

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #12 – August 17, 2010**

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Emmonak, Kotlik, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, The Rapids, Fairbanks, Circle, Eagle

Subsistence Reports: Fishing effort remains low through most of the river. High water, debris, and rainy weather through much of the week have kept many people from fishing. Some fall chum and coho salmon were reported in the lower and middle river. Water levels have dropped in the upper river where fishers are waiting for the fall chum to arrive. Elsewhere on the river, people are moose and goose hunting, berry picking, and harvesting firewood from the river.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The fall chum run has not developed as expected. Two pulses have passed Pilot Station; based on run reconstruction, the cumulative fall chum run size to date is 200,000 fish, well below the average of 550,000 fish for this date. Based on lower Yukon River assessment projects, the current projected total run size ranges from 340,000 to 400,000 fish. Wide swings in production rates have been observed in recent years in the fall chum run, which has also been retuning later than average. A low assessment of the run at this time may not indicate a poor run; additional pulses of fall chum are anticipated this week and may substantially change the run assessment.

Because of concerns for the fall chum salmon run size, a windowed subsistence schedule will be implemented in Y-1 effective 8 a.m. August 18 and in Y-2 and Y-3 at 8 a.m. on August 20. If assessment of the fall chum salmon run does not improve, upriver districts can anticipate returning to windowed subsistence fishing schedule. Currently Y-4 and Y-5 are still open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Subdistrict 4-A above the mouth of Stink Creek is open to drifting. Further reductions in subsistence fishing opportunity may occur if projections continue to indicate low abundance.

The coho salmon run is anticipated to be average based on the primary parent year escapement in 2006. No substantial pulses have been observed yet. Cumulative passage at Pilot Station as of August 16 is 21,000 fish, which is below the average of 49,000 for that date.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

DFO Input: Total Chinook salmon border escapement is 33,000 fish, which is well below the escapement goal. This puts Canadian management deep into the Yellow Zone. There is no commercial fishing, the sportfishing quota is set to zero and Tatchun Creek will be closed to all angling. Assessment projects in Canada are all below average to date. Approximately 3500 Chinook salmon have passed the Big Salmon Sonar, which is about 66% of the average. Blind Creek Weir has counted 243 Chinook salmon, 38% of the average for this date. At the Whitehorse Fish Way, 68 Chinook salmon have been counted which is 10% of the average. To

date, total First Nations harvest is approximately 1,300 Chinook salmon. Due to conservation measures and the fact that many First Nations have fully stopped fishing, DFO does not expect this total to increase much. The fall chum run is looking below preseason estimates, but it is still too early to project the Canadian run.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

There were very few comments on the call. ADF&G clarified the subsistence fishing and drifting schedule for a few callers who had questions about it. One caller had a question about the genetic analysis of the fall chum salmon to date. The last analysis ADF&G did revealed that 30% of the chum salmon past Pilot Station were summer chum and 69% were fall chum salmon. Of the fall chum salmon, 13% of them were Tanana River stocks. It was also asked if it was possible to separate out the Sheenjek and Chandalar River stocks in the genetic analysis. ADF&G answered in the negative.