P.O. Box 127
Emmonak, Alaska 99581
Date Issued: 8/16/2016

2016 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 31
Fall Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The 2016 fall chum salmon run projection, based on inseason assessment, is for a run size greater than 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 15 is 677,700 fish, which is above the historical median of 449,300 fish for that date. The fall chum salmon run reconstruction is past the midpoint, which occurs on August 6 for early run timing and August 11 for median run timing.

The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the Yukon River on July 18 and is expected to be near 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 the communities of Tanana/Huslia around August 18 and the Canadian border around September 2. The third pulse of fish began entering the Yukon River on August 10 and has sustained over five days and are expected to be near Russian Mission today, near Anvik on August 18, near Nulato on August 23, near Tanana/ Hulsia on August 29, near Fort Yukon on September 6 and the Border the second week of September. On the Tanana River the second pulse may arrive around August 20 at Manley and August 22 near Nenana and the third pulse would be expected to be in those areas around August 29 and September 2 respectively. High water may slow the passage of fish and delay timing slightly from these dates.

The coho salmon outlook is for an average return. The primary parent year for coho salmon this this season is from the escapements of 2012. Coho salmon have reached the historical average first quarter point in the lower Yukon River projects between Emmonak and Pilot Station and are

currently running below average in all three projects. A first pulse of coho salmon arrived in the lower Yukon on August 14 and will be tracked up river.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through August 14 was 914.59, which is above the historical median of 839.56 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 14 was 76.71, which is below the historical median of 120.22 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing/Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE for the project through August 14 was 1,687.39, which is above the historical median of 1,187.45 for this date. The cumulative coho salmon CPUE for the project through August 14 was 48.38, which is well below the historical median of 237.04 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through August 14 was 491,000, which is above the median passage of approximately 393,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage estimate through August 14 was 17,000 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 33,000 fish for this date.

Chandalar River Sonar USFWS

The sonar began operations on August 8 and as of August 14 the cumulative passage estimate for fall chum salmon is 3,600 fish which is slightly below the median of 4,600 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 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 81% and 19% respectively compared to the average of 61% age-4 and 38% age-5 fish based on a samples size of 592. Females represent 51% of the 649 fish sampled and the average is 56%.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the strata from July 26–August 7 that passed the mainstem sonar, which included the second pulse, contained approximately 20% summer chum and 80% fall chum salmon. The summer chum salmon components included lower summer at 11%, Tanana at 6% with the middle Yukon stocks at 3%. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 40% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), 32% Canadian and 8% Tanana.

Fall Season Management Strategy

The Coastal District, Districts 1, 2, 3, and Subdistrict 5-D as well as the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers were initially placed on their full regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedules of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for the fall season. As a result of the Chinook salmon restrictions put in place in the Yukon Area this season, the department increased 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. District 6

currently remains on their standard regulatory schedules. 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 72,000 Chinook salmon have been counted at the sonar project as of August 14, which is above the historical cumulative average of 57,000 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 set 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.

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, 2, and 6 as well as Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C. It is expected that Districts 1 and 2 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 these districts may be adjusted when pulses of fall chum salmon are moving through the area.

District 1, including the Set Net Only Area Commercial Fishing:
The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 1 through August 11 is 98,394 fall chum and 6,036 coho salmon.

District 2 Commercial Fishing:
The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 2 through August 13 is 83,346 fall chum and 2,644 coho salmon.

Subdistrict 5-B, and 5-C Commercial Fishing Schedule:
Commercial fishing in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, is 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.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 8 is 906 fall chum salmon.

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 6-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

No commercial harvest for District 6 has been reported at this time.

All Yukon Area commercial fishermen should confirm their market prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers must 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 fish species harvested and not sold must be recorded on the fish ticket as “caught but not sold”.

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.

-end-