

**Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference
Call # 1 – May 31, 2005**

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -Office of Subsistence Management
Yukon River Panel

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	Nulato	Rampart	Mayo, Y.T.
Alakanuk	Koyukuk	Beaver	Fairbanks
Emmonak	Allakaket	Ft. Yukon	
Mtn. Village	Ruby	Venetie	
St. Mary's	Tanana	Dawson City, Y.T.	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG - Commercial Fisheries in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks
ADFG, Subsistence Division in Fairbanks
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage & Fairbanks
Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO)

Other organizations/entities

CATG	Interior Alaska Fish Processors, Inc.
TCC	Kaltag Fishermen's Association
BSFA	Boreal Fisheries

The start of this season's teleconferences was marked by a moment of silence in remembrance of John Hanson. His impact on Yukon River salmon fisheries will not be forgotten.

Subsistence Reports:

The king salmon appear to have an average run timing (but later than last year). Subsistence fishers river-wide reported very low salmon fishing activity. However, along the coast salmon have been sighted walking down the street! Seriously though, one teleconference participant reported seeing another fisher carrying a salmon, but has received no reports from people. A fisher in Alakanuk caught one 15-20lb male, king salmon (well developed and the meat looked fine) after one-hour's effort on May 30th. While fishing for non-salmon species, an incidental catch in Emmonak turned up a jack (immature male king salmon). Another second-hand report given by one fisher stated that one king salmon had been caught in St. Mary's, but was lost from the fishers net.

Water levels in the lower river are high. Floating debris and drift are low, yet there is lots of sub-surface, net-fouling debris ("moss" and other dead plant material). High water, which has been slow draining, and ice that took some time to go out, led one fisher to predict that the salmon will come in slower and will run deeper this year. Water levels near Koyukuk have been steadily receding since last week, yet levels are still about 2 feet higher than last year's high water mark. Further up river water levels are high, but dropping slowly or leveling off, and not a lot of debris in the river. In communities located on tributaries (of the mainstem), like Allakaket and Mayo, Y.T., fishers reported high, fluctuating water levels as there is still snow in the higher mountain ranges.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG & USFWS:

Emmonak ADFG office opened on May 25th, therefore all phone lines are operating (Public line: (907) 949-1320, Recorded Fishery Announcements & Updates: (907) 949-1731, Toll-Free 1-866-479-7387). The USFWS office in

Emmonak will also be opening soon and the number there is (907) 949-1798. ADFG test fisheries are starting in Emmonak; the nets have been put in at Big Eddy; camp at Middle Mouth will begin operation around June 2nd or 3rd; and set nets are not out yet. The Pilot Station test fishery is up and will be fully operational (with sonar) starting June 1st. High water is currently impacting test fishing (started May 27), but a few sheefish and no salmon have been caught to date. ADFG is estimating average run timing, not early like last year, after experiencing a normal break-up. There is no assessment data to date and no changes to the current management strategy. However, ADFG discussed the possibility of either liberalizing or reducing fishing opportunity based on run abundance. ADFG also stated that unlike last year, it WILL BE NECESSARY to remove the dorsal fin from fish caught in the Y-1, -2 & -3 subsistence fishery this year.

For fishery updates call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731, or the public line at 907-949-1320 or the toll free number at 1-866-479-7387 (in Fairbanks) for fishing schedules and current information.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Unity & Equity: Nick Tucker, from Emmonak, reiterated the importance of unity between Yukoners (Yukon Territory residents) and Alaskans for a responsible and equitable harvest of the salmon resource this year. He encouraged co-management of this resource and to look out for each others' needs.

Wind Conditions: North-west winds off the coast will push water down to the south; therefore salmon will most likely be entering the Yukon River from either the Middle or South Mouth.

Gas Prices: Prices are again high this year throughout Alaska, but particularly in the Yukon River communities. In Alakanuk gas is \$3.47/gallon (not including taxes) and in Nulato it's \$5.00/gallon. This could potentially impact the subsistence fishery (i.e. length of subsistence fishing time and the number of times fisherman go out).

Y-4B & C Drift Gillnet Fishery: USFWS reviewed the new regulations regarding this new fishery, which will occur between June 10th and July 14th. The fishery is limited to 150ft length and 35 mesh deep nets; mesh size is not limited; must have a permit to participate; intended for the harvest of king salmon, but incidental catch may be retained; will occur last 18 hours of subsistence opening; limited to federal waters within those sub-districts.

Subsistence Schedule Calendars: A suggestion was made to print the windowed, subsistence fishing schedule for June, July and August as a calendar to pass out to fishers or have the schedule printed in the *Delta Discovery* (free newsletter given out to all communities along the Yukon) to increase its distribution.

Leasing Interior Alaska Fish Processors Building: The leased building from which Interior Alaska Fish Processors (IAFP) operates and conducts business is earmarked for disposal by the State of Alaska. As the only processor buying commercially-caught salmon in the upper Yukon in Alaska, there is concern that this fishery may cease to exist if IAFP is forced to close its doors. Please contact YRDFA for further information.

ADFG Staffing: This year's Acting Research Biologist will be Larry Dubois and Manager for the Yukon Area Summer Season will be Steve Hayes. Dan Bergstrom will be assisting/volunteering to help management during this time. Tracy Lingnau and Paul Salomone have been transferred within ADFG and no longer work on the Yukon River.

Call # 2 – June 7, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment by ADFG & USFWS
Management Strategy by ADFG & USFWS
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	Pilot Station	Koyukuk	Ft. Yukon
Alakanuk	Grayling	Galena	Eagle

Emmonak
St. Mary's

Nulato
Huslia

Tanana
Rampart

Old Crow, Y.T.
Dawson City, Y.T.

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG - Commercial Fisheries in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Galena & Emmonak
ADFG, Subsistence Division in Fairbanks
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage & Fairbanks

Other organizations/entities

AVCP Kaltag Fishermen's Association BSFA

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers river-wide reported very low salmon fishing activity again this week. The Chinook (king) salmon appear to have a near average or later run timing, as breakup occurred at a near average time this year (ice went out from mouth of Yukon between May 18th-24th). Northwest and west winds are blowing off the coast, yet fishers in Hooper Bay are not catching as many king salmon as normal, but have caught quite a few summer chum already. There is little to no debris in the lower river, but water is high and current swift. Most fishers are saving their resources and waiting for a significant king run before putting much effort into salmon fishing. However, one Alakanuk fisher reported catching 5 king salmon, another caught 17, and near Pilot Station one fisher caught 13 king salmon with 2.5 hours effort. On the Andreafsky River (near St. Mary's) a few small, but nice looking king salmon were also caught. Further up river, water levels have increased since last week (with little to no debris) and people report fishing for freshwater fish only. In Huslia, up the Koyukuk River, water is warm and levels have come down 4-6", but still report flooding further downriver.

Near Tanana, on the Yukon mainstem, water level is steady and fishers' efforts are for whitefish only – same as in Eagle. Water temperature near Eagle was reported at a balmy 51° Fahrenheit (~11° Celsius) with levels dropping nearly 4 feet. On the Upper Yukon mainstem within the Yukon Territory, water level is also dropping steadily. Up the Porcupine River, water is high with no debris and fishers' efforts are currently for freshwater fish only.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG & USFWS:

Assessment: The salmon runs are anticipated to have a near average or later run timing this year. Fishers should expect salmon run strength to begin building in about 3-4 days. ADFG anticipates that subsistence fishers in Districts Y-1 & Y-2 will begin increasing their efforts in their next scheduled subsistence periods.

Test Fisheries: The Lower Yukon River drift test fishing project, operational as of May 28th, has not caught any salmon (as of June 5th). The Lower River test set net project was operational June 1st and caught the first king salmon on June 2nd. High water has been affecting the drift test fishing project and test set nets. The Pilot Station sonar project was operational as of June 1st and the Pilot Station drift test nets caught the first king salmon on June 5th. While there are no numbers at this time, some salmon have passed the sonar. The Marshall drift project, funded by AVCP, will begin this year around June 12th. (The Marshall drift project, having operated in 1999 & 2000, was discontinued due to conflicts with the radio telemetry project. Now that the radio telemetry project has concluded, the drift project will be restarted.) The Andreafsky weir site will be operational towards the end of this week (June 6-10), so counts may begin next week (June 13-17). The first news release concerning the Y-4B & C Drift Gillnet Fishery should be going out by June 8th.

Age Composition: Based on data from 2004, these percentages of 4 and 6 year-olds in the Y-1 subsistence harvest are above average, while 5 and 7 year-olds are below average (see table at right). It was expected, however, that the 5 and 7 year-olds were to be higher than average in 2005.

Strategy: Districts Y-1, 2, and 3 are currently on the subsistence salmon fishing schedule. ADFG will currently stick to the subsistence schedule in order to meet conservation and escapement needs. The coming week will be

**Test Set Net Project
Age Composition**

Age	Percentage
4	0%
5	36%
6	60%
7	4%

sample size =50

**Y-1 Sub. Harvest
Age Composition**

Age	Percentage
4	0%
5	38%
6	62%
7	0%

sample size =13

important concerning the king salmon run and possible management actions – as it will be a few days before fish are seen (maybe until June 12th), so ADFG asks fishers to be patient and to bear in mind that indicators are showing there may be a stronger chum salmon run this year than years past.

For fishery updates call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731, or the public line at 907-949-1320 or the toll free number at 1-866-479-7387 for fishing schedules & current information.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Contact ADFG: ADFG encourages subsistence fishers to report their catches directly to the ADFG office in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320, in between Tuesday's teleconference calls.

Wind Conditions: There have been predominantly north winds blowing off the coast (which is good for bringing salmon into the river); however, ice along the coast may be slowing down the entry of fish into the river. There are currently no indications of anything out of the ordinary as we near the average run timing.

Predictions Based on By-Catch: Preliminary calculations (by NOAA) based on chinook by-catch in the Bering Sea show a "loose" correlation between run size and by-catch; thereby making the prediction that the number of chinook returning this year will be similar to last year – however, this comes from a gross look at the numbers and fishers should keep in mind that there are many other variables affecting salmon returns.

Old Crow & Ft. Yukon Salmon Gathering: The two communities of Ft Yukon & Old Crow met last week in Old Crow, Y.T. to discuss and forge a cooperative relationship between the two communities regarding chum salmon on the Porcupine system. Two resolutions were passed at the gathering including 1) opening lines of communication and 2) creating partnerships to work on projects to provide needed information regarding chum salmon (for example, survey how many salmon return to the Sheenjek and Colleen Rivers.)

Norton Sound Fishery: Fishers in Norton Sound are currently fishing for herring, but ice near the southern end is making fishing more difficult.

Summer Chum Appearance: Once seen/caught in Hooper Bay, summer chum salmon usually appear in the lower river test fishery within 3-5 days. ADFG will contact fishers from the Nelson Island area to see if they are currently catching chum salmon – which would be another indicator for approximate arrival time of chums in the Yukon.

Call # 3 – June 14, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Alakanuk	Pilot Station	Nulato	Ruby	Ft. Yukon
Emmonak	Holy Cross	Koyukuk	Minto	Circle
Mtn. Village	Grayling	Alatna	Tanana	Eagle
St. Mary's	Kaltag	Galena	Rampart	Dawson City, Y.T.

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG - Commercial Fisheries in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Galena & Emmonak
ADFG, Subsistence Division in Anchorage
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage & Fairbanks
Dept. of Fisheries & Oceans, Canada
NMFS
NPS

Other organizations/entities

AVCP Boreal Fisheries
CATG Interior Fish Processors
TCC

Subsistence Reports:

Lower-river subsistence fishers reported an increase in salmon fishing effort, while middle- to upper-river fishers reported minimal to no activity. A report from Hooper Bay indicated fishers are seeing a second run of king salmon and chums. Water levels in the lower river are still high, thus limiting opportunity for people to get out fishing. One Alakanuk fisher reported catching 29 salmon in 6 hours and between 1 and 200 chum salmon. In Emmonak 7 (out of 12) households are actively fishing; and 6 are 5-25% done with their subsistence salmon fishing. The next subsistence opening will most likely result in a major fishing effort in District Y-1. From Mtn. Village to St. Mary's some fishers have already filled their racks, having caught quite a few chums and small to medium-sized king salmon. (Fishers in St. Mary's appear to be 80% done.) Near Pilot Station 9 families are out on the riverfront cutting and drying salmon; one family reported catching 50 kings and 50 chums in an 8 hour-period.

Around the G.A.S.H. (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross) region fishers are just beginning to catch king salmon (mostly small and of good quality). Debris load in the river is so high that fishers are looking for new areas to fish. In Kaltag there is no fishing activity yet, but in Nulato a set net brought in 1 king salmon. Water level is still high in this area, but dropping steadily. In Alatna, up the Koyukuk River, no king salmon fishing yet, but water level is rising again. Back on the mainstem Yukon River, between Galena and Ruby there is no fishing activity as of yet. Near Tanana a few fishers have set nets out in the river (which is also warm for this time of year), but have caught nothing. However, in Rampart the first king salmon was caught today (6/14)! In the upper reaches of the Yukon River reports indicate no fishing activity and high water (with no debris) which is dropping steadily.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Assessment & Strategy: Indicators at this time suggest later run timing (~4 days later than last year) and a below average king salmon run. Calm (unfavorable) winds at the mouth are not pushing fish into the river. However ADFG's lower river set net project detected a pulse of king salmon beginning June 10th and continuing through June 13th. Based on current run timing, ADFG estimates this year's 1/4-point to be between June 15th and 17th (historical 1/4-point for king salmon in the lower river is June 15th). ADFG will continue assessing the run (monitoring test net catches and Pilot Station Sonar) but at this time ADFG is acting conservatively (due to high water conditions) as there are no changes to the subsistence fishing schedule.

Test Fisheries: The Lower Yukon River drift test fishing project (operational on 5/28), caught 56 king and 291 chum salmon as of June 14th. The Pilot Station sonar passage estimate through June 13th was 6,400 king (part of the first pulse of king salmon) and 9,400 summer chum salmon. When adjusted for a 4-day later run timing, the current king salmon passage estimate (6,400) is about half of the historical average (13,200). Additionally, the current s. chum passage estimate (9,400) is below the historical average (32,500). The Marshall drift project was operational on June 11th and caught the first king salmon on the same day. As of June 13th, this test fishery has caught 25 king salmon (most likely from the king salmon run that were detected on June 7th at Black river). Due to ice damage, the Andreafsky weir site will be operational in another 1.5 to 2 weeks.

Age Composition: King Salmon: Based on historical averages, the percentage of 5 year-olds in the test set net project are about 11% above average and 6 year-olds are 4% below average. The percentage of females in the test set net project was 46% - which is 2% below historical average; and in the Y-1 subsistence harvest the percent females was 56%. **Chum salmon:** From the Y-1 subsistence harvest, 4 year-olds composed 50% of the harvest and 5 year-olds composed the other 50%. Percent females was 17% (sample size was only 5 fish).

Test Set Net Project Age Composition

(king salmon)

Age	Percentage
4	0%
5	38%
6	58%
7	4%

sample size =137

Y-1 Sub. Harvest Age Composition

(king salmon)

Age	Percentage
4	0%
5	33%
6	67%
7	0%

sample size =18

DFO: DFO is currently working on getting their test wheels in place and should be operational around June 23rd – before salmon start crossing the border. In addition a larger-mesh gill net will be used to augment the test wheels to catch fish of different sizes - particularly the larger king salmon. However, early in the run and if the run looks good, management will hold a commercial fishery in lieu of a test fishery. (Permission was given to DFO by the Yukon Salmon Committee allowing management to make this decision). At this time, it is anticipated that there will be a limited aboriginal chum fishery on the Porcupine system to act as a test fishery.

For fishery updates call the recorded information line in Emmonak at 907-949-1731, or the public line at 907-949-1320 or the toll free number at 1-866-479-7387 for fishing schedules & current information.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Pilot Station Sonar Margin of Error: Margin of error for the Pilot Station sonar is not based on water level. Water level is currently not a problem for the Pilot Station sonar project. Regardless of water level, the sonar is keyed into the bank. Transducers are located on both sides of the river, but usually drift net near the left side where sonar is keyed into) to catch salmon moving farther up river (Traditionally local fish swim near the right side of the bank).

Weighing King Salmon: This summer, for the first time, ADFG initiated a new project to measure length, girth and weight of all king salmon caught at the Pilot Station sonar project. However, they are not weighing king salmon caught in the drift test fishery in Emmonak.

Aerial Surveys: ADFG will conduct aerial surveys to assess fishing effort during future subsistence openings and will report their findings on the YRDFA teleconferences.

Call # 4 – June 21, 2005

As of June 28th, NEW Teleconference No.: 1-800-315-MEET (6338), same Participant code: 9966815#

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	St. Mary's	Kaltag	Galena	Beaver	Old Crow, Y.T.
Alakanuk	Pilot Station	Nulato	Ruby	Ft. Yukon	
Emmonak	Marshall	Huslia	Tanana	Circle	
Mtn. Village	Holy Cross	Wiseman	Rampart	Dawson City, Y.T.	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG - Commercial Fisheries in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Galena & Emmonak
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage & Fairbanks
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
NPS

Other organizations/entities

AVCP CATG Boreal Fisheries Marshall Fish Processors Interior Fish Processors

Subsistence Reports:

Lower-river subsistence fishers reported an increase in salmon fishing effort, while middle- to upper-river fishers reported minimal to no activity. Along the coast in Hooper Bay fishers are 98-99% done meeting their subsistence needs. Northwest winds have brought in a good coho run and fat & healthy chums. Water levels in the lower river are still high, but slowly receding. Most have met, or have nearly met, their subsistence needs. In Alakanuk, fishers have met their king salmon needs and are currently fishing for chum. In Emmonak 22 (out of 27)

households are actively fishing; and most are over 50% done fishing for king and chum salmon. From Mtn. Village to Marshall fishers are between 85-100% done.

Around the G.A.S.H. (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross) region fishers are beginning to catch king salmon. Previous high water and lack of fish prevented fishers in this area from exerting high fishing effort. In Kaltag, fishing just started on June 20th with mixed results; one fisher caught 7 king salmon in 5 drifts. Near Nulato, and likewise in Galena and Ruby, king salmon are just starting to show up. In Nulato one fisher caught 11 kings, another seined and got none, but most are ready and waiting for a big pulse to hit.

Up the Koyukuk River no salmon at this point and water further upriver is clear and receding. Near Tanana, water levels are rising and a lot of drift is coming down. Above Tanana, at the Rapids, water temperature is unusually warm for this time of year (62°F, 16.7°C) and 75% of the camps are cutting fish. Of the salmon caught to date, there have been no reports of *Ichthyophonus* in the flesh. In Rampart 6 king salmon were caught near 60-Mile Island, but no nets are in the water above that area. Within the Yukon Flats communities, water level is also receding and fishers are getting their fish wheels ready and are waiting for salmon to arrive. (Forest fires near Ft. Yukon have created smoky conditions.) In the upper reaches of the Yukon River reports indicate no fishing activity and high water (with no debris) which is dropping steadily.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG &USFWS:

Assessment: Indicators at this time suggest lower king salmon abundance than average and a run below the preseason projection. ADFG's lower river set net project detected a pulse of king salmon from June 11-13 – which is continuing up river for escapement and subsistence uses. This first pulse was followed by an unusual entry pattern (5 days of low test fishing catches) of 20-50 king salmon/day, which was similar to poor runs in 1998 and 2000. Based on possible later run timing, the ¼-point for 2005 may be from June 15-18 (average ¼-point from 1989-2004 for king salmon in the lower river is June 15th). Test nets observed a second pulse on June 19, which started decreasing June 21st. The ¼ -point for the Pilot Station sonar, based on possible later than average run timing, could be from June 18-21. High water is affecting both the test nets and sonar.

Although the king salmon run is showing a similar pattern as the poor 1998 and 2000 king runs, abundance appears to be greater than those two years at this point in the run, but weaker than 2004. Based on average run timing, the king salmon run is projected to be around 140,000 at this time. The current passage estimate of 259,000 s. chum salmon is just below the historical average of 326,000. Based on average run timing, the s. chum run is projected to be over 1,000,000 at this time in the run.

Test Fisheries: The Lower Yukon River drift test fishing project observed a 2nd pulse of king salmon on June 19 (CPUE of 1.25 – a conservative estimate). The cumulative CPUE through June 20 is 7.09, which is below the 1989-2004 average of 11.75. High water levels could have been affecting the test nets, so additional nets were set. The Pilot Station sonar passage estimate through June 20 was 37,000 king (~½ the historical ave. of 73,000) and 259,000 s. chum salmon (close to the historical ave. of 326,000). (These estimates reflect ADFG's adjustment of 14,000 king and 71,000 chum salmon for missing/not counting salmon along the left bank. Therefore the front end of the run is stronger than originally estimated.) The Marshall drift project has caught 205 king salmon as of June 20, which is not as high as in 1999. Since this project has no operated since 2000, it is uncertain what this catch rate indicates and has been included for informational purposes only.

Age Composition: King Salmon: Based on historical averages, the percentage of 5 year-olds (39%) in the test set net project is about 12% above average and 6 year-olds (58%) is 6% below average. The percentage of females in the test set net project was 41% - which is 9% below historical average. **Chum salmon:** From the Y-1 subsistence harvest, 4 year-olds composed 30% of the harvest and 5 year-olds composed 44%. Percent females was 16% (sample size was only 99 fish).

Strategy: A small commercial fishery, with unrestricted mesh size gillnets, will open in District Y-2 for a 6-hour period on Thursday, June 23 at 8:00pm until Friday, June 24 at 2:00am. ADFG will be assessing the run to determine when additional commercial fishing periods are warranted. Therefore, in Y-2, Subsistence salmon fishing in District 2 will be open except for 18 hours before, during, and 12 hours after commercial fishing periods. In District Y-1, the subsistence salmon fishing schedule remains in effect; District Y-3 is still on the subsistence fishing schedule.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Commercial Fishery Wanted in Lower River: Several teleconference participants from the lower river expressed an interest and concern for having a commercial opening. ADFG announced their strategy for the week, by declaring a commercial fishery open for Y-2. Timing of this opening will maintain managers' strategy to allow king salmon from the second pulse to make their way upriver to meet escapement obligations and allow for subsistence opportunities.

Lifting Subsistence Window Schedule: Concerned fishers from District Y-4 asked that consideration be given to liberalizing the subsistence window schedule to allow them extra opportunity – as the Y-2 fishers are getting with a commercial opening. ADFG responded by stating that the subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be relaxed progressively upriver, once commercial fishing begins, similar to the timing that the schedule was implemented.

Mid-point of King Run: Typically 2-3 days later than the ¼ -point, June 21 is the mid-point for this year's king run.

Call # 5 – June 28, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	St. Mary's	Kaltag	Galena	Tanana	Dawson City
Alakanuk	Marshall	Nulato	Ruby	Rampart	Pelly
Emmonak	Holy Cross	Huslia	Manley	Beaver	
Mtn. Village	Grayling	Wiseman	Nenana	Old Crow	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG - Commercial Fisheries in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks & Emmonak
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage & Fairbanks
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Dept. of Fisheries & Oceans - Canada

Other organizations/entities

BSFA Boreal Fisheries Interior Fish Processors

Subsistence Reports:

Lower-river subsistence fishers reported being nearly done, while middle- to upper-river fishers reported an increase in fishing activity since last week (first pulse now near Ruby). Northwest winds (15mph) have been blowing along the coast. Water levels in the lower river are still high, with some debris. In Emmonak most are over 50% done fishing for king and chums, and they started to see blush fish during the first commercial opening. One fisher reported catching a whitenose king salmon. From Mtn. Village to Marshall, only fishers who got a late start are still out fishing to meet their needs. Bigger and nicer looking king salmon are still moving upriver, as well as lots of chums. At this point in the season, fishers around the G.A.S.H. region report the same catch rate and equal fishing effort as compared to last year. Water levels are dropping and these fishers anticipate completely meeting their subsistence needs by July 4. They are currently catching mostly medium-sized fish, with only a few large ones. Further up river near Kaltag (fishers reported using drift nets) and Nulato (fishers reported using set nets) half the fishers reported catch effort the same as last year, while ¼ reported less and ¼ reported more.

Up the Koyukuk River in Huslia the first king salmon was caught on June 24 and they are now seeing good quality chum and king salmon. A fisher also reported that the fish are swimming way out and deep in the river. Near Wiseman water conditions are low and clear. Back on the mainstem in Galena, fishers are putting in less effort,

even though a late run, and the fish are smaller, but of better quality. Near Tanana, water level is dropping and fishers are just starting to actively fish as the first pulse of salmon has hit their area. Near the Rapids, there is a lower rate of *Ichthyophonus* infection (11%) compared to last year at this time (17-18%). (Salmon are examined for possible *Ichthyophonus* as part of the Rapids Student Data Project at the Tanana Conservation Outreach Camp). In Rampart, a few fish are going by and being caught on the north bank. Fishers are waiting for water levels to drop slightly before going fishing.

Within the Yukon Flats community of Beaver, fish wheels are being put in the water as the first few kings have already arrived (catching 1-2 kings/day in nets). No king salmon have crossed the border into Canada, but one net and one wheel are out near Dawson. Water levels are dropping rapidly.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG &USFWS:

Assessment & Escapement Projects: Indicators at this time suggest lower king salmon abundance than average and a run near the lower end of the preseason projection. ADFG's set test nets observed a 3rd pulse of king salmon from June 22-24, and a 4th pulse beginning on June 26. The 2nd and 3rd pulses seem to be stronger in magnitude than the 1st pulse. Based on average or possible later run timing, the mid-point of the season may be from June 21-23 (average mid-point from 1989-2004 is June 21). Through June 27, the cumulative CPUE is 12.75, which is below the average 1989-2004 of 18.12. The cumulative passage estimate by Pilot Station sonar through June 27 is 100,000 king and 955,000 s. chum salmon. The king salmon passage estimate for this date is near the historical average of 118,000 salmon. The s. chum estimate is above the historical average of 780,000 salmon.

Although the early portion of the 2005 king salmon run showed a similar entry pattern as the poor 1998 and 2000 king runs, both the test fishery and sonar index indicate greater abundance than those 2 years. Based on average run timing, the king run is projected to be near 140,000 salmon and the s. chum near 2,000,000 fish. The current passage rates of king salmon in route to the upper river areas seem to be sufficient to satisfy escapement and subsistence needs, as well as border passage commitments to Canada. Escapement projects throughout the Yukon River are either being setup or just beginning to count fish. Passage counts will be available during the next teleconference call.

Commercial Harvest: In District Y-2 nearly 11,700 king salmon were harvested during the first two commercial fishing openings. In District Y-1, 11,700 king salmon were also harvested during the first commercial opening. Therefore, the season total through June 26 for Districts Y-1 and Y-2 is 23,400 king salmon, which is comparable to the harvests from June 23-27 in 2002, 2003 & 2004.

Age Composition: King Salmon: From the test net project, 37% of the catch was 5 yr-olds and 60% were 6 yr-olds. The percent of females was 51%. (Sample size =443 fish). From the Y-2 commercial harvests, 5 yr-olds composed 50% of the harvest and 6 yr-olds 46%. Percent females was 56% (Sample size = 99 fish). However, age composition for king salmon from the District Y-1 commercial harvest shows a decrease in 5 yr-olds (41%) and an increase in 6 yr-olds (54%), with 68% females. **Chum salmon:** From the drift test net project, 83% were 4 yr-olds and 17% were 5 yr-olds; 33% were females. (Sample size = 212 fish).

Strategy: The subsistence window schedule will be relaxed for Sub-district Y-4A starting 6:00pm Wednesday, June 29 to 7 days/week, 24 hours/day. Likewise, the schedule for Districts Y-4B & C will be relaxed to 5 days/week starting 6:00pm Sunday, July 3. Later this week, ADFG will be assessing the run to determine if additional commercial fishing periods are warranted in the lower river. Commercial fishing periods for Districts 4, 5 and 6 are anticipated in early to mid July depending on availability of buyers. (Interior Fish Processors later expressed interest in buying fish.) There is a surplus of s. chum salmon available for commercial harvest, but there appears to be very little market for them.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Fall Chum: A report from the coast indicated that the chum they are currently seeing look like fall chum. A fisher near St. Mary's agreed that the chums they were seeing in the lower river also looked like fall chum (big & bright). ADFG suggested fishers examine the eggs; fall chum will have relatively small eggs.

Liberalizing Subsistence Schedule Further: A concerned fisherman from District Y-4 asked that further consideration be given to liberalizing the subsistence window schedule to allow them to fish 7 days/week. For Sub-districts Y-5A, B, &C, one fisherman asked that their schedule be considered for liberalization around July 5.

King and chum salmon - Price/lb: During the previous commercial opening, fishers in Y-1 received \$4.25/lb for king salmon and \$0.05/lb for chum. In Y-2 fishers got ~\$4.00/lb for kings. During the first opening in Marshall, fishers received \$1.89/lb for kings. In St. Mary's, Boreal Fisheries bought bright king salmon for ~\$4.00/lb and bluish salmon for ~\$1.00/lb. In Mtn. Village, Kwikpak paid \$3.50/lb across the board.

Call # 6 – July 5, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment by *ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy by *ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	Nulato	Rampart	Mayo, Y.T.
Emmonak	Huslia	Beaver	Pelly, Y.T.
St. Mary's	Galena	Eagle	
Pilot Station	Tanana	Dawson City, Y.T.	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks & Emmonak
National Marine Fisheries Service
Dept. of Fisheries & Oceans – Canada
National Park Service

Other organizations/entities:

AVCP
TCC
BSFA
Kaltag Fishermen's Association

Subsistence Reports:

Most all lower-river subsistence fishers are done fishing & have met their subsistence needs; middle-river fishers' efforts are winding down, while upper river fishers continue to fish or are still waiting for salmon to arrive. Along the coast fishers are seeing another run of bright silver chums. Water levels in the lower river have dropped substantially. In Emmonak fishers are seeing blushed king salmon, white-nose king salmon, and lots of chum.

Further up river in Nulato most fishers are 75-85% done and have reported better catches compared to last year. However, a majority (5 out of 6) have had to put in more effort. Water levels are dropping with no drift in the water. Up the Koyukuk River in Huslia, some fishers did well and some did not. Four (out of 9) report doing better compared to last year. Fishers are not catching as many kings as fishing effort decreases, but lots of chum salmon have entered the river and water levels are dropping. Back on the mainstem in Galena, less people are on the river as fishing effort winds down. One report indicated that not many were fishing the new federal Y-4B&C drift gillnet fishery either. In Tanana, fishers are catching a few fish on the north bank. (Second pulse expected in that area today, for the next 6 days). Near the Rapids they are seeing an increase in the percentage of females (21%) compared to last year (12%), and an increase in average length (longer by 5cm). Like last week, there is still a lower rate of *Ichthyophonous* infection compared to last year at this time. Subsistence catches have been adequate so far, but most are anticipating a good second pulse. Near Rampart, fishers are also waiting for the second pulse in order to fulfill their subsistence needs.

Within the Yukon Flats community of Beaver, needs have not been met as fishers (4 using wheels & 3 using nets) are only catching around 5-9 small king salmon/day. Near the border in Eagle water levels are up and drift in the river is complicating fishing efforts. Three (3) fishers are currently active - catching only 3 salmon/day. Into Canada, fishers are ready in Dawson, having caught one king salmon to date. As in Eagle, water levels are high with a lot of debris. Further upriver no fish have been reported being caught. Water levels are down, with no debris.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG &USFWS:

Assessment, Escapement Projects & Strategy: Indicators at this time suggest lower king salmon abundance than average (but greater abundance than in 1998 & 2000) and a run near the lower end of the preseason projection.

ADFG’s set test nets observed a 4th smaller pulse of king salmon from June 26-27. Through July 4, the cumulative CPUE is 15.80, which is below the average 1989-2004 of 21.57. The cumulative passage estimate by Pilot Station sonar through July 4 is 120,000 king and 1,500,000 s. chum salmon. The king salmon passage estimate for this date is 18% below the historical average of 147,000 salmon. The s. chum estimate is above the historical average of 1,109,000 salmon.

King Salmon	AGE COMPOSITION			Sample Size
	5-year olds	6-years olds	Females	
Y-1 Sub. Harvest	40%	54%	41%	222
Test Set Net Project	37%	60%	47%	380
Y-1 Commercial Harvest	41%	54%	62%	386
Y-2 Commercial Harvest	53%	42%	50%	810

Chum Salmon	4-year olds	5-years olds	Females	Sample Size
	Y-1 Sub. Harvest (June 7-14)	72%	26%	35%
Drift Net Project	90%	10%	55%	334
Y-1 Commercial Harvest	85%	13%	48%	480
Y-2 Commercial Harvest	87%	11%	50%	479

King salmon abundance appears to be sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence needs, as well as border passage commitments to Canada. Most escapement projects have just begun operation, so it is too early to make an assessment at this time. A 4th commercial fishing period will open for District Y-1, as well as two commercial openings for Sub-districts Y-5B&C. ADFG anticipates no further commercial salmon fishing in the Lower Yukon Area during the summer season. There is a surplus of s. chum salmon available for commercial harvest, but there appears to be very little market for them.

Commercial Harvest: The commercial season opened ~10 days later than normal. Generally, commercial fishing periods occurred between pulses of king salmon to provide more fish for escapement and upriver subsistence use. The preliminary season total through July 4 for Districts Y-1&2 is 29,000 king salmon and 29,000 s. chum salmon. It is expected that total harvest in the lower river for this year will be ~30,000 king salmon. (In 2004, a total of 56,000 king salmon were harvested.)

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Management Assessment Tools: Several teleconference participants expressed concern regarding the accuracy of abundance estimates calculated from test fisheries and the lack of management’s use of information from subsistence fishers. ADFG discussed this year’s issue surrounding underestimates of abundance early in the run based on sonar information, but stated they would not have changed their management strategy had they had the properly adjusted estimates anyway. ADFG uses data collected from sonar as an index (not an exact number) and incorporate other information from subsistence reports, CPUE calculations and other test fisheries to help determine abundance. Several entities, including AVCP & YRDFFA, agreed that these issues needed to be addressed, perhaps during the post-season.

High Water or Not?: One fisher reported that Elders from areas in the lower river say this year has not been a high water year. (Rather it has been normal with the past 10 years being below normal.) Concern was also expressed that ADFG made adjustments (based on high water) to pre-season management plans just to “create” enough fish to warrant having commercial openings; therefore how can the public participate in the management process if they can’t understand and fully appreciate estimated abundance numbers? ADFG stated there were no high water expansion factors involved in this year’s abundance estimate - only new equipment was utilized after June 19th (when they realized fish were not being counted by the split-beam sonar) to actually count fish. Some feel that the public does not understand management’s rationale for decision-making. ADFG stated they put their best effort into pre-season planning, but things change in-season and therefore their management plans need to be flexible.

Y-2 Disaster Assistance May Be Needed: Concerned Y-2 fishers asked for help in declaring a commercial fishery disaster for 2005 as commercial fishers only caught half the number of fish compared to last year. While it may not be possible to declare a federal disaster in this case, YRDFFA offered to look for ways (seek action) to improve the situation for next year. AVCP mentioned looking in to TAA (Trade Adjustment Assistance.)

Liberalizing Subsistence Schedule Further: For Sub-districts Y-5B, &C, one fisherman asked that their subsistence schedule be considered for liberalization after the commercial openings, while another thought a commercial

fishing period should not be opened until subsistence needs were first met. ADFG acknowledged their request and reiterated that 2 more pulses (stronger in magnitude than the first) are yet to hit their area.

Premiere King Salmon Fishery: Some commercial fishers fear the loss of the world's premiere king salmon fishery if ADFG continues to schedule commercial openings between pulses in the lower Yukon River. Need openings during first half of the run and during pulses to ensure catching higher quality and higher percentage of fish to provide consistent product in the marketplace. Further post-season discussion is needed.

Illegal Sale of Salmon: For several years now, fishers in the lower river have expressed concern regarding the illegal sale of subsistence-caught fish during a commercial opener. Fishers want penalties set & imposed upon those who practice such behavior, and feel they have received no response from ADFG in this matter.

Call # 7 – July 12, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Hooper Bay	Nulato	Rampart
Emmonak	Koyukuk	Old Crow, Y.T.
Mtn. Village	Galena	Dawson City, Y.T.
Pilot Station	Tanana	Mayo, Y.T.

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks & Emmonak
ADFG, Subsistence Division in Fairbanks
USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage

Other organizations/entities:

AVCP YDFDA BSFA Interior Fish Processors Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Most all lower-river subsistence fishers are done fishing & have met their subsistence needs; middle-river fishers' efforts are winding down, while upper river fishers continue to fish or are still waiting for salmon to arrive. The first few fish that entered the river around June 1 should currently be between Pelly Crossing and Whitehorse, Y.T.; the first pulse between Circle and Eagle; second pulse between Beaver and Ft. Yukon; third pulse around Rampart; fourth pulse between Ruby and Tanana; and the last few seen during the decline around June 28 should be near Galena. Last week's weather conditions throughout much of the interior and western Alaska regions of the Yukon River hindered fishing efforts.

South to southwest winds having been blowing the past 3-4 days along the coast. Prior to the change in wind conditions, fishers in that area saw an influx of pink salmon. In Emmonak, fishers are seeing big fall chum-looking salmon and one pink salmon has been caught to date, but most (9 out of 10) are waiting for weather conditions to improve before continuing with their efforts. Near Pilot Station the water level is dropping and 95% of the fishers are done meeting their s. chum & king salmon needs, but no one has fished this past week due to weather. Further up river in Nulato the water level is raising a bit, but most fishers have met their needs (done smoking). Fishers there too have waited out the bad weather before continuing with their fishing efforts. Fishers in Galena report better quality fish in the last pulse compared to prior pulses. Likewise, stormy weather prevented fishers from being out Saturday through Monday (July 9-11).

Only one fisher near Tanana reported fishing with a fish wheel and indicated that he is seeing less incidence of *Ichthyophonus* infection; the best its been in the last 4-5 years. High water has limited the abilities of the test wheel operating there- but the test wheel operator believes a lot of s. chum are going up the Tanana River. Near the Rapids fishers are seeing an increase in the number of s. chum. (These numbers are low, however, it's normal for this time of year.) In Rampart strong winds kept fishers from being out on the water, but water level is dropping again. Across the border and into Canada, a fisher near Dawson reported catching 18 king salmon to date, compared to 49 salmon last year at this time (~60% decline). Water level there is also dropping. As of yet, there are no reports of fish being caught further upriver. On the Porcupine System, in Old Crow, fishers are catching king salmon (~2 salmon/catch) for a total of 20 to date. However, they are anxiously anticipating the return of the f. chum run.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Assessment & Strategy: The king salmon run is nearly over at the mouth and test fisheries suggest lower king salmon abundance than average and a run near the lower end of the pre-season projection. Cumulative CPUE through July 11 was 17.66, which is below 1989-2004 average of 23.17. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage index of 153,116 kings is 4% below the average of 158,849. (On average, 97% of the king salmon run passes Pilot Station sonar by July 11.) The current passage index of 2.1 million s. chum salmon is above the historical average of 1.3 million, has exceeded the pre-season projection of 2 million, and should provide for all uses. As pulses of king and s. chum salmon have migrated upriver, subsistence reports indicate fair to good catches.

Escapement Projects: King salmon escapements are on track to meet escapement goals; kings continue to be about average for most escapement projects. However, at this time some escapements for s. chum are lagging compared to expectations based on estimates of passage at Pilot Station sonar. The federal assessment projects (including E. Fork Andreafsky, Gisasa River, Tozitna River, Clear Creek Weirs, and Henshaw Creek Tower) are all reporting escapement near historical averages and will continue to count until the 2nd-3rd week in August. (ADFG escapement projects include: Anvik River sonar, Kaltag Creek Weir and the Chena, Salcha and Chatanika River Towers.)

Age Composition: Age composition of king salmon from District Y-1 subsistence samples, test net projects and commercial fisheries for Y-1&2 consistently show 5 year-olds between 40-44% and 6 year-olds between 50-56%. Summer chum age composition from Y-1 subsistence samples shows 4 year-olds at 72% and 5 year-olds at 26%. Typically, the historical average for 4 year-olds is 47% and 5 year-olds at 50%.

Commercial Harvest: The preliminary season total through July 10 for Districts Y-1, 2, 5B&C is 31,500 king and 32,000 s. chum salmon. Due to market conditions for chum salmon, the king salmon harvest level to date, and the presence of lower quality fish during early July, there will be no further commercial openings in the lower Yukon River during the summer season. There will also be no further commercial openings in District 5. However, a limited commercial fishery for s. chum is likely to occur in District Y-6, but dates and times have not been determined.

DFO: The early group of salmon (reportedly entering river around June 1) arrived a few days earlier than expected at the border and a few fishers have started fishing around the Dawson area. The crew at DFO's fish wheel reported seeing good quality (physically) salmon. A fisher above the wheels reported salmon within the weight range of 12-15lbs. A two-day commercial opening occurred during the last week.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Fall Chum: The fall season officially starts on July 16 and fall assessment projects will be coming on line next week. Based on the great performance of the s. chum and the fact that chum stocks all over western Alaska are rebounding, ADFG is confident the fall chum run will be near or above the upper end of their pre-season projection of 584,000-776,000 salmon. This will be sufficient to meet escapement goals, subsistence needs and provide for a commercial harvest. ADFG asked teleconference participants if they felt it reasonable to liberalize the subsistence fishing schedule so that Districts Y1,2&3, Coastal and Innoko would be open 7 days/week, 24hrs/day. If so, ADFG would wait until the first ¼ -point to adjust the schedule, if necessary. No teleconference participants objected. Although a commercial fishery may be possible, ADFG suggested that fishers have buyers lined up prior to the start of a commercial fishery. Boreal Fisheries, in St. Mary's, stated they are actively pursuing a market for f. chum. ADFG also anticipates seeing a more noticeable overlap between s. chum and f. chum, since the runs are doing so well.

DIDSON Sonar Counts: Of the 153,116 king salmon estimated by the Pilot Station sonar as the cumulative passage index, 1/3 (~54,000) of those salmon were counted using the new DIDSON sonar. Less than 20% of the s. chum run was counted using the same method. Even though this is the first year using DISON sonar, this year's counts will still be compared to previous years (pre-DIDSON sonar). ADFG acknowledged it's hard to say if this year will be completely comparable to previous years, but that's why the Pilot Station passage estimate is only an index.

Y-4B & C Drift Gillnet Fishery: Forty (40) permits were issued for this year's new fishery. Some fishers prospecting, but still a low number of salmon (less than 20) was taken in this fishery. This fishery closes at midnight on July 14.

Call # 8 – July 19, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak	Huslia	Rampart
Pilot Station	Galena	Pelly Crossing, Y.T.
Nulato	Minto	Teslin, Y.T.
Koyukuk	Tanana	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Galena
USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage
NMFS
DFO

Other organizations/entities:

Interior Fish Processors

Subsistence Reports:

As fishers wait for f.chum, fishing activity in the lower river is minimal, while upper river fishers continue to fish or are still waiting for Chinook and f. chum salmon to arrive. In Emmonak most are waiting for a big pulse of f. chum before actively fishing again. However, on July 18, one fisher caught 150 f. chum in one drift while just catching something for supper. All the way up the mainstem to the Koyukuk River fishers are waiting for f. chum. Up the Koyukuk in Huslia, fishers are currently fishing for chum only and have caught more than they can handle. Back on the mainstem, within the Tanana-Rapids-Rampart area, fishing efforts for s.chum & Chinook still continue. Across the border into Canada, the first Chinook salmon was caught near Pelly Crossing on July 12, and fishers there continue to catch (slightly above average) at this time. Up into the further reaches of the Yukon, near Teslin, salmon have not arrived yet.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Summer Assessment & Strategy: The king salmon run is over at the mouth and the lower river test fishery project indicated lower king salmon abundance than average and a run near the lower end of the pre-season projection. Cumulative CPUE through July 15 was 17.80, which is below 1989-2004 average of 23.54. Based on historical average run timing, the king salmon run was two days late with the first quarter of the run being on June 17. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage index of 164,400 kings is near the average of 161,500. While the sonar index is near average, prior to 1998 a larger commercial harvest near 80-90,000 kings would have been taken in the lower river districts as compared to 30,000 kings harvested this year. The current passage index of 2.5 million s. chum salmon is above the historical average of 1.4 million, has exceeded the pre-season projection, and is the

highest s. chum run since 1995 (based on estimates from Pilot Station sonar). Although the s. chum salmon run should provide for all uses, some escapements are lagging (compared to expectations based on estimates from Pilot Station sonar). Current management strategy is to remain the same this week as last week. There are five (5) commercial fishing periods scheduled for District 6 starting July 15.

Escapement Projects:

Project	As of	King passage	S. Chum passage	Average for s. chum salmon	Average for king salmon	Notes
Anvik River Sonar	17-Jul		459,000	334,000 (1994-2004)		Esc. considered good at this point
Kaltag Creek Tower	17-Jul	79	18,000	23,500 (1994-2004)	81 (1994-2004)	Esc. considered good at this point
Chena River Tower	17-Jul	234	234			only been counting for 4 days
Salcha River Tower	17-Jul	2448	597	179 (2002 count; not an ave.)	2081 (2002 count; not an ave.)	Esc. considered good at this point
Chatanika River Tower	NO COUNTS AT THIS TIME (started operating on June 29)					
Clear Creek			19000			Estimating that esc. will fall at high end of lower years
Andreafsky River Weir	17-Jul	1800	17400	62300 (1995-2004)	3069 (1995-2004)	88% of king run passed; s. chum esc. is below ave.
Gisasa River Weir	17-Jul	2600	13100	43600 (1995-2004)	1643 (1995-2004)	68% of king run passed; in line for 2nd highest s. chum esc.
Tozitna River Weir	17-Jul	1200	9400			72% of king run passed; only 28% of s. chum run has passed
Henshaw Creek Weir	17-Jul	386	45000			no counts through July 15-17

The Eagle sonar project started counting on July 12. On July 18 they had a daily count of 4,500 king salmon!

DFO: As of July 19, 482 chinook salmon have been counted through DFO's wheels, with another 36 caught in their gill net (32 of which were tagged). They are counting 33-65 fish per day (mean = 45). The first pulse hit July 16th and peaked July 24th. Population estimate through July 18 is 7,800 king salmon, with July 15 as the ¼ pt. of the run. DFO is estimating a potential border passage of 35,000-43,000 king salmon at this point, with a total allowable catch between 7,000-16,000 king salmon. Eleven (11) fishers participated in the first commercial fishery opening and caught 397 king salmon. During the second opening 13-15 fishers participated and caught approximately 325 salmon (but this number will be higher). Currently the First Nation fishery is open 7 days/week.

Fall Season Update: Test fishery projects indicate low chum salmon abundance in the lower Yukon River at this time, but a big pulse of bright chum likely hit on July 18. However, there is increased confidence that the 2005 f. chum salmon run size will likely be at or above the upper end of the pre-season projection range of 776,000. Even with good production, it is expected that some stocks may be weak because they will be rebuilding from very low levels. ADFG's fall drift test fishing project started on July 16 in Emmonak and the Mountain Village Cooperative drift test fish project began on July 17. The Pilot Station sonar project will change counting from s. chum to f. chum on July 19. Subsistence fishing in all districts will remain relaxed off the windowed subsistence fishing schedule. ADFG will wait for the first ¼ point of the run before considering opening commercial periods.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Yukon Queen: One teleconference participant from Canada questioned whether the Yukon Queen (boating back and forth from Eagle to Dawson) was a factor in decreasing salmon numbers. DFO responded by stating that some studies on the impact of the Yukon Queen have been done (some commissioned by the R&E Fund), and have shown that the boat does strand and kill juvenile fish, but there are no significant spawning sites along the route of the Yukon Queen.

Ichthyophonus & Disease: YR DFA successfully held an *Ichthyophonus* workshop at the Rapids near Tanana and saw *Ichthyophonus* in the hearts of some salmon. However, they also looked at cisco and saw white spots that were not *Ichthyophonus*. The take home message was "what you see is not always what you get." They also saw

tapeworm in fish and commented that if these fish are cooked thoroughly or frozen for week, they are safe for human consumption.

Call # 9 – July 26, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak	Nulato	Tanana	Mayo, Y.T.
St. Mary's	Huslia	Beaver	
Pilot Station	Koyukuk	Eagle	
Grayling	Galena	Old Crow, Y.T.	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak, Pilot Station & Eagle
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Anchorage
NMFS
DFO

Other organizations/entities:

AVCP BSFA

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing activity in the lower river is minimal as most are done fishing for f. chum or are planning on going fishing after berry picking season. Upper river fishers continue to fish for Chinook and/or wait for f. chum salmon to arrive. In Emmonak only 2 (out of 7) are actively fishing f. chum, while the rest wait for berry season to end. In St. Mary's fishing is for supper & freezer food. Fishers there caught big, rich-tasting fish during the front end of the f. chum run (which was a mix between s. & f. chum salmon). Further upriver in Nulato, not many are out fishing for f. chum yet; they are waiting for the drift net fishery to open to make it worth their effort. Likewise, in the village of Koyukuk, fishers wait for the drift net fishery before really getting started fishing for f. chum. They are also currently seeing about a 50/50 mix of s. & f. chum. Up the Koyukuk River in Huslia a couple of fishers are still out fishing for s. chum (and catching a few f. chum), but most are done. One fisher commented that they have seen more fish this year than in the last 10 years.

Back on the mainstem near Tanana, fishers are still catching s. chum for dog food, and waiting for f. chum to arrive. The first "red flesh" chum appeared today (July 26) near the Rapids – marking the start of the f. chum run in that area. *Ichthyophonous* infection rates in king salmon still appear to be lower this year than last year. In the Yukon Flats community of Beaver fishers are nearly done fishing for king salmon. And in Eagle, fishers are 80% done meeting their subsistence needs as the fish are coming on strong. Water temperature there was recorded at 58°F (14.4°C). Up the Porcupine system and across the border into Old Crow, 100 salmon have been harvested as fishers wind up their fishing efforts for king salmon. In Mayo the king salmon fishery has been in full swing the past week as the fish are coming in strong. However, the kings have been soft – which is unusual for this time of year.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Summer Season Assessment & Strategy: In summary, all indications at this time are the 2005 king salmon run was below average but similar to 2002. The early portion of the 2005 king salmon run showed a similar entry pattern as the poor runs of 1998 and 2000 king runs. However, both the sonar index and the test fishery indicate greater abundance than those two years. Based on historical comparisons of test fishing CPUE and sonar passage indices and subsistence reports, the king salmon run abundance was sufficient enough to provide for escapement and subsistence needs, as well as border passage commitments to Canada and a small commercial harvest. The summer

chum salmon run was large enough to provide for all uses. Currently ADFG is conducting aerial surveys of escapement streams. Two commercial fishing periods in District Y-6 have been scheduled. The Eagle sonar project is counting 5,000-6,000 salmon/day. Preliminary estimates indicate a border passage between 52,000-54,000 king salmon.

Fall Season Assessment & Strategy: The drift test fishery began July 16 at Emmonak. A strong pulse was detected on July 18 that lasted 2 days. This pulse was detected 2 days later at the Mtn. Village drift test fishery and has since passed the Pilot Station sonar project, and is most likely near Anvik as of today (July 26). The cumulative sonar estimate of f. chum salmon through July 25 is 255,000, which is above the average of 75,000. Test net samples from the first pulse showed 84% as 4 yr-old fish. Several different people examined the sample from the pulse (including local fishermen and buyer technicians) who thought the f. chum salmon made up 30-50% of the fish sampled. The f. chum salmon run size will likely be at or above the upper end of the preseason projection range. The first pulse passed the lower river districts with little exploitation, which should benefit the stocks and upriver users. Two 12-hour commercial salmon fishing periods Y-1 have been announced for this week. However, fishers should be aware that markets are weak.

Currently most districts are off the windowed fishing schedule. The middle river districts are scheduled to be back to drift fishing on August 2. ADFG will take into consideration fishers request in that area to relax the drift net fishing period to start earlier. ADFG will also have to manage the fishery around tides and daylight.

DFO: Over the past few days DFO's fish wheels have seen a peak in king salmon numbers (ranging 48-85/day; mean 72). As of July 25, 52% of the king run has passed into Canada. DFO's current population estimate (30,000 king salmon) is low (due to low tag recovery) – 30% lower than it should be for this time of year. DFO will work through the tag values to compare low tag recovery vs. high tag recovery. A commercial fishery was opened for 2 days and harvested 934 king salmon. The First Nation fishery harvested 149 in Dawson and 5 in Pelly. There is a bit of lag time between the fishery and reporting to DFO, so these numbers are probably low. No salmon have appeared in Whitehorse yet. DFO may forgo the f. chum test fishery and go into a commercial fishery instead, but that is yet to be determined.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Request for Relaxed Drift Net Schedule for Y-4A: A couple of teleconference participants, from communities within District Y4-A, requested that the drift net fishery schedule be relaxed so they may be able to drift earlier than August 2. ADFG acknowledged their request, will consider it and let them know their decision before next Tuesday's teleconference.

Atlantic Salmon or Sockeye?: A salmon caught near Pitka's Point led those who caught it to question whether it was an Atlantic salmon or a sockeye. The salmon has been sent to ADFG for genetic testing, but is believed to most likely be a sockeye salmon. The number of sockeye salmon reportedly caught on the Yukon River has increased, but ADFG has not heard of many being caught this year in particular.

Recovered Yellow Tag: A fisher near Pilot Station caught a king salmon with a yellow tag. Unsure of what project tagged the fish, the fisher was encouraged to turn the tag into YRDFA for further identification. As DFO uses orange tags, it is not likely to have been tagged by their project. It is possible that it was a fish tagged previously during the radio telemetry studies. No matter, the tag could provide some insightful information.

False Pass Fishery: Concern was raised by one teleconference participant regarding by-catch of Yukon f. chum salmon in the False Pass fishery. However, the June fishery through False Pass is usually tied to the Yukon's s. chum, and not f. chum fishery. Incidentally, ADFG reported by-catch of Yukon chum near 440,000 salmon.

Chena & Salcha Towers: The Chena Tower only counted for a total of 4-5 days. Aerial surveys were affected by murky water. The Salcha Tower counted 4,700 king salmon and 5,700 s. chum salmon through July 24. This year's king count was comparable to last year, while the s. chum far exceeded last year's. Chris Stark of BSFA commented that the Salcha ran average for a bad year.

Call #10 – August 2, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Funded by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Office of Subsistence Management
Yukon River Panel

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak Nulato Nenana Rampart Old Crow, Y.T.
St. Mary's Huslia Tanana Dawson, Y.T. Mayo, Y.T.

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Fairbanks, Anchorage & Emmonak
ADFG, Subsistence Division in Anchorage
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Anchorage

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing activity in the lower river is minimal as most are done fishing for f. chum or are planning on going fishing after berry picking season. Upper river fishers continue to fish for Chinook, but most are winding down. In Emmonak only 1 fisher is actively fishing f. chum, while some plan on continuing to fish after berry season. One fisher in the area commented that this year's Chinook and f. chum were in good shape and didn't seem as sick this year. Further upriver in Nulato, not many are actively fishing as a major wild fire threatens the community only 3 miles from town. (Most fish cutters are Elders, so they won't be out in the smoke). However, some will drift for fresh fish to feed fire crews. Water level in this area has also gone down. Up the Koyukuk River in Huslia fishers are still out fishing for s. chum and getting f. chum too. Fishers felt they did better this year than last.

Up the Tanana River in Nenana fishers wait for f. chum, having met their subsistence needs. Back on the mainstem near Tanana, fishers are done fishing for Chinook and are waiting for f. chum. Near the Rapids, nearly 50% of the f. chum salmon have passed through and the video test wheel saw the highest 24hr catch yesterday with over 1000 salmon. *Ichthyophonus* infection rates in king salmon still appear to be lower this year than last year (Table 1).

Up the Porcupine system and across the border into Old Crow, the first chum salmon was caught on July 28. In Dawson, most First Nation fishers are done having caught smaller king salmon than in the past, but still in good shape. In Mayo 10 fishing families are fishing during this peak time - catching good quality fish and in satisfying amounts.

Supposed Ich. Infection Rate near the Rapids

	2004	2005
female	49%	17%
large male	17%	17%
small male	6%	5%
Total	23%	13%

Table 1.As reported by Stan Zuray and the Science Camp Students. *Ichthyophonus* infections were not definitely diagnosed with laboratory testing.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Please see the attached ADFG, Yukon River Salmon Fishery Update #9 and the DFO, Yukon River Chinook Salmon Update: July 29, 2005 for details.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Science Camp Students: Ft Yukon Science Camp students from Arctic and Beaver participated in this teleconference. Lower River subsistence reports were redone for the students' benefit.



Yukon River Salmon Fishery Update

UPDATE #9

Fall Season Assessment

August 2, 2005

The first significant pulse of Yukon River fall chum salmon began entering the mouth on July 18 and the size was estimated by the Pilot Station Sonar to be approximately 204,000. The pulse was followed by eight days of very low passage before the second pulse began entering on July 29. The second pulse is in progress at the time of this update and the size has not been estimated by the sonar yet. However, based on the lower river drift test fish project at Emmonak, the second pulse is believed to be as large or larger than the first pulse as indicated by a record high CPUE on July 31 for the project and the longer duration of the pulse.

The sonar cumulative passage through August 1 is 313,000. This is well above the average passage of 160,000 by the same date for the project which typically represents the first 30% of the fall chum salmon run. With the strong first quarter, the assessment at this time is that the 2005 fall chum salmon run size will be near or above the preseason projection of 776,000 and could be near 1 million based on average timing. The drift test fish projects at Emmonak and Mountain Village corroborate the relative passage strength estimated by the Pilot Station sonar and the travel speed. The first pulse is thought to be currently in the vicinity of Ruby and the front of the second pulse is near Marshall.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing: The project began July 16 at Emmonak with 2 days of low catches. A strong pulse was detected on July 18 that lasted 2 days then catches dropped off. The second pulse began on July 29 and continued through August 1. The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 31 is 1,035 which is well above the 4-year average of 289. Over 90% of the test net samples have been caught at the Big Eddy sites with less than 10% coming in the Middle and North Mouths.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing: The project began on July 17. There were 3 days of low passage with the first pulse passing on July 20, it lasted 2 days, then dropped off. The second pulse began on July 31 and continued through August 1. The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 31 is 1,252 which is well above the 8-year average of 545.

Pilot Station Sonar Project: The cumulative sonar estimate of fall chum salmon through July 31 is 275,000 which is above the average for the project of 153,000. The cumulative passage estimate of 846 coho salmon is near average and is not anticipated to start building until around August 8.

Kaltag Drift Test Fishing: The project began on July 25 with 2 days of good catches that dropped off for 2 days and increased on July 29, which corresponds closely with the predicted travel time of the first pulse. The cumulative CPUE for the project through July 31 is 458 which is well above the 6-year average of 171.

Sample Data: The cumulative test net samples to date include 82% 4-year old fish while samples from the first two commercial periods were comprised of 93% 4-year old fall chum salmon. This is consistent with our expectations where the brood year that produced the strong 3-year old component in 2004 is continuing this year as a strong 4-year old age class.

Fall Season Commercial Harvest

<u>Location</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>#Fishermen</u>	<u># Chum</u>	<u>#Coho</u>
District 1	1	23	399	50
	2	62	8,104	458
	3		22,879	170

31,382

678

Three 12-hour commercial salmon fishing periods were opened last week. The first period which started on July 27 had 23 fishermen landing 399 fall chum and 50 coho salmon in District 1. The majority of those fish were poor quality summer chum salmon. The second period on July 29 had 62 fishermen landing 8,104 fall chum and 458 coho salmon. Preliminary reports from the third period on July 31 had an increased number of fishermen landing 22,879 fall chum and 170 coho salmon. The total harvest for the three periods is 31,282 fall chum and 678 coho salmon. Salmon quality was reported as very good with nearly an 8-pound average per fish.

Fall Season Management

With confidence that the 2005 fall chum salmon run size will likely be at or above the upper end of the preseason projection range of 776,000, it is anticipated the run size will be adequate for escapement and subsistence uses and a surplus is available for commercial harvest. The first pulse of fall chum salmon has passed the lower river districts with little exploitation which is expected to benefit escapement and upriver fishers. Commercial salmon markets are weak and limited to District 1 with no buyers have expressing interest in purchasing salmon in Districts 2 and 3 so far.

The fall chum salmon run has just passed the average first quarter point in the lower river. By beginning commercial fishing early in the run, it is intended to help spreadout opportunity and harvest impacts. Additional commercial fishing periods are anticipated for District 1 and will be scheduled around market interest and fishing effort. Fish quality is very important in maintain the Yukon River salmon market. Fishermen need to handle their catch carefully. They also need to keep in contact with the buyers during each period to make sure there is capacity on the tenders and at the dock to take their deliveries.

At this time, subsistence fishing will remain open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day in Districts 1, 2, and 3 except for closures 12 hour before, during and 12 hour after each commercial salmon fishing period as specified in regulation

Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing

District 1: To be announced. Possibly 2 to 3 periods per week depending on market capacity.

Subsistence Salmon Fishing

Coastal District: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

District 1: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day. Except that subsistence salmon fishing is closed 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial salmon fishing period.

Districts 2 and 3: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

Subdistrict 4A: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

Subdistricts 4B&C: Sun. 6 pm to Fri. 6 pm

Subdistrict 5A: Tue. 6 pm to Sun 6 pm

Subdistricts 5B&C: Tue. 6 pm to Sun 6 pm

Subdistrict 5D: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

District 6: Mon. 6 pm to Wed. Noon / Fri. 6 pm to Sun Noon

Old Minto Area: Fri. 6 pm to Wed. 6 pm

Koyukuk River: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

If you have any questions concerning the fall season fishery, you can contact the Emmonak office at 949-1320 or the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Summer Season

Escapement Projects

Current Yukon River king salmon escapements in 2005 are meeting escapement goals in most tributaries. This assessment is based on escapement counts and estimates from selected tributaries.

Preliminary escapement data indicates the 2005 summer chum salmon escapement levels continue to be near average or above in most tributaries.

Andreafsky River Weir: Cumulative fish passage through July 31 is 2,061 kings and 19,430 summer chum salmon. The 1995 - 2004 average cumulative passage through July 31 is 3,587 kings and 68,500 summer chum salmon.

Anvik River Sonar: Final preliminary sonar passage index through July 26 is 525,400 summer chum salmon. The 1979 - 2004 average passage index through July 26 is 365,500 summer chum salmon.

Kaltag Creek Tower: The tower counts through July 27 is 103 kings and 22,000 summer chum salmon. The 1994 - 2004 average counts through July 27 is 133 kings and 33,000 summer chum salmon.

Gisasa River Weir: The final preliminary cumulative fish passage through July 31 is 3,086 kings and 170,186 summer chum salmon. The 1995 - 2004 average cumulative passage through July 31 is 2,524 kings and 38,452 summer chum salmon.

Tozitna River Weir: Cumulative fish passage through July 31 is 1,580 king and 30,368 chum salmon. Weir counts through July 31 in 2002 were 1,426 kings and 16,409 summer chum salmon.

Chena River Tower: High water conditions on the Chena River have affected operations since July 1.

Salcha River Tower: The tower counts through July 27 is 5,085 kings and 15,891 summer chum salmon. Tower counts through July 27 in 2002 were 4,595 kings and 3,140 summer chum salmon.

Chatanika River Tower: The tower became operational on June 29. No counts at this time due to high silt loads in water.

Henshaw Creek Weir: The weir counts through July 31 is 504 kings and 132,927 summer chum salmon. In 2002, the cumulative passage through July 31 was 645 kings and 25,067 summer chum salmon.

Clear Creek Weir: Cumulative fish passage through July 31 is 23,626 summer chum salmon. The 2002 cumulative passage through July 31 was 13,064 summer chum salmon.

Commercial Harvest

The 2005 commercial fishery was managed conservatively by a reduction in the number of fishing periods early in the season until it was determined the run could sustain more frequent fishing periods. The 2005 management plan developed pre-season also outlined that commercial fishing would occur during the mid-50 percent of the run. The summer chum harvest was taken incidental to fishing directed at king salmon except for directed chum salmon commercial fishing periods in District 6.

The estimated commercial harvest for the lower Yukon River is 30,000 king salmon and 32,200 summer chum salmon. The estimated upper Yukon River harvest to date is 1,900 king salmon and 9,000 summer chum salmon. There were 578 permit holders in the lower Yukon River. The effort is not yet known for the upper Yukon River. Value of the fishery won't be available until all fish ticket data has been entered. Four buyer-processors operated in the Lower Yukon Area and one in the Upper Yukon Area. There were also a number of catcher-sellers operating this year. Total harvest, fishery value, and fishing effort will be available in the season summary.

If you have any questions concerning the summer season fishery, you can contact the following people, Steve Hayes or Kevin Clark, 267-2383 or 267-2135.



YUKON RIVER CHINOOK SALMON UPDATE

June 29, 2005

RUN SIZE ESTIMATES

Canadian Portion Run Assessment:

A crew is onsite and the fish wheels are operating.

Run Program	Assessment	Date	2005	2005	Average
Fish wheel Catches		June 29	3		3
Population Estimate					
Whitehorse Fishway					
Aerial Surveys					
Other Projects	Assessment				

Alaskan Portion Run Assessment

At this time, information on the 2005 Chinook salmon run indicates that it is below average in strength, however the run may not be late as was indicated in previous updates. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has indicated that the 2005 Chinook salmon run will support escapements, subsistence harvest, a limited commercial harvest, and Canadian border passage requirements.

The Pilot Station sonar passage through June 28th is 106,000 Chinook salmon and 1,015,000 summer chum salmon. The average counts through June 28th are 123,000 Chinook salmon and 845,000 summer chum salmon.

CANADIAN FISHERIES

The conduct of Canadian fisheries will be dependent upon conservation concerns. The first objective is achieving the 2005 spawning escapement goal of 28,000 Chinook salmon set by the Yukon River Panel. On July 04th a decision will be made regarding whether to proceed with a test fishery or a limited commercial fishery.

Upper Yukon River

First Nations Fishery: At this time an unrestricted aboriginal fishery is anticipated.

Test Fishery: A test fishery funded by the Yukon River Panel (or a limited commercial fishery if there is an expectation that the spawning escapement goal of 28,000 Chinook salmon and aboriginal fishery requirements will be achieved) will be used for assessment purposes during the early part of the Chinook salmon season.

- Domestic Fishery:** Fishing opportunities will be provided if the run is sufficient to meet spawning escapement requirements and the needs of the aboriginal fishery.
- Recreational Fishery:** Open unless in-season estimates indicate that there are insufficient numbers of fish to meet spawning escapement requirements and the needs of First Nations.
- Commercial Fishery:** There may be a limited commercial fishery early in the season primarily for assessment purposes if it appears that the escapement goal and aboriginal fishery requirements will be achieved. A normal commercial fishery would then take place after the early season assessment.

ALASKAN FISHERIES

Subsistence Fisheries:

Subsistence fisheries are taking place at this time.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The pre-season outlook for the 2005 Yukon River Chinook salmon run was a below average return. Initial information from the U.S. assessment programs located on the lower river is confirming that the 2005 run is below average, although the total season run projections have improved. Recent information is also suggesting that the 2005 run may not be late. The current Pilot Station count (106,000) is 86% based on the average historical count of 123,000.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has revised their in-season sonar count at Pilot Station after conducting some testing using DIDSON sonar. During the June 28th Teleconference the total passage count of 100,000 Chinook salmon to June 27th included 48,000 fish counted using the DIDSON sonar. The average historical count for June 27th is 118,000.

A Canadian mark-recapture assessment program will monitor the run. Recovery of the tags for this program will be by a test fishery or a limited commercial fishery which will be initiated shortly after the arrival of Chinook salmon in Canada. Three Chinook salmon were caught in the DFO fish wheels to June 29th which may reflect average timing.

At this point in time, the information we have is more optimistic than it was earlier in the season. There may be an unrestricted aboriginal fishery and opportunities for other fisheries, however all fishing opportunities will be dependent upon ongoing assessments.

DFO is involved in a new sonar program located near Eagle Alaska, which will attempt to count the Chinook salmon return to the Upper Yukon River. Eagle Alaska is a community located downstream of the Canada/US border.

For more information please contact:

Patrick Milligan at (867) 393-6720

milliganp@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

or

Louise Naylor (867) 393-6725

salmon@yukonsalmoncommittee.ca

Call #11 – August 9, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Funded by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Office of Subsistence Management
Yukon River Panel

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak	Tanana	Old Crow, Y.T.
Nulato	Rapids	Dawson, Y.T.
Koyukuk	Rampart	Mayo, Y.T.
Galena	Eagle	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Anchorage & Emmonak
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks, Emmonak & Anchorage
Office of Subsistence Management in Fairbanks
NMFS

Other organizations/entities:

AVCP BSFA YDFDA

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing activity in the lower river is decreasing. Upper river fishers continue to fish for Chinook, but most are gearing up for the arrival of f. chums. In Emmonak fishers are between 50-75% done with regards to meeting their subsistence needs. Further upriver in Nulato only a few fishers have gone out as most are currently working on the wild fires. Near the community of Koyukuk and Galena water levels are dropping. No chum salmon are reportedly going up the Tanana River yet, but near the Rapids one fisher saw ~1,400 chum go by in a 24-hour period. Near the Alaska-Yukon border in Eagle, fishers are done fishing for Chinook salmon and are waiting for chums.

Up the Porcupine system and across the border into Old Crow, no fishers are fishing from fishing camps yet, but one fisher reported catching 47 chum (since July 28) in the Chinook fishery. (He consequently has caught 368 king salmon for his freezer). Water is clear, but levels are up slightly. Back on the mainstem in Dawson, fishers are catching Chinook salmon in good shape. Most are waiting for the arrival of f. chum salmon. Water is also clear of debris. Further up river in Mayo, 80% of the fishers there have pulled their nets and reported putting in less effort this year than last – even though they caught fewer salmon (between 100-200 less). Overall people in Mayo are happy with the quality and number of salmon harvested. Little effort has been made near Fraser Falls due to weather and environmental conditions (bad air and lots of wasps).

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Fall Season Assessment & Strategy: There are lots of chum in the river after 3 significant pulses and coho salmon are just starting to show up. The first pulse of chum salmon, now in Stevens Village, was estimated to be approximately 195,000 salmon – as was the second pulse, which is now near Kaltag. The third pulse (starting on Aug. 8) is now near Pilot Station. The size of the third pulse, after monitoring for the first 2 days, is at 380,000, which is an incomplete estimate at this time. The cumulative passage of f. chum is currently 846,000 salmon and is expected to exceed 1 million. We are currently at the midpoint of the run and saw a strong first half.

Fall chum test fishery projects are operational now, including the Rapids/Rampart tagging project which began tagging fall chum July 28; Chandalar and Sheenjok River sonar projects are getting setup at this time and are expected to be counting in the next few days; and the Kantishna River tagging projects will be starting next week.

The Tozitna project through USFWS is wrapping up and has counted 38,000 s. chum and 1,600 chinook. The last day for the Henshaw Weir project was yesterday and has counted 500 chinook and 149,000 s. chum salmon.

Fall Season Commercial Fishery: There have been 2 commercial fishing periods in District Y-1 since last week, for a combined total of 5, catching a total of 64,679 f. chum and 2,871 coho salmon. Average weight for f. chum is 7.9lbs and 7.4lbs for coho. District Y-1 had 2 buyers (however one left as the other buyer reached capacity) and Districts Y2&3 had none. ADFG reminded teleconference participants that commercial markets are weak (even though fish are abundant and of good quality) and interested catcher/seller parties should call ADFG.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Science Camp Students: Science Camp students from Arctic and Beaver participated in this teleconference. Lower River subsistence reports were redone for the students' benefit.

Subsistence Fishing Schedule: ADFG reminded teleconference participants that subsistence fishing is closed during commercial openings, which some teleconference participants feel is dampening subsistence activity. Participants from Galena complained of the current subsistence schedule (5 days/week with no weekend fishing) and asked that it be changed to 7 days/week.

Call #12 – August 16, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Funded by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Office of Subsistence Management
Yukon River Panel

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak	Galena	Eagle
St. Mary's	Tanana	Old Crow, Y.T.
Grayling	Rapids	Dawson, Y.T.
Nulato	Rampart	Pelly, Y.T.

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Pilot Station & Galena
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks
NMFS
DFO

Other organizations/entities:

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing activity in the lower and upper river continues. In Emmonak water level is low, but most people are at least 75% done with their harvests. As in Emmonak, air conditions in St Mary's are smokey. Most are done with their fishing there, although some are catching coho salmon too. In Grayling a fisher reported drifting and catching 59 red, good-looking chum and that lots of fish are jumping. Near Nulato water level is dropping. A Nulato fisherman had drifted three times during the previous week and caught 54 good-quality fish that he gave to feed firefighters. Near Tanana and the Rapids a lot of chum salmon are moving through, but are of poor quality so fishermen have stopped fishing. (It's too early to start fishing for dog food because of the heat.) Fishermen near Eagle are starting to chum salmon as the Chinook run is dwindling down.

Up the Porcupine system chum salmon are starting to show up. One fisher stated that he thought this could be a good chum run. Water level is low. Dawson fishermen are waiting for chum salmon to arrive. A fisher near Pelly finished fishing for Chinook salmon on August 1, even though fish were still running. She also reported not seeing many fish infected with (supposed) *Ichthyophonus* this year.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Please see the attached ADFG, Yukon River Salmon Fishery Update #11 for details.

DFO: The test wheel near the border is catching between 5-7 chinook and 20-30 chum salmon per day. An aerial chinook survey on the Big Salmon River counted approximately 5,200 salmon.; the Nisutlin River (current count at 807 chinook salmon) and the Wolf River (current count at 260 chinook salmon) are above the 10-year average. The Fishway in Whitehorse has counted 1,658 chinook salmon and expect ~2,300 salmon by the end of the season. Up the Porcupine System near Old Crow a significant number of fish have arrived and they have tagged 206 fish already.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Relaxed Subsistence Fishing Schedule Request: Fishermen and teleconference participants from Galena requested that ADFG open the Sub-District 4B&C subsistence fishery to 7 days/week, 24 hours/day because a majority of people are firefighting or have day jobs and need better access to fish on weekends. Other teleconference participants from outside Galena felt that the schedule should be relaxed. ADFG commented that Sub-Districts 4B&C are currently on a more relaxed schedule of 5 days/week. ADFG is willing to be flexible but they have to be so systematically, according to the regulations, and have to give commercial fishing an opportunity to open. Changes within these regulations can occur.

Sonar Estimates: Counts at the Anvik River Sonar project currently indicate 535,000 s. chum have passed, which is the highest count since 2000. The Eagle River Sonar has counted approximately 80,000 chinook salmon.

Chum Production: A discussion ensued covering possible reasons for fluctuations of s. chum and f. chum production rates in the lower and upper Yukon River. One teleconference participant from Huslia suggested a relationship better lower lower-river production and lack of snow-covered mountains on the lower country areas of the Yukon River. A fisherman near St Mary's also suggested that low water level on the E. Fork Andreafsky which could affect the number of salmon making it to the spawning grounds as the river is nearly impassable.



Yukon River Salmon Fishery Update

UPDATE #11

Fall Season Assessment

August 15, 2005

August 14 is the average three-quarter point in the fall chum salmon run at the Emmonak test fish project and there have been three significant pulses that have entered the mouth of the Yukon River so far this Fall. The first pulse was estimated to be approximately 195,000 and should be in the vicinity Fort Yukon. The second pulse was estimated to be roughly the same size and near Ruby. The third pulse began entering the river on August 5, ran for 4 days, and was estimated by the Pilot Station sonar to include approximately 650,000 fall chum salmon. The third pulse was exceptionally large and set a new record for highest single day passage rate for both summer and fall chum. Coho salmon are just beginning to increase which is normal for this date.

The cumulative sonar passage through August 14 is 1,333,669. This is well above the average passage of 324,000 by the same date for the project which typically represents the first 60% of the fall chum salmon run past Pilot Station. With the strong first half, the assessment at this time is that the 2005 fall chum salmon run size has far exceeded the preseason projection of 776,000 and is on track for the largest run since 1975 based on average

timing. Test fish wheels at the Rapids and Rampart along with subsistence fishermen reports indicate there is a strong early component traveling up the mainstem above the Tanana River confluence. Additionally, there are early reports of steady fish passage from the sonar projects on the Chandalar and Sheenjek Rivers that started last week.

Coho salmon are entering the Yukon River in increasing numbers, but it is still early in the run which has an average first quarter point of August 16 at Pilot Station sonar. The coho salmon cumulative passage estimate of 62,559 is currently above the Pilot Station sonar average passage estimate of 24,131 for the date and the total run is expected to be above average based on the recent trend of strong coho salmon returns.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing: The project began July 16 and the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through August 14 is 1,707.02 which is well above the 4-year average of 768.65.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing: The project began on July 17 and the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through August 14 is 3,003.58 which is well above the 8-year average of 1,164.70.

Pilot Station Sonar Project: The cumulative sonar estimate of fall chum salmon through August 14 is 1,333,669 which is above the average for the project of 324,000. The cumulative passage estimate of 62,559 coho salmon is well above the average of 24,131.

Kaltag Drift Test Fishing: The project began on July 25 and the fall chum salmon cumulative CPUE for the project through August 13 is 1,302.86 which is well above the 6-year average of 687.21.

Rampart/Rapids Tagging: The project began operations on July 27 and provides an estimate of fall chum salmon passing to the Yukon River mainstem above the Tanana River. The passage estimate of chum salmon through August 12 is 361,000. The estimate is well above all previous years for the project which began in 1996. The tagging sample included both summer and fall chum salmon entering the Yukon River prior to the start of fall chum management and includes fish from the same timeframe of the first pulse. CPUE data is collected in conjunctions with the tagging projects at the Rapids and Rampart test fish sites. CPUE rates at both sites are tracking well above average.

Chandalar River Sonar: Operations began counting on August 8. As of August 14, approximately 35,519 fall chum salmon have passed the Chandalar sonar which is well above the average for the project of 3,999, but it is still very early in the run for the site.

Sheenjek River Sonar: Operations began counting on August 10. As of August 14, approximately 2,836 fall chum salmon have passed the Sheenjek sonar which is near the average for that date of 2,167, but it is still very early in the run for the site.

Subdistrict 5-A Test Fish Wheel: The project at the mouth of the Tanana River, began operations during the summer season and will continue to be used to monitor run timing through the fall season as fish turn off into the tributary. The current CPUE rate is low which is typical for project at this time of year.

Tanana River Fall Chum Salmon Tagging: Fish wheels on the Tanana, Kantishna, and the Toklat Rivers are getting setup this week and tagging is scheduled to begin August 16.

Sample Data: The cumulative test net samples to date include 93% 4-year old fish while samples from the first five commercial periods were comprised of 94% 4-year old fall chum salmon. This is consistent with our expectations where the brood year that produced the strong 3-year old component in 2004 is continuing this year as a strong 4-year old age class.

Fall Season Commercial Harvest

The preliminary total harvest for the eight periods to date in District 1 is 75,201 fall chum and 5,952 coho salmon. Salmon quality continues to be reported as very good. The average weight of fall chum is 7.8 pounds and 7.2 pounds for coho salmon. It is obvious how dynamic fall chum salmon enter the river in distinct pulses. On August 1 fish were abundant with high commercial catch rates. The period on August 3 found very few fish to catch. The

period on August 6 found fish very abundant in the river and fishermen enjoyed very high catch rates. The recent periods 6, 7, and 8 have had more average catch rates with fewer fishermen and reduced fishing time due to the reduced daily buying capacity.

Fall Season Management

The fall chum salmon run is now at the average three-quarter point in the lower river. The run has far exceeded expectations and is on track for a near record season. The coho salmon run is currently above average near the first-quarter point and is expected to have an average to above average season. Subsistence fishing time has been off the windowed subsistence fishing schedule from the start of the season and the amount of closed fishing time around commercial periods has been reduced to compensate for the increased frequency of commercial periods in District 1. Commercial markets are weak and harvests have only been landed in District 1.

As the fall chum salmon run proves to be strong and fish move upriver, there is increasing interest by small markets indicating they may want to buy limited quantities of salmon. Three commercial periods have been announced for District 1 this week to be open on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. In District 4, commercial fishing periods will be open 5 days a week from Sundays through Fridays. In Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, commercial periods will also be open on a 5-day a week schedule from Tuesdays through Sundays. Markets in the upriver areas are very limited and these longer commercial fishing periods are intended to provide buyers flexibility in taking advantage of transportation opportunities. Subsistence fishing in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C will be open concurrent with the commercial periods.

Upcoming Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing Periods

District 1:	Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday		
	Set Net Only Area	8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.	9 hours
	Remainder Y-1	8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.	6 hours

District 4: 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays

Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C: 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays

Subsistence Salmon Fishing

Coastal District: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

District 1: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day. Except that subsistence salmon fishing is closed 6 hours before, during, and 6 hours after each commercial salmon fishing period.

Districts 2 and 3: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

Subdistrict 4A: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

Subdistricts 4B&C: Sun. 6 pm to Fri. 6 pm

Subdistricts 5A, B, & C: Tue. 6 pm to Sun 6 pm

Subdistrict 5D: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

District 6: Mon. 6 pm to Wed. Noon / Fri. 6 pm to Sun Noon

Old Minto Area: Fri. 6 pm to Wed. 6 pm

Koyukuk River: 7 Days/Week, 24-hours/Day

If you have any questions concerning the fall season fishery, you can contact the Emmonak office at 949-1320 or the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Call #13 – August 23, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Funded by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Office of Subsistence Management
Yukon River Panel

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak	Kaltag	Rapids
St. Mary's	Huslia	Rampart
Pilot Station	Galena	
Grayling	Tanana	

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Fairbanks, Pilot Station & Emmonak
ADFG, Subsistence Division in Fairbanks
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks & Galena
Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage & Fairbanks
DFO

Other organizations/entities:

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing activity in the lower river is minimal. In Emmonak most fishers are done, except for one who is 50-75% near reaching his goal with f. chum. Near Pilot Station salmon run seems to be slowing down and they have been receiving a lot of rain. Up the Koyukuk River in Huslia fishing activity decreased last week, but picked up again on August 20. Water level is also down on the river – comparable to last year in September. In Galena water level had been decreasing too, until recent downfall of rain.

Back on the mainstem in Tanana, on the north side of the river water is high, yet a fisherman was still able to catch 90 fish. On the south side of the river the Y-5A test wheel is turning slowly, but a few f. chum are starting to show up. They have also had rain in this area and water level is dropping. Near the Rapids, fishers are catching and cutting for “dry” dog food and will start crib fish after September 1. Fish are still gong by in Rampart.

Up the Porcupine system and across the border into Old Crow, the first chum salmon was caught on July 28. In Dawson, most First Nation fishers are done having caught smaller king salmon than in the past, but still in good shape. In Mayo 10 fishing families are fishing during this peak time - catching good quality fish and in satisfying amounts.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Fall Season Assessment & Strategy: By now 80% of the f. chum and 50% of the coho are in the river. The 4th pulse of f. chum is passing Pilot Station sonar and is estimated to be smaller than the 3rd pulse at 200,000 salmon. The first 2 pulses have moved further upriver and the third pulse is expected to turn up the Tanana River. The current projection for f. chum is 1.7 million – the highest since 1975. The current coho count at Pilot Station is ~107,000, which is average to above average. Subsistence fishing has been off the windowed schedule since the beginning of the fall season, except for Y5B&C which will open to 7 days/week after this period (Aug 26).

Fall Season Commercial Fishery: The preliminary total harvest for f. chum in the Y-1 commercial fishery is 96,000 and the coho harvest totals 17,000 salmon. The quality of the fish is very good and the f. chum and coho average is 7.8lbs and 7.2lbs, respectively. Capacity limitations of the fish buyer in Y-1 led to the cancellation of the opener for today as there were just too many fish coming in. Commercial markets for f. chum are weak

throughout the river, although there is still interest in upriver districts. Therefore ADFG is giving buyers increased flexibility by increasing time for commercial periods. District Y-6 will have a small test opener to see if the market warrants having future openers.

DFO: The test fish wheels are fishing slowly, catching 100-107 salmon per day. The tagging program in Old Crow started but has had very few recoveries, but the population estimate for the first few days was 20,000 f. c hum. DFO will open a commercial fishery for 5 days next week and currently doesn't have a population estimate yet for mainstem f. chum.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Chinook Count Preliminary Estimates: The total number of chinook salmon through the Pilot Station sonar (both DIDSON and split-beam) this year was 160,000 salmon. The Eagle sonar (DIDSON and split-beam) estimated that 80,000 chinook passed through to Canada and DFO estimated border passage to only be 45,000 chinook salmon.

Effort Appreciated – One teleconference participant thanked ADFG for opening the Y-5 subsistence fishery to 7 days/week, mentioning that it was good, responsible progressive management.

Lower River Stocks – There was some concern that stocks in the lower river – particularly on the Andreafsky River – were not returning as normal; the number of salmon was lower than average. However, low water level conditions could have been causing the decrease and recent rains should help move more fish (like coho salmon) up the Andreafsky River.

Sockeye on the Yukon – ADFG has not seen many sockeye salmon pass by the Pilot Station sonar, but fishermen have reported seeing an increase.

Call #14 – August 30, 2005

Sponsored by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Time of Call: 1:00 PM

Funded by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Office of Subsistence Management
Yukon River Panel

Agenda: Village Identification & Subsistence Reports
Management Update/Run Assessment *by ADFG & USFWS*
Management Strategy *by ADFG & USFWS*
Local Input & Closing Comments

Communities involved in the call:

Emmonak Huslia
St. Mary's Rapids/ Rampart

State and Federal Agencies involved in the call:

ADFG, Commercial Division in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Emmonak & Pilot Station
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Fairbanks
DFO

Other organizations/entities:

Norman Cohen

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing activity is slowing down a bit as most are getting ready for moose hunting season. However, some fishers in Emmonak plan to continue fishing while others (5 fishers) are satisfied with their harvest to date. Up the Koyukuk River in Huslia fishers are still fishing and doing well, although most activity has slowed down. Back on the mainstem near the Rampart-Rapids a big pulse went through (~235 chum salmon in one hour and over 4,000 salmon in a 24-hour period). More people are fishing/cutting because of the high number of salmon currently

coming through, but the quality of the salmon is down a bit. Water level is also dropping, but fish wheels are still operational. Fishers are still active in Rampart as well.

Run Assessment Highlights & Management Strategy by ADFG, USFWS & DFO:

Fall Season Assessment & Strategy: On average, 95% of the fall chum salmon and 70% of the coho salmon are assumed to be in the Yukon River by this date. Four pulses of chum salmon have entered the river; the first 3 pulses were typical/sharp and the most recent pulse continued for 8-9 days and accumulated nearly 380,000 fish. Cumulative passage is estimated to be 1.77 million salmon, which is above normal, and the total run size is projected to be ~1.8 million; the highest run size since 1975. The first pulse should be near the border at this time; the 2nd pulse near Circle; the 3rd pulse between the Rapids and Stevens Village with a portion of the pulse turning up the Tanana River (currently near Nenana); and the front end of the 4th pulse near Kaltag.

The test drift net fishery in Emmonak ended on August 29th; the Mountain Village test drift net fishery will end Sept. 10th; and Pilot Station sonar will end operations on Aug. 31st. The upper river test fisheries will continue for a while. The Y-5A test fish wheel is still operating and has shown an increase in the number of fish which coincides with the travel time of the 3rd pulse. The sample data from the cumulative test net samples, indicate that 94% of the fish have been 4-year olds!

Commercial Harvest: There have been 17 commercial periods as of today with a preliminary total harvest of 115,000 f. chum and 26,000 coho salmon. The average weight for coho has been 7.1lbs (but are starting to see smaller now) and the average for f. chum has been 7.8lbs. Fishing effort has decreased from 113 permits to 65 permits due to buying capacity.

Commercial fishing periods for Districts Y-1 through Y-3 will close by the end of the month, which is the regulatory fall season closure date for the lower river. ADFG will consider extending the season and fishing time based on the strength in the later portion of the run and market interest. In District Y-4 and Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, commercial fishing periods have been extended to 7 days a week and concurrent with subsistence fishing. Depending on the outcome of test-market samples and processing requirements, a commercial fishery in District 6 may develop later this week.

DFO:

To date the DFO test fish wheels have caught 1,817f. chum salmon (ave. 443 salmon). This count exceeds the record from 1982 by over 700 salmon. The Fishing Branch weir has counted 8,517 f. chum (2,000/day), which is 10 times the average of 800 salmon. The fishway at the Whitehorse Dam has counted 2,591 Chinook salmon (including 518 females) with an average of 57% of hatchery-origin. The Big Salmon sonar, in the first year of operation, has counted 5,600 Chinook salmon. Aerial surveys are above average, except for the Big Salmon River. The commercial fishery has harvested 3,751 Chinook salmon and 5 f. chum salmon. The Firs Nation/aboriginal fishery harvested 3,301 chinook salmon – but not all catches have been reported yet.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Testing for *Ichthyophonus* Infection on Mainstem: ADFG has been conducting tests in Emmonak on the mainstem Yukon River and on the Chena and Salcha Rivers (tributaries to the Tanana River), a though no test results are yet available.

Chinook Border Passage: DFO projects that the border passage for Chinook salmon will be ~55,700 salmon. Carl Pfisterer from ADFG is currently reviewing data collected from the Eagle sonar project, but estimated that ~80,000 Chinook salmon crossed into Canada.

Thank you: Teleconference participants and agency managers publicly thanked YR DFA for facilitating this season's weekly teleconferences, as this is the last scheduled teleconference for the season.