

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 7th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, July 18, 2017. The call lasted 114 minutes.

**Background:** Yukon River salmon management teleconferences are held annually on every Tuesday in June, July, and August for managers and fishers throughout the Yukon River drainage to discuss fishing conditions and management strategies in real time as the salmon run is occurring. Teleconferences are funded by the US Dept. of the Interior, Office of Subsistence Management.

**Media participating:** KEAA Eagle community radio, KZPA Fort Yukon radio

Political Representative or staff: Mike Fleagle; Senator Dan Sullivan’s office

**Communities participating this week in Alaska:** Alakanuk, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Anvik, Huslia, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Manley, Stevens Village, Fort Yukon, Eagle

**Alakanuk:** Pamela-26 fishers contacted, 17 interviewed, 1 fished. Everyone waiting for fall chum. When is first pulse? Berry picking and commercial fishing going on. All satisfied with management giving opportunity to catch Kings, Thanks management!

Ray Oney-majority have put a way fish for winter, waiting for fall chum. River high due to storm, no debris in the river.

**Pitkas Pt.:** Eugene-everybody done subsistence fishing, concentrating now on berry picking. River up a little. No debris. Test fishery just started above the village.

**St. Mary's:** Bill-not much happening, just listening in. Most done with subsistence.

**Marshall:** Norma-most done with summer catch, waiting for fall cum. Berry picking going on. Water steady some rain no debris.

**Russian Mission:** Basil-no fishing activity, done with summer harvest. Brother got humpies, sheefish. Water up but still so low a lot of berrying places out of reach. Switching gears. Concern about incidental caught Kings for sale. Too early for that! Still need to conserve. Lots of rain.

**Holy Cross**: Alfred-done fishing, happy with the Kings, water up a little. Kathy-reading sale of King salmon by District 1-premature for managers, need to hold off.

**Anvik:** Ken Chase-several folks got a good bit of chum, no Kings in Shageluk and happy with those. Anvik done fishing last week. Went upriver 80 miles, only got 3-red Kings. Also-my work on subsistence for FWS, skeptical, know there will be problems with sales of fish. Next year who knows. ADFG a bit liberal. My opinion, need to look at family quotas and feel that is too much. Have to be careful. Hopefully a good fall chum run. River up a bit. Kathy-forgot to mention quality, no parasites, healthiest run in years. Good looking fish.

**Grayling:** Ivan D-wonderful season, all done. Folks happy. Excessive fishing going on. Good quality fish-have not seen in years. Appreciative of the run. Look into the future-we do not know what will come. How can we sustain ourselves? We need to stay conservative.

**Koyukuk:** Benedict- no report, all week southwest winds, some rain, river up 1’.

**Huslia:** Lisa-7 of 9 interviewed, 5 fished. 329 chum and 35 Kings caught. A drop from last week. Water low. Folks did not too well, not sure why. Some have seen some dead fish floating in the water. More than usual.

**Galena:** Susie Sam-first call in. Preparing for Lt. Gov & ADFG Commissioner coming. ADFG should review their mission. Mission is to protect...reads mission statement. Wonder why they opened commercial in lower areas, like Lisa said they have not even met their quota or met escapement in CA. Does not sound like good management. If they would listen, native people have been managing since before statehood and could help. Disappointing commercial was opened. In Galena area, we are in a stretch where the State manages so driftng is not allowed here. We have to travel a long way, Koyukuk as we do not have not enough set net sites. Not our way to take fish from other villages.

**Ruby:** Ed-did well with King harvest. Few parasites. A bit of rain, dry enough for smoking. Water up, not much drift. Folks not too wild about the commercial harvest down-river. State reps coming to Ruby.

**Tanana:** Danielle-5 households interviewed, 3 fished, got Kings-90% done with subsistence harvest. Kathlyn Zuray-fishing at Rapids camp-looking at the last week June, run was good. After that it just was not great. Got what we wanted-5 families at the camp. Strange, our wheel was not catching, sons net helped. Pretty spotty. Reiterate what Susie Sam said about commercial opening at mouth, especially when we are struggling to get subsistence needs met.

**Stevens Village:** Carey Stevens, above the village. Concern about the size and age of the fish. As others have said, we are opposed to the commercial opening. Yukon Flats folks have sacrificed for years. ADFG has likely been too liberal and we question if it was wise and maybe intended to divide the river. Disheartening they opened up the season and did not consult fishers or tribes.

**Fort Yukon:** Andrew- 9 interviewed, 8 fished. 4 said they were done getting subsistence, 3 at 75%. Still folks fishing. Water level stable, no debris. Glad to hear those concerns, Tanana etc. Been spotty fishing here. 10 one day, 2 next, then 10. Makes me concerned when management was here 7/6, we shared, don’t underestimate the fishing power of Yukon fishers and now to open full-bore, it’s just wrong, jumping ahead of the game-goes against everything we have been working for. Have not met Canadian escapement yet.

**Eagle:** Naomi-5 households interviewed, 2 fished. Run better than last week. Water higher, better. Thankful and sharing the catch. Family wheel, getting 50 a night. Good to see jars and smoke houses going.

**Manley :**Dorothy-brother busy cutting fish in Manley. Quite a few fishers in Manley, but like everyone else, upset. Hear the lower-river commercial caught 114 King. Very upset.

**Minto:** Melanie-concerned about Kings at the mouth, interference...do not agree with the commercial sales. Brooke-against the commercial on King salmon.

**Communities participating this week in Canada:** Teslin, Whitehorse

**Teslin:** William-High water, lots of rain.

**Whitehorse:** Jesse- other communities not on the call due to having a big meeting on fisheries act. Had a meeting yesterday and Trondek Hwichen expressed concern on how few fish they have seen or caught. Finally seeing the sun. Water high. No Kings yet. Folks getting excited.

**Management Reports:** See detailed weekly “Updates” at the ADFG Yukon River Facebook page and YRDFA Facebook page.

***ADFG:***Fred West: current Chinook assessment-Pilot Station-260k, above the avg 218k since 2005. 99% throug Pilot Station now. Run 3 days early. Eagle sonar-23k above the average of 13k. By 7/23 should see 4th pulse through.

Jeff Estensen-folks very concerned and heard about the commercial sale of incidental kings in the commercial fishery. Explanation-99% of the king run is over and numbers are dropping. As of Sunday District 1 on July 16, by regulation changes over to fall chum subsistence and commercial fisheries. Justification for the sales. About 117 caught, numbers dropping. If we continued to do this, looking back to previous years info, that’s the pattern. We hear ya. We hear your comments on sacrifice, what we will need to do is reexamine this to see if we continue. May need to reevaluate and perhaps speak to the commissioner and we will be discussing this.

**Canadian Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans**: Mary Ellen Jarvis- seeing some activity in Dawson area. Still on precautionary approach. Maintain that any harvest of Chinook be focused on small fish using 6” gear and release larger fish. Individual 1st Nations maintaining a very conservative fishing approach even more so than DFO’s management approach. Will be standing by looking for more robust returns*.*

***Questions and discussion:***

*Carl Sidney-have not been involved for a couple years, have to say something and thank the managers for the moratorium and cutting back on subsistence. Some had a lot of chum. Why did they open it-you just blew 4-5 years of work. My general counsel debating whether to fish or not. We only take 50. Could have used those 117 sold.*

*Steve Guinness-Fairbanks- Concern regarding the commercial fishery opening, like the previous speaker said. “Wrong move to make”. Dept. needs to recognize and appreciate the fisher's up and down the river, a real insult to take this action without consultation with those affected. Certainly hope the Dept. will consult.*

*Jeff/ADFG-want to reiterate these are fall chum harvests, the Kings are incidentally caught and would be taken home. It is not a Chinook targeted fishery. Just to be clear. Steve-need to be mindful that even though these may be incidental there are people further up river who have not got any fish. Bill-sorry to hear the discontent up river about these Kings being sold. Like Jeff said-”we’ve been fishing since mid-June, all summer chum directed-dip-nets, beach seines and Kings were released. Down here subsistence, we are all done. 1st big runs are CA stocks and later ones go up tribs. King late comers going up Andrefsky river and lower tribs. Pulses 2,3 & 4 on there way up. Dept. did not intentionally open King harvest. Millions of fall chums. We want to harvest. We are all done, don’t need them. What should we do? There are just a few of them. Still thousands of Kings going up the river. We are not targeting Kings.*

*Martin-Pilot Station-as I state often and continue to rely solely on commercial fishery with focus on summer chum and now shifting to fall. What happens to a family that struggles to get their catch? (Lot of interference on the line.)*

*Alfred-big run bluebacks. A few fishing right now, some catching bright red with soft eggs.*

*Ken-agree w/Alfred and Bill’s comments-we don’t usually hear the fish going up side streams. Up river-be more patient.*

*Fred-the incidental catch this late are partly pretty pale and buyer taking? Dept should let go to spawn.*

*Mike-Y2 in Marshall been very conservative, last time, listening to the numbers past the Eagle sonar, did we meet that? Usually print out the escapement plan. All along the Yukon been very conservative, getting ready for fall fishing. Believe the numbers should come up up-there. Sometimes they go spawning on some side streams. Fred West-7/17, 23k.*

*Dorothy-understand that it's a small number of incidental on Kings, regardless, I feel they need to spawn. Just because they are not going upriver, the lower river folks need those. Its the prinicpal. Who made the decision? The people along the river have sacrificed; to have this done is a disgrace. Jeff-the decision to allow was discussed with area and regional folks and follows what’s in the fall chum management plans. Once the fall season begins we switch. That said we have heard everyone’s comments, giving us something important to review, which we will do, even with the commissioner. D-what point in the past several years have you heard anyone say, “Lets start selling Kings”. J-right. This is the 1st year in several years. No Kings were sold earlier. What Bill said, nevertheless.*

*Charlie-my village on the Yukon, when I heard a subsistence license-unwritten law; you don’t fish other people’s fish.*

*Phillip-the conservation was for the whole river. Everybody!*

*Pamela-no matter down or up, was puzzled why they opened up.*

*Ray-appreciate your comments on sale of Kings. ADFG been doing since statehood. In in-season management is where the desion is made and as Jeff said its a low number-destined for tributaries in AK. I applaud the depts work. This year was the best year ever, getting the Chinook very early. Like Bill and Jeff mentioned Kings on the way up the river.*

*Susie-want t0 reiterate that Dept. ADFG has over $2 million and 1200 employees, is very important and someone should be reminded to read their mission, goals etc. before making decisions. They are good and just need to follow them.*

*Jess-thank you for expressing concerns and managers for explaining down river and it all helps us understand. ? for Fred West-Since 2005 when Eagle started.*

*Andrew- was there a YAG call? Wayne-no. A-having those decisions made without consultation makes it seem like commercial dominates decision making. Throws all the hard work out the door. Lots of misunderstanding.*

*Basil-mismanagement led to our present problem. To hear of King sales boils the blood. The closures changed our lifestyle.*

*Bill-? for dept. We have our Spring meetings, they put out projections, wondering-they projected this run to be similar to 2016 and then we see big surge come up river, now predicting big fall chum. Whats up with that, projections so far off? Really low water this summer. Last few year’s high water. Any explanation? Fred-we had a projection, the info at the time, they just came in better than expected, similar to the juvenile studies. We put out a conservative estimate.*

*Vera-opposed to commercial sales of Kings in lower Yukon area.*

*Minto-agree with Vera and all those. We worked hard waiting for this big run and then, folks selling the fish. We live off the fish and game that come into our area.*

*End……..*

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3131 or look for us on the web at www.yukonsalmon.org.

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

or call toll-free 1-866-479-7387 for recorded fishing schedules and assessment information.

For Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada updates, please visit:

http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/yukon/fmcountingfac.htm

Please join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).

Thanks for your interest and participation.

YRDFA Board and staff