

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



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**2018 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release 63
Fall Update # 9, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2018 the inseason total run size of fall chum salmon (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is estimated to be 1,300,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 816,000 fish. Overall the timing of fall chum salmon in the lower river projects was a week later than average.

The peak of the third pulse is expected to be near the U.S./Canada border around September 23. The fourth pulse contained a good proportion of Tanana River stocks and is expected to be near the U.S./Canada border around September 26. The fifth pulse is expected to be near Fort Yukon around September 25, and the U.S./Canada border around October 5. A smaller sixth pulse is expected to be near Tanana/Huslia around September 21, and the majority of which are bound for the Tanana River which should have fall chum salmon for the remainder of September.

The coho salmon were three days later than average at the mainstem Yukon River sonar site at Pilot Station. The inseason total run size of coho salmon (based on passage at the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station plus the harvest downstream of the sonar) is estimated to be 237,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 209,000 fish. The third pulse of coho salmon that entered the Yukon River around August 27 is expected to be near Tanana/Huslia around September 18, Manley around September 20 and Nenana around September 23.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

This project concluded operations on September 10, 2018. The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project was 2,961.66, which was above the historical median of 1,520.50 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 381.96, which is below the historical median of 443.37 for this date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

This project concluded operations on September 12, 2018. The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project was 3,018.41, which is above the historical median of 2,051.51 for this date. The coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 679.52, which is below the historical median of 1,121.91 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The mainstem sonar near Pilot Station completed operations for 2018 season on September 7. The cumulative passage estimate was 927,000 fall chum salmon, which is above the median passage of approximately 707,000 fish for that date. Fall chum salmon run timing was seven days later than average at this project. The cumulative passage estimate for coho salmon was 137,000 coho salmon which is below the median of 160,000 for that date. Coho salmon run timing was four days later than average at this project.

Chandalar River Sonar / USFWS

The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon through September 16, is 60,499 fish which is well below the median of 132,000 fish for that date. The low passage at the beginning of the run was not unexpected given that the fall chum salmon run was late entering the lower river, in the last two weeks the daily passage has significantly increased.

Sonar Project near Eagle / ADF&G, DFO

The mainstem sonar operated near Eagle transitioned from Chinook to fall chum salmon beginning August 21. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate through September 16 was 20,198, which is below the median passage of approximately 49,000 fish for this date. The low passage at the beginning of the run was not unexpected given that the fall chum salmon run was late entering the lower river, in the recent week the daily passage has significantly increased.

Upper Porcupine Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project has had difficulties with high water most of the season. One bank operations began on August 27 while the second bank became operational on September 6. The cumulative passage attributed to fall chum salmon based on partial operations is 3,890 fish which is below the average of 19,000 through September 16.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

Water levels are higher than average and has delayed weir deployment. Sonar operations began on September 3 and the weir is still being assembled as water levels permit. The estimated passage as of September 16 was 640 fall chum salmon which is well below the median of 9,500 for this date. Counts prior to September 15 (the day the river was fully ensonified) are considered minimum estimates.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on fall season chum salmon for the strata from September 3-7 that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar contained approximately 3% summer chum and 97% fall chum salmon. The fall chum salmon stocks in the sample consisted of 14% Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjok), 22% Canadian and 61% Tanana Fall stocks. These proportions reflect that stocks bound for the Tanana River were dominating while the upper stock components of Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjok) dropped off substantially, with a greater proportion of Canada stocks remaining in the upper Yukon River. This was the final strata analyzed for this project.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5 inch or smaller mesh size gillnets and fish wheels in all areas of the Yukon River. Because 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 to seven days per week, 24 hours per day in all of Districts 4 and 5.

In recent years, the abundance of fall chum salmon in the upper Porcupine River has been low when compared to other stocks in the Yukon River drainage. Fall chum salmon escapements into the Canadian Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River, have fallen short of meeting the escapement objective agreed upon by U.S. and Canadian representatives despite other Yukon River stocks meeting or exceeding their escapement goals or objectives. Like the action taken in previous years, to improve fall chum escapement to the spawning grounds in Canada, a subsistence salmon fishing schedule in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River is being implemented. Managers will closely monitor inseason information at the mainstem Porcupine River sonar and the Fishing Branch River escapement monitoring projects to determine future management actions as appropriate.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:**South Coastal District, and Districts 1, 2, and 3 including the Innoko River:**

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

District 4 (from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek, which includes all the communities between Anvik and Ruby):

Subsistence salmon fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Subsistence fishermen may use 7.5-inch or smaller mesh size drift and set gillnets and fish wheels.

Koyukuk River:

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

District 5 (from Illinois Creek upstream to the U.S./Canada border, and including all adjacent tributaries, which includes all the communities between Tanana and Eagle):

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

A fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the following locations: the 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. Subsistence fishermen outside of the permit areas are encouraged to fill out their subsistence salmon catch calendars. Calendars and subsistence fishing permits are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks.

Porcupine River:

Subsistence salmon fishing is open weekly from 12:00 noon Thursdays to 12:00 noon Mondays in the Porcupine River. This includes those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3

mouths of the Porcupine River. Subsistence salmon fishing in tributaries such as the Sheenjek, Black, Coleen, and Salmon Trout rivers will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

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 fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage below the Wood River. Permits are available from the ADF&G office in Fairbanks. Subsistence salmon fishermen 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 p.m. Thursday each week by reporting online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/ or by calling (907) 459-7388. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Kantishna River:

The Kantishna River is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Fishermen may use fish wheels or gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less. A subsistence fishing permit is required.

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is currently 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 (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):

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

Personal Use Fishing:

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

Personal use fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays

A personal use salmon fishing permit and sport fish license are required to fish in Subdistrict 6-C. Fishermen are required to report their harvest catches to the department by **4:30 p.m. Thursday** each week by reporting online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/PU/ or by calling (907)

459-7388. When you call, please provide your name, permit number, fishing location, and daily catch by species for that week.

Fall Season Commercial Salmon Fishing:

In the Upper Yukon, commercial fishing is open in Districts 4 and 6, and Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C. Several catcher-sellers are operating in District 6. Fishermen must confirm they have a buyer prior to fishing. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Subdistrict 4-A Commercial (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village to Cone Point):

The commercial fishing season is open for the fall season. Currently, there are no registered buyers operating in District 4. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent to operate by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 2 in Subdistrict 4-A is 596 fall chum salmon.

Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C Commercial (from Illinois Creek along the north bank of the Yukon River upstream the mouth of the Tanana River, and both along banks of the Yukon River upstream to the regulatory markers 2 miles below Waldron Creek, which includes the communities of Tanana and Rampart as well as the area near the Yukon River Bridge):

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 set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Commercial fishermen must confirm their buyer or market prior to commercial fishing. Processors, catcher sellers, or direct marketers are required to notify the department of their intent to operate prior to purchasing salmon by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through August 20 in Subdistrict 5-B and 5-C is 896 fall chum salmon.

District 6 Commercial (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the regulatory marker at the mouth of Wood River, upstream to the Chena River, which includes the communities of Manley, Nenana, and Fairbanks):

Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

- **6 p.m. Fridays to 12 noon Sundays**
- **6 p.m. Mondays to 12 noon Wednesdays**

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest through September 9 in District 6 is 238 fall chum salmon and 1 coho salmon.

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