



Advisory Announcement

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2022 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #22

Fall Update #12, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The Yukon River fall chum salmon run is the third lowest on record (1974–2021), while the coho salmon run is the second lowest (1995–2021). The fall chum salmon run is approximately 240,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 1 million fish. The coho salmon run is approximately 100,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 234,000 fish. According to the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, the run size did not meet the threshold of 300,000 fish needed to allow subsistence, personal use, sport, or commercial fishing. The fall chum salmon run is unlikely to meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000-600,000 fish, tributary escapement goals, nor Canadian treaty objectives. Fishing restrictions are being relaxed as fall chum and coho salmon assessment projects are near completion in the upper Yukon River drainage. However, as fall chum salmon move into their spawning tributaries, closures remain in effect in those areas through December. Spawning surveys to enumerate fall chum and coho salmon will occur in the Tanana River drainage in October through early December.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association are conducting a cooperative radio tagging project on coho salmon. From mid-August to early September, 349 coho salmon were tagged out of the community of Russian Mission and aerial surveys are tracking the coho salmon as they migrate throughout the Yukon River drainage. Please report any tagged coho salmon observed or harvested within the Yukon River drainage to help us gain knowledge on their migration. To report a tagged coho salmon, contact andrew.padilla@alaska.gov or call (907) 459-7274.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) will meet in Anchorage from January 14 to 18, 2023 to consider proposals concerning the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim area. Ten proposals relate to Yukon Area subsistence, personal use, and commercial fisheries predominantly focused on salmon, some of which will be addressed at the statewide BOF meeting. Two proposals relate to the subsistence fishery for northern pike in the Chatanika River. Ten proposals address sport fisheries in the Tanana River drainage. One proposal addresses retention of sport caught salmon in the Yukon Area. Public comments can be submitted online until December 30, 2022. Managers will discuss proposals with local Advisory Committees this winter prior to the meeting. Proposals can be viewed at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main.

Fall Assessment Projects

All projects that handled fish (fall season Lower Yukon Test Fishery; Mt. Village Test Fishery; Pilot Station and Eagle sonars) made efforts to reduce salmon mortality and distribute test fish catches to community members. Healthy salmon were released alive from the test nets. Injured salmon and mortalities were distributed to community members by Tribal councils or on a first-come first-served basis from a public dock.

Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed in this section can be accessed online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

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

This project concluded operations on September 10, 2022. The cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) was 574.32 for chum salmon, which is below the average of 1,519.19 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 44.22, which is well below the average of 395.49 as of September 10.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

This project concluded operations on September 12, 2022. The fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 610.00, which is below the median of 2,035.33 for this date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 259.00, which is well below the median of 1,084.03 for this date.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The project concluded operations on September 7, 2022. The preliminary cumulative passage chum salmon passage estimate from July 19 through September 7 was 325,202 fish, which is below the median passage of approximately 707,000 fish for this date. Chum salmon genetic stock proportions were applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 237,000 fall chum salmon that came into the river after July 19. As of September 7, the cumulative passage of coho salmon is approximately 92,101 fish, which is below the median of 145,000 fish through this date.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began counting fish on August 8. As of September 25, the estimated cumulative passage of fall chum salmon was 64,700 fish, which was well below the median passage of 185,000 for this date. Historically the fall chum salmon run is 90% complete by this date at this project. The sustainable escapement goal for this system is 85,000 to 234,000 fall chum salmon and will not be achieved.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon is 16,230 fish (including a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on September 25 through October 9), this estimate is well below the median passage of 92,000 for this date.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon is 22,075 fish (including a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on October 6 through October 18), this estimate is well below the median passage of 165,000 for this date. The interim management escapement goal for the Yukon River Canadian mainstem stocks, as estimated by the sonar passage minus upstream harvest, is 70,000 to 104,000 fall chum salmon and will not be achieved.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon is 3,800 fish (including a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on September 27 through October 13), this estimate is well below the median passage of 30,000 for this date.

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

This project began operations on September 7. As of October 13, the estimated cumulative passage was 2,600 fall chum salmon, which was well below the median passage of 25,729 for this date. The interim management escapement goal for this system is 22,000 to 49,000 fall chum salmon and will not be achieved based on the poor run size observed in 2022.

Tanana River Escapement Assessment (ADF&G)

Escapement foot surveys (primarily counting fall chum salmon) begin the first week of October in the Delta River and typically occur weekly through the end of November. The Delta River is an index of escapement in the Tanana River and has a sustainable escapement goal of 7,000 to 20,000 fall chum salmon. In 2020, the Delta River was the only fall chum salmon escapement goal achieved in the drainage. Aerial surveys will also be conducted in various other area in the Tanana River drainage for both fall chum and coho salmon in late October or early November during typical peak spawning times.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon has concluded for the season. The estimates from the entire fall season, from July 19 through September 7, that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar, contained approximately 27% summer chum and 73% fall chum salmon. The fall component entering after July 19, were comprised of 31% Border/US (Teedriinjik/Sheenjok/Draanjik), 10% Canadian, and 59% Tanana Fall stocks.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 394 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through September 4, consisted of 78% age-4 and 20% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2021 historical averages of 67% age-4 and 30% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 4 was 54% which is below the historical average (1986–2021) of 58%. The average length of 566 mm (n=421) is well below the historical average of 592 mm from 1981–2021. The percentage of female coho salmon through September 6 was 41% which is below the average (1986–2021) of 47% for this date. For coho salmon, the average length of 546 mm (n=48) is well below the historical average of 575 mm from 1981–2021.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

Coastal District, Districts 1-3, and Subdistrict 4-A (Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk):

Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (Galena and Ruby):

Subsistence fishing for chum salmon is closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels, dip nets, and hook and line gear may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon; however, chum salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum salmon may not enter a livebox.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Sunday, October 16** subsistence salmon fishing will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear. All fish caught may be retained.

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

Subsistence fishing for chum salmon is closed through December. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and pink, sockeye, and coho salmon; however, chum salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum salmon may not enter a livebox.

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species and gillnet gear may not exceed three and one-half inches in the South Fork of the Koyukuk River drainage upstream from the mouth of the Jim River, and in the Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River drainage upstream from the mouth of the North Fork.

District 5 (including Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Circle, and Eagle):

Subsistence fishing for chum salmon is closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon; however, chum salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum salmon may not enter a livebox. In Birch Creek and the subsistence area of Beaver Creek below Moose Creek, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 3 inches.

Effective at the dates and times listed below, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Thursday, October 20** in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart).

Effective **8:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 26** in Subdistrict 5-D Lower (Stevens Village and Beaver).

Effective **8:00 a.m. Sunday, October 30** in Subdistrict 5-D Middle and Upper (Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Central, Circle, and Eagle).

Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh size will no longer be restricted to 60 feet in length. In Birch Creek and the subsistence area of Beaver Creek below Moose Creek, gillnet mesh size may not exceed 3 inches.

Porcupine and Teedriinjik River drainages (Fort Yukon, Arctic Village, Venetie, and Chalkyitsik):

Subsistence fishing for chum salmon is closed through December. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon; however, chum salmon must be released alive.

General reminders for winter subsistence fishing in District 5 are as follows: Only while ice fishing may a hook and line attached to a rod or pole be used. A subsistence permit is required to fish year-round for all species in Subdistrict 5-C and a portion of Subdistrict 5-D from two miles below Waldron Creek to the mouth of the Dall River and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (including the Kantishna River drainage, Lake Minchumina, Manley, Old Minto area, Minto, and Nenana) **and the Upper Tanana Area** (including the Delta Junction area, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Northway, and Nabesna):

Subsistence fishing for chum salmon is closed. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon; however, chum salmon must be released alive. While using manned fish wheels, chum salmon may not enter a livebox. Subsistence fishing for nonsalmon within Lake Minchumina and the

Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats, is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Sunday, October 30**, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon gear. All fish caught may be retained. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh size will no longer be restricted to 60 feet in length.

Kantishna and Nenana River drainages:

Subsistence fishing for fall chum salmon is closed through December, excluding Lake Minchumina. Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon but are restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. Manned fish wheels and dip nets may be used for nonsalmon and coho salmon; however, chum salmon must be released alive.

General reminders for winter subsistence fishing in District 6 are as follows: Only while ice fishing may a hook and line attached to a rod or pole be used in subsistence areas of District 6. A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in Upper Tanana Area and for northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats.

Personal Use Management Actions

Personal Use Salmon Fishing

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

Personal Use salmon fishing will remain closed for 2022.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing

Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (a portion of the Tanana River drainage from the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank, which includes Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction):

Personal use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels is closed. Fishing with other gear for whitefish and suckers remains open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, subject to permit stipulations. Only whitefish and suckers may be retained.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Sunday, October 30**, personal use whitefish and sucker fishing will open with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets limited to 60 feet or shorter.

A personal use whitefish and sucker permit and a current sport fish license are required. Contact the Fairbanks office at (907) 459-7274 for a permit application.

Federal Special Action

Federal special actions in federal public waters of the Yukon River were rescinded effective 12:01 a.m. October 1. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this advisory announcement. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.

This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS.

Federal Special Actions will be posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements will be posted on www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov/ and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG.

ADF&G subsistence fishing permits are available at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store

