

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #3 – June 15, 2010**

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: USFWS – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Allakaket, Wiseman, Galena, Ruby, Rampart, Nenana, Beaver, Circle, Eagle, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: Chinook salmon were reported as far upriver as Holy Cross. Summer chums were being caught as far as Pilot Station. People are still fishing for whitefish, sheefish and pike and are preparing for the salmon to arrive. It was commented that the Chinook salmon look good, but seem to be a bit on the small to medium size. The chums also look good.

Water levels are still very low in the lower and middle reaches of the river and in the Koyukuk River, but is rising around Galena and Rampart as well as the Tanana River. The water is up significantly in Circle and Eagle and in the Canadian portion. Debris is still low to non-existent except for around Circle and Eagle.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: The first subsistence caught Chinook salmon occurred in Emmonak and Alakanuk on June 8. Subsistence fishing effort has been increasing. The first fish should be around Anvik in a few days. The Dall Point test fishery at Hooper Bay was delayed because of coastal ice; it did not begin until June 9. Through June 13, three Chinook salmon were caught in the 8.25 inch mesh and an additional three Chinook and six chum salmon in the 5.5 inch mesh nets. Both Chinook salmon and summer chums are being caught in the Lower Yukon Test Fishery. The cumulative CPUE in the 8.5 inch set nets through June 14 is 1.39; in the summer chum drift project it is 16.99. The Mountain Village test fishery as of June 14 has caught six Chinook salmon. Pilot Station has counted 286 Chinook salmon and 1,650 chum salmon as of June 14.

Run and Harvest Outlook: While some fish have been seen in the assessment projects, it is still too early to assess the run and there is not enough data to compare with previous years yet. The run appears to be 4-5 days late, probably because of late coastal ice. It is anticipated that there will be a higher percentage of 5-year olds in this year's run, as compared with more 6-year olds last year. That may explain the smaller size of Chinook salmon. Age data from the test fisheries will be available next week. Management decisions will be made consistent with the preseason projection, moving to inseason management of the runs once salmon abundance increases.

The regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule is in effect in Districts Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3. It will go into effect in Y-4a on June 16. Subsistence fishing in Districts 4 and 5 are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week until the subsistence schedule goes into effect, as well as in the Coastal District, the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers all summer. District 6, the Tanana River is already on its normal schedule which begins at ice-out.

Current Subsistence Fishing Schedule and Assessment Projects – please visit the ADF&G website

at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php> for this information.

USFWS Input: USFWS reminded fishers in District Y-4b and Y-4c that a federal permit is needed to go drift fishing; permits are available through the Galena refuge office.

DFO Input: DFO is anticipating a below average to average run and will enter the season with no restrictions on the First Nations fishery. Inseason management will be based on the Eagle sonar numbers and the harvest share agreements. DFO is still a couple of weeks away from implementing their assessment projects.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Questions this week were about Pilot Station sonar, implications of the late run, the Marshall test fishery, and fishing regulations. The daily updates ADF&G distributes on the test fisheries has showed the reported numbers at Pilot Station changing and a reason for this was requested. ADF&G replied that because they are testing 50 fathom nets at Pilot Station along with the traditional 25 fathom nets, they are only able to fish the 25 fathom nets once a day. More than one time fishing is needed to calculate the correct numbers. Therefore, two days worth of data are used to report each day's numbers. This means that each day's reported number changes the following day when the second fishing period is included, but then the number should remain the same. This will happen for the rest of the season. Another caller wanted to know more about the new sonar being used at Pilot Station. ADF&G responded that they were using a new down-looking side-scanning sonar, something that has never been used in fisheries, solely as a test. They are looking to see if they can use this type of sonar in years when there is bad detection from shore, but no numbers are being reported for this year because it is only in a testing phase.

A couple of questions were asked about how being late might affect the development of the king run and possible regulations. ADF&G shared that in years with a late run, they tended to see the Chinook salmon come in fast and compressed. Also with late runs, the Chinook salmon also tend to come in right on top of the summer chums, whereas with average timing there is some overlap. As for making any decisions about regulations, ADF&G felt it was much too early and there were too few data to make any assessment or management decisions. They will continue monitoring the run and should know more by the end of the week.

Callers from Marshall wanted to understand why the Marshall test fishery has not been reinstated. ADF&G replied that they chose to move the test fishery to Mountain Village because they felt that they were able to get more useful information from that location than from Marshall. Funding for the Mountain Village fishery was obtained by a group other than ADF&G or USFWS, however, and Marshall is encouraged to apply for funding for a test fishery there as well.

Clarification on the mesh size reduction was requested. ADF&G explained that for this fishing season mesh size for subsistence fishing is unrestricted, but next year nets will be limited to a 7.5 inch mesh. Kwikpak Fisheries is replacing large mesh nets in the lower river this year with the smaller mesh, but it is not necessary to switch until next year. Another caller wanted the subsistence fishing schedule altered in Y-2 and Y-3 because some elders had complained about the current schedule. ADF&G said they'd look into it.