



Advisory Announcement

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2020 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #35

Summer Update # 6, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are nearly complete in the lower river, and management will transition to fall season in District 1 on July 16. The projected season total passage at the Pilot Station sonar is approximately 160,000 Chinook salmon (Figure 1). Based on passage at the Pilot Station sonar and inseason genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA), the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run size past the sonar is estimated to be about 77,000 fish which is the middle of the preseason outlook of 59,000 to 90,000 fish.

The summer chum salmon run appears to be late and weak. The average third quarter point at the sonar project for summer chum in years with late run timing is July 6. At this time, run projections for summer chum salmon indicate the run is well below the preseason forecast of 1.7–2.1 million fish (Figure 2).

Historical swim speeds are used to track salmon, however, because of unseasonably high water fish may travel slower this season. As of July 13, the first pulse of Chinook salmon should be near Beaver. The second pulse of Chinook salmon should be near Stevens Village. A third pulse of Chinook salmon should be near Tanana and a fourth should be approaching Koyukuk. Early summer chum salmon should be up the Tanana river drainage and the first pulse of summer chum salmon should be between Ruby and Tanana. A second pulse should be approaching Kaltag, and the third pulse should be approaching Anvik.

The inseason salmon management teleconferences hosted by the 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#).

Assessment Projects

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

Operations for 2020 have been altered. The set net (for Chinook salmon) and drift test fish sites for summer chum were not operated at Middle Mouth during the summer season. Due to these changes, the historical test fishery cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) and numbers reported inseason should not be compared to past reports.

The cumulative Chinook salmon catch per unit effort (CPUE) in the 8.25-inch drift gillnet is 287, which is below the historic average of 396. The cumulative CPUE for summer chum salmon is 4,347, which is well below the Big Eddy historical median of 9,915. All CPUEs are current through July 12.

The set gillnet has been pulled for the season. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE for the set gillnet at Big Eddy is 17.

LYTF operations for summer season will conclude July 15.

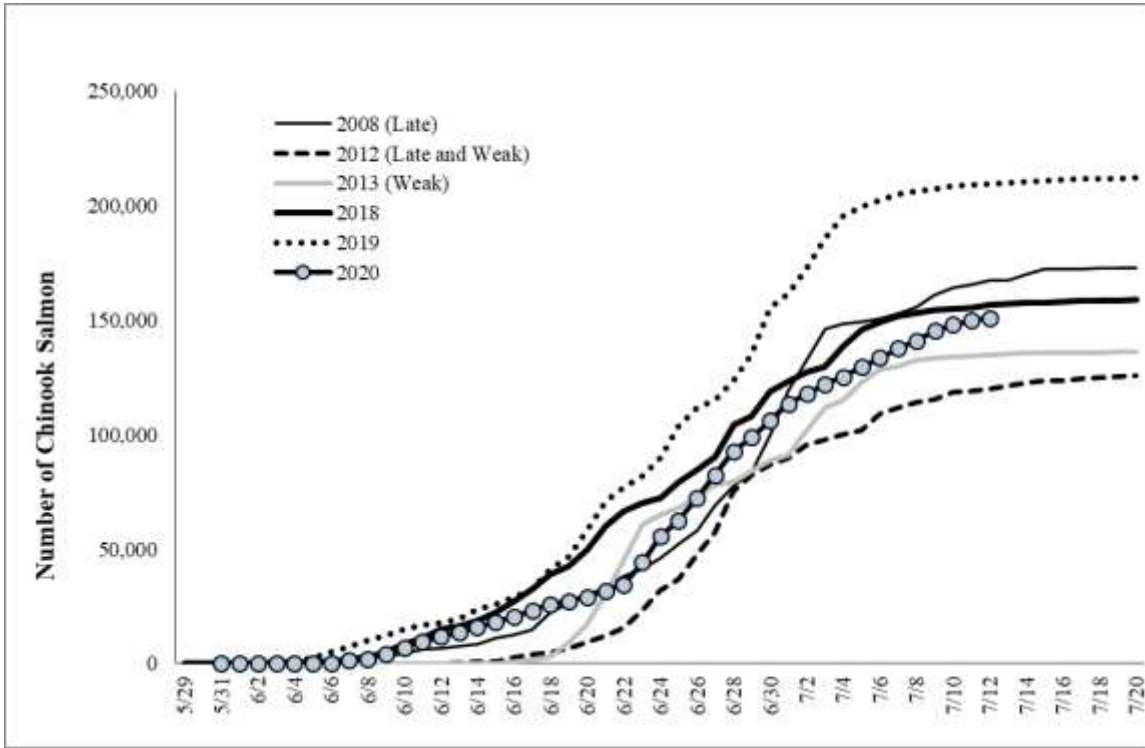


Figure 1. Cumulative passage of Chinook salmon at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and/or weak years.

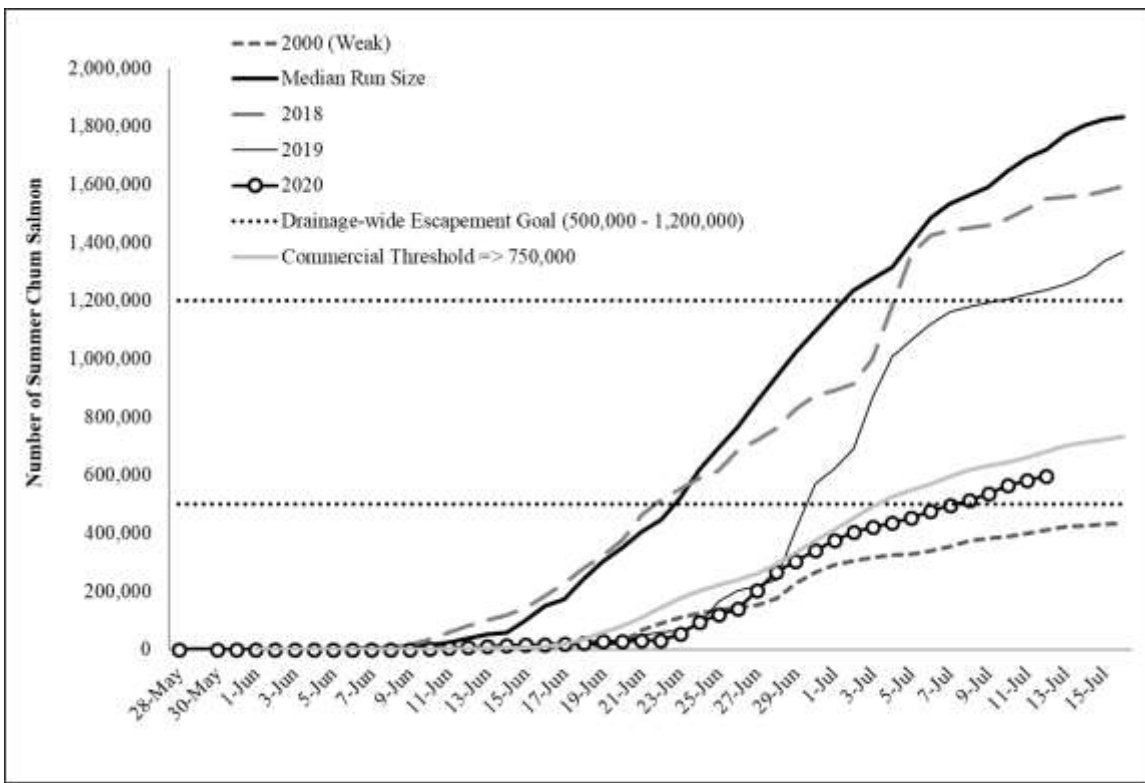


Figure 2. Cumulative summer chum salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar compared to late and weak years. The management “commercial threshold” of 750,000 summer chum salmon needed for commercial harvest based on late run timing is included for reference. The horizontal dotted lines represent the lower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

Assessment Projects (continued)

Sonar Project near Pilot Station/ ADF&G

Water levels remain high but slowly dropping with moderate debris. Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 151,008 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 176,554 fish. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be 596,138 fish, which is below the historical cumulative median of 1,717,715 fish. All estimates are current through July 12. Starting July 19, chum will be considered to be fall chum salmon at the sonar (though it will continue to be a mixture of summer and fall chum).

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G

The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1. Chinook salmon passage, as of July 12, is estimated to be 2,924 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 4,699 fish for this date. The Interim Management Escapement Goal for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon is 42,500-55,000 fish. The goal is assessed post-season using the Eagle sonar count minus the estimated U.S. and Canadian harvest of Chinook salmon above the sonar. Water levels at the Eagle sonar are high for this time of year but have dropped since last week.

Chena River Tower and Sonar / ADF&G

The Chena River project effectively began counting salmon on July 6. However, visual identification of salmon with the tower has not yet been possible due to high water. The counts reported here are sonar counts apportioned to species based on length. Fish larger than 650 mm are counted as Chinook salmon, smaller than 650 are a combination of Chinook and chum salmon. As of July 12, Chinook salmon passage is estimated to be 216 fish, which is below the historical cumulative average of 1,258 fish. Fish passage of ≤ 650 are 112 summer chum or small Chinook. The BEG for Chinook salmon is 2,800–5,700 past the tower site.

ADF&G, USFWS, and TCC projects that will not operate in 2020

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions or funding concerns, these projects will not operate: East Fork Andreafsky Weir, Anvik River Sonar, Gisasa River Weir, Henshaw Creek Weir, and Salcha River tower/sonar.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the early group of Chinook salmon (stratum 1, sampled at the Pilot Station sonar project June 7 to June 22) indicated that 62% of this group of fish were of Canadian-origin. The first and second pulses (stratum 2, June 23–June 28) had 50% Canadian-origin fish. The third and a portion of the fourth pulse (stratum 3, June 29–July 5) had 43% Canadian-origin fish.

The first stratum of chum salmon genetic samples from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery stratum 1 (from June 7 through June 28) consisted of 99% summer chum salmon, of which, 94% were lower river stocks and 5% were bound for the middle Yukon River. In 2019, the middle river stock represented a larger proportion of the first stratum (18%), which was near the average of 19%. Genetic chum salmon samples from stratum 2 (June 29 through July 9) are in the lab at this time and results should be available later this week and posted in the daily update.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 497 Chinook salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the Pilot Station test fishery through July 5 was 10% age-4, 47% age-5, and 39% age-6 fish. The percentage of age-6 fish and the percentage of females (52%) were above average. Chinook salmon within each age class were smaller than average, and the average length of 725 mm across all age classes is smaller than the recent 10-year average length of 740 mm, corroborating what fishermen have been observing.

The age composition of 295 summer chum salmon sampled from the LYTF project (June 2–June 30) indicates the run is composed of 86% age-5 fish, which is higher than the recent 10-year average of 45%. The average

length is 572 mm from a sample of 365 summer chum salmon, which is slightly above the 10-year average of 562 mm. The samples were 70% female, which is above the long-term average. These size and percent female trends are likely being driven by the smaller percentage of 4-year old fish in the samples.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

The project begins July 16 at Emmonak when the gear switches from 5.5-inch mesh to 6-inch mesh targeting fall chum and coho salmon.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council

The fall season project will begin July 18 at Mountain Village.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project near Pilot Station will transition to fall season counts on July 19.

Summer Season Management Strategy

The bulk of the Chinook salmon run has moved above the Tanana River, therefore, gillnet restrictions are being relaxed to a maximum mesh size of 7.5-inch or smaller mesh and fishing is returning to the regulatory schedule in most districts. In District 5, where few summer chum are present, 6-inch gillnet restrictions remain in place and fishing opportunity is on a reduced schedule to limit harvest.

Due to the weak summer chum salmon run, no additional summer season commercial periods are anticipated.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

South Coastal District (from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62 degrees North latitude which includes Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay):

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

District 1 and the North Coastal Area (from 62 degrees North latitude north to Point Romanof, including the Black River, and communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, and Kotlik):

Fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a schedule of two 36-hour periods per week from:

8 p.m. Mondays to 8 a.m. Wednesdays

8 p.m. Thursdays to 8 a.m. Saturdays

District 2 and 3 (including Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission and Holy Cross):

Fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a schedule of two 36-hour periods per week from:

8 p.m. Sundays to 8 a.m. Tuesdays

8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays

Innoko River:

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

Subdistrict 4-A Lower (from $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile downstream from Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek including the communities of Grayling and Anvik):

Fishing is open with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a schedule of 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 4-A Upper, 4-B and 4-C (from Stink Creek upstream to Illinois Creek, including the communities of Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, and Ruby):

Effective 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 15, subsistence fishing will reopen with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a schedule of two 48-hour periods per week from:

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

Koyukuk River (Huslia, Hughes, Alatna, Allakaket, and Bettles):

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

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart):

Fishing reopens Tuesday, July 14 with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh and fish wheels on a schedule of two 24-hour periods per week from:

6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays
6 p.m. Fridays to 6 p.m. Saturdays

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 and all other adjacent tributaries, and the communities of Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, and Fort Yukon):

Fishing is open with fish wheels and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh on the following fishing schedule (with fishing closed between the periods):

One 84-hour period: currently open, closes 10 p.m. Monday, July 13.
One 48-hour period: 10 a.m. Friday, July 17 until 10 a.m. Sunday, July 19.
One 84-hour period: 10 a.m. Friday, July 24 until 10 p.m. Monday, July 27.

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

Fishing is open with fish wheels and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh on the following fishing schedule (with fishing closed between the periods):

One 84-hour period: currently open, closes 10 p.m. Monday, July 13.
One 84-hour period: 10 a.m. Friday, July 17 until 10 p.m. Monday, July 20.
One 48-hour period: 10 a.m. Friday, July 24 until 10 a.m. Sunday, July 26.
One 84-hour period: 10 a.m. Friday, July 31 until 10 p.m. Monday, Aug 3.

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.

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 a schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:**

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays

Kantishna River:

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

Old Minto Area:

Subsistence fishing is open with **7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets** and fish wheels on a 5-day per week schedule from:

6 p.m. Fridays to 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 gillnets and fish wheels.

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (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 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels on a schedule of two 42-hour periods per week from:**

6 p.m. Mondays to 12 p.m. noon Wednesdays

6 p.m. Fridays to 12 p.m. noon Sundays

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

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 (459-7274) or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.



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 456-0406.

Announcements will be shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG



COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.