



Advisory Announcement

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2024 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #15

Fall Update # 7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

The 2024 Yukon River fall chum and coho salmon runs are projected to be one of the lowest on record (1974–2023). The fall chum salmon run is projected to be 204,000–230,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 900,000 fish. The coho salmon run size based on late run timing is projected to be 85,000 fish compared to a historical average run index of 222,000 fish. According to the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, the inseason projection requires closures for subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial fishing. A run of this size will not meet the drainagewide escapement goal of 300,000–600,000 fall chum salmon, and unlikely to meet any tributary escapement goals or Canadian treaty objectives. Due to the poor salmon runs, subsistence fishing for coho salmon closed and nonsalmon subsistence fishing time with 4-inch gillnets was reduced to protect migrating salmon.

Genetic analysis applied to the fish passage estimates at the Yukon River mainstem sonar near Pilot Station indicates 186,000 fall chum salmon are in the river as of September 2, compared to the historical median of 880,000 fish (Figure 1). Fall chum salmon typically take 39 days to migrate from the mouth of the Yukon River to the U.S./Canada border, using an estimated travel rate of 35 miles per day.

Coho salmon have arrived later and weaker than average in all the Lower Yukon River assessment projects. At the mainstem Yukon River sonar project near Pilot Station, 61,000 coho salmon have been counted as of September 2, compared to a historical cumulative median of 165,000 fish (Figure 2). The primary parent year for coho salmon this year is from the escapements in 2020.

Fall Assessment Projects

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

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

Fall season operations began on July 16 using 6-inch mesh gear to target fall chum and coho salmon. Through September 2, the fall chum salmon cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) was 1,054.13, which is below the historical median of 1,261.45 for this date. As of September 2, the coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 50.17, which is well below the historical median of 339.77 for that date. Coho salmon run timing this year is late compared to median.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing / Asacarsarmiut Tribal Council

Fall season operations began on July 18. As of September 2, the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE was 1,575.88, which is below the historical median of 1,891.36 for that date. As of September 2, the coho salmon cumulative CPUE was 119.92, which is below the historical median of 815.15 for that date. Coho salmon run timing this year is late compared to median.

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

The sonar project operated near Pilot Station transitioned to fall season chum salmon counts on July 19. As of September 2, the cumulative passage is approximately 234,000 chum salmon. This compares to a median cumulative passage of 669,000 chum salmon for this date. Genetic analysis applied to the fish passage estimates at the Yukon River mainstem sonar near Pilot Station indicates 186,000 fall chum salmon are in the river as of September 2, compared to the historical median of 880,000 fish.

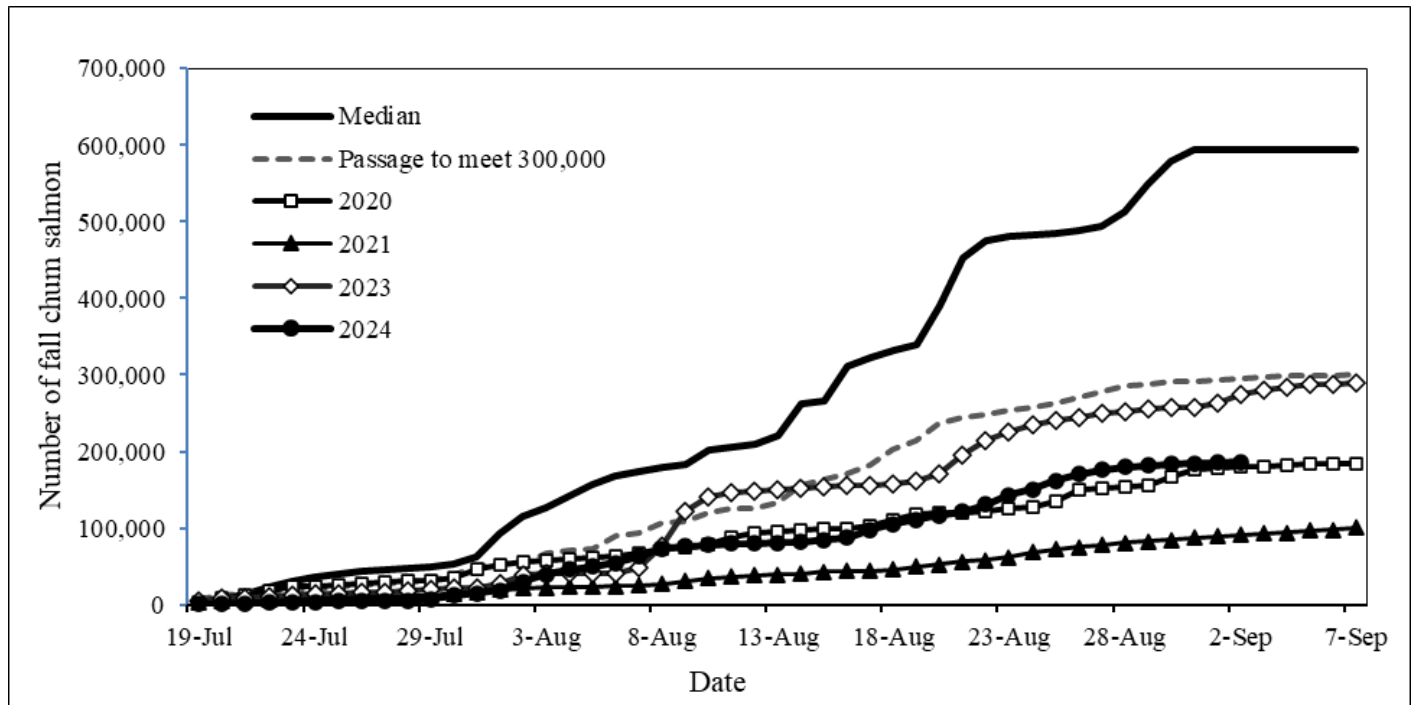


Figure 1. Cumulative passage of fall chum salmon at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2024 compared to the historical median and select years. The dashed line is the passage required to meet the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal.

For coho salmon the cumulative passage as of September 2 is approximately 61,000 fish, which is below the median passage of 133,000 fish for this date. The three-quarter point, based on late run timing, occurs on September 1.

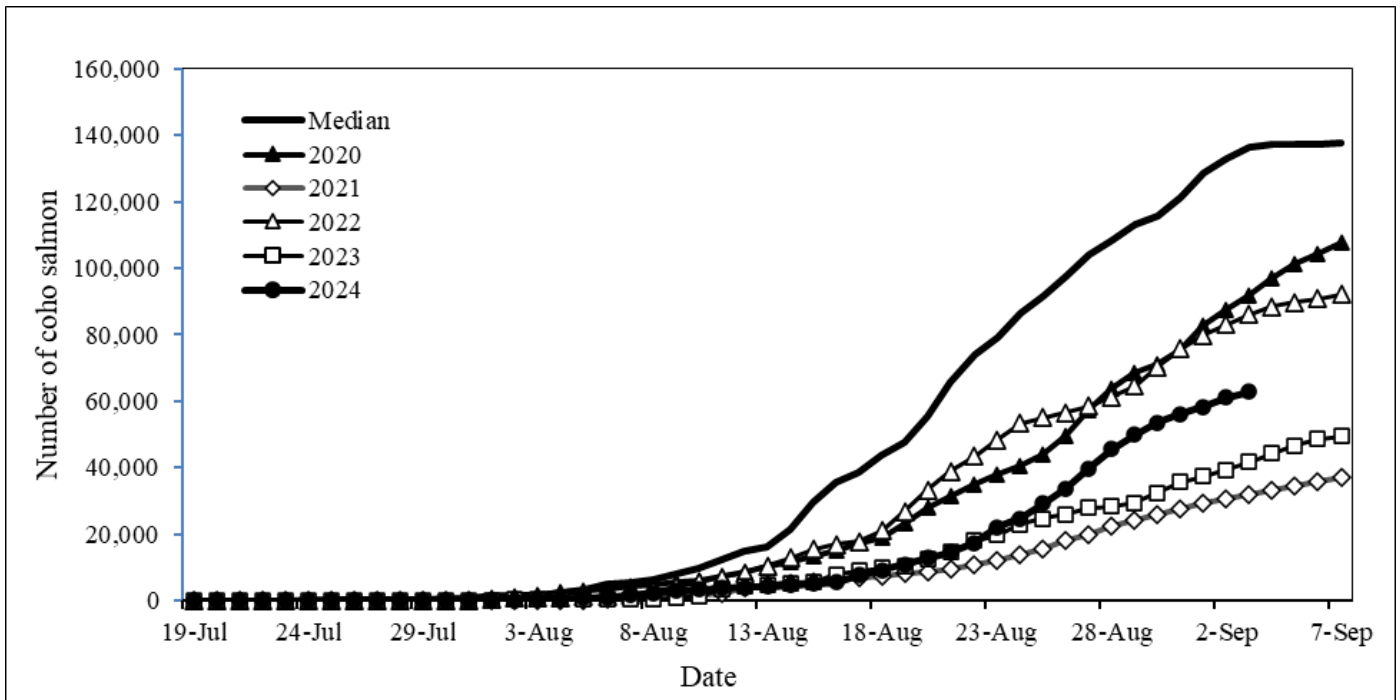


Figure 2. Cumulative passage of coho salmon at the mainstem Yukon River sonar project (Pilot Station) in 2024 compared to the historical median and select years.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

The sonar project began operations on August 5. As of September 2, the cumulative passage was 8,128 fall chum salmon, which is well below the median of 45,000 fish. The Teedriinjik escapement goal is 85,000–234,000 fall chum salmon. The first quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on September 5, at this project.

Sheenjek River Sonar / ADF&G

The sonar project began operations on August 5. As of September 2, the cumulative passage was 1,630 fall chum salmon, which is well below the median of 11,800 fish. The first quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on September 8, at this project.

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

This project transitioned to counting fall chum salmon on August 27. As of September 2, the cumulative passage was 590 fall chum salmon, which is well below the median of 5,400 fish.

Porcupine River Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

The sonar project began counting fall chum salmon on August 11. As of September 2, the cumulative passage was 1,568 fall chum salmon which is below the historical average of 5,300 fish. The first quarter point for fall chum salmon typically occurs on September 4, at this project.

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

The project is began counting on September 1. The interim management escapement goal is 22,000–49,000 fall chum salmon for this system.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 550 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 25, consisted of 64% age-4 and 35% age-5 fish, which compared to the 2001–2023 historical averages of 69%

age-4 and 29% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 2 was 43% which is below the 2001–2023 historical average of 58%. The average length from 555 fall chum salmon of 573 mm is well below the 2001–2023 historical average of 584 mm.

The age composition of 24 coho salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through August 25, consisted of 24% age-3 and 71% age-4 and 5% age-5 fish, which compared to the 2001–2023 historical averages of 18% age-3, 77% age-4, and 5% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 2 was 46%, which is average 2001–2023 historical. The average length from 38 coho salmon was 553 mm which is below the 2001–2022 historical average of 563 mm.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon that passed the mainstem sonar from August 20 through August 26 are currently in the lab. When results are available, they will be provided in the following weekly advisory announcement or look for them in the ADF&G Yukon River daily update for those who subscribe: <http://list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate>.

Summer Assessment Projects

Chinook Radio Telemetry (ADF&G)

This was the second year of a three-year effort to capture and tag up to 500 Chinook salmon near Emmonak and track upriver migration to evaluate concerns for *en route* mortality. Tagging in the lower river concluded on July 12 with 182 tags deployed. Tracking operations are ongoing using remote tracking towers and aerial surveys within both Alaska and Canada. Each fish was tagged with both an internal radio tag and an external spaghetti tag. **If you encounter a tagged fish this season and are successful at documenting the tag number, please call 1-877-467-2104 to report information about when and where the fish was observed.** As a thank you for voluntarily reporting the tag number and associated information, you will be automatically entered into the ADF&G salmon tag lottery. More information about the project can be found on posters in communities along the river or at the ADF&G offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Emmonak. Please contact Josh Clark at 907-267-2217 or Fred West at 907-267-2237 with any questions.

Eagle Sonar (ADFG)

This project transitioned to counting fall chum on August 27. The preliminary inseason cumulative passage was 24,112 Chinook salmon \pm 295 fish (90% Confidence Interval), which is below the historical cumulative average of 49,734 fish.

Current Subsistence Management Actions

As a reminder, all gillnets must be marked with a buoy, float, or keg that has the fisherman's first initial, last name, and address. In Districts 3-6, submerged gillnets may be used for subsistence and personal use during ice-free months, however nets must have a visible buoy, keg, or cluster of floats attached to both ends of the net, plus a third in the middle if the net is over 60 feet in length.

Due to the extremely poor salmon runs, subsistence fishing for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon is closed and nonsalmon subsistence fishing time with 4-inch gillnets is reduced to protect migrating salmon. Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole (excluding District 6), hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seine, manned fish wheel, and spear. If closures are in place for a salmon species, they must be released alive immediately from nonsalmon gear (other than 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets).

Coastal District, Districts 1-4, Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C, and the Innoko, Anvik, and Koyukuk River drainages (including Chevak through Rampart):

Subsistence fishing for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon is closed. Fishing with selective gear types (dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear) is open for nonsalmon and pink and sockeye salmon. Chum, coho, and Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately.

Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon **12:01 am Fridays through 11:59 p.m. Sundays. All gillnets will be closed Mondays through Thursdays likely for the remainder of the salmon season.** There will be an announcement in late September when restrictions are relaxed. Nets are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net near shore.

A subsistence fishing permit is required for all species in the South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles, including the communities of Wiseman and Coldfoot. Gillnet gear for nonsalmon in this permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size. A subsistence permit is also required to fish for all species in Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area).

Subdistrict 5-D (including Stevens Village through Eagle):

Subsistence fishing for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon is closed. Fishing with selective gear types (dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear) is open for nonsalmon. Chum, coho, and Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately.

Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon **12:01 am Fridays through 11:59 p.m. Sundays. All gillnets will be closed Mondays through Thursdays likely for the remainder of the salmon season.** There will be an announcement in October when restrictions are relaxed. Nets are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net near shore.

A subsistence permit is required to fish for all species in the portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of Dall River and from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.

Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B, and the Upper Tanana Area (including the Kantishna River drainage and Manley through Nenana) **and the Upper Tanana Area** (including the Delta Junction area through Nabesna):

Subsistence fishing for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon is closed. Fishing with selective gear types (dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear) is open for nonsalmon and pink and sockeye salmon. Chum, coho, and Chinook salmon must be released alive immediately.

Gillnets of 4-inch or smaller mesh may be used to target nonsalmon **12:01 am Fridays through 11:59 p.m. Sundays. All gillnets will be closed Mondays through Thursdays likely for the remainder of the salmon season.** There will be an announcement in late September when restrictions are relaxed. Nets are restricted to 60-feet or less in length and must be operated as a set net near shore.

In Lake Minchumina and the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats, subsistence fishing for nonsalmon will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

A reminder to fishermen that a subsistence permit is required to fish for salmon in the Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and Kantishna River drainage), northern pike in the Tolovana River drainage (including Minto Flats), and all species in the Upper Tanana Area. A subsistence salmon permit is not required in Lake Minchumina.

Personal Use Management Actions

Subdistrict 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 salmon fishing is closed.

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 fishwheels is closed. Fishing with other gear for whitefish and suckers in this area remains open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day, subject to permit stipulations.

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for whitefish and sucker in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Permits and licenses are available from the ADF&G Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.

Federal Special Action

ADF&G and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have coordinated on this advisory announcement. The USFWS Federal Inseason Manager has previously issued separate Federal special actions with the same fishing schedule and gear restrictions, that restricts fishing to federally qualified subsistence users in waters adjacent to Federal Land. To reach the USFWS Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager, call Holly Carroll at 907-351-3029.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G and the USFWS. Federal Special Actions will be posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions.

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

