

ABSTRACT

The Lower Yukon River drift gillnet test fishery project is designed to provide an index of run timing and relative abundance of fall chum salmon *Oncorhynchus keta* and coho salmon *O. kisutch* returning to the Yukon River drainage. Drift gillnets were operated from 16 July through 28 August 2008, on the Lower Yukon River near the village of Emmonak, Alaska. Catch per unit effort (CPUE), as well as age, sex, and length (ASL) composition were gathered from drift gillnet catches from the Big Eddy test fishery operated in Kwikluak Pass (South Mouth) and the Middle Mouth test fishery operated in Kwikpak Pass, upstream of Kawanak Pass (Middle Mouth) and Apoon Pass (North Mouth). The test fishery recorded a cumulative CPUE of 810.02 for fall chum salmon with the midpoint occurring on 13 August. Fall chum salmon were predominantly age-0.4 fish, comprising 55.2 % of the unweighted age sample. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon was 226.22 with the midpoint occurring on 19 August. Age-2.1 coho salmon were the most abundant, making up 90.8% of the unweighted age sample. In 2008, the Lower Yukon River drift gillnet test fishery project provided critical information that was used to make inseason management decisions regarding escapement, and prosecution of commercial and subsistence fisheries for fall chum and coho salmon in the Lower Yukon River.

Key words Yukon River, *Oncorhynchus*, Chinook, chum, coho salmon, gillnet test fishery, run assessment, catch per unit effort (CPUE).

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