

## Weekly Teleconference Summaries 2003

### Call # 1 – June 3, 2003

#### Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	Anvik	Allakaket	Selkirk, YT
Alakanuk	Grayling	Alatna	Whitehorse, YT
Emmonak	Kaltag	Wiseman	
Mtn. Village	Nulato	Galena	
St. Mary's	Koyukuk	Tanana	
Marshall	Huslia	Ft. Yukon	

#### State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Emmonak, Anchorage  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel, Galena  
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage

#### Other organizations and businesses

Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA), Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (BSFA),  
Interior Fish, Council of Athabaskan Tribes (CATG)

#### Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers reported that fish have been caught upriver as far as Holy Cross. Reports are that the fish arrived very early. The qualities of the kings are excellent, with bright colors, firm meat and well-developed egg and sperm sacs. There were several reports of kings and chums running together, which elders say this means this is going to be a good run.

Report in Emmonak said that the kings are averaging 25-30 lbs. and that 30 chums were caught within 15 minutes. Upriver in Marshall they are reporting catching 10-15 kings per drift and no chums yet.

The water level is very low and not much silt (pretty clear) and low load debris. Fishers on the Koyukuk River said their water level rose 10-12 inches overnight and there is more snow to melt up in the mountains.

#### Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:

Breakup was early this year and the test fishery started on May 27<sup>th</sup>. Other years that compare to this years run timing are: 1995, 1991, and then back in the mid-1980's.

This is only the fourth day for the test nets to be in the water, so little test fishery information is available. CPUE is 2.5 as of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, but it's early in the run and ADFG needs more time to gather information for run assessment.

The water level is low with little debris, which can make the test net fishery more efficient. They have caught 100 kings, which 36% are 5 year olds, 52% are 6 year olds, and 34% female. This is similar to other years.

Pilot Station Sonar camp is set-up and should start counting by June 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>. An error was detected in the program ADFG used in previous years to estimate fish at Pilot Station. The error caused the counts for summer chum to increase by 10-12%, fall chum to increase by 5-10%, and the king run to decrease by 40%. This error will not affect management and will be used in time series data.

Radio telemetry project should start fishing on June 4<sup>th</sup> and placing radio tags.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

Y-1 and Y-2 are on schedule and Y-3 will start on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Right now the schedule will not change.

Please visit [http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/NEWS/ayk\\_news.htm#yuknr](http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/NEWS/ayk_news.htm#yuknr) for latest commercial and subsistence schedules.

**Input by YR DFA Board of Directors:**

Lester Wilde (Hooper Bay) – the fish were early and the herring were way early.

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – Agencies need to get a handle on the stock apportionment of fish coming in the lower Yukon.

John Lamont (Emmonak) – the run is earlier this year and when chums come in with kings that usually means the run is going to be strong

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – run was very early, subsistence efforts in their area were curtailed due to a storm that came through with cold, damp weather.

**Public Comments (management reply):**

Managers need to consider how long it takes users to catch fish (*question has been added to survey*), concerns over the early fish not counted (*those will be considered*), concerns over when will there be a decision about commercial fishing (*once needs are met, escapement goals reached and no sooner than mid-season*) and making sure a buyer is on hand because it can interfere with subsistence fishing.

**Call # 2 – June 10, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay	Pilot Station	Allakaket	Selkirk, YT
Nunam Iqua	Marshall	Wiseman	Mayo, YT
Alakanuk	Grayling	Galena	
Emmonak	Nulato	Beaver	
Mtn. Village	Koyukuk	Venetie	
St. Mary’s	Huslia		

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station and Russian Mission  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Galena and McGrath  
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage

**Other organizations and businesses**

Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA), Interior Fish, Council of Athabascan Tribes (CATG), Dawson Commercial Fishing Association, Mascurilq Fish

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far as Galena and chums as far as Mountain Village. Reports are that the fish are about a week early. The qualities of the fish are good, the same or better than last year, in both physical appearance and numbers.

Some subsistence fishers in and around Alakanuk are finished fishing for kings and have their chum nets in.

The water level is still low and clear with low load debris around Emmonak, but the water is starting to rise up by Galena and around Holy Cross and Marshall. There is also more debris around those areas where the water has risen and the water is murkier than a week ago. In some areas the water is rising a foot a day. Fishers on the Koyukuk River said the river is bank to bank, has high load debris and is murky, so fishers are fishing for whitefish in the side channels and sloughs.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

Since the test nets were set on May 27<sup>th</sup>, the kings continued to increase until May 31<sup>st</sup> and have remained steady since then. The CPUE is 6.50 as of June 9<sup>th</sup> and the highest catch to date was on June 8<sup>th</sup> with a CPUE of 0.76. The kings aged to date, which 31% are 5 year olds, 63% are 6 year olds and 6% are 7 year olds, and 39% female. There have been no 4 year olds caught to date; therefore that's why fishers are seeing no small fish. There have been 70 summer chum aged. The king run is a week earlier than normal and the river around Emmonak still remains low with little debris.

The drift net fishery started May 28<sup>th</sup> and as of June 9<sup>th</sup> the chinook CPUE is 47.27 and summer chum is 27.87. This is only the third year for this test fishery, so there isn't sufficient data to compare it to.

Pilot Station sonar started counting on June 5<sup>th</sup>. As of June 9<sup>th</sup> there has been approximately 27,000 chinook and approximately 23,000 summer chum pass by.

Radio telemetry started tagging fish on June 5<sup>th</sup> and has tagged approximately 122 chinook as of June 9<sup>th</sup>. The goal is 1,000. Managers want to remind fishers to be on the look out for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag or take it to your community representative. It is very important to report catches of tagged fish, and if the fisher responds quickly that tag may be able to be deployed again.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

Kings are coming in about as anticipated. At this point there appears to be sufficient abundance for escapement and subsistence use, but it is not believed the run will support a commercial fishery. The run will be monitored closely and assessed daily.

The subsistence fishery will be staying on the schedule.

Please visit [http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/NEWS/ayk\\_news.htm#yuknr](http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/NEWS/ayk_news.htm#yuknr) for latest commercial and subsistence schedules.

**Input by YRDLA Board of Directors:**

Lester Wilde (Hooper Bay) – people may want to be on the look out for strange salmon. On June 4<sup>th</sup> there was some type of spill in Hooper Bay and fishers pulled their nets. Some dead kings washed up on the beach and those caught had a natural appearance, but were found to have been contaminated by something. ADFG was called and traveled to Hooper Bay a couple of days later, but didn't notice anything unusual. It was probably gone by the time they arrived. ADEC has been called and samples will be collected if they haven't already and they won't know anything more until results come in. So, please report any unusual salmon during the teleconferences.

**Public Comments (management reply):**

Concerns over the number of fish that passed Pilot Station before it was operational (*those will be considered for management purposes, but probably won't know an approximate number until after the season*), what do we do if we catch a king with a radio tag (*please call the number on the tag or give it to the ADFG representative in your community*), what is the mid-range number for Pilot Station (*at Pilot Station we are not looking for a number, but more of an index*), how are the ages of fish used to determine run strength (*the age doesn't determine run strength it is used to determine abnormalities in the run*).

**Call # 3 – June 17, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay YT	St. Mary's	Nulato	Tanana	Selkirk,
Alakanuk Whitehorse, YT	Marshall	Koyukuk		
Emmonak Mtn. Village	Holy Cross Grayling	Allakaket Galena		

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Russian Mission

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Galena

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

**Other organizations and businesses**

Interior Fish Processors, Yukon River Fishing Association, Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), and Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (BSFA)

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far as the Rampart Rapids and summer chum as far as St. Mary's. Reports are that the fish are still running about a week early. The qualities of the fish are good, the same or better than last year, in both physical appearance and numbers. Smaller fish were reported this week.

Most chinook subsistence fishing is finished in communities up to Marshall and as of last night the chinook catches have increased around Holy Cross. The water level has risen all along the river and remains steady. The water also seems to be more the normal color than last week. The debris load varies from community.

The Koyukuk River fishers report that the water level has dropped and the debris is moving out. They are slowly starting to catch king salmon in their drift nets.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

Since the test nets were set on May 27<sup>th</sup>, the kings continued to increase through May 31<sup>st</sup> and remained steady until June 10<sup>th</sup> when a pulse hit on June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The CPUE is 15.08 as of June 17<sup>th</sup> and the highest catch to date was on June 12<sup>th</sup> with a catch of 238 chinook and a catch of 159 on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The kings aged to date, which 29% are 5 year olds, 64% are 6 year olds and 8% are 7 year olds, and 45% female. The chums aged to date, which 48% are 4 year olds, 45% are 5 year olds, and 32% are female. The king run continues to be 5-7 days ahead of schedule. The water levels around Emmonak have risen since last week and there is more of a debris load.

The drift net fishery started May 28<sup>th</sup> and as of June 17<sup>th</sup> the chinook CPUE is 200 and summer chum CPUE is 541. This is only the third year for this test fishery, so there isn't sufficient data to compare it to. Pilot Station sonar started counting on June 5<sup>th</sup>. and as of June 17<sup>th</sup> there has been approximately 129,000 chinook and approximately 123,000 summer chum pass by. The pulse of chinook salmon was recorded on June 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>.

Radio telemetry started tagging fish on June 5<sup>th</sup> and has tagged approximately 370 chinook with yellow spaghetti tags as of June 17<sup>th</sup>. The goal is 1,000. There are also 40 chinook that have pink spaghetti tags that indicate they have archival tags. The archival tags record temperature and depth. Managers want to remind fishers to be on the look out for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative. It is very important to report catches of tagged fish, and if the fisher responds quickly that tag may be able to be deployed again.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

Summer chum started to move in last week and the run is similar to or better than last year.

The chinook are holding and are providing for escapement and subsistence harvests. There was a six hour commercial fishing period in Y-1 on June 16<sup>th</sup> and another to take place on June 18<sup>th</sup> in Y-2 from 6 PM until midnight using mesh 8 inches or larger. In Y-1 and Y-2 the subsistence schedule will revert to the pre-2001 Subsistence Regulations. The subsistence fishing schedule will begin in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C on June 20. All other areas remain the same until further notice.

Please visit [http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/NEWS/ayk\\_news.htm#yuknr](http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/NEWS/ayk_news.htm#yuknr) for latest commercial and subsistence schedules.

**Input by YRDLFA Board of Directors:**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – was disappointed to hear about commercial fishing after the big pulse of chinook went by. Fishing the bigger pulses would ease up pressure on the smaller pulses. But, glad to hear the run can support a commercial opening and hopes all subsistence needs will be met.

Lester Wilde (Hooper Bay) – the spill he reported last week in Hooper Bay didn't seem to affect the beach so people resumed fishing. Too bad people weren't able to utilize fish coming in, but glad to see some people were going to make some money. Reports from the Black River say that the kings moved in and out last week.

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – the run looks good and wondered if there were any reports from Stebbins or St. Michael's (*management reply: no, they hadn't heard anything*).

John Lamont (Emmonak) – chinook look better than average.

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – called in before the teleconference to state that he hasn't heard any complaints about the commercial fishery opening in Y-1 and he doesn't have any either. In fact, he hopes they'll have a commercial opening in his area soon.

**Public Comments (*management reply*):**

How many fish were harvested in the commercial opener (*best guess is 9,000-10,000*), how much earlier is the chinook run (*approximately 5-7 days*), what % of the run is 4 year olds (*not for sure because we need to know the total abundance, but we are just starting to see smaller fish in the nets*), was escapement met on the mainstem last year (*it was a little below average*), how much better is the run this year as compared to the last two years (*the reports from the subsistence fishers and Pilot Station sonar tell us the run is better than it has been the last two years, but it's still early to make an overall statement*), since there is commercial fishing happening can the subsistence regulations be lifted (*the schedule will not be lifted at this time in the upper districts in order to spread out the harvest, but there may be incremental changes to the schedule as the run allows*). Questions about keeping or liberalizing the subsistence schedule provoked many comments from the public and responses by management. This topic needs further discussion among fishers and managers. As well, it was pointed out that fishers need to be better informed and educated in order to participate in the teleconferences and management discussions.

**Call # 4 – June 24, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay	St. Mary's	Nulato	Tanana	Mayo,
YT				
Alakanuk	Pilot Station	Koyukuk	Beaver	
Whitehorse, YT				

Emmonak  
Mtn. Village

Grayling  
Holy Cross

Wiseman  
Galena

Circle  
Minto

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel and Pilot Station

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Galena

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada

**Other organizations and businesses**

Interior Fish Processors, Yukon Delta CDQ and Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far as Circle and summer chum as far as Tanana. Reports are that the fish are still running about a week early. The qualities of the chinook are still good, and running steady in their numbers. At the coast, most are done with subsistence Chinook and chum and they are now seeing pinks. In the Lower river, most chinook subsistence fishing is finished in communities up to Grayling and as of last night the chinook catches have increased around Galena. The water level has dropped approximately one foot since last week, except around the coast and the debris load also seems to be decreasing throughout the river. The Koyukuk River fishers report that the chinook run has increased over the last few days. The water level has dropped and there is less debris, but the water is still a little muddy. There have been several fish caught along the Tanana River and the water level is low. Fishers mentioned the difference between Tanana River stocks as compared to the numbers of fish in the mainstem, which are currently lower. Fishers are anticipating an increase of salmon to begin meeting their subsistence needs.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

Through June 23<sup>rd</sup> the set-net cumulative CPUE is 18.91. When adjusted for run timing, this is below the average CPUE, but above the previous three years. The kings aged to date, which 27% are 5 year olds, 64% are 6 year olds and 8% are 7 year olds, and 46% female. The water levels around Emmonak remain high and the debris load is low. The large pulse of chinook that entered the mouth of the river on June 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> is thought to be around Grayling and Kaltag. The mid-point of the run was around June 14-16 at Emmonak test fishing gillnets. Through June 23<sup>rd</sup> the drift net cumulative CPUE is 309.5 and summer chum CPUE is 785. This is only the third year for this test fishery, so there isn't sufficient data to compare it to.

As of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, approximately 183,000 chinook have passed by Pilot Station sonar station. The passage of chinook is well above the season ending total for years 2001 and 2002. This is the highest number of fish recorded at Pilot Station sonar.

Radio telemetry is in its fourth week of operation and has tagged approximately 700 chinook with yellow spaghetti tags as of June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The goal is 1,000 tagged fish. There are 40 chinook with pink spaghetti tags that indicate archival tags, which record temperature and depth. There has been five times more chinook moving up the Yukon River than the Tanana River. The tagged fish are moving approximately 39 miles/day. Managers want to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative. It is very important to report catches of tagged fish, and if the fisher responds quickly that tag may be able to be deployed again.

There have been three commercial openings to date; two openings in Y-1 and one in Y-2. The preliminary harvest is approximately 26,000 chinook and 2,800 summer chum. Additional commercial openings have been scheduled for Y-1, Y-2 and Y-4.

Approximately 289,000 summer chum have passed by Pilot Station to date, which indicates the summer chum index is half of what it should be. The projected run size is currently 700,000 – 850,000, which is below the threshold needed for commercial fishing, but above the threshold to restrict subsistence fishing.

Most escapement projects are just getting set up and some of them are delayed due to high water. Andreafsky Weir is operational and has counted 694 summer chum and 4 chinook.

### **Canadian Report**

Test wheels across the border in Canada are up and running, but no catches to date. One king was caught in Old Crow on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. DFO mentioned that they are reviewing their tagging data from last year and have found conflicting views. They are interested in a data exchange with the U.S. and would like to have the best data possible on border passage.

### **Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook are running steady and projected to provide for escapement and subsistence. There will be a commercial opening in Y-2 on June 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM until midnight. A commercial opening for chinook salmon in Districts 4, 5, and 6 are anticipated near the end of June or early July, depending on the availability of buyers. Due to the low numbers of summer chum entering the mouth of the river, subsistence fishing in Y-1 is closed until June 29<sup>th</sup> and then will revert to the pre-2001 schedule. The chinook run will continue to be monitored. Y-3 will go back on the pre-2001 schedule, Y-4 will go on the pre-2001 schedule starting June 25<sup>th</sup> and Y-5 will go on the pre-2001 schedule sometime in early July.

### **Input by YRDLA Board of Directors:**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – suggests we should have had a commercial opening on the big pulse, and possibly still fish the big pulse in Y-5 and Y-6, where people would be glad to get back to their fish camps. Concerns were raised about Tanana River and mainstem stocks.

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – supports reduced subsistence fishing time for summer chum, but management needs to continue to monitor the king run so that subsistence needs are met and commercial openings are possible.

John Lamont (Emmonak) – Thinks the run is better than ADFG predicts, and supports further commercial openings and doesn't support restricting subsistence fishing, but he would rather have increased commercial time, than subsistence time. Concerns were raised over the roe fishery since the summer chum numbers are currently low.

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – feels that management has a good strategy.

Philip Titus (Minto) – supports commercial fish openings as long as the run can handle it, but wants to make sure the people upriver fulfill their subsistence needs.

### **Public Comments (management reply):**

Are scale samples being taken from tagged fish?(yes, paired samples are being taken but won't be reviewed until after the season), where is the main pulse (between Grayling and Nulato), what is the prevalence of *Ichthyophonus* this year? Bill F. commented that Dr. Kocan had told him that he had detected several fish with the disease at the mouth, and reported on some preliminary numbers. There were further inquiries about the prevalence this year of *Ichthyophonus*. Conversation continued about the visibility of it in fish this year and debated about the difference of a well trained eye that sees the small white lesion on heart at the early stage of the disease as compared to fishers noticing the developed stages of the disease. Questions were also asked about water temperature and how it is affecting *Ichthyophonus*. We hope that further information will be provided to the public at the next teleconference. Lower river fishermen requested further commercial openings and debated the timing of the opening. Other fishers supported ADFG and USFWS management strategy to open the commercial fishery, but hope that upriver subsistence needs get met and shouldn't fish the tail end of the fish as there is now the need to conserve the summer chum as they are a stock of concern.

**Call # 5 – July 1, 2003**

### **Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay Circle	St. Mary's	Nulato	Wiseman
Alakanuk	Holy Cross	Koyukuk	Galena
Emmonak	Grayling	Hughes	Tanana
Mtn. Village	Kaltag	Allakaket	Beaver

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Pilot Station  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Galena, and Holy Cross  
 Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks  
 National Marine Fisheries Service

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Interior Fish Processors, Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA), Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (BSFA) and Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far as Circle. Reports are that the fish are still running about a week early. The qualities of the chinook are still good, with a little blushing reported around Tanana. Reports from the lower river are that the chinooks are still going upstream, but the coast reported people fishing on pinks. One fisher reported that this years run reminded him of the run in 1957, where the chinook run ran pretty steady until mid-July. Most subsistence fishers are done in the lower river; Nulato is about 80% complete, Galena 75% complete and Tanana not at 50% yet. Middle River reports that the north bank is not doing well, but the south bank is doing well. Subsistence fishers around the mouth of the Koyukuk are 90% done and reports that the big pulse hit on June 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, but Bishop Rock is not doing well. The big pulse is just starting to hit Husila on the Koyukuk River. Upper river reports that they are catching a few fish a day and that they will keep trying.

Subsistence fishers reported that summer chum have been caught as far as Tanana and a few at the mouth of the Koyukuk River.

The water level in the Yukon has dropped since last week, but seems to be holding steady throughout. The upper river reports that the river is almost too low to fish. Rain has been reported in various communities that may help increase the water level. There were little reports of debris load. The water level in the Koyukuk River dropped approximately three feet since last week and there is less debris, but the water is still a little muddy. According to a report from Wiseman there is still snow pack up in the mountains melting.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

Through June 30<sup>th</sup> the set-net chinook cumulative CPUE is 24 as compared to the average of 22. This run is above the previous three years, but is not a record year. The kings aged to date, which 27% are 5 year olds, 64% are 6 year olds and 8% are 7 year olds, and 46% female.

Through June 30<sup>th</sup> the drift net chinook cumulative CPUE is 390, which exceeds last years CPUE of 320. The summer chum CPUE is 1292, half of the index as compared to last year. This is only the third year for this test fishery, so there isn't sufficient data to compare it to.

As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, approximately 209,000 chinook and 539,000 summer chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar station.

Radio telemetry has tagged approximately 940 chinook as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. The goal is 1,000 tagged fish. There have been 190 tags recorded going up the Yukon River above the Tanana River, 40 up the Tanana River, and 13 up the Koyukuk River. The tagged fish are moving approximately 32 miles/day. Based on this rate the run should be reaching the border soon. Managers want to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number

on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative. It is very important to report catches of tagged fish, and if the fisher responds quickly that tag may be able to be deployed again. Please do not cut off the antenna, this prevents the tag from being redeployed.

There have been several commercial openings to date in Y-1, Y-2, and Y-4. The preliminary harvest in Y-1 and Y-2 is approximately 33,000 chinook and 4,200 summer chum. Y-4 has only caught 350 chinook at this time.

All escapement projects are up and running and are starting to see both chinook and summer chum salmon. Andreafsky weir reports 51 chinook and 2009 summer chum, Clear Creek weir reports 81 chinook, Henshaw weir reports 4 chinook, 6 summer chum, Gissassa weir reports 18 chinook, 1039 summer chum, and Tozitna weir reports 4 chinook and 7 summer chum.

#### **Canadian Report:**

Test wheels across the border in Canada are up and running. The run is slow, but caught 60 today and did observe one radio tag. The water level is low.

#### **Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook run is still holding and providing for escapement and subsistence as well as a few small commercial openings.

There have been commercial opening in Y-1, Y-2 and Y-4. The final commercial opening will happen in Y-1 on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be no more commercial openings in Y-2 because there is no buyer, Y-5 will have a commercial opening on July 4<sup>th</sup> for 6 hours and July 8<sup>th</sup> for 12 hours and there have been no decisions made for Y-6.

State and Federal management entities believe they were flexible with their management strategy by having commercial openings that resulted in a greater harvest than their pre-season projection, but they still need to be conservative and this is apparent from the spacing and duration of commercial openings. The run is holding steady and this last bump should provide for the additional commercial opening in Y-1, but they need to let most of the back half of the run make it upriver for subsistence and escapement. The middle river is not sounding promising right now, but radio tag data is encouraging now.

Y-2 will stay on their current subsistence schedule, Y-3 will stay on their two 36-hour periods per week, Y-4 will be back on the pre-2001 schedule and then on July 8<sup>th</sup> revert to the two 48-hour periods per week.

Currently, the projected end-of-season summer chum salmon run is between 850,000 – 950,000 salmon. This run appears better than the years of 2000 and 2001, but is lower than anticipated for this year. There may be some restricted subsistence fishing in order to provide for escapement and no commercial harvests are planned at this time.

It is time to start thinking about the fall chum since the summer chum just passed their midpoint. The original outlook for the fall chum run was 550,000 – 650,000, but since the summer chum run is lower than anticipated, it is anticipated the fall chum will be similarly lower. A realistic fall chum run may be around 400,000 – 500,000. If these numbers hold true the management plan states that if the run is below 500,000 it would require subsistence restrictions. ADFG is hoping to make those schedule decisions by the end of the summer and would like to have comments on this at the next teleconference.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yüksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

#### **Input by YR DFA Board of Directors:**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) –feels that the overall strategy is good, but still has a problem with the commercial openings after the big pulse has gone by. He feels that this decision is hurting the middle river as the fishers might miss fishing the big pulse and then they don't have the opportunity to fish on the back

half of the run if the department is allowing commercial periods on that portion of the run in the lower river.

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – supports management’s decision on the third commercial opening in Y-1. There was an increase of fish entering last night and feels it is OK.

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – every time the fishing starts to pick up, it drops right back off; having a hard time fishing the expected pulses. The radio telemetry data doesn’t seem to match what fishers are seeing in his area – there seems to be more fish going up the Tanana River than the mainstem (North Bank).

**RAC Comments:**

Gerald Nicola (Tanana) – waiting to see what happens and would like to get more information from the Yukon Flats area.

Benedict Jones (Koyukuk) – the big chinook pulse hit around June 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> then dropped off considerably. The run should be hitting Tanana soon.

Jack Riehoff (Wiseman) – wait and see approach and hopes that management is correct and that all subsistence and escapement needs will be met.

**Public Comments (reply):**

Believes announcing the last commercial opening in Y-1 is premature. Concerns over *Ichthyophonus* (at the next call Joe Sullivan, YRDFA Project Director will have more information on Dr. Kocan’s study), since there is not going to be any more commercial openings in Y-2 can the Y-2 commercial fishers go to Y-1 and commercial fish on July 2<sup>nd</sup> (no, because they would need to register for the Y-1 opener and there is a 72 hour waiting period making that after July 2<sup>nd</sup>), when will the decision be made on restricting the fall chum harvest (will be watching as the summer season winds down).

**Call # 6 – July 8, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay	Pilot Station	Koyukuk	Galena	Dawson City	Whitehorse
Alakanuk	Holy Cross	Huslia	Tanana	Mayo	Burwash Landing
Emmonak	Kaltag	Allakaket	Ft. Yukon	Pelly	Teslin
St. Mary’s	Nulato	Wiseman		Carmacks	

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak and Pilot Station

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, and Fairbanks

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Interior Fish Processors, Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments (CATG), Aboriginal Fisheries

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far as Pelly, YT, Canada (email report from Selkirk First Nation). Most subsistence fishers are done up to Nulato. Areas around Galena said they are starting to see nice, big females and users around Tanana fishing on the north side of the river and the Rampart Rapids area report that they just are not seeing the fish like other users in the lower river. Water levels throughout the drainage seem to be holding from last weeks report, but the river still remains lower than normal.

Reports are that *Ichthyophonus* has been found in fish around Tanana. Dr. Kocan, who is conducting the *Ichthyophonus* research reported that 27% of the king salmon sampled in District 5-A and 35% sampled in District 5-B showed clinical signs (spotting on heart, liver, flesh and meat) of *Ichthyophonus*.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River report that most are done catching king salmon up to Huslia and that the river had crested and was starting to drop. Reports on the Tanana River are that the king salmon run looks strong and that people are fishing.

Subsistence fishers reported catching summer chum upriver as far as Tanana, but the run seems to be weak at this point.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

As of July 8<sup>th</sup>, approximately 250,000 chinook and 989,000 summer chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar station. The summer chum seem to have been a few days late. It is believed that the total will surpass one million summer chum in a day or so, which is above the threshold to support a commercial harvest. However, the harvest will not be large scale since the market is weak for summer chum at this time.

Radio telemetry has tagged approximately 1052 chinook as of July 8<sup>th</sup>. The goal was 1,000 tagged fish. The salmon that were tagged during the first week (June 3<sup>rd</sup>) of the project have been tracked past the Pelly tracking station in the Yukon Territory, Canada. Of the salmon tagged most were mainstem fish, but 6% were tracked in the lower and middle river tributaries (Tozitna, Nulato, etc.) and 22% tracked in the Koyukuk and Gissassa Rivers. The tagged fish are moving approximately 32 miles/day in the mainstem and 28 miles/day in the tributaries. Managers want to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative. It is very important to report catches of tagged fish, and if the fisher responds quickly that tag may be able to be deployed again. Please do not cut off the antenna, this prevents the tag from being redeployed.

There have been several commercial openings to date in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, and Y-5 B & C. The preliminary harvest for all districts combined are approximately 37,500 chinook and 5,300 summer chum.

Most of the escapement projects encountered flooding last week and over the weekend. Andreafsky weir reports a cumulative of 1,113 chinook and 7,810 summer chum. Clear Creek flooded and the weir was not operating until July 4<sup>th</sup>. Henshaw flooded and is still not operating but before the flood reported a cumulative of 10 chinook and 40 summer chum. Gissasa River flooded on July 5<sup>th</sup> and reports from July 7<sup>th</sup> reported a cumulative of 139 chinook and 4861 summer chum. The Tozitna River flooded on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and the weir was not operational until July 6<sup>th</sup> but as of July 7<sup>th</sup> the cumulative totals were 54 chinook and 14 summer chum.

**Canadian Report:**

Test wheels across the border in Canada are up and running and have caught 250 chinook. This is 160% above average for this time of the year, so the run is strong early. As of July 5<sup>th</sup> they believe the border escapement for chinook is 1,800. The forecast for border escapement is 41,000 chinook, which is a cautious estimate. A radio tag was caught up the Stewart River.

**Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook run is winding down at the mouth, but it is still considered for providing for all levels. There have been commercial opening in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, and Y-5 B&C with other openings scheduled for Y-5 D and Y-6 A&B later in the week and next.

Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 will stay on their current subsistence schedule, Y-4 will stay on their two 48-hour periods per week, and Y-5 B&C will be on a 5 day schedule starting July 8<sup>th</sup>, with the second 5 day schedule starting July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Currently, the projected end-of-season summer chum salmon run is greater than one million. This run appears to be picking up and may have just been a few days late. It looks as if all levels will be provided for, but a commercial opening may not be possible due to the lack of a market.

The preseason outlook for the fall chum run was 260,000 – 650,000, but since the summer chum run is starting to pick up, the estimate for the fall chum is slightly becoming more optimistic. A realistic fall chum run may be around 400,000 – 500,000. If these numbers hold true the management plan states that if the run is below 500,000 it would require subsistence restrictions. Ideas for restrictions are: begin season with closures or start subsistence fishing on reduced subsistence schedule. ADFG is taking comments for restriction ideas.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Input by YR DFA Board of Directors:**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – regrets that the lower river did not harvest as many fish as possible during the commercial opening, but is glad to see that the fishers in the upper river will benefit with a commercial opening too. He isn't sure if anyone is going to fish for summer chum, but a couple of commercial openings would be good. As far as the fall chum restrictions he would like for ADFG to look at Y-4 B&C separately. If management is concerned with the upper Yukon fall chum run then they should restrict fishing in Y-4 B (north bank) since this is where the fall chum run. Y-4 C (south bank) is the Tanana River stock (management will look into).

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – suggests since fall chum season starts on the 16<sup>th</sup> he would like to see ADFG use a restricted schedule since folks will be off berry picking. But, the run needs to be monitored.

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – if there is going to be a low fall chum run this year and there is a possibility of no or limited subsistence fishing he would rather that ADFG start with a limited schedule even if it's 24 hours per week. But, he would like to see ADFG split the 24 hours into two 12 hour periods (management will look into). He also reemphasized that ADFG needs to remember how important the subsistence reports are and that they can't entirely rely on the sonar.

Angie Demientieff (Holy Cross) – would like to see some limited fishing for fall chum so that their school program of teaching students how to cut fish and give it to the Elders continues.

John Lamont (Mountain Village) – the fall chum need to be monitored all along the river and decisions need to be made sooner than later so that subsistence times can be spread out.

Bill Alstrom (St. Mary's) – agrees with people along the river to keep a watch on the fall chum because fish are unpredictable. No one should bury their head in the sand because the fish are unpredictable.

**Regional Advisory Members Comments:**

Gerald Nicola (Tanana) – supports a limited opening of 2 periods per week, but suggests making the decision early.

Benedict Jones (Koyukuk) – will go for two 12 hour periods.

Jack Riekoff (Wiseman) – two 12 hour periods is a good idea, but need to have during day light hours. He also liked Gilbert's idea about the Y-4 B&C fishing restrictions.

Mickey Stickman (Nulato) – would like for management to look back at the averages that one great year doesn't make up for all the others. Fall chum are just as important to the people of Nulato as the kings are, so he would like to also see a fall chum opening.

**Public Comments (reply):**

Many supported the two 12 hour subsistence fishing periods (*management is looking into this, but doesn't foresee any problems with it*), if fishing periods are limited management needs to look into times that fall on a weekend for those that work (*management will look into*), concerns over management implying strong run of silvers and chums in the past and now reduced harvest catches, need to make sure the Tanana River fall chum run is strong enough to support commercial fishing, fishers understand conservation concern, but the decision needs to be made early and management needs to use the winter session to strategize.

### Call # 7 – July 17, 2003

#### Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	St. Mary's	Wiseman	Ft. Yukon	Mayo, YT
Alakanuk	Pilot Station	Galena		Whitehorse, YT
Emmonak	Holy Cross	Tanana		
Mtn. Village	Koyukuk	Beaver		

#### State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Emmonak

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Anchorage, and Fairbanks

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

#### Other organizations and businesses:

Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments (CATG)

#### Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far as Carmacks, YT, Canada. Most subsistence fishers are done up to Galena. Around Tanana there seems to be a big pulse of kings running on the north bank as of Sunday, right before subsistence fishing was closed. Up at the Rampart Rapids the fish wheels are starting to catch more kings. The fishers that fish kings on the south bank near Tanana report that the quality of the meat and skin are good. Reports are that *Ichthyophonus* around Tanana is still at about 30%. Water levels throughout the drainage seem to vary, but the consensus is that the water level is lower than normal. One report from Holy Cross stated that someone who went across the river reported lots of king salmon running close to the bank at about 40 feet down, too deep for nets.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River report that kings seem to be reaching Wiseman, but it rained and turned the water cloudy again making it hard to see the fish. One fisher reported that around Koyukuk they are still catching 15 kings per drift. It has been raining throughout the Koyukuk River area raising the river by a foot and it is continuing to rise.

Subsistence fishers as far as Holy Cross are done with summer chum fishing and are just waiting for fall chums. Fishers around Alakanuk and the Andreafsky River are reporting catching pink salmon.

#### Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:

As of July 15<sup>th</sup>, approximately 253,000 chinook and 1,143,000 summer chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar station. The summer chum seem to have been a few days late. It is estimated at this time that the number of summer chum is the best since 1998 and should provide for all levels of use. It is doubtful that there will be a large commercial harvest due to the lack of a buyer. However, there is still concern that the summer chum aren't showing up in the escapement projects as what has passed Pilot Station sonar, but this could be due to the low water levels.

Radio telemetry has completed their tagging project. Approximately 1100 chinook were tagged from June 3<sup>rd</sup> – July 14<sup>th</sup>. The goal was 1,000 tagged fish. The salmon that were tagged during the first week (June 3<sup>rd</sup>) of the project have been tracked past Carmacks in the Yukon Territory, Canada. Of the salmon tagged most were mainstem fish, but 10% were tracked in the lower and middle river tributaries (Tozitna, Nulato,

etc.). The ratio of tagged fish continuing up the Yukon River as compared to the Tanana River is 2 to 1 since the last of June. The tagged fish are moving approximately 32 miles/day in the mainstem. Managers want to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative. It is very important to report catches of tagged fish, and if the fisher responds quickly that tag may be able to be deployed again. Please do not cut off the antenna, this prevents the tag from being redeployed.

There have been several commercial openings to date in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, Y-5 B&C, and Y-6. The preliminary harvest for all districts combined are approximately 39,000 chinook and 4,700 summer chum.

Most of the escapement projects are back up and running since the flooding that occurred last week. All reports are through July 13<sup>th</sup>. Andreafsky weir reported a cumulative of 3,500 chinook and 16,000 summer chum. Anvik weir reported a cumulative of 109,000 summer chum. Clear Creek weir reported a cumulative of 3,000 chinook and 43,000 summer chum. Henshaw weir reported a cumulative of 215 chinook. Gisasa weir reported a cumulative of 900 chinook and 13,000 summer chum. The Tozitna weir reported a cumulative of 1000 chinook and 736 summer chum. Radio tagged fish have been seen at the following weirs: Gisana, Henshaw and Tozitna.

The chinook run is nearly over at the mouth and the run was stronger than expected. However, it is still considered below average at this time.

#### **Canadian Report:**

Test wheels across the border in Canada are up and running and have caught 570 chinook. One wheel is catching large females and the other is catching small males. As of July 12<sup>th</sup> they believe the projected border passage estimate may be around 47,000 chinook, which is a cautious estimate. A two day fishery just ended and the fishing has improved, but is still below average. Fish have been reported being caught in the Stewart and White Rivers.

#### **Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook run is winding down at the mouth, but it is still considered for providing for all levels. There have been commercial opening in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, Y-5 B&C and Y-6 with an additional openings scheduled for Y-5 B&C, Y-5D and Y-6 this week. Please make sure there is a buyer before participating.

Currently, the projected end-of-season summer chum salmon run is greater than one million. This run appears to be picking up and may have just been a few days late. It looks as if all levels will be provided for, but a commercial opening may not be possible due to the lack of a market.

Beginning July 16<sup>th</sup> the reduced subsistence fishing schedule for fall chum will go into effect. Districts Coastal, Y-1, 2, and 3 will have two 12 hour fishing periods on Wednesdays from 8 am to 8 pm and again on Saturdays from 8 am to 8 pm. This reduced fishing allowance is only one third of their normal fishing time. So, as the fall chum start to move upriver the other Districts will have their fishing times reduced to only one third of their normal time. This schedule was developed by taking fishers comments last week during the YRDFA In-season Management Teleconference. This schedule will be re-evaluated once the fall chum look as if they are running stronger.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

#### **Input by YRDFA Board of Directors:**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – supports the fall chum plan.

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – supports the two 12 hour subsistence fishing periods for fall chum, but would like for management to continue to monitor the run in case they can relax the schedule somewhat.

Angie Demientieff (Holy Cross) – glad to see some limited fishing for fall chum so that their school program of teaching students how to cut fish and give it to the Elders will continue.

**Regional Advisory Members Comments:**

Gerald Nicola (Tanana) – supports the fall chum plan.

Benedict Jones (Koyukuk) – supports the two 18 hour fishing periods for fall chum in his district.

Jack Riekoff (Wiseman) – agrees with the fall chum plan and likes seeing everyone getting an opportunity to fish.

Harry Wilde (Mtn. Village) – agrees with the fall chum plan.

**Public Comments (reply):**

What is the number that the fall chum run needs to increase to in order for the fishing schedule to be relaxed (*There is no specific trigger number it really depends on how and when the run builds up. The midpoint of the run is the best time to get a feel for the run strength.*), Why is July 16<sup>th</sup> the beginning of the fall chum subsistence schedule (*July 16<sup>th</sup> is the historical date for the fall chum run*).

**Call # 8 – July 22, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Alakanuk	Holy Cross	Wiseman	Mayo, YT
Emmonak	Koyukuk	Tanana	Pelly Crossing, YT
Mtn. Village	Huslia	Eagle	
St. Mary's	Allakaket		

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak and Pilot Station

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak, Fairbanks and Galena

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Bering Sea Fisherman's Association (BSFA), Interior Fish Processors, and United Catcher Boats

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught upriver as far Pelly, YT, Canada and up. Most subsistence fishers are done with kings up to Tanana. Chinook catches are increasing around Stevens Village, Fort Yukon and Eagle. There were reports from around Fort Yukon about long worms underneath the skin on the kings, other than that the fish look healthy. Reports from the Yukon Territory are that the fish look healthy. Summer chum have been caught as far as Stevens Village and fall chum as far as Tanana. Fishers around Tanana are finding that only 1 in 5 of the fall chum caught are good enough for the smokehouse. Water levels throughout the drainage seem to vary, but the consensus is that the water level is starting to rise.

Subsistence fishers on the lower Koyukuk River are done fishing for kings and are starting to catch summer chum and/or waiting for silvers. It has been raining in the upper Koyukuk River area turning the water cloudy, so fishers in the upper region are not able to see the fish.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

As of July 21<sup>st</sup>, approximately 253,000 chinook and 1,100,000 summer chum, and 38,800 fall chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar. Pilot Station started counting fall chum on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

The chinook salmon are in their terminal areas and escapement goals are expected to be exceeded, and in some locations have been exceeded.

Summer chum estimates at Pilot Station indicate a similar run size to last year, but there are still concerns that the summer chum aren't showing up in the escapement projects as what has passed Pilot Station sonar. It could be that the majority of the summer chum are Tanana River stocks and at this time those escapement projects are not operating due to high water levels. Therefore, no commercial test fisheries will be conducted in Subdistrict 4-C at this time.

The outlook for fall chum is similar to the last two years of 400,000. Therefore, the regulations require reduced fishing times.

The Emmonak drift net test fishery started on July 16<sup>th</sup> and has caught 112 fall chum as of July 21<sup>st</sup>. The Emmonak drift net test fishery is only in its third year. The drift net test fishery in Mountain Village has caught a total of 22 fall chum as of July 21<sup>st</sup>, which is a little below average for this time.

Radio telemetry has completed their tagging project and 1097 chinook were tagged from June 3<sup>rd</sup> – July 14<sup>th</sup>. The goal was 1,000 tagged fish. The salmon that were tagged during the first week (June 3<sup>rd</sup>) of the project have been tracked around the Big Salmon and Teslin Rivers, almost at the headwaters in the Yukon Territory, Canada. Of the salmon tagged most were mainstem fish, but 10% were tracked in the lower and middle river tributaries (Tozitna, Nulato, etc.). The tagged fish are still moving approximately 32 miles/day in the mainstem. Managers would like to thank those fishers who have sent in tags and want to continue to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative.

There have been several commercial openings to date in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, Y-5 B&C, and Y-6. The preliminary harvest for all districts combined are approximately 40,200 chinook and 6,400 summer chum. A commercial period in District Y-6 ends tomorrow (July 23<sup>rd</sup>).

Most of the escapement projects are back up and running with the exception of the Chena and Salcha weirs. All reports are through July 21<sup>st</sup>. Andrafsky weir reported a cumulative of 4,066 chinook and 19,352 summer chum. Anvik weir reported a cumulative of about 227,000 summer chum. Clear Creek weir reported a cumulative of 3,000 chinook and 44,063 summer chum. Henshaw weir reported a cumulative of 504 chinook and 9,061 summer chum. Gisasa weir reported a cumulative of 1,640 chinook and 21,021 summer chum. The Tozitna weir reported a cumulative of 1,669 chinook and 3,372 summer chum.

Other projects to start in the coming week are: Rampart Rapids tagging project, Kaltag drift net test fishery and aerial surveys for both counting and radio telemetry.

#### **Canadian Report:**

As of July 19<sup>th</sup> the border passage estimate is around 19,000 chinook. At this time it is estimated that 40,000 – 60,000 chinook will cross the border.

#### **Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook run is considered complete at the mouth and is still considered for providing for all levels. There have been commercial opening in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, Y-5 B&C and Y-6.

Currently, the projected end-of-season summer chum salmon run is greater than one million, but they are not showing up in the escapement projects. Therefore, no commercial harvests are anticipated.

On July 16<sup>th</sup> the reduced subsistence fishing schedule for fall chum went into effect for Districts Coastal, Y-1, 2, and 3. District Y-4 A will begin their reduced schedule on July 26<sup>th</sup>, Y-4 B&C and the Koyukuk River will begin their reduced schedule on July 30<sup>th</sup>. This reduced fishing allowance is only one third of

their normal fishing time. This schedule was developed by taking fishers comments last week during the YR DFA In-season Management Teleconference. The schedule will be re-evaluated around July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup>.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Input by YR DFA Board of Directors (reply):**

Stanley Ned (Allakaket) – is concerned with the reduced schedule, especially since the fishers around that area are just starting to fish due to the high water and timing (*right now the Koyukuk region is still on the regular schedule and the reduced fishing schedule does not start until July 30<sup>th</sup>, which means fishing would not be closed until August 2<sup>nd</sup>*).

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

Orville Huntington (Huslia) – suggested that management look at the upper Koyukuk differently since the fish usually get there a week later. So, possibly the restricted fishing schedule for the upper Koyukuk could start a week later (*management will take this into consideration*).

Benedict Jones (Koyukuk) – would like to see a delay on the fall chum closure for the Koyukuk River because the fall chum don't usually show up until August 15<sup>th</sup> and the schedule is set to take effect on July 30<sup>th</sup>.

Jack Riekoff (Wiseman) – agrees with Orville and Stanley's comments because their area won't see the fall chum for sometime after they first enter the Koyukuk River. He wanted to know the total Chinook count on the Yukon River. (*There is really no way to give a total number, but Pilot Station ended up with an index of around 250,000 for the season. Again, this is just an index and not a total number counted.*)

**Public Comments (reply):**

Orville Huntington (Huslia) – suggested that management look at the upper Koyukuk differently since the fish usually get there a week later. So, possibly the restricted fishing schedule for the upper Koyukuk could start a week later (*management will take this into consideration*).

**Call # 9 – July 29, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Alakanuk	Allakaket	Ft. Yukon	Mayo, YT
Emmonak	Tanana		Teslin, YT
St. Mary's	Circle		
Koyukuk	Eagle		

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Emmonak and Pilot Station

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Emmonak and Galena

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

National Park Service

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers reported that king salmon have been caught in the headwaters around Teslin, YT, Canada. Most subsistence fishers are done with kings up to Ft. Yukon. Reports from the Yukon Territory are that the fish look healthy.

Summer chum have been caught as far as Eagle and fall chum past Tanana. A fish wheel around Galena caught 160 fall chum. Most fishers are waiting for silvers and are picking berries in the meantime. Water levels throughout the drainage seem to vary.

Subsistence fishers on the lower Koyukuk River are still catching some straggler kings, but did catch their first fall chum last Saturday. There are reports around Allakaket that the kings have open sores. The water has stabilized along the Koyukuk River.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

As of July 27<sup>th</sup> 253,774 chinook, and 1,234,553 summer chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar with 133,000 fall chum recorded as of July 28<sup>th</sup>. There are concerns with the Pilot Station sonar numbers on the chum salmon.

The chinook salmon are in their terminal areas and escapement goals are expected to be exceeded, and in some locations have been exceeded.

Summer chum escapement projects are showing a run at ½ of what Pilot Station sonar showed, but the projects have lost several days due to high water. There is a possibility that the sonar could have counted more fish summer chum this year. The Tanana River catch rates indicate a run similar to last year. The test wheel in Subdistrict 5A is currently indicating that the Tanana River may be stronger than other chum salmon spawning escapements.

The first pulse of fall chum should be reaching Russian Mission and Anvik with the second pulse reaching Mountain Village. The outlook for fall chum is still similar to the last two years of 400,000. Therefore, the regulations require reduced fishing times. The Emmonak drift net test fishery has a cumulative CPUE of 236.40 as of July 27<sup>th</sup>. The Emmonak drift net test fishery is only in its third year. The drift net test fishery in Mountain Village has a cumulative CPUE of 0.95 as of July 27<sup>th</sup>.

Coho salmon are starting to show up, which is early. This run of coho is expected to be strong.

Radio telemetry has completed their tagging project and 1097 chinook were tagged from June 3<sup>rd</sup> – July 14<sup>th</sup>. The goal was 1,000 tagged fish. Fish that were tagged in the first week of the project, 98% have been located and have reached their final destination. Fish that were tagged in the second week, 81% are in the upper basin around Teslin. The ratio of tagged fish for the Yukon River as compared to the Tanana River is 3 to 1. Managers would like to thank those fishers who have sent in tags and want to continue to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative.

There have been several commercial openings to date in Y-1, Y-2, Subdistricts 4B, 4C, 5B, 5C, 5D and Y-6. The preliminary harvest for all districts combined are approximately 40,490 chinook and 9,300 summer chum. A commercial period in District Y-6 will end at 6:00 PM on July 29<sup>th</sup>. It is likely that this commercial opening will be the last; however the department will continue to monitor the summer chum run into the Tanana River.

All escapement project reports are through July 27<sup>th</sup>. Just a reminder that many of the weirs have lost time counting due to high water/flooding conditions. Andreafsky weir reported a cumulative of 4,206 chinook and 20,713 summer chum. Anvik weir reported a cumulative of 251,300 summer chum. Clear Creek weir reported a cumulative of 4,949 summer chum. Henshaw weir reported a cumulative of 583 chinook and 16,482 summer chum. Gisasa weir reported a cumulative of 1,799 chinook and 22,727 summer chum. The Tozitna weir reported a cumulative of 1,819 chinook and 11,487 summer chum.

**Canadian Report:**

The commercial fishery catches were good and there is still a lot of fish moving up. The test wheel isn't doing well because of the low water conditions. There is a 45,000 season projection, but with the early run it could be around 40,000 – 42,000 (low projection). Fishers have satisfied the market, so not that much fishing going on. The size and quality of the fish are good and the water level has dropped.

**Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook run is considered complete at the mouth and is still considered for providing for all levels. There have been commercial opening in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, Y-5 B, C & D and Y-6.

Currently, the projected end-of-season summer chum salmon run is greater than one million, but they are not showing up in the escapement projects. Therefore, no commercial harvests are anticipated.

As of July 25<sup>th</sup> the reduced subsistence fishing schedule for fall chum was effect for Districts Coastal, Y-1, 2, 3, and Subdistrict 4A. This reduced fishing allowance is only one third of their normal fishing time. This schedule was developed by taking fishers comments during the YR DFA In-season Management Teleconference. The schedule will be re-evaluated around July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup>.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Input by YR DFA Board of Directors (reply):**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – people are happy to get any subsistence opportunity

Bill Alstrom (St. Mary’s) – not much fishing effort taking place, most fishing is just for supper

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

None

**Public Comments (reply):**

None

**Call # 10 – August 5, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay	St. Mary’s	Tanana
Alakanuk	Shageluk	Selkirk, YT
Emmonak	Huslia	Dawson, YT
Mtn. Village	Allakaket	

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Emmonak and Pilot Station  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Emmonak and Galena  
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Interior Fish Processors, Dawson Commercial Fishing Association, Selkirk Renewable Resources Council

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers in the lower and middle Yukon River are at a lull for now. The opening at St. Mary’s on Saturday caught 50% fall chum and 50% coho on the south bank and 75% fall chum and 25% coho on the north bank. Reports around Nulato are that the kings that are being caught resemble hatchery fish. Around Tanana the fall chum catches are starting to pick up.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River are reporting slow fishing time. The water level is low.

Reports from Dawson City, Yukon Territory are that fishers are done commercially because there is no fish plant, but they did get what they needed and subsistence fishers around Pelly Crossing, Yukon Territory report they haven't caught a lot of fish, but the quality is good and the females are just starting to pass through.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG:**

The chinook assessment is complete and met escapement or over set numbers.

Summer chum is almost done and only half showed up on spawning grounds. There is concern over Pilot Station showing high numbers. Management has reviewed the sonar program to try to determine why the numbers are not showing up on escapement grounds. There could be a problem with sonar over counting, so management will be conservative with fall chum and rely on other projects up and downriver of the sonar. Most escapement projects have had high water and were not able to count fish. This is also part of the problem as to why about half of the fish counted by Pilot Station sonar have not showed up on the spawning grounds.

The first pulse of fall chum was estimated at 65,000, the second at 90,000 and the third pulse should be bigger. The first pulse should be by Galena. The fall chum run is projected to be 400,000 – 650,000, which meets the escapement goal and provides for partial subsistence. Pilot Station sonar may overestimate the fall run by double. The test net fisheries in Mountain Village and Emmonak are showing a smaller run than in the past, but the Kaltag test net fishery is showing a run larger than in the past 4 years. The Rapids tagging project will be coming on line soon and on August 8<sup>th</sup> the Sheenjak sonar will be coming on line.

The coho salmon run looks strong and the recent pulse of fall chum contained 25% coho. So, the run could be a week early.

Radio telemetry continues to track tagged salmon. Those fish that were tagged in the first few weeks of the operation have reached their destination. Those fish tagged in the second week of July are still moving upriver. To date 380 chinook have moved into Canada. Of those 360 entered Canada via the Yukon River and the other 20 via the Porcupine River. There are still several tagged fish to cross the border. The ratio of tagged fish for the Yukon River as compared to the Tanana River is 3 to 1. Managers would like to thank those fishers who have sent in tags and want to continue to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative.

**Canadian Report:**

There are no new population estimates this week. The water is low, so the test wheel is not catching a lot. There is a commercial fishery taking place now, but there are only a couple of fishers taking part in it because the fishing is slow. Right now the border escapement is projected to be 35,000 – 36,000 and possibly up to 42,000. There are still quite a few tagged fish to possibly cross the border.

The total commercial catch to date is 2,295 chinook and the aboriginal catch is 2,000, which is only 22% of what is expected this season. The Whitehorse Fishway has seen 108 chinook pass through, which is a little below average. The Blind Creek weir has counted 940 chinook through August 5<sup>th</sup>, which follows the highest count.

There have been a few fall chum caught in the test wheel as well as reports from Old Crow.

**Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The chinook run is considered complete at the mouth and is still considered for providing for all levels. There have been commercial opening in Y-1, Y-2, Y-4, Y-5 B, C & D and Y-6.

There are subsistence restrictions on fall chum when the run is in the 350,000 – 400,000 range. Right now the fall chum schedule has been reduced to 1/3 of the normal fishing time. Do not anticipate a fall chum commercial fishery.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Input by YRDLA Board of Directors (reply):**

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – were the summer chums counted at Pilot Station sonar really fall chum? *(could give us a partial answer to why the summer chum are not showing up in the escapement projects).*

Stan Zuray (Tanana) – we are seeing fish as fall chum, but were counted as summer chum – we are on the back side of the run right now and the next pulse of chums will probably be darker.

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – what were the chinook escapements into the Chena and Salcha Rivers? *(both projects were washed out at the mid-point, but the numbers were showing meeting or exceeding escapement goals).*

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

Gerald Nichola (Tanana) – fish seem to be going into other streams if the streams are too warm

**Public Comments (reply):**

Orville Huntington (Huslia) – spawners will not go up where there is warm water, therefore deep nets are needed to catch the summer chum that swim deep because the water is colder. TEK is pointing out that climate change is affecting salmon runs and spawning locations even though ADFG is doing an OK job.

Ben Jones, Mickey Stickman and Angie Demientieff requested that 50 – 100 salmon be taken for the Denakkanaga Elders Council gathering in Shageluk. ADFG will look into this.

Discussion continued about how many chum went up the Tanana, but the escapement projects were washed out, so counts are inaccurate. As well, Pilot Station sonar was talked about with respect to fish getting counted twice and if whitefish get counted too at Pilot Station sonar. There was continued discussion about when fall chums arrive and when the summer chum run ends and if the summer and fall chum counts be re-evaluated. ADFG is doing a genetic snips sample on the difference between summer and fall chum and this information will be available post-season. Also, discussion continued as to why fewer tagged fish went up the Tanana River as compared to the Yukon River. This again will be looked at post-season and could be due to when fish were tagged at Russian Mission.

**Call # 11 – August 12, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay	St. Mary's	Wiseman
Alakanuk	Koyukuk	Tanana
Emmonak	Huslia	Dawson, YT

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak and Pilot Station

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Emmonak

Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage and Fairbanks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Dawson Commercial Fishing Association

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers in the lower and middle Yukon River report that there is little fishing effort. Of those fishing around Alakanuk fishers report catching 50% fall chum and 50% coho, with one fisher catching a bright 25 pound king over the weekend. Eagle reports that they are still catching good quality chinook and the fall chum are arriving early. Water levels vary throughout.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River are reporting slow fishing time. Water levels around the mouth have rapidly dropped two feet, but it has been rain heavily at the headwaters around Wiseman so the level is expected to rise and become muddy.

Reports from Dawson City, Yukon Territory are that minimal fishing is taking place and only wheel is running. Fishers are done with kings and are waiting for the fall chum. The water level around Dawson is low for this time of the year.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG/USFWS:**

It is anticipated that the fall chum run will range between 400,000 – 500,000 fish, which should meet escapement needs and a portion of the subsistence needs. The drift test net fisheries in both the Lower Yukon and Mountain Village indicate that the run is similar to the previous two seasons, but the Kaltag test fishery is showing the run to be slightly larger than in recent poor years. The average return for the past five years has been 400,000. All the indicators suggest the run is better than the low end of the preseason projection of 250,000.

The average midpoint in the fall chum salmon count at Pilot Station is August 7<sup>th</sup> for the average run timing. As of August 9<sup>th</sup> a cumulative of 480,000 fall chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar and the cumulative total projected run size would be about 800,000 – 900,000 based on the average run timing. But, since the summer chum run was assessed to have been substantially lower than the Pilot Station sonar estimates there is a good chance the same could be happening to the fall chum run. Managers are very concerned that a run of 900,000 fall chum should have been more obvious in test fish projects and in the subsistence fishery. The fall chum salmon 4-year old age component through July 31<sup>st</sup> is approximately 86%, which is unusually high in comparison to the average by that date of 58%. It is not known yet if the 4-year olds are strong or if the 5-year olds are weak, but it should be noted that the summer season had a weak return of 5-year olds.

The first estimates from the Rampart Rapids mark-recapture project show that a cumulative of 39,396 fall chum have passed by, which is in between the count for 2001 and 2002 that ended up near a run size of 200,000 fall chum. Chandalar sonar has counted a cumulative total of 2,026 fall chum.

The third pulse of fall chum entered the river on August 3-4 and Pilot Station sonar estimated the pulse to be nearly double of the previous two pulses. The first pulse should be near the Rampart Rapids, the second near Ruby and the third near Anvik.

The coho salmon run looks strong and the recent test net catches at Emmonak contained 50% coho. So, the run looks to be a week early.

Radio telemetry continues to track tagged salmon, but is in the final phases of the study. Those fish that were tagged in the first few weeks of the operation have reached their destination. To date 430 chinook have moved into Canada. Of those over 400 entered Canada via the Yukon River and the others via the Porcupine River. There are still a few tagged fish to cross the border. The ratio of tagged fish for the Yukon River as compared to the Tanana River is 3 to 1. Managers would like to thank those fishers who have sent in tags and want to continue to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative.

**Canadian Report:**

Right now the border escapement is projected to be 40,000. The test wheel is catching 6-8 chinook per day and picked up last night and this morning. Many of the fish look good and other tired. There is a commercial fishery taking place now, but there are only a couple of fishers taking part in it. The test wheel has caught 41 fall chum to date.

Blind Creek weir unofficially reports the highest count ever recorded of 1,100 chinook. The Whitehorse Fish Way has seen 545 chinook pass by to date and is anticipating a minimum escapement of 850. These numbers show that the run is approximately three days early.

Not much information from the Aboriginal fisheries except that they are still fishing. To date approximately 3,000 chinook have been harvested of the expected 8,500. Some of the major fisheries are just getting started.

#### **Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

Management is more uncertain this year due to the discrepancies between Pilot Station sonar estimates and our run assessment projects. In keeping consistency with the management strategy this season, the subsistence salmon fishing time in Subdistrict 5-D would be reduced to one 3 ½ day per week to continue conserving fall chum salmon in the upper Yukon River particularly the weak Porcupine stocks.

Subsistence salmon fishing time would likely be reduced also in Subdistricts 5-A and District 6 around August 17 when the fall chum salmon run should be entering the Tanana River. The anticipated schedule would be two 16-hour periods each week, except for the Old Minto Area which would be reduced to two 24-hour periods, with open fishing periods on Wednesdays and Saturdays. At that time, the Personal Use fishery in the Fairbanks Management area would close to provide for the subsistence priority.

Even though fall chum salmon are only beginning to build in the upper Yukon River districts, the end of the run is approaching in the lower river. The average three quarter point of the run at Pilot Station Sonar is on August 17. It is common for the upper Yukon bound fall chum salmon stocks to enter and move upriver earlier than both the Tanana River fall chum salmon stocks and the coho salmon stocks. In recent years the Tanana River fall chum salmon stocks have performed better than the upper Yukon stocks. At this time, managers are considering relaxing the lower river Districts 1, 2, 3 and the Coastal District back to the Board of Fish schedule with the intent to increase opportunity to harvest the building coho salmon run. It is believed this action would not increase harvest pressure on fall chum salmon bound for the upper Yukon because the majority of those stocks will have already passed out of the lower river. Similar actions relaxing of the fishing schedule would then occur sequentially upriver as the three-quarter point is reached in each district. However, later in the season it is anticipated that more data would become available that would assess the fall chum salmon run as it splits into the Tanana and upper Yukon components. Management actions could then be adjusted specific to those areas.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

#### **Input by YR DFA Board of Directors (reply):**

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – concerns with fishing during the day and pulling gear/shutting down wheels in the dark, can fishing times be adjusted to reflect the concern (*managements thoughts are to 1) gear can fish overnight and check in the morning or 2) shift the whole 16 hour period to earlier in the day – will make a decision next week managers will be working on getting a consensus for changing fishing time of day with fishermen from 5-B and 5-C*)

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – concerns are the same a Bill Fliris above, so can Y-4 B&C change their schedule to 8 PM to noon? (*we can do that starting Wednesday night – Gilbert will contact fishers to let know of the change and management to inform law enforcement of the change.*)

Ragnar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – how did management come up with reducing the Pilot Station sonar numbers for summer chum by 50% (*only half of the fish showed up in the escapement grounds as compared to last year.*)

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

Gerald Nichola (Tanana) –agrees with Bill Fliris and Gilbert Huntington on changing times due to number of daylight hours now.

**Public Comments (reply):**

Jack Wholecheese (Huslia) – concerned with not getting enough fishing time to fulfill needs and how does the Koyukuk River figure in when it comes to fish take (*the Koyukuk River fishing schedule was only reduced to ½ the time as compared with 1/3 the time in all the other districts – in the post-season with subsistence surveys and YRDFA teleconferences. Managers obtained his phone number to make a personal call to talk to him.*)

**Call # 12 – August 19, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Emmonak	Galena	Pelly Crossing, YT
Koyukuk	Tanana	
Huslia	Eagle	

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak and Pilot Station  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Galena  
Office of Subsistence Management in Fairbanks

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers in the lower and middle Yukon River report that there is little fishing effort. Of those fishing around Tanana the reports are that the fall chum are still coming and that the coho have increased over the last couple of days, which is about a week early. The Rampart Rapids Video project also shows an increase in the fall chum catch, but the cumulative is only about 1% of Pilot Station sonar. This could be due to that the Rapids wheel is over counting, Pilot Station under counting or both. Eagle reports that they are catching 15-30 fall chum each day and that the water is the lowest that is has been all year. Water levels vary throughout.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River report that fishing was just starting to pick up just as the reduced schedule was making them take their nets out of the water. The quality of the fall chum and coho caught were good. Water levels around Huslia are the highest they've been all season and it's rising around Koyukuk because it has been raining all week.

Reports from Pelly Crossing, Yukon Territory are that king fishing is done and there is no fall chum run.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG/USFWS:**

All of the assessment projects are painting an inconsistent picture. It is now anticipated that the fall chum run will range between 500,000 – 600,000 fish, which meets both escapement and subsistence needs. The last five years the fall chum run has averaged approximately 400,000 fish.

The average ¾ point in the fall chum salmon count at Pilot Station is August 18<sup>th</sup> for the average run timing. As of August 18<sup>th</sup> a cumulative of 700,000 fall chum have passed by Pilot Station sonar and the cumulative total projected run size would be about 800,000 – 1,000,000 based on the average run timing. But, since the summer chum run was assessed to have been substantially lower than the Pilot Station sonar estimates there is a good chance the same could be happening to the fall chum run. The fall chum salmon 4-year old age component through August 5<sup>th</sup> is approximately 89%, which is unusually high in comparison

to the average by that date of 59%. It is not known yet if the 4-year olds are strong or if the 5-year olds are weak, but it should be noted that the summer season had a weak return of 5-year olds.

The second estimates from the Rampart Rapids mark-recapture project show that a cumulative of 85,000 fall chum have passed by as of August 17<sup>th</sup>. It is estimated that 250,000 – 325,000 fall chum should enter the upper Yukon basin and provide for escapement, Canadian treaty needs, and subsistence.

The fourth pulse of fall chum has just passed by Pilot Station sonar. It is estimated that this is the largest pulse seen this season. The first pulse should be near Fort Yukon, the second near Steven's Village, the third near Ruby and the fourth pulse near Holy Cross. The fall chums seem to be moving at a rate of 35 miles/day.

The coho salmon run looks strong and the recent test net catches at Emmonak contained 50% coho. So, the run looks be a week early.

Radio telemetry continues to track tagged salmon. Those fish that were tagged in the first few weeks of the operation have reached their destination. There are still a few tagged fish to cross the border. The ratio of tagged fish for the Yukon River as compared to the Tanana River is 3 to 1. The temperatures retrieved from the archival tags shows a mainstem temperature of 16.9 degrees C (62.4 degrees F) as compared to 16.5 degrees C (61.7 degrees F) last year. Not a significant difference. Managers would like to thank those fishers who have sent in tags and want to continue to remind fishers to look for spaghetti tags behind the dorsal fin on the chinook. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please call the number on the tag (1-866-881-2104) or take it to your community representative.

#### **Canadian Report:**

Right now, the border escapement is projected to exceed 40,000. The test wheel is catching 4-10 chinook per day and 3-15 fall chum per day.

Ariel surveys were conducted over the Little Salmon, Big Salmon, Teslin and Wolf Rivers. The water levels were low and visibility was great. There were record counts for both the Little and Big Salmon Rivers, almost three times the historical average. Record counts dated back to 1968.

To date the Whitehorse Fish Way has had 1,100 chinook pass by and estimate that 1,226 will pass through the ladder.

#### **Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

There is inconsistent information coming from all the test projects, but the does not seem to be below 500,000 fall chum. Since that is the case, it is appropriate to return to the regular Board of Fish subsistence fishing schedule as soon as possible. If the run continues to be strong and above 600,000 fall chum, management will consider relaxing the subsistence schedule beyond the BOF schedule and if the run appears to be over 675,000 fall chum management will consider having a commercial fishery. All of these aspects will be monitored closely over the next couple of days.

Please watch for press releases for days and times.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

#### **Input by YRDLA Board of Directors (reply):**

Gilbert Huntington (Galena) – sees need for Pilot Station sonar, but still concerned with it. He thinks it did count a lot of chum. Unfortunately, he thinks that a good portion of the run labeled summer chum was really fall chum, so Gilbert feels the run is bigger than the 500,000 – 600,000. Management still needs to consider commercial openings because people are hurting due to the reduced subsistence fishing schedule and now moose season is about to start, cold weather is approaching and not everyone is done with their fishing. Putting fish up late in the season is tough. Management should not look at the run so

conservatively. (Thanks for supporting Pilot Station sonar. Management does not know where the 500,000 fish went because they didn't see an increase in the escapement projects. But, the Tanana River escapements show lots of there, so that's why we were prudent to be conservative. We will continue to monitor Pilot Station sonar and the other projects online to help.)

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – agrees with Gilbert that he thinks some of the summer chum counted were really fall chum. Thanks to management for liberalizing the subsistence schedule.

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

Benedict Jones (Koyukuk) –of the last seining done last week 90% of the fish were males.

**Public Comments (reply):**

Orville Huntington (Huslia) – thinks Gilbert is right on the Pilot Station sonar – lots of fall chum caught and lost still coming by. Glad to be going back on the regular subsistence schedule.

Pat Moore (Tanana) – please to be going back on regular schedule because all the open periods last week occurred while it was raining so the quality of the fish put up is questionable.

Ruth Althoff (Tanana) – their wheel is catching 35-40 fall chum per hour, which is near Stan's Rapid Video Project. She can't understand why his wheel is only catching a ¼ of what their wheel is catching at the Rapids.

Ted Hamilton (Emmonak) – agrees with Gilbert's Pilot Station sonar analysis. He is also wondering what is going to happen next year.

**Call # 13 – August 26, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Hooper Bay	Mtn. Village	Kaltag	Huslia	Eagle
Alakanuk	Marshall	Nulato	Tanana	
Emmonak	Holy Cross	Koyukuk	Circle	

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak and Pilot Station  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Galena  
Office of Subsistence Management in Fairbanks and Anchorage  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Association for Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA)

**Others:**

Bill Wolf – Senator Lisa Murkowski's Office, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)  
Fisheries Technician Training Class, Fairbanks Daily News Miner

**Subsistence Reports:**

Subsistence fishers on the coast and in the lower Yukon River report that there is little fishing effort. Subsistence fishing around Tanana is minimal due to the rainy conditions. There has been a steady passage of fall chum on the south bank in Tanana according to the video test wheel with increases on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The fall chum caught varies from bright colored fish to some with color. The coho have also started to increase on the south bank in Tanana. In Circle two fish wheels are averaging 20 fall chum per day that are firm and good looking. Eagle reports that one wheel is catching 40 fall chum per day and that the water is very low. Water levels vary throughout.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River report minimal fishing due to the high water conditions. The qualities of the fall chum caught were good. Water levels around Huslia are expected to rise even more due to more rain predicted. Eighty percent of what is being caught around Huslia is freshwater fish (pike, burbot, whitefish, etc.).

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG/USFWS:**

Approximately 90% of the fall chum salmon and 75% of the coho salmon are assumed to be in the Yukon River. The strong westward winds over the weekend showed increased passage of both fall chum and coho at Emmonak. The drift net test fishery at Mountain Village is tracking slightly below the 1997 to 2002 average for fall chum and above average for coho salmon. The Kaltag drift test net fishery is above the 1999 to 2002 average for both fall chum and coho salmon.

The CPUE of the test fish wheel in the Rapids is tracking below average for fall chum while the CPUE at the Rampart test wheel is tracking above average. Both wheels are used together in the mark-recapture tagging study that is providing an above average estimate of passage this season.

The Tanana River mark-recapture project located near the Kantishna River estimates fall chum salmon abundance in both the Kantishna and the upper Tanana Rivers. The project began tagging chum salmon on August 16, but it is still too early to make an estimate based on the tag information. However, the project has noted that fall chum salmon are moving steadily up the Tanana River. This project will also provide CPUE data at each of its fish wheels, in the Tanana, Kantishna and Toklat Rivers.

The first pulse of fall chum should be near the Canadian border, the second near Circle, the third near Steven's Village and the fourth pulse near Galena. The fall chums seem to be moving at a rate of 35 miles/day.

The coho salmon run looks strong and the recent test net catches at Emmonak contained 50% coho. So, the run looks to be a week early. The first coho salmon pulse should be near Tanana and the second pulse should be near Kaltag.

**Canadian Report:**

No report

**Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The Yukon River fall season salmon assessment projects have been providing an inconsistent picture of the 2003 fall chum salmon run. There is concern the Pilot Station sonar may be overestimating fall chum salmon abundance because of assessment discrepancies observed during the summer season. The Pilot Station sonar passage estimate through August 24 is 880,000 fall chum salmon and projections based on this estimate is for a total run of 900,000 to 1 million. In comparison, the average return of fall chum salmon has been around 400,000 for the last five years (1998-2002). The large pulses observed in the lower river assessment projects continue to be tracked upriver confirming a normal travel speed of 35 miles per day. The Rampart-Rapids tag estimate through August 24 is 158,000 which provides a run size projection to the upper Yukon of 425,000. There are no fall assessment projects for the Koyukuk River and it is still too early to judge the Tanana River stocks. Overall, the drainage-wide fall chum salmon run appears to be larger than the last five years and is anticipated to range from 650 to 800 thousand.

This year's coho salmon run began about one week earlier than usual and appears to be at least as strong as the last few years, which were considered large runs. The Pilot Station Sonar passage estimate through August 24 is 212,000 and it projects a total run of 360,000 coho salmon. This is significantly greater than the average Pilot Station sonar estimate of 87,000 by this date and the highest end-of-season estimate of 263,000. The coho salmon entered the Yukon River in significant pulses along with the third and fourth pulses of fall chum salmon.

Currently, the fall chum salmon run is judged to be large enough to provide for drainage-wide escapement needs, subsistence needs, Canadian Border commitments and it can support limited commercial, personal

use, and sport harvest as stipulated in the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan. All subsistence fishing was returned to the full Board of Fish schedule last week. At this time the fall commercial salmon season has been opened in the Lower Yukon however commercial periods have only been announced for District Y1 because District Y1 is the only district that has commercial market interest in the lower river. Subsistence fishing in Subdistricts Y2 and Y3 has been extended beyond the BOF schedule pending any potential commercial opportunities. The commercial season in District Y4 will begin on Wednesday, August 27. At that time subsistence fishing time in Subdistrict 4-A will increase to 7 days per week unless a commercial market develops. Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will open to a commercial fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week that run concurrently with the two 48-hour weekly subsistence fishing periods in the same subdistrict. Fishermen must keep in mind that commercial markets are very limited and it is up to the fisherman to secure their own market.

Announcements of relaxations for subsistence fishing and the opening of the commercial season in districts further upriver can be expected. The majority of the front half of the fall chum salmon run was protected which should help bolster the early but weak Porcupine River stocks. However, the Porcupine River fall chum salmon stocks remain a conservation concern and management actions may be necessary to protect those stocks as the run continues to develop.

There is a conflict with the fall chum and coho commercial fishing management plans – fall chum closes on September 1<sup>st</sup> and coho on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Management would like input on what they should do.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Input by YRDLA Board of Directors (reply):**

Rangar Alstrom (Alakanuk) – go to the coho management plan to give those fishers a chance for some commercial fishing.

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – what is the conflict between the fall chum and coho plans? (*the dates – fall chum closes 8/1 and coho closes on 8/5*). Why don't you have a commercial fishery for fall chum in the upper river here fairly quickly then go to coho (*it doesn't work that way, one fishery is to compensate for the other- the department will discuss internally*). It would be nice to give folks in the area a chance to catch fall chum, but doesn't know if there is a market.

Lester Wilde (Hooper Bay) – how many teleconferences are left? (*2-3, will discuss next week on the teleconference*).

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

Benedict Jones (Koyukuk) – management needs to be conservative will fall chum because their area is catching 50% fall chum and 50% coho.

**Public Comments (reply):**

Ted Hamilton (Emmonak) – agrees with Rangar Alstrom.

**Additional Happenings:**

Bill Wolf from Senator Lisa Murkowski's Office joined the call to discuss the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. It boiled down that the program was originally meant for farmers affected by foreign markets and not fishermen. So, the 2003 monies are not going to help many of the fishermen, but Senator Murkowski's Office is trying to work with the USDA concerning the 2004 monies.

The program is NOT a disaster relief fund. It is solely to help those that were affected by foreign markets causing their price per pound to go down. If you did not commercial fish in 2002 you are not eligible for the 2003 monies, but if you commercial fished in 2003 you will be eligible for the 2004 monies.

Individuals do not need to apply for the 2003 monies now. Right now the United Fisherman's Association is working on a statewide and possibly a per species proposal for all Alaskan fishers, but other organizations are welcome to submit proposals too. Just remember the USDA has only until the end of September to review all the proposals. So, the more they have the greater the chance they won't be reviewed by the deadline.

It was figured that using the cost adjustments for the different species of salmon on the Yukon River that very few Yukon River fishers would receive any money and what money they would receive would be minimal (\$.14 to \$26 total).

Documented sales of subsistence sold whole fish may qualify and sales of processed subsistence salmon is illegal and those sales would not qualify.

### **Call # 14 – September 2, 2003**

#### **Communities involved in the call:**

Alakanuk	Huslia	Eagle
Emmonak	Tanana	
Mtn. Village	Ft. Yukon	

#### **State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Commercial Fish and Subsistence offices in Emmonak  
Office of Subsistence Management in Fairbanks and Anchorage  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

#### **Other organizations and businesses:**

Association for Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments (CATG)

#### **Subsistence Reports:**

Minimal subsistence fishing was reported in the lower and middle river either due to moose season and/or the weather conditions. One fisher from Alakanuk reported that of the fish caught around Alakanuk 85% were coho and the coho caught were the biggest he'd ever seen in his 27 years of fishing. He also reported that the fall chum caught were still bright. The third pulse of fall chum are at the Rapids and along the south bank near Tanana, but fishing is minimal due to the poor weather conditions. Fishers are reporting nice looking fall chum around Ft. Yukon and one wheel near Eagle Village has caught 100-150 fall chum. Of those fishing around Eagle it is for dog food. Even though there has been a lot of rain around Eagle the river is still low. Other water level reports vary throughout the drainage.

Subsistence fishers on the Koyukuk River report minimal fishing due to the high water conditions and many fishers are moose hunting. Most of what is being caught around Huslia is freshwater fish (pike, burbot, whitefish, etc.).

#### **Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG/USFWS:**

The fall chum run is winding down in the lower river, but has provided for escapement, boarder passage, subsistence, and minimal commercial harvest. The Emmonak drift net test fishery ended on August 27<sup>th</sup> and Pilot Station sonar ended on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The cumulative count for fall chum salmon as of August 31<sup>st</sup> at Pilot Station sonar was approximately 930,000. It is believed that Pilot Station sonar overestimated the run because the average return for the last four years has been 400,000 and these numbers were not seen in other escapement projects.

The CPUE of the test fish wheels in both the Rapids and at Rampart are tracking above average for fall chum. Both wheels are used together in the mark-recapture tagging study that is providing an above average estimate of passage this season. As of August 31<sup>st</sup> the Rapids mark-recapture project has reported 220,000 fall chum, with a projected estimate of 400,000 fall chum salmon passing into the upper river drainage.

Chandalar sonar is showing fall chum salmon CPUE above average and the Sheenjak sonar is showing fall chum salmon CPUE below average.

The first pulse of fall chum should be in the Yukon Territory, the second at the Canadian border, the third near Circle and the fourth pulse near Rampart.

The Tanana River mark-recapture project located near the Kantishna River is showing fall chum salmon moving steadily up the Tanana River. The third pulse to enter the mouth of the river is hitting Nenana and the fourth pulse is near Manley Hot Springs.

The coho salmon run looks strong and still looks to be a week early. The run is proving to be just as strong as in the last few years. As of August 30<sup>th</sup> Pilot Station sonar reported a cumulative of 272,000 coho have passed by with an estimated run of 325,000. The first coho salmon pulse should be near Tanana and the second pulse should be near Kaltag.

#### **Canadian Report:**

The weir on the fishing branch was late getting in due to high water, but the last three counts have counted 1,084 fall chum salmon as compared to the 10 year average of 1174. So, the fall chum run up the Sheenjak to the Porcupine River may not be as bad as previously thought but it is still too early to estimate.

A large pulse of fall chum just hit the border on September 1<sup>st</sup>, which doubled the highest daily catch rate of the year. The catch went from 50 to 100 per day. There were 197 fall chum in the test wheel on September 1<sup>st</sup>, which is 80% above average. It is still too early to estimate the run strength and know if it will persist, but so far the run is stronger than expected.

#### **Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

Management was conservative on the first half of the run to make sure fall chum salmon made it to the upper regions of the Yukon River. There have been concerns with Pilot Station sonar estimates, but it is possible that the sonar did not over estimate as much as previously thought.

The fall chum run has provided for drainage wide escapement, border passage, subsistence and limited commercial and sport fishing.

Areas did return to the full Board of Fish schedule and as of August 25<sup>th</sup> there have been commercial openings in Districts Y-1, 2, 3, 4 B&C. Subsistence fishing in Districts Y-1 & 3 has reverted to the pre-Board of Fish schedule and there is a good chance that Districts Y-5 & 6 will also see a lessening of the subsistence schedule and some possible commercial fisheries if a market exists.

There are still concerns for the Porcupine River stocks.

Preliminary numbers for the commercial openings to date are:

Y-1 has had four openings since August 25<sup>th</sup>. As of September 1<sup>st</sup> 3788 fall chum and 7007 coho have been caught. Districts 4 B&C have had 2 openings in which no one fished in the first opening due to the poor weather conditions, but on August 31<sup>st</sup> there were 400 fall chum caught.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

#### **Input by YR DFA Board of Directors (reply):**

John Lamont (Mtn. Village) – was worried about the Porcupine River stocks in the past and told it was not an issue by management and now it is an issue with management – why? *(The issue is that the fishing branch weir is just getting started so they are using the Sheenjak project as a predictor and right now the Sheenjak is about 1/2 of what it should be tracking and to date it doesn't look like the fishing branch is going*

to do that well.) Need to get close to 15,000 fall chum to Sheenjak and right now it is not producing this, right? (Correct. Chandalar is showing to be on track with 240,000, so it's more of a distribution problem.)

Don Woodruff (Eagle) – Are you still using the Bendix method for counting on the Sheenjak? (We are using that as a back up because we are using the HDI.) Are you still counting to the end of September on the Sheenjak? (Probably. There isn't an exact date because it is due to the fall weather conditions on ice on the river.)

Bill Fliris (Tanana) – Are there any more large pulses of fall chum after this one? (This is the last, large significant pulse. There are others but we are not for sure of their distribution.) My concern is that most people are not going to fish this pulse due to the weather and is concerned they may be restricted later because of the poor showing in the Porcupine River, could that happen? (Not likely because most of the fish heading for the Porcupine River are past Tanana and the early restrictions should have helped too.)

**Regional Advisory Members Comments (reply):**

No Comments

**Public Comments (reply):**

Joe Shlosman (Ft. Yukon) – There is only a couple of people fishing on the Porcupine River as far as he knows. Could Pilot Station be counting correctly and there just aren't enough escapement projects to get an accurate count? (Possible. Anvik sonar was way below for the fall season and it is usually pretty reliable.)

There will be two more In-Season Management Teleconferences. So, there will be teleconferences on September 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Call # 15 – September 9, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

St. Mary's	Allakaket
Koyukuk	Tanana
Huslia	

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game in Fairbanks  
Office of Subsistence Management in Fairbanks  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Subsistence Reports:**

Minimal subsistence fishing was reported in the lower and middle river either due to moose season and/or the weather conditions. St. Mary's reported no efforts. Subsistence fishers from Koyukuk, Allakaket and Huslia said that over the last two weeks water levels, and hence debris, have been high. In Koyukuk, they are anticipating even more water because it has been raining. In Huslia the average catch is one fall chum. There have also been 6 coho and 2 sockeye with green heads and red bodies. In Allakaket summer chums were small females, with bigger fall chums.

Up river, in Tanana, people are putting up subsistence crib fish since debris in the river is down, as well as the water levels. There has been a big pulse hit with 1700 per day, through the 8<sup>th</sup> of September. The fish are dark for the end of the run, which is considered normal.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG/USFWS:**

Management was cautious at the beginning of the fall season due to previously low returns. Management now believes that the fall chum numbers passing Pilot Station are correct as they are lining up with other projects. USFWS reinforced the estimate for the upper Yukon and Tanana stocks and thinks this is encouraging due to the increase in returning fish.

There have been six commercial fishery periods in Y-1 leading to a take of 5,366 fall chum and 9,071 coho. There have been two commercial periods in Y-4c with a take of 1,562 fall chum and 572 coho. There was one fisherman in Y6b&c with a low catch. The fall season is winding down. Pilot Station ended on August 31<sup>st</sup> with 930,000 fall chum being counted and 277,000 coho. This is greater than the average of 400,000 from the past five years. There is significant run improvement with a projection of 800-900,000 fall chum. The Sheenjack is currently weak and the Fishing Branch is passing fish earlier this year. The largest pulse of fish should be by Beaver. Fish are still entering bright at the mouth of the Yukon and bright fish are still the majority of the entering fish.

**Canadian Report:**

With the test fishery in the Porcupine being new this year, they have been cautious but have caught 140 chums. The goal of this project is to create autonomy in running a test fishery through the R&E fund as well as to establish a population estimate. The main stem run is strong and the escapement goal for fall chum is 65,000. Approximately 3,000 aboriginal take and 10,000 commercial take. If run timing is normal, then 140,000 are expected for border escapement. If the run is five days early, the projection will decrease, but still meet the various user group needs.

**Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

Y1, Y4b,c and Y6b,c had commercial periods due to available commercial markets, but will close 9/11 and go to seven days a week subsistence fishing.

Y2, Y3, Y4 all are on the Board of Fish 2001 Subsistence fishing schedule. Y4b&c and Y5a,b,c are pre-2001 BOF schedule at five days a week effective today. If markets were available, there could have been a commercial opening(s).

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Discussion:**

Alaskan managers wanted to know about the commercial market for fall chum in Canada. Pat Milligan informed them that less than 500 fish are for human consumption and the rest are mainly for dog teams. Commercial fishers can keep the fish for themselves, which they do.

ADFG announced that the subsistence surveys have begun in the Alaskan villages in the lower river and will work there way upriver.

**Call # 16 – September 16, 2003**

**Communities involved in the call:**

Tanana (*via message*)  
Ft. Yukon

**State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:**

Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management in Fairbanks and Anchorage  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Whitehorse, YT, Canada

**Other organizations and businesses:**

Interior Fish

**Subsistence Reports:**

Minimal subsistence fishing was reported throughout the river system as the fishing season is winding down. Up river, Bill Fliris, from Tanana, reported that the last of the fish needed for dog food are being caught and their needs are being met. His is the only wheel out due to high water. While the water is high

on the south bank the fishing is strong, but fishing is down on the north bank. 50% of the fish going through are coho, and the quality of the fish is down. He noted that the water is starting to freeze at night. Further up river in Ft. Yukon it was reported that most people are done fishing and there is ice on the water in the mornings now. Joe Shlossman and a few others went out and looked around on the Black River, but the water is high.

**Run Assessment Highlights by ADFG/USFWS:**

The run assessment at the moment is that the fish are well into the upper portions of the river. Commercial harvests for the season have wrapped up with 5,653 chum and 9,638 coho reported for District Y1. Sub-district 4C finished with 1,562 chum and 572 coho. Sub-district 6C, over two periods, caught 154 chum and 43 coho. The total harvest for the season is 7,372 chum and 10,253 coho. The cumulative count for fall chum salmon as of August 31<sup>st</sup> at Pilot Station sonar was approximately 930,000. In Kantishna the run has come in so far at 69,000, but is projecting for 160,000.

The escapement objective and Rampart tagging are tracking consistently. Chandalar sonar is showing fall chum salmon CPUE above average and the Sheenjak sonar is showing fall chum salmon CPUE below average. The Canadian mainstem appears strong.

There have been nearly 900,000 overall fall chum recorded, which is up over the recent 5-year average. Therefore, fall chum should meet drainage wide escapement needs. Coho are a week early, but are showing as strong as last few years. 277,000 have gone through Pilot Station –with a run size projection of 320,000 – which is above high end of past years.

**Canadian Report:**

To date there have 8,310 fall chum through the weir on the Fishing Branch River, with counts that have recently dropped. Projections based on current counts estimate 17,000-23,000 fish for escapement through the Fishing Branch passage, which is above the goal of 15,000. The number was expected to be higher because of the information coming through Alaska. The next large pulse should come around the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, based on wheel counts at the border. So far 130-160 fall chum have been caught at the wheel, with 220-290 previously caught a few days before. They are tracking well, but looking at border escapement to satisfy the 65,000 goal.

With 3 fishermen participating in commercial fishing 894 fish were caught and periods were liberalized recently. Tag ratios were very stable in two test fisheries and for commercial opening, but are hoping for higher number of fish per tag with the pulse coming through on September 18.

**Run Assessment and Management Strategy by ADFG/USFWS:**

The fall chum run has provided for drainage wide escapement, border passage, subsistence, and limited commercial and sport fishing.

Fishing districts returned to the full Board of Fish schedule. In Districts Y1-3 and Y4A the schedule has reverted to 7 days per week. In districts 4B-C and 5A-C the schedules are set at 5 days per week.

In District 6B-C subsistence fishing is only open for one 42-hour period per week because of the commercial period in effect.

If markets are available the commercial fishing season could be extended because there is a surplus of fish everywhere. Contact ADF&G for more information.

Please visit <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/03yuksal.htm> for fishery updates and schedules or call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731 or the recorded line in Fairbanks for the upper Yukon at 907-459-7387.

**Discussion (reply):**

Fred Bue: (ADF&G) – Asked Pat Milligan, from DFO, what the distance between border wheels and the test fishery was? *(From the upper wheel it is 35 miles to test fisher by 40 mile, and there were 2 fishers there. Dawson City is 90 miles from wheels and most fish are 3 days travel from there. Because the border is the same distance from the ocean as Old Crow [Porcupine River], they should see fish arrive at the same time. The test fishery in Porcupine is not working great, but fish caught in high, turbid water – as opposed to clear water, which is not good for capturing fish in the wheel.)*

Russ Holder: (USFWS) – The aboriginal catch for fall chum is 3,000 for First Nations, it is usually more like 10,000. What's the normal number? *(Pat Milligan responded – There is very little chum catch outside of Dawson as it is not targeted elsewhere. There are only two families currently fishing for chum, both are using the chum for dog food while one is also selling it for human consumption. Due to the fact that this is the last teleconference of the year, Russ expressed his gratitude for being able to participate in the calls. He appreciates the improvements made each year to the teleconferences and finds the summaries from the teleconferences to be very helpful. He attaches importance to the “feedback” process of sharing with other folks dealing with issues on the river.*

Pat Milligan: (DFO) – What is the current mark-recapture estimate based on projections from Rampart? *(There have been 465,000 after the most significant pulses, but figuring more like 500,000 as a “ballpark” figure.)* Where are the fish going? *(220,000 have been reported in the Chandalar, 25,000 in Sheenjak, 17-23,000 in Porcupine and 140,000 in the mainstem; nothing looks out of place as all the numbers are falling into line.)* From September 1-7 there were counts of 170,000 through the Rapids, with 75,000 the week prior and 60,000 the week after. Pat also expressed his opinion about the overall effect of the teleconferences this year, remarking that they were highly organized and very helpful.

Erin Gaylor: (ADF&G) – Reminded everyone that subsistence salmon surveys are under way, starting in Mt. Village and working their way up river. Catch calendars need to be completed and picked up.