

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



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**2019 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 3
Summer Update # 1, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2019 salmon season has begun on the Yukon River. The Chinook run size is forecasted to be similar in size to the 2018 run. The Chinook salmon run timing is predicted to be average this year, despite one of the earliest river break-ups on record. The first subsistence-caught summer chum and Chinook salmon were reported in the lower river on May 23rd. The first summer chum and Chinook salmon were caught in the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) on June 2 and June 3, respectively, and catch rates have remained relatively low for both species. Water levels are very high with large amounts of wood debris affecting subsistence and test-fishery set nets.

The department would like to thank the subsistence fishermen who have shared harvest information. Please track your harvest on subsistence calendars and continue calling the ADF&G office to provide harvest reports.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association will be held every Tuesday, starting June 4, 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 24. The first two Chinook salmon were caught on June 2. The cumulative CPUE, as of June 3, is 12.10, which is below the historical average of 15.92. Due to high water and large amounts of woody debris in the Big Eddy site, only half (12 fathoms) of the 8.5-inch set gillnet is being deployed. The 5.5-inch drift gillnet test fishery for summer chum salmon at the Big Eddy site has been fully operational since May 23. First reported catch was June 3. The cumulative CPUE, as of June 3, is 7.84, which is below the historical median of 14.91.

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. Fewer set net sites are being fished than in the past to reduce Chinook salmon mortality.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

The Pilot Station sonar full operations began on June 2. Most of the catch in the test fishery has been non salmon species. Water and debris levels are high but current wind conditions are pushing most of the debris towards center of the river. As of June 3, an estimated 1,304 Chinook salmon have passed, this is above the historical cumulative average of 875 Chinook salmon. As of June 3, no summer chum have been caught in the test fishery. The historical cumulative median for summer chum salmon passage is 1,689 fish for this date.

Management Strategy

Chinook are just beginning to enter the river. Once significant Chinook catches occur in the Lower Yukon Test fishery, subsistence fishing time may be limited to half of the regulatory fishing schedule. This reduced fishing schedule is intended to limit the harvest of early Chinook salmon while more information about the timing and strength of the run is collected. The reduced schedule will be implemented in each district based on run timing as the fish move upriver. The 2019 summer chum salmon run is expected to be similar in size to the 2018 run. **Due to limited buyer capacity, Commercial summer chum fishing openings may be delayed in District 1 and 2 until approximately June 17. There is no commercial buyer this year in District 4.**

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. During salmon fishing closures, fishermen may use only gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh. Subsistence fishermen may retain any Chinook salmon harvested in dip nets, gillnets and fish wheels, unless otherwise specified in the announcements. During commercial fishing periods for chum salmon with dip nets and beach seines, all king salmon must be released alive immediately.

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.

Districts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5:

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

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 regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River, which includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana) and the 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 (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.

Subdistricts 6-C (Personal use fishery 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 fishing is open on the regulatory fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels:

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

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in portions of subdistricts 5-C and 5-D, and the Upper Tanana River drainage. The permit areas of Subdistrict 5-C and 5-D are from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the mouth of Dall River, 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.

In the Tanana River up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A and 6-B) a subsistence permit is required for salmon fishing. A personal use permit is required to fish for salmon and other species above the Wood river (Subdistrict 6-C). In Subdistrict 6-D a permit is required to fish for salmon and non-salmon species.

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/.

News releases, test fish catches, and sonar counts are also available on Facebook: www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

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