

TRM
Comments

Chinook Salmon Monotony

LC50

Tanana – Rampart – Manley Advisory Committee
SUMMARY of T-R-M AC actions on Proposals submitted to the Board of Fisheries for the
January 2013 meeting

The Tanana – Rampart – Advisory Committee met on Dec 3, 2012 to consider the proposals listed below.

The members of the TRM Advisory Committee believe that the Yukon River Chinook Salmon run is in serious trouble, and have watched from our vantage point on the upper Yukon as Chinook numbers and size both decline to the point where drastic action is needed.

The members of the TRM (and some fisheries biologists of substance) also do not agree that this is mostly an “Ocean” problem, but believe that in-river fishermen and managers bear a large responsibility for overfishing the Chinook run and for over-selecting for large females over the past 30 years, and that we all jointly bear responsibility for fixing it.

The attached paper by Dave Daum (a USFWS fish biologist, recently retired) has been formally endorsed by a unanimous vote of the TRM AC, and we wish hereby to enter it into the public record as reflecting our view of the dire situation that the Yukon River run is in, the inappropriateness of proposed “catch-and-release” methods for Chinook bycatch, and blueprints for recovery.

The TRM AC also voted unanimously to pass TRM AC Resolution 2013-01, as follows:

“The Yukon River Chinook Salmon subsistence and commercial fisheries shall be entirely closed to fishing for the 2013, 2014, and 2015 seasons to allow the Chinook run a chance to recover, after which time fisherman’s groups, Advisory Committees, ADF&G, and other interested parties shall meet to revisit what success has been achieved in terms of rebuilding the run, and what steps should be taken next to bring the Chinook fishery back to health and sustained yield.

The Chinook run shall be shut down just prior to the first major pulse of each of those years, and opened just after the last major pulse. During the closures, 4 inch mesh or less may be used for subsistence seven days a week, no fishwheels may be run, and no fishery will be allowed to occur in-river, commercial, subsistence or otherwise, that has the potential for allowing any substantial bycatch of Chinook.

The TRM AC realizes acutely the hardship that this closure will bring to themselves and their fellow fishermen on the Yukon River, but considers the alternative— which is to run the Chinook fishery past the point of any recovery by our inaction—to be unacceptable.”