

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



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**2019 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 47
Fall Update # 11, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

The 2019 fall chum salmon total run size is estimated to be near 850,000 fish, after adjusting inseason for the overlap of summer chum salmon into the fall season. A fall chum salmon run size at this level is expected to provide for escapement, subsistence needs, and a limited commercial fishery. The fall chum salmon that peaked in the lower river projects on August 23 are expected to be near the Canadian border around October 1 as well as spread through the Tanana River. The overall fall chum salmon run entered the Yukon River later than average and is anticipated to be slightly late arriving to upriver spawning areas, although with the lower water levels the migration appears to be making up some time.

The primary parent year for this year's coho salmon run is 2015. The coho salmon run, based on inseason assessment and using late run timing is estimated to be 172,000 fish, which is below average.

Fall Assessment Projects

Note that daily, cumulative, and historical data for each of the assessment project's (listed in this section) can be accessed online at the following address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareayukon.salmon#fishcounts>

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

This project concluded operations on September 10, 2019. The cumulative CPUE through September 10 was 1,744.68 for chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 1,605.78 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 197.64 which is well below the median of 440.44 as of September 10.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

This project concluded operations on September 12, 2019. The cumulative CPUE through September 12 was 2,906.41 for chum salmon, which is above the historical median of 2,068.20 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 573.04 which is well below the historical median of 1,111.91 as of September 12.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The project concluded operations on August 31, 2019. The preliminary cumulative chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through August 31 was 843,464 fish, which is above the median passage of approximately 718,000 fish for this date. The cumulative coho salmon passage was 85,884 fish, which is below the median of 135,000 through August 31.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) River Sonar / USFWS

The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon is 100,607 fish as of September 26 which is well below the median passage of 208,000 for this date. However, the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal range of 85,000 to 234,000 was surpassed on September 22. This project concluded on September 27. An expansion will be derived to estimate the number of fish passing after the project ceased operations in an effort to estimate total escapement post-season.

Sonar Project near Eagle / ADF&G, DFO

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate from August 15 through September 29 was 74,535 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 134,000 fish for this date. The last sonar count will be on October 6. An expansion will be derived to estimate the number of fish passing after the project ceases operations in an effort to estimate total border passage post-season.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon is 20,380 fish as of September 27, which is below the median passage of 30,100 for this date.

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

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage estimate from September 3 through September 27 is 9,992 fish, which is below the median passage of 19,800 for this date.

Age Composition Fall Season / ADF&G

The preliminary chum salmon age composition from the LYTF 6-inch drift gillnets indicates the run is dominated by age-4 fish. The 2019 preliminary proportions of age-4 is 82%, above the average of 67% and age-5 is 16% which is below average (31%), as of August 29. Females represent 54% of the fish sampled (n=1,230), which is slightly below the average of 58%, as of September 10.

Chum Salmon Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis for the season has concluded. The estimates from the entire fall season, from July 19 through August 31, that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar, contained approximately 35% summer chum and 65% fall chum salmon. The fall component only entering after July 19, represented 31% BorderUS (Teedriinjik/Sheenjok/Draanjik), 32% Canadian, and 37% Tanana Fall stocks.

Fall Season Management Strategy:

All Yukon River Districts 1-6 are under fall season management. Subsistence fishing on the mainstem Yukon River is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Commercial salmon fishing is essentially over in the lower river districts while opportunities in upriver districts are expected to continue, on a small scale until nearly freeze-up.

The abundance of fall chum salmon in the upper Porcupine River has been low in recent years 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 frequently fallen short of meeting the interim management escapement goal (IMEG) of 22,000 to 49,000 fish agreed upon by U.S. and Canadian representatives despite strong escapements in neighboring tributaries. Based on the drainage-wide inseason run size near 850,000 fall chum salmon, it is unlikely the lower end of the Fishing Branch River IMEG will be achieved in 2019. As in recent years, to improve fall chum salmon escapement to the Porcupine River spawning grounds in Canada, subsistence salmon fishing in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River is closed.

As a reminder to subsistence fishermen, dip nets are a legal gear type for subsistence salmon fishing. Subsistence salmon fishermen may continue using gillnets, dip nets, and fish wheels. Personal use fishermen in Subdistrict 6-C of the Tanana River may only use set gillnets and fish wheels.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule:**Coastal District and Districts 1 -3:**

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

District 4 (Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

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

As a reminder, fishermen in District 4 may drift gillnet for all salmon; there are no longer dates when drifting is discontinued, and there is no longer a gillnet mesh depth restriction in state or federal waters.

District 5 (including the Porcupine River, other adjacent tributaries, and communities of Tanana, Rampart Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

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

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.

Porcupine River:

Subsistence salmon fishing in the Porcupine River, including those portions of the mainstem Yukon River around the 3 mouths of the Porcupine River, is closed until further notice. During the closures, fishermen may fish for non-salmon species using gillnet gear with a mesh size of 4 inches or less. 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.

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 is open 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 is open 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 fish wheels 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 department does not anticipate any more commercial openings in Districts 1 through 5 for the remainder of the 2019 season. In the Upper Yukon Area, commercial fishing is ongoing in District 6. Commercial fishermen should coordinate with their buyer prior to fishing. Commercial fishing effort is expected to pick up once the air temperature cools down. Preliminary commercial harvest in District 6 is 12,731 fall chum salmon and 1,792 coho salmon.

District 6:

Commercial fishermen should confirm their markets prior to fishing. Commercial fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels from:

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

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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