

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



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**2019 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 32
Summer Update # 6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The Chinook salmon run is currently coming in stronger than the run observed in 2018 and toward the upper end of the preseason outlook range of 168,000 to 241,000 fish. (Figure 1). In accordance with the pre-season management strategy, a run of this size warrants subsistence salmon fishing on a full regulatory schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The Chinook salmon run is approximately 93% complete at the Pilot Station sonar, based on normal run timing. The 2019 summer chum salmon run is late and weaker than expected. However, summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar is near the upper end of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 1,200,000 fish. A commercial surplus of summer chum is available for harvest (Figure 2). The summer chum salmon run is likely 82% complete at the Pilot Station sonar, based on late run timing.

The strong early trickle of Chinook salmon is passing into Canada. As of July 7, the first pulse of Chinook salmon should be near Circle. A smaller, second, pulse of Chinook salmon should be approaching Tanana. A third pulse of Chinook salmon should be approaching Koyukuk. Early summer chum salmon should be in the upper reaches of the Koyukuk and Tanana rivers. The first, relatively small pulse of summer chum salmon should be in District 4-B/C. The second pulse of summer chum salmon should be approaching Koyukuk. The third, and largest to date, pulse of summer chum salmon should be passing through District 4-A Lower.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group and first pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the Pilot Station sonar (June 2 to June 23) indicated that 56% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. Genetic MSA on the second, and part of the third pulse of Chinook salmon sampled at the sonar (June 24 to June 30) indicated that 42% of the fish sampled were of Canadian-origin. The age composition of 582 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through June 30 was less than 1% age-3, 11% age-4, 50% age-5, 38% age-6,

and 2% age-7 fish. All major age classes were within one percentage point of their historical averages (years 2009-2018). The percentage of fish that were female, 49%, was above average.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association are held every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. To participate, call (800) 315-6338, and enter code: YUKON# (98566#). Sharing your local knowledge, harvest information and fishing observations on these calls is very helpful for effective management.

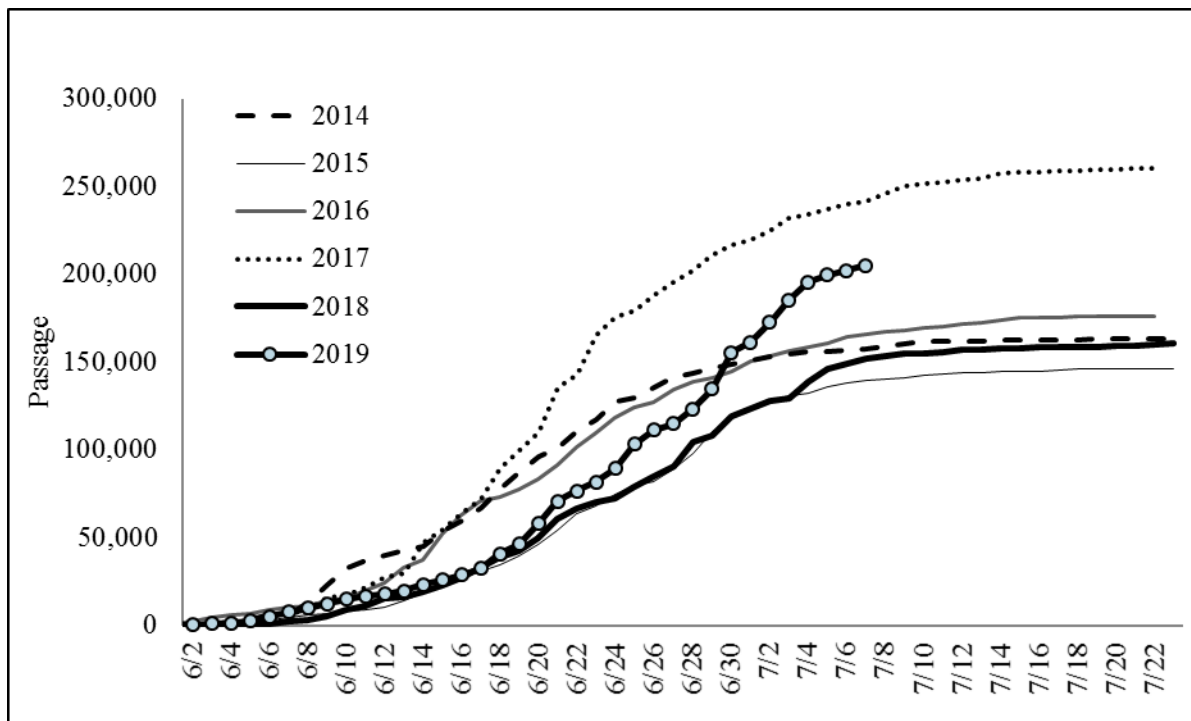


Figure 1. Estimated cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar, 2014-2019.

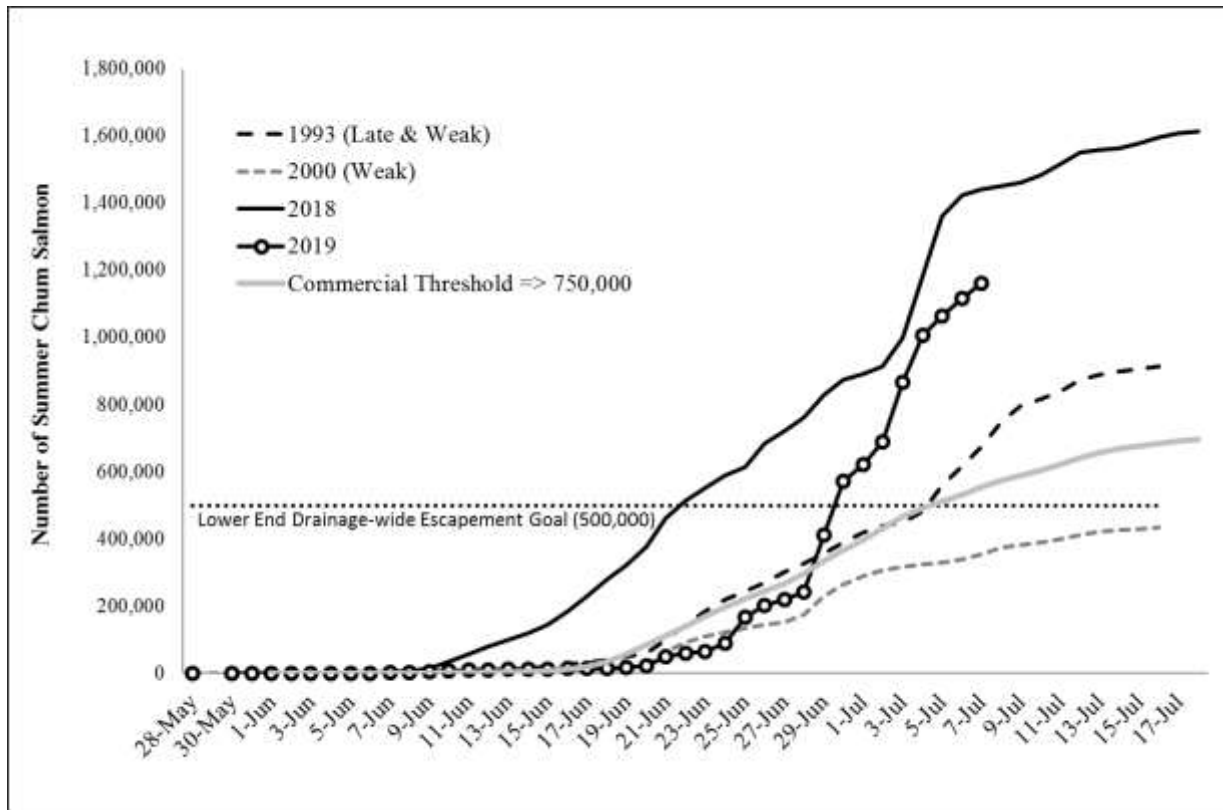


Figure 2. 2019 Cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to 2018, and late and weak years. The theoretical management “commercial threshold” of 750,000 summer chum needed for commercial harvest based on late run timing is included for reference. The horizontal dotted line represents the lower bound of the drainage-wide escapement goal for summer chum.

Assessment Projects

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

The combined cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the 8.5-inch set gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 37.15, which is above the historical average of 23.70. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy site is 390.78, which is similar to the historical average of 390.79. The combined cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE for the 5.5-inch drift gillnet at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites is 7,269.45, which is above the historical median of 6,569.16 for this date. All CPUEs are current through July 7.

Operations at the LYTF have been altered from previous years, so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. Any Chinook salmon healthy enough will be released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities will be distributed to village elders by the Tribal Councils.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

Chinook salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be 204,933 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 167,154 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 1,160,590 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,533,460 fish. All passage

estimates are current through July 7. Water levels at the Pilot Station sonar are near record low levels.

East Fork Andreafsky River Weir / USFWS

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 28, 7 to 10 days late (due to high water). Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 3,541 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 1,364 fish, and above the minimum sustainable escapement goal range of 2,400-4,900 Chinook salmon. Summer chum salmon passage through July 7 is 15,992 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 32,332 fish which has a sustainable escapement goal of greater than 40,000 summer chum salmon.

Anvik River Sonar / ADF&G

The Anvik River sonar began operations on June 16. Summer chum salmon passage, as of July 7, is 60,400 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 270,578 fish for this date. The biological escapement goal for Anvik summer chum salmon is 350,000–700,000.

Gisasa River Weir / USFWS

The Gisasa River weir began operations roughly a week late on July 2 due to high water. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 133 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 297 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 1,025 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 17,729 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 7.

Henshaw Creek Weir / TCC

The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 30. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 24 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 81 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 572 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 12,574 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 7.

Chena River Tower / ADF&G

The Chena River tower began operations on June 24. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 276 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 486 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is 39 fish, which is above the historical cumulative median of 23 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 7. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site.

Salcha River Tower / ADF&G

The Salcha River tower began operations on June 24. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 339 fish, which is above the historical cumulative average of 282 fish. No summer chum salmon have been counted at the tower; however, the historical cumulative median for July 7 is only 8 fish. All passage estimates are current through July 7. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 3,300–6,500 past the tower site.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 7, is estimated to be 1,391 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,553 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish and is assessed at the Eagle sonar. Water levels at the Eagle sonar are near record low levels.

Management Strategy

The Chinook run projections for the drainage-wide stocks and the Canadian-origin stock indicates a run size towards the upper end of the preseason forecasts. Escapement goals and harvest shares are likely to be met, therefore all subsistence harvest restrictions are being relaxed. Summer chum commercial fishing is underway, but possibly due to a late start, and a single buyer in Districts 1 and 2, fishing effort appears to be lower than usual. Retention of Chinook salmon incidentally-caught in the chum commercial fishery has been allowed for subsistence use, but catches of Chinook have been low. In accordance with the king salmon management plan, due to the strength of this year's Chinook salmon run and relatively low passage of Chinook salmon through the lower river at this time, the department is considering the sale of Chinook salmon incidentally-caught in the commercial chum fishery.

Current Subsistence Management

As a reminder to fishermen, dip nets are now a legal subsistence gear type and are allowed during subsistence salmon gillnet openings. Subsistence fishermen may retain any Chinook salmon harvested in dip nets, gillnets and fish wheels, unless otherwise specified in the announcements. During salmon fishing closures, fishing for non-salmon is allowed, however, gillnets must be 4-inch or smaller mesh.

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude including the marine waters near Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

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

District 1 (Black River, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik and Emmonak):

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 18-hour periods per week from:

- 2 p.m. Tuesdays to 8 a.m. Wednesdays
- 2 p.m. Fridays to 8 a.m. Saturdays

District 2: (Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station and Marshall):

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a reduced regulatory schedule consisting of two 18-hour periods per week from:

- 2 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Thursdays
- 2 p.m. Saturdays to 8 a.m. Sundays

District 3 (Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets for two 36-hour periods per week from:

- 8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays
- 8 p.m. Sundays to 8 a.m. Tuesdays

District 4-A, 4-B and 4-C (Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Ruby):

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels for two 48-hour periods per week from:

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

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart): Subsistence fishing is currently closed. The mesh size restriction is being removed.

Effective 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 9, subsistence fishing will open on the regulatory schedule for two 48-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

- **6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Thursdays**
- **6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Sundays**

Subdistrict 5-D Lower and Middle (from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to 22 Mile Slough, including the Porcupine River, other adjacent tributaries, and communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

The previously announced closure has been cancelled.

Subsistence fishing is currently open and will remain open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistrict 5-D Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries, and communities of Circle and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of Subdistricts 5-C and 5-D from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River (Dalton Highway bridge area) and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Innoko, Koyukuk and Kantishna Rivers:

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

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the Wood River, including Manley, Minto, and Nenana):

Subsistence fishing will open for one more 24-hour period with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from 6 p.m. Monday, July 8 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 9.

Effective 6 p.m. Friday, July 12, subsistence fishing will reopen with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of five days per week from:

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

Upper Tanana Area (from 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 Dot Lake, Tok, Tanacross, Northway):

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

Subdistrict 6-C Personal Use Salmon (from the Wood River upstream to the Salcha River, including Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal Use salmon fishing will open for one more 24-hour period with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from 6 p.m. Monday, July 8 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 9.

Effective 6 p.m. Friday, July 12, personal use fishing will reopen with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on the regulatory schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to noon Wednesdays**

Fishermen may only use set gillnets and fishwheels in the Personal Use salmon fishery.

In the Tanana River up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A and 6-B), and in the Upper Tanana River Area, a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use permit is required to fish for salmon and other species from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Salcha River (Subdistrict 6-C).

A subsistence permit is required for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats. Subsistence harvest calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Commercial Fishing:

The summer chum salmon commercial fishery opened with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in District 1 on July 3 and in District 2 on July 5. As of July 7, approximately 79,000 summer chum salmon and 1,400 pink salmon have been harvested. A total of 840 Chinook have been retained for subsistence use, which is well below the season average of approximately 5,000 Chinook retained from commercial fishing.

Commercial Fishing Periods:

Commercial fishermen in Districts 1 and 2 should stand by for additional announcements.

This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To reach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks call 455-1849

News releases, test fish catches, and sonar counts are also available on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

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