

Yukon River Inseason Salmon Teleconferences, 2008

Annual Report for
Study No. FIS 08-253,
FWS Agreement No. 701818J698

Jason Hale, Jill Klein and Lauren Sill
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
725 Christensen Drive, Suite 3-B
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

and

Jonathon Gerken
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office
101 12th Avenue Room 110
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

April 2009

ABSTRACT

Teleconference calls are a practical and useful method for discussing the complexities of salmon management and for gaining real-time information from fishers along the expanse of the Yukon River. As such, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association hosted weekly inseason teleconference calls during the 2008 Yukon River salmon fishery season, from early June through early September. The teleconference calls were a means to exchange information on run timing, abundance, and escapement data; discuss management strategies; facilitate open dialogue between users and management entities; and enable salmon resource stakeholders drainage-wide to communicate. To ensure consistent participation and reporting, inseason harvest interviewers were hired in 10 communities along the Yukon River to gather and share inseason subsistence harvest information each week. Interviewers also collected information on the quality of salmon harvested, the amount of time they fished, and fishing conditions in their area. Teleconference calls facilitated information sharing and capacity building amongst resource users and resource managers by combining subsistence harvest information with research and escapement monitoring tools. Teleconference calls were typically one hour in duration and summaries of each teleconference call were written and distributed to teleconference participants within three days. In total, 14 teleconferences were conducted during the 2008 fishing season.

Funding for the Yukon River Inseason Salmon Teleconferences was provided by the U.S. Fisheries Information Service, Office of Subsistence Management Federal Research and Monitoring Program and the Yukon River Panel.

Key Words: Alaska, Canada, Chinook, chum, commercial, federal, inseason management, salmon, state, subsistence, teleconference, Yukon River, Yukon Territory.

Citation: Hale, J., J. Klein, J. Gerken and L.Sill. Yukon River Inseason Salmon Teleconferences, 2008. Annual Report No. 08-253. Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, Anchorage, Alaska.

ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF APPENDICES	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
OBJECTIVES	1
METHODS	2
Preseason.....	2
Inseason	3
Postseason.....	4
RESULTS	5
Teleconferences.....	5
Inseason Harvest Interviews.....	6
Postseason.....	9
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
Teleconferences.....	10
Inseason Harvest Interviewers	10
CONCLUSIONS	11
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
LITERATURE CITED	12

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Participation by communities on 2008 teleconferences.	13
Figure 2. Participation in teleconferences by communities based on presence of Inseason Harvest Interviewers.....	13
Figure 3. Participation in 2008 teleconference calls by agencies.	14
Figure 4. Number of communities and agencies involved in each 2008 teleconference call.	14
Figure 5. Comparison of participation per teleconference call 2003-2008.	15
Figure 6. Average community participation per teleconference call 2003-2008.....	15
Figure 7. Comparison of average participation on teleconference calls by U.S. & Canadian communities 2003-2008.....	16
Figure 8. Community participation & phone line usage for 2008 teleconferences.	16
Figure 9. Number of phone lines used during 2008 teleconferences vs. ADF&G lower Yukon River test fishery daily Chinook catch estimates.....	17
Figure 10. Number of phone lines in 2008 teleconferences vs. ADF&G Pilot Station sonar daily fall chum passage estimates.	17

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Results of household responses to the 2008 inseason subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in lower and middle Yukon River villages.....	18
Table 2. Results of household responses to the 2008 inseason subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River villages.	19
Table 3. Results of household responses to the 2008 inseason subsistence interview questions for summer chum salmon in Yukon River villages.....	20
Table 4. The 2008 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in lower and middle Yukon River villages.	21
Table 5. The 2008 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River villages.....	22
Table 6. The 2008 weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Yukon River villages.....	23
Table 7. The 2008 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River villages.....	24
Table 8. The 2008 weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Yukon River villages.....	25

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Preseason Flyer	26
APPENDIX B. Preseason Reminder Card & Magnet	27
APPENDIX C. Weekly Teleconference Summaries	28
APPENDIX D. The 2008 inseason salmon interview project inseason salmon weekly harvest summary sheet.	56

INTRODUCTION

Decreases in the Chinook salmon run size have occurred since an extremely poor run in 2001. In response to this decrease, the State of Alaska Yukon River management determination lists Chinook salmon as a stock of “yield concern” (Hayes et. al. 2006), which is defined as “a concern arising from a chronic inability, despite the use of specific management measures, to maintain expected yields, or harvestable surpluses, above a stock’s escapement needs. A yield concern is less severe than a management concern, which is less severe than a conservation concern” (5 AAC 39.222(f) (42)) (ADF&G 2004). Summer chum salmon have not been designated a level of concern due to their recent history of adequate run sizes (Clark et al. 2006). Fall chum salmon also do not meet the criteria for designation of a stock of concern based on their recent return to near average production levels (Bue et al. 2006).

Since its inception in 1994, the inseason management teleconference program has provided a practical and useful method for fishers, processors, managers, and other stakeholders in Yukon River salmon fisheries to discuss the complexities of salmon management and gain real-time information across the more than 2,000 mile expanse of the Yukon River. Facilitated by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDF), these teleconferences have enabled local users to provide valuable insight to fisheries managers on inseason salmon subsistence needs, river conditions, and abundance and quality of salmon.

Beginning in 2002 by the USFWS, inseason harvest interviewers have been hired each year in select communities along the Yukon River to ensure consistent participation and reporting each week regarding subsistence harvests and perceived abundance. The inseason interviews were implemented to assist in meeting the mandate set forth in the Alaska Native Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the State of Alaska Statute 16.05.258 *Subsistence use and allocation of fish and game*, both of which require a priority for subsistence over other consumptive uses. Postseason subsistence harvest surveys have been conducted annually on the Yukon River by the ADF&G since 1961 to help estimate subsistence salmon harvest levels and total salmon use, evaluate subsistence fishing success, and detect and quantify shifts in harvest patterns and amounts (Busher et al. 2007). However, this information is only collected postseason and therefore unavailable for inseason management. Inseason interviews provide managers insight on subsistence harvest progression within multiple villages located on the Yukon River for use in inseason management decision-making. In addition to subsistence reports, the teleconference calls provide a forum for information sharing where managers can disseminate incoming salmon run information to local fishermen specific to subsistence fishing time, status of escapement goals, and location of salmon pulses.

OBJECTIVES

As an open forum for exchange between fishers, state and federal managers, and other stakeholders in Yukon River salmon fisheries, this program helps keep rural residents informed, while building their capacity to collect information and participate in management decision-

making. It also provides managers with inseason subsistence harvest data for use when making inseason management decisions. Objectives for the Inseason Management Teleconferences include:

1. Facilitate communication between Yukon River salmon fishery users and federal, state and Canadian agency staff during the summer and fall salmon fishing seasons.
2. Promote local involvement in Yukon River fisheries management through capacity building and participation.
3. Collect and summarize inseason subsistence salmon harvest information and document local salmon run-timing on a weekly basis for Chinook salmon in 10 communities throughout the summer fishing season.

METHODS

Preseason

To organize and carry out weekly teleconference calls during the 2008 summer and fall fishing seasons, YR DFA first sought input from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on teleconference protocol and design. All parties agreed that the previous year's agenda and call schedule were suitable, therefore no alterations were made. Agenda items included an agency roll-call, village identification and subsistence reports, management updates and strategies, local input, and closing comments.

To facilitate drainage-wide involvement, preseason announcements, in the form of flyers (Appendix A) and reminder business cards and magnets (Appendix B), were sent to more than 2,000 potential participants, including Yukon River tribal councils and city offices, YR DFA board of directors, management personnel, advisory council members, Yukon River Panel members and advisors, and tribal nonprofits. These cards were also distributed by YR DFA staff during meetings and visits to villages in the Yukon River drainage throughout the fishing season.

All fishermen and rural residents were encouraged to answer the following questions while giving a subsistence report on teleconference calls:

- Are subsistence harvests good or bad and what is your assessment of run strength in your area?
- How far along are fishers in their subsistence harvests?
- What is the quality of the fish being harvested?
- What are the current river conditions?

In addition, YR DFA hired inseason harvest interviewers in 10 communities to provide more detailed information on subsistence harvests. The communities selected to participate in the study were chosen because of their proximity to the federal conservation system as well as the presence of a dedicated interviewer. Interview collection and summary techniques were based on a methodology developed in 2003 (Gerken and Holder 2005).

Individuals were selected as interviewers based on their in-depth knowledge about their community and local fishing activities. Interviewers were employed by YRDFA. YRDFA and USFWS personnel trained and consulted with interviewers at the onset of the fishing season in their village on an individual basis.

Inseason

Teleconference calls were facilitated by YRDFA's executive director or communications director every Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). Each call lasted between 45 and 125 minutes, depending on the level of participation and amount of discussion. A brief summary of each call was written and sent to teleconference participants within three days of the call (Appendix C). The summaries were posted on the YRDFA website, along with summaries of every inseason teleconference held since 2003.

The inseason harvest interview household lists were compiled from the ADF&G postseason subsistence surveys database. The household lists were used to identify potential interview contacts. Information from the ADF&G postseason surveys categorized households into unique strata dependent upon their degree of harvest during the prior five fishing seasons. These harvest strata were: Unknown, Do Not Fish, Light (1-100 salmon), Medium (101-500 salmon), or Heavy (> 500 salmon) harvester (Busher et al. 2007). Households identified for this project were categorized in the medium and heavy harvest strata. The assumption guiding this selection was that households in the medium and heavy harvest strata fished longer and more frequently and would provide greater consistency in weekly subsistence fishing input. Before the fishing season, interviewers contacted subsistence fishing households either in person or by telephone to explain the project, determine if members of the household were willing to participate in the project, and gain their consent to be interviewed.

Interviews¹ were conducted weekly from June through August with a minimum sample of five subsistence fishing households per village. Timing of interviews depended on when salmon were present. Interviews were conducted near the end of the week, typically on weekends. Interviewers collected information on: 1) fishing gear used; 2) relative comparison to the 2007 season catch rate ("better", "same", "poor") and amount of time fished ("more", "equal", "less"); 3) the harvest goal progress (expressed as a percentage in 25% increments) that households were making toward completing their subsistence harvest; 4) and general comments from fishermen related to the salmon run.

Interviewers summarized the results and provided the information to the USFWS project leader, who compiled the weekly subsistence information from all villages and distributed written weekly summaries to managers and the public. Verbal summaries describing fishing conditions and subsistence harvest progress for each village were presented at the weekly YRDFA teleconferences. Household specific interview information was confidential and no information that could identify an individual household was released to the general public.

¹ For the purposes of this study, an interview is defined as a meeting between an interviewer and a representative of a subsistence fishing household where information was obtained and documented by the interviewer.

Data were analyzed in three ways. First, to evaluate inseason harvest progression a weekly average percentage was reported. This percentage represents the qualitative estimate of a village's subsistence harvest goal progression throughout the fishing season. Second, to estimate harvest goal completion, a final percentage was reported. This percentage represented the qualitative estimate of a village's harvest goal success. Third, the 2008 harvest trend was compared to the historical Chinook salmon run-timing quartiles. This comparison was important for monitoring subsistence fishing practices and evaluating and predicting subsistence salmon harvest goal progression and success during the fishing season.

The weekly average percentage for each village was calculated using household responses to the question "where are you at in your harvest (%)" during an interview week. In order to maintain consistency between villages, the weekly average percentage was constrained by two criteria. First, once a household reported it began fishing, indicated by a reported harvest percentage > 0%, the household was included in all remaining weekly average percentages regardless of an interview occurring. It was assumed that a household continued to fish and that the reported percentage would not decrease. For example, if a household reported 50% on week one and was not interviewed again until week four, the weekly harvest percentages for week two and week three was considered 50%. Second, once a household reported a 100% completion, it was considered to have met its harvest goal and was no longer interviewed for that species, but was included in following weekly averages as 100%. The weekly average percentage tracked harvest progression by village during the fishing season, interviews ended when the majority of fishing households reported 100% and those households not reporting 100% reported no longer fishing for a specific salmon species. The weekly average percentage was reported inseason in a weekly harvest summary datasheet (Appendix D).

Postseason

Teleconferences

One week after the final teleconference of the season, YR DFA staff developed a teleconference assessment survey to identify areas of possible improvement for the 2009 season. Staff surveyed a sample of regular participants—three subsistence fishers, three managers, and one processor—and conducted the survey. The survey questions were:

- This year we promoted the call to tribal councils, processors, managers, and fishers by mailing magnets, flyers, and business cards. How effective do you think this was? What would you change?
- What did you think of the agenda / order of the call? What worked? What didn't? Would you object to having subsistence reports before agency roll call?
- The call typically lasted 1-2 hours. Was this too short? Too long?
- What did you think of the way YR DFA facilitated the call? Too much input? Too little? Other thoughts on the facilitation?
- Other thoughts / recommendations for the call?

Inseason harvest interviews

Specific to the inseason harvest interviews portion of this project, estimating the level of subsistence harvest goal success a village, as a whole, attained after the fishing season was expressed as a final percentage in the village summaries. The final percentage was the weighted average from all interviewed households during the 2008 fishing season. A household was included in the weighted average if it reported a harvest percentage greater than 0%. This percentage was weighted by the number of interviews per household. For example, a household interviewed twice had a lower weight in the final percentage than a household with ten interviews. Maintaining a consistent weekly household interview list was not always possible and some households were interviewed at a higher frequency than others. A household which fished and was consistently interviewed throughout the fishing season was thought to represent subsistence harvest progression more accurately than a household that was interviewed infrequently.

The timing of the quarter-point, midpoint, and three-quarter point of a particular salmon run are generally unknown until the run is completed, therefore comparisons of run-timing inseason typically involve historical averages. The historical run-timing (1989-2007) of these quartile points in the lower river for Chinook salmon, indicated by the ADF&G lower Yukon River test fishery were June 15, June 20, and June 26. Historical summer chum salmon quartile points (1986-1991, 1993-1995, and 1997-2007) in the lower river were based on the ADF&G Pilot Station sonar project and occur on June 22, June 27, and July 3. In the following discussions of individual village subsistence harvest progression, the historical run-timing was compared to the weekly average percentages. If subsistence harvest progression tracked exactly with historical run-timing, then managers would expect a village to have harvested 25% of their subsistence goals by the quarter point, 50% by the midpoint, and 75% by three-quarter point.

Salmon run-timing occurring for a village was estimated using the length of the run in relation to the ADF&G lower Yukon River test fishery for Chinook salmon and the ADF&G Pilot Station sonar project for summer and fall chum salmon. Dates for each village were estimated using a daily swimming rate of 36 miles/day for Chinook salmon, 18 miles/day for summer chum salmon (T. Spencer, pers. comm.). Radio-telemetry used to identify Chinook salmon movement patterns on the Yukon River indicated that radio-tagged fish traveled an average of 31 miles/day in 2003, but that their speed varied dependent upon their location within the drainage (Eiler et. al. 2006). Inseason analysis in 2008 indicated that the fish were moving faster.

RESULTS

Teleconferences

During the 2008 salmon fishing season, a total of 14 inseason management teleconference calls were organized and carried out by YRDFA. Participants included fishing communities, agencies, tribal organizations, fish processors, and members of the general public (Figures 1, 2, 3). Participation in the calls was considerably higher—nearly three times as large—in villages with inseason harvest interviewers (Figure 2).

Participation was highest at the beginning of the season and steadily declined in the first half of July (Figure 4). This pattern is consistent with participation trends from the previous five seasons (Figure 5). The average number of communities involved in each call—19—was 37 percent above the average of the previous five years (Figure 6). Anecdotally, similar increases have been noticed in years of poor Chinook salmon returns. While most of the increase in 2008 can be attributed to more participation from U.S. communities, participation from Canadian communities was also up from the previous five years (Figure 7).

Typically, twice the number of people listened and did not participate as compared to the number of people who did participate. For example, if 20 people were actively participating in the call, another 40 people were silently listening (as reflected in phone line usage per call). At its peak in participation – June 24, near the midpoint of the run in the lower river – 31 communities were active on the call and 114 phone lines dialed in (Figure 8), including management agencies, processors, and other interested parties that were consistently on the line.

The level of teleconference participation tracked well with the number of fish passing through the lower river. Participation during the summer season tracked with the daily catch numbers of Chinook salmon reported at the ADF&G lower Yukon River fishery project, while participation during the fall season tracked better with the numbers of fall chum at the ADF&G Pilot Station sonar (Figures 9, 10).

Summaries of each teleconference call provided highlights on run assessment, subsistence updates, management decisions and strategies, and key points from participants (Appendix C). Each summary, approximately two pages in length, was emailed to teleconference participants and other interested parties within three days of the completion of the teleconference call. Summaries were available online at www.yukonsalmon.org.

Inseason Harvest Interviews

A total of 207 households were contacted with a combined total of 499 interviews conducted in the villages of Emmonak, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Galena, Huslia, Allakaket, Ft. Yukon, Circle, and Eagle during the 2008 Chinook and summer chum salmon fishing season. Subsistence harvest information for summer chum salmon was collected in Emmonak, Marshall, Huslia, and Allakaket. Interviews were conducted between June 15 and August 17, 2008. Data were summarized and presented verbally on 14 YRDFA teleconferences occurring in 2008 (Table 1 and 2).

2008 Catch Rates and Fishing Time

Information regarding catch rates and fishing time was used to evaluate if subsistence fishermen were changing their fishing practices as compared to 2007. Information was collected between June 15 and August 17, 2008 for Chinook salmon. A total of 272 responses comparing the amount of time fished and 271 responses comparing the catch rates between 2008 and 2007 were collected during the Chinook salmon fishing season. The difference in the total number of responses was a result of fishermen declining to comment or an incomplete interview. The

majority of these households indicated that they spent less time fishing and that catch rates were poor as compared to those in 2007 (Table 3 and 4).

Interviews pertaining to summer chum salmon harvests were conducted with households in Emmonak, Marshall, Huslia, and Allakaket between June 15 and July 7, 2008. A total of 110 responses were provided by households during the summer chum salmon fishing season regarding catch rates, and 109 responses were provided regarding the amount of time fished as compared to the 2008 fishing season. Households indicated that catch rates were the same and that the amount of time fished was less or equal as compared to the 2007 fishing season (Table 5).

Village Results

The weekly average percentages (estimate of village harvest progression) for Chinook salmon were likely lower than corresponding actual percentages because many households could not be interviewed weekly (Table 6 and 7). In these instances, the percentage from the prior interview was used to estimate the current weekly average percentage. A household that was not interviewed likely had a larger harvest percentage than the week before, if they fished, and therefore the weekly average percentage represents the minimum for any interview week. This method was used because the number of interviews per week in a village differed and the households interviewed weekly differed in subsequent weeks. The final percentage (estimate of village harvest completion) was based on information collected in an interview and does not assume a harvest percentage in weeks where an interview for a household was not conducted (Table 6 and 7). Using a weighted average to depict the final percentage minimizes the influence of households that were interviewed infrequently. The estimated final percentage for Chinook salmon ranged from 25% to 94%. The final percentage for summer chum salmon ranged from 29% to 84% (Table 8).

Emmonak:

Interviews occurred between June 8 and July 6, 2008. Seven to 24 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing in Emmonak were June 15, June 20, and June 26. During the week these dates occurred, the weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon were 12%, 51%, and 68%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 94% occurring on July 20, 2008.

The historical quartiles for summer chum salmon run-timing in Emmonak were June 16, June 22, and June 27, 2008. The weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon on these dates were 13%, 45%, and 63%, respectively. The final percentage for summer chum salmon from all interviewed households was 84% occurring on July 6, 2008.

Marshall:

Interviews occurred between June 29 and July 13, 2008. Twelve to 20 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 19, June 24, and June 30. Interviews were not performed during the week of the historical quarter point and midpoint. The weekly average percentage for Chinook salmon on the three-quarter point date was 75%. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 76% occurring on July 13, 2008.

The historical quartiles for summer chum salmon run-timing in Marshall were June 24, June 30, and July 5, 2008. The weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon on the latter two dates were 46% and 64%, respectively. The final percentage for summer chum salmon from all interviewed households was 72% occurring on July 13, 2008.

Holy Cross:

Interviews occurred between June 22 and July 13, 2008. Six to 11 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 22, June 27, and July 3. The weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon on those dates were 25%, 26% and 29%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 44% occurring on July 13, 2008.

Nulato:

Interviews occurred between June 22 and July 27, 2008. Eight to nine households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 28, July 3, and July 9. Interviews were not performed during the week of the historical midpoint. The weekly average percentages for the first and last dates were 16% and 41%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 47% occurring on July 27, 2008.

Galena:

Interviews occurred between June 22 and August 3, 2008. Two to 21 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 29, July 4, and July 10. The weekly average percentages for those dates were 28%, 45%, and 58%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 66% occurring on August 3, 2008.

Huslia:

Interviews occurred between June 29 and August 10, 2008. One to nine households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 4, July 9, and July 15. The weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon on those dates were 10%, 10%, and 16%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 25% occurring on August 10, 2004.

The historical quartiles for summer chum salmon run-timing in Huslia were July 25, July 30, and August 5. The weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon on those dates were 16%, 21%, and 21%, respectively. The final percentage for summer chum salmon from all interviewed households was 29% occurring on August 10, 2008.

Allakaket:

Interviews occurred between June 8 and July 27, 2008. Three to 9 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 11, July 16, and July 22. The weekly average percentages for those dates were 0%, 10%, and 28%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 39% occurring on July 27, 2008.

The historical quartiles for summer chum salmon run-timing in Allakaket were July 25, July 31, and August 5. Interviews were only conducted during the weeks of the first two dates. The weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon on those dates were 24% and 31%, respectively. The final percentage for summer chum salmon from all interviewed households was 39% occurring on July 27, 2008.

Ft. Yukon:

Interviews occurred between July 6 and August 17, 2008. Eight to 18 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 12, July 17, and July 23. The weekly average percentages for those dates were 11%, 13%, and 21%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 38% occurring on August 17, 2008.

Circle:

Interviews occurred between July 20 and August 17, 2008. Two to seven households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 14, July 19, and July 25. Interviews were not performed during the week of the midpoint date. The weekly average percentages for the first and last dates were 51% and 51%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 59% occurring on August 17, 2008.

Eagle:

Interviews occurred between July 13 and August 17, 2008. Two to 11 households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 18, July 23, and July 29. The weekly average percentages for those dates were 52%, 82%, and 86% respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 75% occurring on August 17, 2008.

Gear Type

Fishery managers have the ability to regulate fishing gear if there is a concern for species conservation. Regulations regarding the allowable fishing gear differ between lower river and upper river fishing districts. The primary difference is the use of drift gillnets in the lower river. Subdistrict 4A has a limited drift gillnet fishery availability regulated by date, see 5AAC 01.220(e) (2) (ADF&G 2004). Subdistricts 4B and 4C fishermen with a permit can use a drift gillnet in Federal waters regulated by date, see Subpart D of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 .27i3xvC (Federal Register 2007). Eighty-eight fishermen were interviewed for gear type in Yukon River Districts 1, 2, and 3 Subdistricts 4A, 4B, and 4C. In these areas the use of a drift gillnet was predominant ($n = 60$). In the Koyukuk River District and Subdistrict 5D, 66 fishermen were interviewed for gear type. The predominant gear types used were set gillnet ($n = 29$) and fishwheel ($n = 28$).

Postseason

Generally speaking, participants in the teleconference assessment survey commented positively about the promotion, structure, length, and facilitation of the calls. However, everyone commented that it would be more efficient to skip the lengthy agency roll call and focus more

time on the subsistence reports. The main reasons behind this suggestion were to show respect to subsistence fishermen and to increase the use of time on the calls.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teleconferences

Similar to past years, participation was highest at the beginning of the summer season, peaking near the midpoint of the Chinook salmon run in the lower river. A resurgence of participation coincided with the beginning of the fall chum run entering the lower river. The most common factors contributing to this pattern were high interest in the initial abundance, run timing, and potential commercial openings.

Teleconference call participation was greatest in villages participating in the inseason harvest interviews project. Consistency in teleconference call participation is important to managers because the information is used to track weekly inseason subsistence harvest progression. If gaps in weekly reporting exist, then the utility of the information decreases.

To improve the effectiveness of future teleconference calls and increase the subsistence user input, effort should be made to increase participation in villages with limited or no participation level. Promotional activities should continue in all Yukon River villages to maintain or increase their involvement. The inseason harvest interview portion of this project needs to continue to ensure that consistent, reliable subsistence harvest information is gathered and reported to the public and managers throughout the salmon fishing season.

As discovered through the postseason survey, participants felt it would be more efficient to skip the lengthy agency roll call and begin the call with the subsistence reports. As such, next year's agenda will be changed to reflect this sentiment.

Inseason Harvest Interviewers

Yukon River subsistence fishermen are a diverse group utilizing a variety of different gear types, fishing locations, and techniques to harvest salmon. The active nature of these fishermen is one reason that inseason subsistence information is difficult to collect. Many households relocate to fish camps during summer months and as a result have limited access to teleconferences and management information. Therefore, interviewers conduct weekly interviews face to face in villages at fishermen houses or fish camps, village boat launches, and, to a lesser extent, over the telephone. This dynamic interview process is important for managers because the information includes input from a variety of subsistence fishermen on a range of topics, but the interviews are also valuable for fishermen because they often receive updated management information, i.e., News Release or Fishery Updates, and river-wide fishing news from interviewers.

Inseason harvest interviewers were designed to collect inseason subsistence harvest information using a qualitative and consistent approach. Managers can use the information to evaluate if fishermen met their subsistence harvest goals inseason, prior to postseason surveys. Based on the

information collected during the 2008 Chinook and summer chum salmon fishing season, it appeared that most interviewed households did not meet their subsistence harvest goals for Chinook salmon and summer chum salmon. Information collected during interviews indicated that most households fished less time than in the 2007 fishing season and saw poorer catch rates than in 2007, with the exception of Emmonak's summer chum salmon harvest. Excluding the villages of Emmonak and Marshall, all villages had a season ending harvest percentage of 75% or below for Chinook salmon.

CONCLUSIONS

The teleconference calls have proved a valuable resource for members of the public, Yukon River fishermen and community members, managers, tribal nonprofits, fish processors, and others. The inseason management teleconferences are an effective tool for managers and local subsistence users to communicate and share information about the status of the incoming salmon runs and management strategies. Knowing where subsistence users are in their progression towards their subsistence harvest goals allows managers to anticipate the effects of management decisions on fishing activity. Inseason harvest interviewers incorporate subsistence harvest information from a broad range of villages and users throughout the river and are an integral component to the teleconference calls. Promoting the sharing of information between subsistence fishermen and managers throughout the Yukon River was an effective tool in gaining real-time knowledge about the salmon fishery across thousands of miles.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, provided funding support for this project through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, under USFWS Agreement No. 701818J698, Reference Number 08-253. Additional funding for the inseason management teleconference calls came from the Yukon River Panel.

In addition to our funders, YRDFA would like to offer special thanks to everyone who participated in the 2008 weekly teleconferences, whether this was their first season or if they have participated for years. A strong, regular presence from all stakeholders—fishermen, managers, processors, inter-tribal consortiums, inseason harvest interviewers, and others—maximizes the effectiveness and utility of the calls which goes a long way in building an understanding of the salmon runs throughout the drainage.

We gratefully thank all of the subsistence fishermen who were willing to share their harvest information with interviewers throughout the season. Our appreciation goes to the interview personnel: Emmonak Tribal Council local hire Ted Hamilton, Ohogamiut Tribal Council local hire Norma Evan, village of Holy Cross local hire Rita Paul, Nulato Tribal Council Natural Resources coordinator Robyn George, Huslia Tribal Council local hire Jack Wholecheese, village of Allakaket local hire Catherine Henzie, village of Galena local hire Sandy Scotton, village of Fort Yukon local hire Garry Webber, village of Circle local hire Albert Carroll Jr., and village of Eagle local hire Dana Helmer.

LITERATURE CITED

- ADF&G (Alaska Department of Fish and Game). 2004. 2004 - 2007 Arctic - Yukon - Kuskokwim Region Commercial Finfish, Subsistence, and Personal Use Finfish and Shellfish Fishing Regulations. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Management and Development Division, Anchorage, AK.
- Bue, F.J., B.M. Borba, and D.J. Bergstrom. 2006. Yukon River fall chum salmon stock status and fall season salmon fisheries; a report to the Alaska board of fisheries. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries. Special Publication No. 06-36, Anchorage, AK.
- Busher, W. H., T. Hamazaki, and A. M. Marsh. 2007. Subsistence and personal use salmon harvest in the Alaskan Portion of the Yukon River Drainage, 2005. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Fishery Data Series 07-52, Anchorage, AK.
- Clark, K. J., D. J. Bergstrom, and D. F. Evenson. 2006. Yukon River summer chum salmon stock status, 2006; a report to the Alaska board of fisheries. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries. Special Publication No. 06-34, Anchorage, AK.
- Eiler, J.H., T.T. Spencer, J.J. Pella, and M.M. Masuda. 2006. Stock composition, run-timing, and movement patterns of Chinook salmon returning to the Yukon River basin in 2003. United States Department of Commerce, NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-AFSC-163, 104 p.
- Federal Register: Volume 72, No. 51, pg. no. 12686, March 16, 2007.
- Gerken, J. D. and R. R. Holder. 2005. Yukon River inseason salmon harvest interviews, 2003. United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office. Alaska Fisheries Data Series Number 2005-14. Fairbanks, AK.
- Hayes, S. J., D. F. Evenson, and G. J. Sandone. 2006. Yukon River Chinook salmon stock status, 2006; a report to the Alaska board of fisheries. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries. Special Publication No. 06-38. Anchorage, AK.

FIGURES

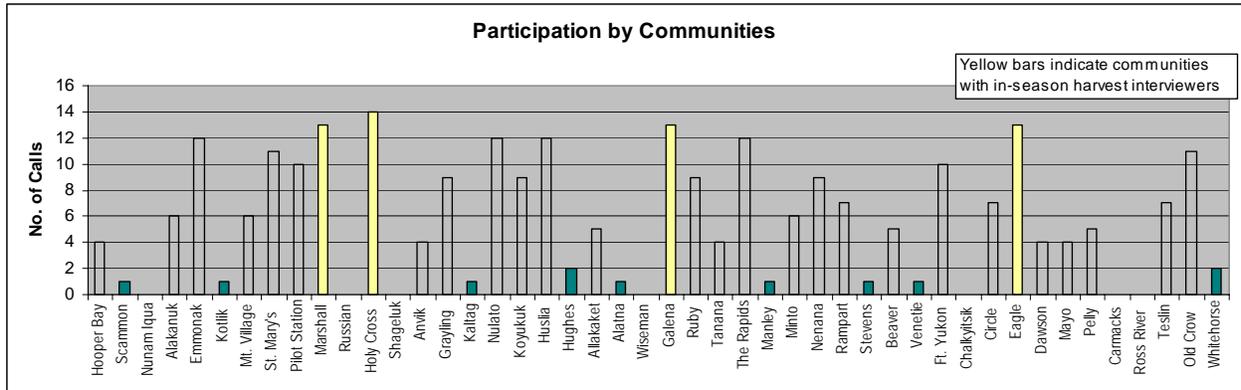


Figure 1. Participation by communities on 2008 teleconferences.

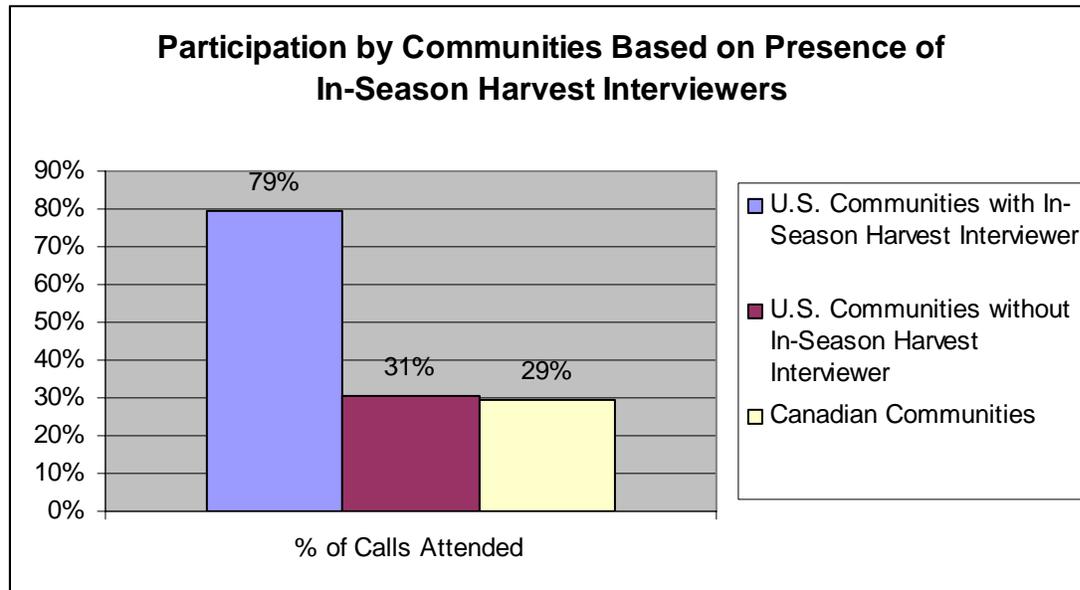


Figure 2. Participation in teleconferences by communities based on presence of Inseason Harvest Interviewers.

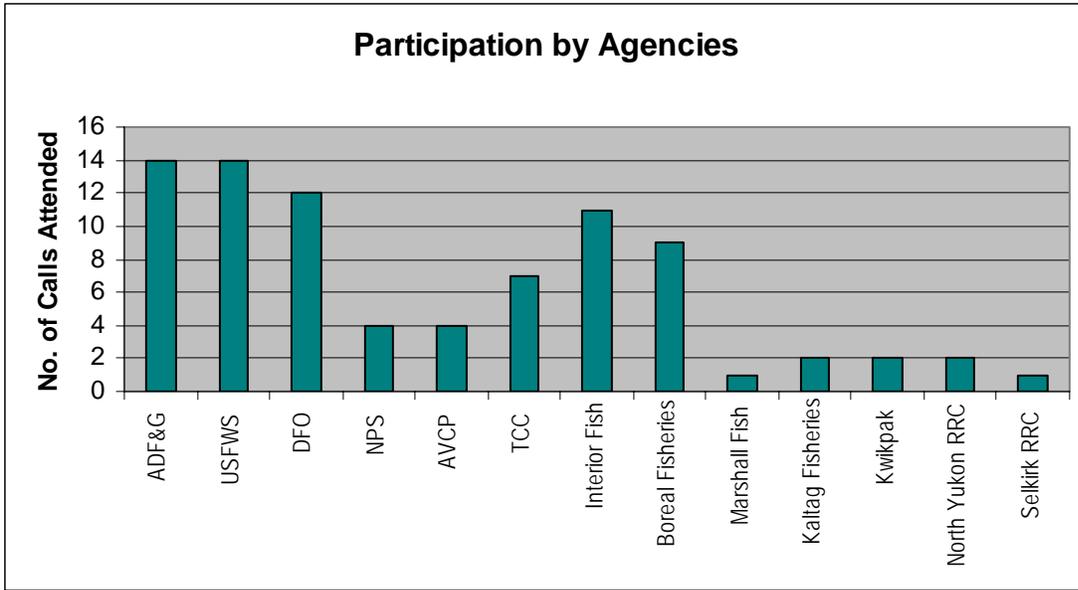


Figure 3. Participation in 2008 teleconference calls by agencies.

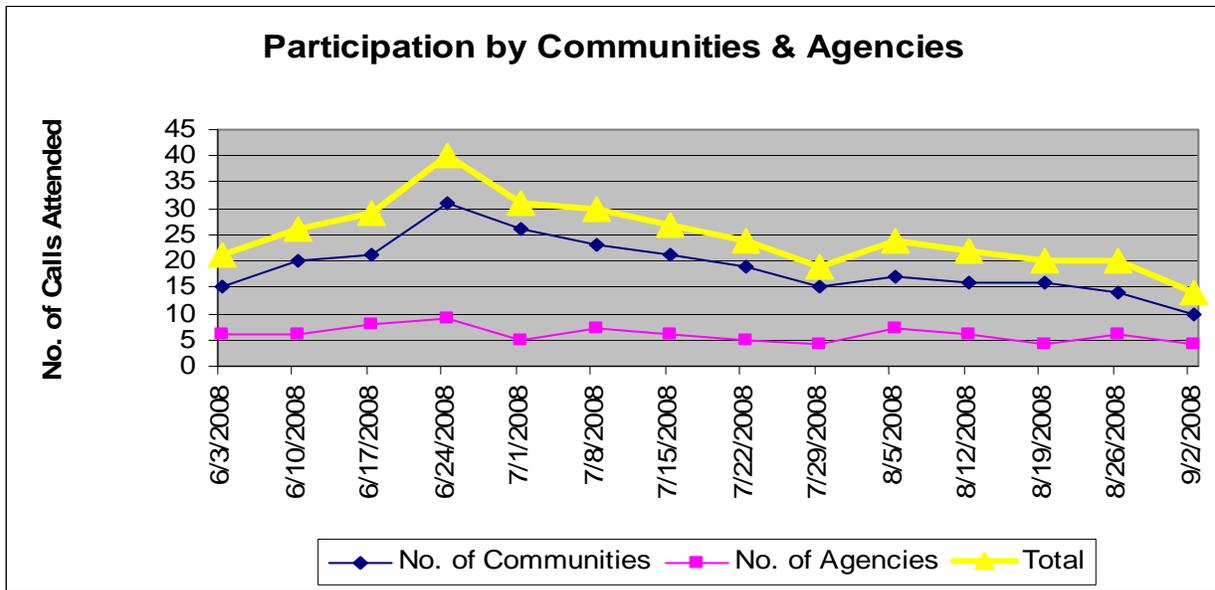


Figure 4. Number of communities and agencies involved in each 2008 teleconference call.

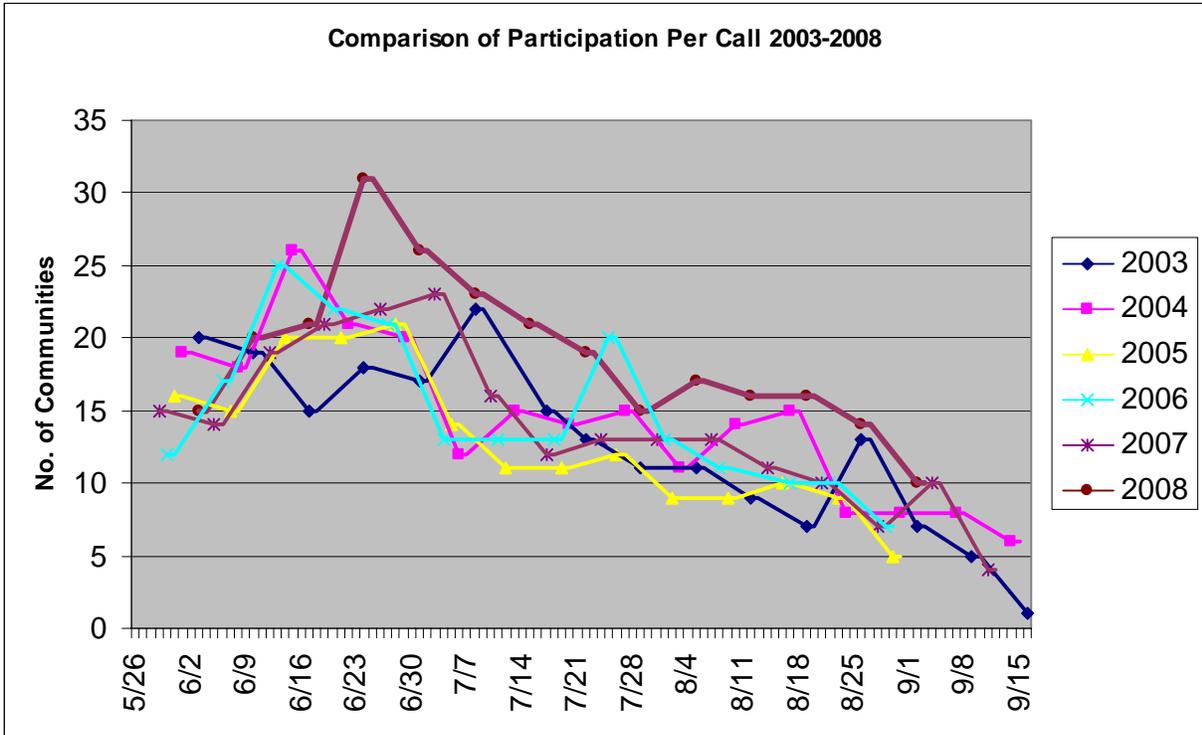


Figure 5. Comparison of participation per teleconference call 2003-2008.

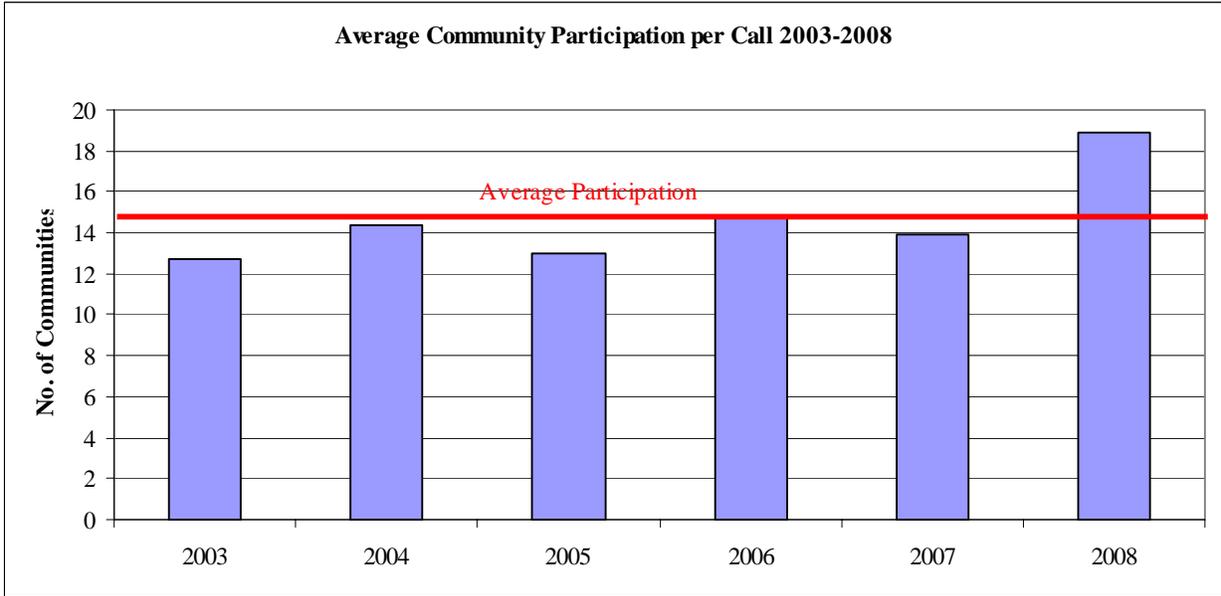


Figure 6. Average community participation per teleconference call 2003-2008.

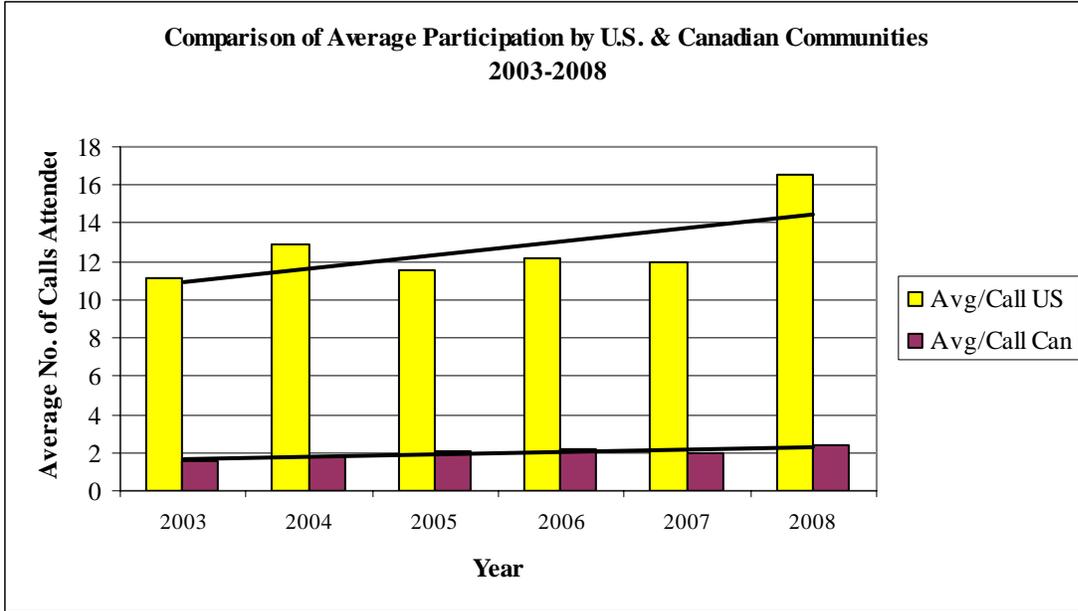


Figure 7. Comparison of average participation on teleconference calls by U.S. & Canadian communities 2003-2008.

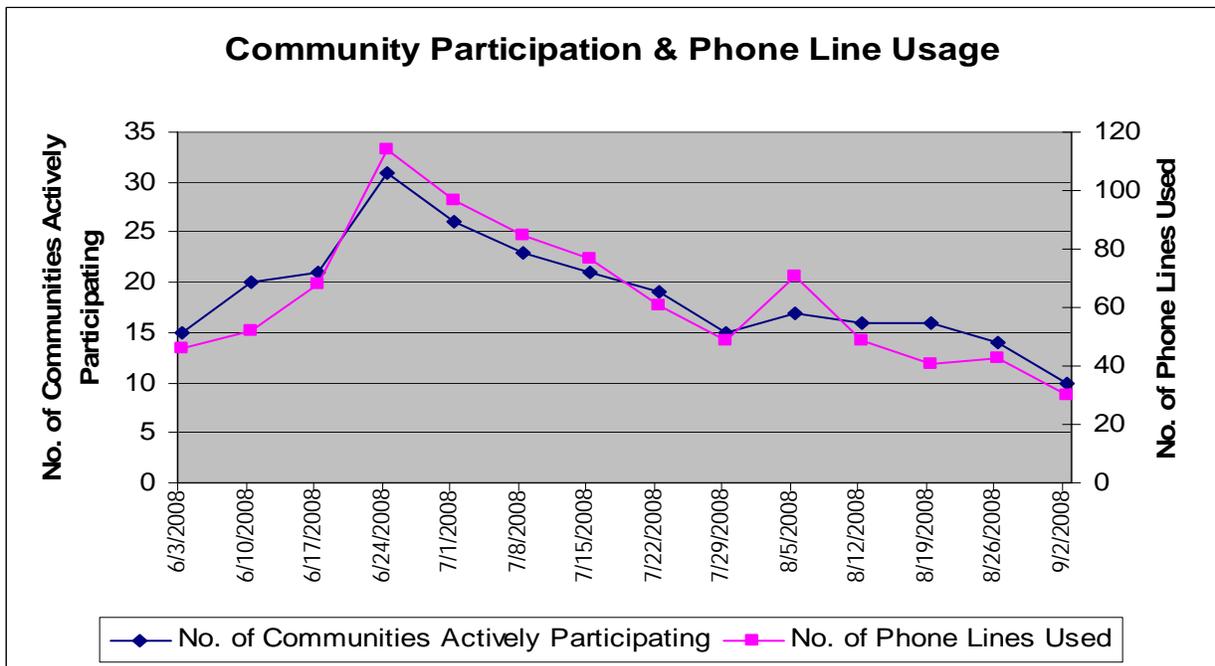


Figure 8. Community participation & phone line usage for 2008 teleconferences.

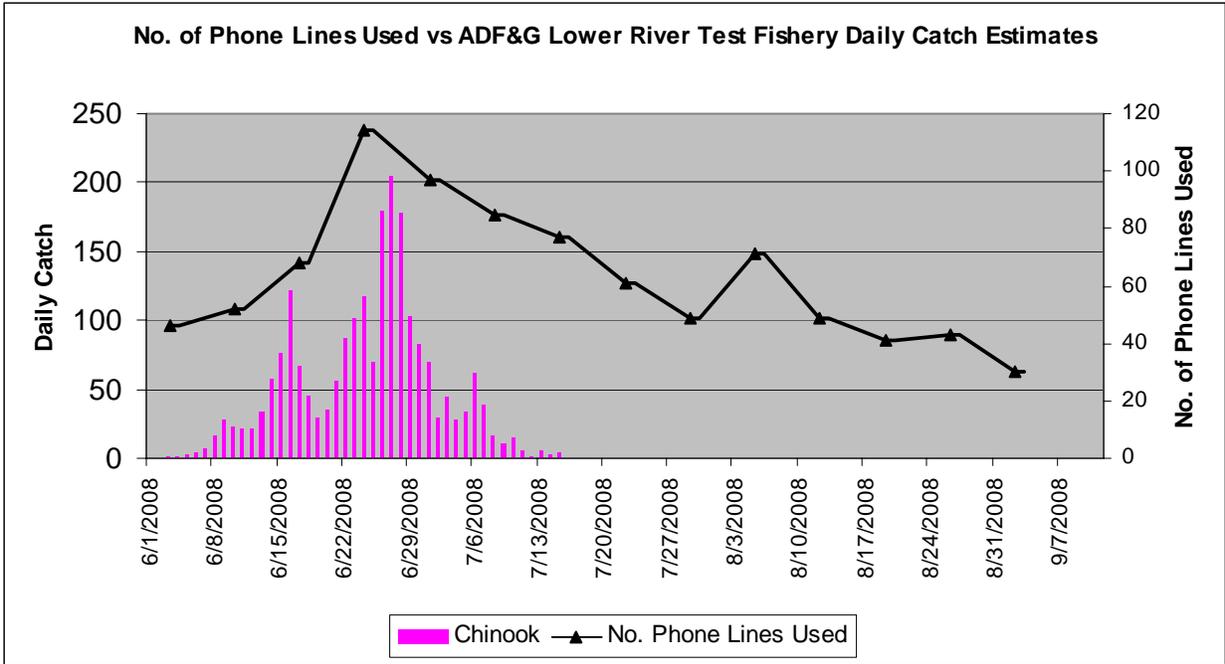


Figure 9. Number of phone lines used during 2008 teleconferences vs. ADF&G lower Yukon River test fishery daily Chinook catch estimates.

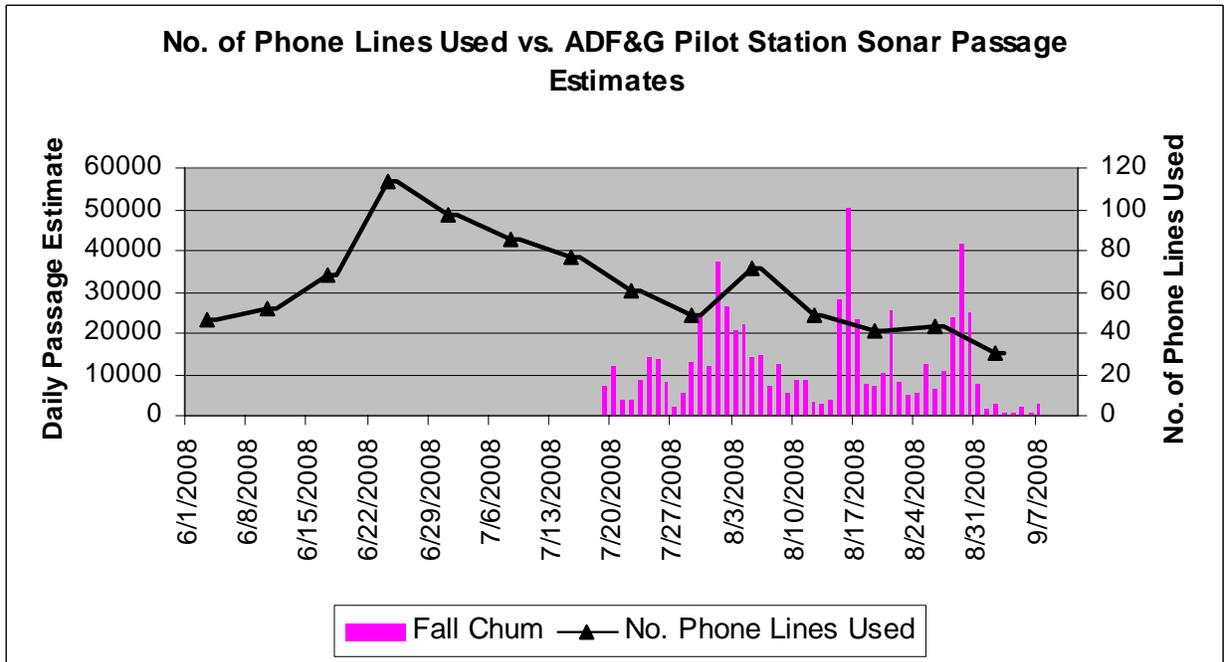


Figure 10. Number of phone lines in 2008 teleconferences vs. ADF&G Pilot Station sonar daily fall chum passage estimates.

Table 1. Results of household responses to the 2008 inseason subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in lower and middle Yukon River villages.

Interview date	Compared with this time "LAST" year, how were your catch rates for salmon this week?			Compared with this time "LAST" year, is the amount of time you have fished?		
	Poor	Same	Better	Less	Equal	More
Emmonak						
15-Jun	3	7	3	3	7	3
22-Jun		7	11	11	6	1
29-Jun	1	4	11	11	4	1
6-Jul	1	1			1	1
Marshall						
29-Jun	2	10	6	3	11	4
6-Jul	1	1	1	1	3	
Holy Cross						
22-Jun	2	5		6	1	
29-Jun	6			6		
6-Jul	4	1		2		3
Nulato						
29-Jun	8			7	1	
6-Jul						
13-Jul	8	1		6	1	2
Galena						
22-Jun	3	5	1	2	7	
29-Jun	13	2	1	2	9	5
6-Jul	15	1	1	7	2	8
13-Jul	11	4		3	2	10
20-Jul	7	1	3	3	1	7
27-Jul	1					1
Total	86	50	38	73	56	46

Table 2. Results of household responses to the 2008 inseason subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River villages.

Interview date	Compared with this time "LAST" year, how were your catch rates for salmon this week?			Compared with this time "LAST" year, is the amount of time you have fished?		
	Poor	Same	Better	Less	Equal	More
Huslia						
29-Jun	3				2	1
6-Jul	1	1		1	1	
13-Jul	3	1		3	1	
20-Jul	5			5		
27-Jul	1			1		
3-Aug	2			2		
Allakaket						
13-Jul		3		1	2	
20-Jul		4		2	2	
27-Jul		4		2	2	
Ft. Yukon						
13-Jul	11			11		
20-Jul	4			4		
27-Jul	3			3		
Circle						
20-Jul	5	1		5	1	
27-Jul	1	6		5	2	
3-Aug	2				2	
10-Aug		3				3
Eagle						
13-Jul	2	5	1	4	4	
20-Jul	3	3	3	3	4	2
27-Jul	6	2	2	5	4	1
3-Aug	4	1		3	1	1
10-Aug	1			1		
Total	57	34	6	61	28	8

Table 3. Results of household responses to the 2008 inseason subsistence interview questions for summer chum salmon in Yukon River villages.

Interview date	Compared with this time "LAST" year, how were your catch rates for salmon this week?			Compared with this time "LAST" year, is the amount of time you have fished?		
	Poor	Same	Better	Less	Equal	More
Emmonak						
15-Jun	5	5	3	3	5	5
22-Jun		6	11	11	5	1
29-Jun	2	4	12	13	5	1
6-Jul			2	1		
Marshall						
29-Jun	4	12	2	4	12	2
6-Jul		5		1	3	
Huslia						
29-Jun	1	3			4	
6-Jul	2	4		1	5	
13-Jul		3		1	2	
20-Jul	1	4		1	4	
27-Jul		1			1	
3-Aug	3	1		3	1	
10-Aug	3			3		
Allakaket						
13-Jul		3		1	2	
20-Jul		4		2	2	
27-Jul		4		2	2	
Total	21	59	30	47	53	9

Table 4. The 2008 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in lower and middle Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Emmonak		Marshall		Holy Cross		Nulato		Galena	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average								
15-Jun	24	12% ¹								
22-Jun	21	51% ²			8	25% ¹	9	0%	13	14%
29-Jun	20	68% ³	18	75% ³	7	26% ²	8	16% ¹	18	28% ¹
6-Jul	16	86%	20	78%	6	29% ³			19	45% ²
13-Jul		86%	15	80%	11	47%	9	41% ³	21	58% ³
20-Jul	7	90%							12	67%
27-Jul							8	45%	3	67%
3-Aug									2	67%
Total # of interviews	88		53		32		34		88	
Total # of interview weeks	5		3		4		4		7	
Final percentage ^b	32	94%	30	76%	12	44%	11	47%	27	66%

¹ Pulse 1

² Pulse 2

³ Pulse 3

^a Number of households calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence Chinook salmon harvest completion.

Table 5. The 2008 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Huslia		Allakaket		Ft. Yukon		Circle		Eagle	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average								
8-Jun			6	0%						
15-Jun			8	0%						
22-Jun			9	0%						
29-Jun	3	8%	9	0%						
6-Jul	2	18% ¹			9	0%				
13-Jul	4	18% ²	4	0% ¹	18	11% ¹			10	40%
20-Jul	4	19% ³	6	10% ²	13	13% ²	6	51% ²	11	52% ¹
27-Jul	3	24%	4	28% ³	14	21% ³	7	51% ³	10	82% ²
3-Aug	3	24%			9	23%	2	51%	5	86% ³
10-Aug	3	24%			9	32%	3	55%	3	86%
17-Aug					8	38%	3	55%	2	86%
Total # of interviews	22		46		80		21		41	
Total # interview weeks	7		7		7		5		6	
Final percentage ^b	4	25%	11	39%	36	38%	7	59%	14	75%

¹ Pulse 1

² Pulse 2

³ Pulse 3

^a Number of households calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence Chinook salmon harvest completion.

Table 6. The 2008 weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Emmonak		Marshall		Huslia		Allakaket	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average						
15-Jun	22	13%						
22-Jun	22	45%						
29-Jun	22	63%	18	46%	4	8%		
6-Jul	15	79%	20	64%	6	10%		
13-Jul			12	70%	3	10%	3	7%
20-Jul					5	16%	5	24%
27-Jul					1	21%	4	31%
3-Aug					9	21%		
10-Aug					3	42%		
Total # of interviews	81		50		40		12	
Total # interview weeks	4		3		7		3	
Final percentage ^b	33	84%	29	72%	9	29%	5	39%

¹ Pulse 1

² Pulse 2

³ Pulse 3

^a Number of households calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence summer chum salmon harvest completion.

Table 7. The 2008 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Huslia		Allakaket		Ft. Yukon		Circle		Eagle	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average								
8-Jun			6	0%						
15-Jun			8	0%						
22-Jun			9	0%						
29-Jun	3	8%	9	0%						
6-Jul	2	18% ¹			9	0%				
13-Jul	4	18% ²	4	0% ¹	18	11% ¹			10	40%
20-Jul	4	19% ³	6	10% ²	13	13% ²	6	51% ²	11	52% ¹
27-Jul	3	24%	4	28% ³	14	21% ³	7	51% ³	10	82% ²
3-Aug	3	24%			9	23%	2	51%	5	86% ³
10-Aug	3	24%			9	32%	3	55%	3	86%
17-Aug					8	38%	3	55%	2	86%
Total # of interviews	22		46		80		21		41	
Total # interview weeks	7		7		7		5		6	
Final percentage ^b	4	25%	11	39%	36	38%	7	59%	14	75%

¹ Pulse 1

² Pulse 2

³ Pulse 3

^a Number of households calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence Chinook salmon harvest completion.

Table 8. The 2008 weekly average percentages for summer chum salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Emmonak		Marshall		Huslia		Allakaket	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average						
15-Jun	22	13%						
22-Jun	22	45%						
29-Jun	22	63%	18	46%	4	8%		
6-Jul	15	79%	20	64%	6	10%		
13-Jul			12	70%	3	10%	3	7%
20-Jul					5	16%	5	24%
27-Jul					1	21%	4	31%
3-Aug					9	21%		
10-Aug					3	42%		
Total # of interviews	81		50		40		12	
Total # interview weeks	4		3		7		3	
Final percentage ^b	33	84%	29	72%	9	29%	5	39%

¹ Pulse 1

² Pulse 2

³ Pulse 3

^a Number of households calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence summer chum salmon harvest completion.

APPENDIX A. Preseason Flyer

 <p>1-800-315-6338 <i>Participant Code</i> YUKON# <i>(985666#)</i></p> <p>1:00 pm Alaska Time 2:00 pm Yukon Time each Tuesday</p> <p><i>Starting the first week in June</i></p>	<h2>Yukon River In-Season Management Teleconferences</h2>
<p>Get involved</p> <p>Discuss fishing conditions & management strategies</p> <p>Make your voice heard</p> <p>Learn from fishers, processors, & managers</p>	<p>Tracking the run, one week at a time</p> <p>Agenda of the teleconferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Village Identification & Subsistence Reports• Management Update• Management Strategy• Local Input• Closing Comments <p>Subsistence Questions for the teleconferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are your catches up or down and what is your assessment of run strength?• How far along are fishers in their subsistence harvests?• What is the quality of the fish?• What are the current river conditions? <p>Rules of the teleconferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A river-wide perspective• Priority to meet escapement (this includes US/Canada treaty obligations)• Priority use for subsistence fishers• Other uses such as commercial fisheries, personal use and sport when there are enough fish• State your name and village location before speaking• Calls will require brief, concise and short statements to enable all participants to communicate• Listen to others, be polite, and state your opinion clearly.
<p><i>facilitated by</i></p>  <p>YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION</p>	<p>Sponsored by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel</p>

APPENDIX B. Preseason Reminder Card & Magnet

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

Yukon River In-Season Management Teleconferences

1:00 pm Alaska Time
2:00 pm Yukon Time
each Tuesday

Starting the first week in June

Tracking the run,
one week at a time

1-800-315-6338

PARTICIPANT CODE yukon# (9 856 66)



APPENDIX C. Weekly Teleconference Summaries

Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference

Call #1 – June 3, 2008

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Huslia, Hughes, Galena, Ruby, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Old Crow, Dawson

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADFG – Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	AVCP
USFWS – Anchorage, Fairbanks	TCC
DFO – Whitehorse	North Yukon RRC

Subsistence Reports:

Salmon fishing has not yet begun. Some sheefish catches were reported in Pilot Station, Marshall, Grayling, and Old Crow while whitefish are being caught in Ruby, Huslia, Nulato, the G.A.S.H. Region, Pilot Station, and Old Crow. Huslia also reported a few pike being caught. Some lower river communities noted people were out getting logs for firewood.

Generally, water levels along the rivers are dropping, with below average levels reported in Hughes and Dawson. A lot of snow is reported in the lower Koyukuk which is anticipated to lead to rising water levels. Water levels in the Robertson, Salcha, Chena and Goodpasture Rivers are reported as very low. Snowpack in the upper Tanana is light so not much of a rise is predicted. Overall the debris levels are low, except in Fort Yukon which is reporting lots of drift.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: Subsistence fishing efforts are light and there have been no confirmed salmon catches to date, although 1-2 kings may have been recently caught in the Alakanuk area. The Emmonak Fish & Game office is open, and nets for the test fishery went in the water at Big Eddy on June 1. One king was caught on June 2. The Middle Mouth set nets should be operational by June 4. Partial test fishing in Pilot Station began on May 29 with the right bank sonar up and running as of May 30. The left bank sonar should be up by June 7. No salmon have been caught but some sheefish, whitefish and cisco have. The Marshall drift project will begin test fishing on June 11. There will also be a salmon data collection project in Y-4 with a Chinook genetics component.

Run and Harvest Outlook: Although ice break up in the lower river occurred with near average timing around May 24, there are insufficient data currently available to estimate the run timing for Chinook salmon. Therefore management decisions will be made consistent with preseason projection, moving to inseason management of the runs once salmon abundance increases.

The 2008 run is expected to be below average, similar to the 2007 run. It is expected to provide for escapements, support a normal subsistence harvest and a below average commercial harvest. If inseason indicators of run strength suggest sufficient abundance for a commercial Chinook salmon fishery, the commercial harvest could range from 5,000 to 30,000 Chinook salmon.

An average run of summer chum salmon is projected for 2008 that will provide for escapement needs and subsistence uses as well as a commercial harvest, anticipated to be between 500,000 and 900,000.

The subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be used until the salmon run size is projected to be of sufficient strength to warrant discontinuing the schedule. Because of the weak Chinook run in 2007, the Chinook directed commercial fishing will be delayed until the midpoint of the run. If a surplus beyond escapement and subsistence needs is identified at that point, Chinook directed openings may occur. No districts have been opened to commercial fishing at this time.

ADF&G announced they would be in Eagle on June 4th to issue subsistence fishing permits.

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: Andreafsky and Gisasa will be operating this year and should be counting fish near the end of June. The Federal Subsistence Board expanded the 4B and 4C drift gillnet time at their meeting this winter from the last 18 hours of the subsistence window to the entire subsistence fishing schedule (two 48 hour periods).

DFO Input: The Joint Technical Committee of the Yukon River Panel established a one year interim escapement Eagle sonar goal of 45,000 Chinook salmon which is 30% more fish than they saw last year. They are waiting to see how this will play out with below average runs expected this year. Stewart and Pelly River levels were quite high last week.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Several fishermen expressed concern at the rising gas and oil prices and the effect that will have on the ability of people to fish. Currently in Fort Yukon gas averages \$5.50/gallon and oil is at \$6/quart, while Nulato is seeing \$5.00/gallon gas.

There will potentially be a renewal of a chum salmon commercial fishery opening in the Y-4A district this year. If that happens, a question was asked regarding how the management agencies will divide up the chum. ADF&G replied that they are still working with interested buyers but do not currently have a good handle on who will come in. The buyers are pretty limited in what they want so dividing the Guideline Harvest amount should not be too much of an issue.

Finally, a question was asked about the possibility that the current low water levels will keep the fish from coming. ADF&G responded that king salmon are being caught at Nelson Island. From there it usually takes 7 or 8 days for the fish to enter the Yukon, so more will be known next week about the salmon run.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #2 – June 10, 2008**

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Scammon Bay, Emmonak, Mountain Village, St. Mary’s, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Hughes, Galena, Ruby, The Rapids, Old Minto, Nenana, Beaver, Eagle, Old Crow, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADFG – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	AVCP
USFWS – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Marshall, Galena	TCC
Interior Alaska Fish Processors	North Yukon RRC

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence salmon fishing has begun, mostly in the lower river and coastal areas, but has been rather slow. Catches have been largely kings with a few chum. King salmon are reported as being small but of good quality. Sheefish, pike, grayling or whitefish are being caught in Pilot Station, Mountain Village, Grayling, Nulato, Huslia, Ruby, the Rapids, and the upper river reaches in Canada. People are heading to fish camps in Emmonak and the Rapids (where there are 2 fishwheels in); elsewhere they are getting nets and fishwheels ready and in the water. In Pilot Station, people are cutting and drying sheefish and whitefish.

Water levels in the lower river and G.A.S.H. region are holding pretty steady or slowly dropping. In Huslia the water levels peaked and are expected to start dropping. Water levels in the middle river are dropping and are low for this time of year in the Rapids. The Tanana River is very low. The upper river areas are seeing high water that’s dropping some; in Teslin the water is quite high and the area continues to receive snow. Overall the debris levels are low, with the majority of communities reporting clear water. Fuel prices are still on the rise in many communities, which may be impacting who goes fishing and how.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: Chinook salmon have begun entering the lower river in small numbers but effort is light and harvest is low. High fuel prices appear to be causing a delay in fishing. Fishing efforts in the lower river should increase as the water level drops and salmon abundance increases. The lower Yukon test fishery became fully operational on June 4, with a cumulative CPUE through June 9 of .64, which is below the average of 2.53 for this date. The Pilot Station sonar project came fully on line June 5, with both banks providing passage estimates. The project’s test fishery caught its first king on June 7 and its first chum on June 9. Preliminary sonar passage estimates through June 9 are 2,018 Chinook salmon and 117 summer chums. These estimates are lower than the averages for this date, which are approximately 5,000 kings and 19,000 chums. The Marshall Drift project will begin test fishing on June 11. ADF&G is expecting a large number of five year old fish returning to the river this year, which means they will tend to be smaller, although the fish tend to get larger as the season goes on.

Run and Harvest Outlook: There is insufficient data at this time to estimate run timing for king and summer chum salmon. Management decisions will continue to be made consistent with preseason projections, moving to inseason management of the runs as salmon abundance increases.

The 2008 Chinook salmon run is expected to be below average, similar to the 2007 run, with the possibility of a below average commercial harvest (potentially ranging from 5,000 to 30,000 Chinook salmon). An average run of summer chum salmon is projected for 2008 that will provide for escapement needs and subsistence uses as well as a commercial harvest, anticipated to be between 500,000 and 900,000.

The subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be used until the salmon run size is projected to be of sufficient strength to warrant discontinuing the schedule. Because of the weak Chinook run in 2007, the decision on a Chinook directed commercial fishing will be delayed until the midpoint of the run.

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: Andreafsky and Gisasa crews are in route to getting set up. The inseason subsistence harvest interview project is also getting up and running.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

The majority of the question period centered on management's data. Specifically, clarification was requested on the daily fish numbers coming out of the Pilot Station project, and in particular if the drastic variation reflected in those numbers was normal. Managers explained that early in the season high variability in catch rates is normal. Another question asked for clarification of when the commercial fishery would be opened and ADF&G responded that because they are somewhat concerned about low returns of fish, they would wait until the mid point of the run to make that decision. What data ADF&G Commercial Fisheries uses to determine the half way point of the run in order to decide on a commercial opener was also questioned. ADF&G noted that three data sets are used – primarily the lower river test fishery, with data going back to 1989; also the current year of subsistence reports, and; the Pilot Station sonar going back to 1995. It was clarified that while they look at the averages for these data sets over time, managers also compare the current year with individual past years because there is much variability from year to year.

This led to the question of how this year compares historically in terms of run timing and abundance. ADF&G replied that because there are still so few projects running, it was difficult to give an answer. However, the run seems late and similar reports have come in from other areas of the state. Run strength also appears to be lower this year, but it is still too early to tell.

In response to a comment that some people in the middle river were disappointed that the fishing schedule was already in effect even though there were no salmon yet, ADF&G clarified that people can still fish with smaller than 4-inch mesh nets even when the schedule is closed.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #3 – June 17, 2008**

Facilitated by: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)

Funded by: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

Communities involved in the call: Alakanuk, Emmonak, Mountain Village, St. Mary’s, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Grayling, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, the Rapids, Old Minto, Nenana, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Old Crow, Pelly, Whitehorse, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks	AVCP
USFWS – Emmonak, Anchorage, Galena	TCC
DFO – Whitehorse	Selkirk RRC
Interior Alaska Fish Processors	NPS

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence salmon fishing is continuing along the lower river and beginning upriver; the first king salmon was caught in Galena on June 16. The fish quality is being reported as bright and big. Chum nets are set in Galena and chums are being caught in the lower river. While some fish camps and wheels are just getting up and running, some lower river villages report that smokehouses are up to 50% full. Whitefish, sheefish and pike are being caught in the Canadian reaches of the river.

Water levels in general are dropping in the lower parts of the river and the G.A.S.H. region. Water levels are rising in Ruby, the Rapids and along the Tanana River. The upper river areas are seeing high water that’s dropping.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment: Districts Y-1 and Y-2 have been harvesting kings in greater numbers during the most recent windows. Summer chum are beginning to enter the river and some fishers have been successful in targeting them. However, the overall subsistence harvest of both king and summer chum remains low and effort light. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) has detected the beginning of the first pulse of kings entering the river. Catch rates increased on June 14 and have continued through June 17. The catch per unit effort remains below the average for this date (4.34 as compared to an average of 7.59). The Chinook age-composition of the test fishery was largely age-5 and age-6 fish (55% and 43%, respectively). The percent of females was 37%, below average but not cause for concern at this point. It is largely due to the high percentage of age-5 fish, which have a low percentage of females as compared to age-6 fish.

The summer chum drift net fishery became operational on June 16, catching 124 chum that day. The Pilot Station Sonar estimate through June 16 is 10,200 Chinook (below the average of 33,200 fish) and 42,200 summer chum (below the average of 118,500 fish). The Marshall test fishery also became operational on June 11. The cumulative CPUE is 22.58, below the average of 54.66 for this date.

Run and Harvest Outlook: Chinook and summer chum abundance has increased over the past weekend. The first pulse of Chinook being detected by the LYTF will be more clearly understood once it is assessed by the Pilot Station sonar and Marshall drift project, although it appears the run is about 2-3 days late. Due to the limited amount of assessment information currently available, it is difficult to estimate the run

timing of Chinook and summer chum. Management decisions will continue to be made consistent with preseason projection, but will increasingly be made based on inseason assessment as more information becomes available.

The subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be used until the salmon run size is projected to be of sufficient strength to warrant discontinuing the schedule. Because of the weak Chinook run in 2007, the Chinook directed commercial fishing will be delayed until the midpoint of the run. If a surplus beyond escapement and subsistence needs is identified at that point, Chinook directed openings may occur. No districts have been opened to commercial fishing at this time

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: The Andrafsky project will begin counting fish next week. Gisasa is on track to also begin counting next week.

DFO Input: Border passage estimates this year will be based on the Eagle sonar count. However, mark-recapture studies will continue, but not be used for escapement estimates.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

The majority of the question period centered on the timing of the run. Given that the run appears to be a few days late, the question was asked if we were even at the quarter point yet, and when the mid point should be. ADF&G responded that the quarter point should be sometime between June 17 and June 19, with the midpoint coming around June 20-23.

Looking at the number of fish that have been counted to date, a question was asked if there was a worry about having to cut back on the subsistence harvest. ADF&G allayed those worries by explaining that given that we haven't seen Pilot Station sonar numbers yet, it is much too early to even begin thinking about harvest restrictions. The comment was made that close to the quarter point it seems like there are less fish than there should be, and people are just concerned about what might or might not be done. An additional question was asked about when there might be a commercial opener. ADF&G explained that they were waiting till near midpoint of the run to make any decisions on a commercial opener, and that they are still looking at a possible directed chum opener but there is not enough information yet.

A final question was asked about how the Pilot Station sonar works and how many hours per day it is operating. ADF&G answered that it ran 3 times per day, on both banks, for 3 hour shifts. However, expansion factors are taken into consideration so the estimates are for 24 hour periods.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #4 – June 24, 2008**

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, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Mt. Village, St. Mary’s, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Alatna, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Old Minto, Nenana, Stevens Village, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Venetie, Eagle, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	NPS
USFWS – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Huslia, Galena	TCC, AVCP
Marshall Fish Processor, Interior Alaska Fish Processor	Kaltag Fisheries, Boreal Fish

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers along the coast and lower Yukon River generally have more than 50% of their needs met in terms of king salmon. Fishing efforts are the same or higher than last year. King salmon are of good quality, bright, and they are getting bigger as the run progresses. Chum fishing has begun. Pink salmon have begun to show up earlier than normal. Fishing in the G.A.S.H region is slower than last year with more effort. Fish seem to be of poorer quality and are small. Chums are beginning to show up. The water is starting to drop with little or no debris. From Kaltag to Rampart they are beginning to catch more fish, mostly smallish males, but the catch rate is poor compared to last year. The Tanana & Koyukuk Rivers, as well as the Yukon Flats to the upper river, have seen no fish yet and high water.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: Catch rates at LYTF began to increase slightly on June 22, though they are still below average for this date. The Pilot Station sonar passage estimate for kings through June 24 is approximately half of the average. The first pulse of summer chum was detected on June 19 and catches remain high. The estimate for summer chum through June 23 is below the average for this date.

All indicators currently point to a weak Chinook salmon run. The first pulse of kings yielded a lower than expected estimate of fish at Pilot Station sonar of approximately 10,000 fish. The projected total run passing Pilot could be as low as 80,000 fish. The projected run abundance will not support subsistence harvests and meet escapement goals in Alaska and Canada. In an effort to conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing periods are being reduced and gear restrictions are being implemented chronologically upriver. These restrictions are being designed to allow subsistence fishing opportunity on the first pulse of kings consistent with the migratory timing as the run progresses.

It is anticipated that summer chum passage at Pilot Station will increase significantly in the next few days. Due to the limited amount of assessment information available, it is difficult to estimate the run abundance for summer chum salmon. The run appears to be 1-2 days late.

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 evaluated limiting Chinook salmon fishing to federally qualified users on federal public waters, but decided not activate this restriction at this time since the conservation gains would be minimal due to low numbers of non-rural fishermen fishing in federal waters and this action could potentially eliminate a possible directed chum fishery. USFWS welcomes comments on how to

accomplish their goals of getting fish to the spawning grounds and getting fish to people. Also, USFWS noted that they have been contacted regarding limiting customary trade this season. They shared that such requests must be made directly to the Federal Subsistence Board because this does not fall under the delegated inseason manager's authority.

DFO Input: If the U.S. subsistence harvest is reduced to 50% of the average, the total spawning escapement to U.S. and Canadian tributaries could range from 50,000-55,000 fish. With a run composed of 50% Canadian-origin fish, the run into Canada would then fall within the 25,000-28,000 fish range. The 2008 Interim Management Escapement Goal (IMEG) for Canada is 45,000 fish on the spawning grounds – approximately 30% higher the number of spawning fish that made it to spawning areas in 2007. Many Canadian aboriginal fishers were not able to meet their needs in 2007.

The information at hand suggests that the Chinook salmon run into Canada will be in the Yellow Management Zone. Within this zone, the management response will likely involve the closure of the commercial, domestic and recreational fisheries and potential restrictions to First Nations fisheries. DFO had a teleconference with a number of First Nations yesterday to inform them of the developing concern.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

The first round of questioning began with asking USFWS if they have looked at all possible programs they could administer given the small number of fish likely to cross the border, and emphasizing that every action should be considered to ensure sufficient spawning numbers. USFWS responded that the number of fish reaching the spawning grounds will be lower than they would like, and that throughout the drainage there will be difficulties meeting escapement goals. Clarification was asked on why the Marshall test data is showing the run to be average. ADF&G explained that the Marshall fishery is a better run timing tool than abundance tool. There is a short history of data and variations between years. Another question posed was whether a second pulse of kings had been detected. ADF&G responded in the affirmative, saying the pulse appeared a little bigger. The current age composition through June 22 suggests over half of the fish are 5 year olds.

Questions moved to the possibility of a commercial opener. ADF&G responded that a directed Chinook fishery is highly unlikely, but they will look at a directed summer chum fishery sometime in early July depending on how weak the run is and what it does. One caller asked if the sport fishery in the U.S. would close. ADF&G Sport Fish Division staff responded that the sportfish harvest is very small and is mostly concentrated in the Tanana drainage. On the Yukon, the daily bag limit has been reduced from 3 fish to 1 fish which primarily affects the Andreafsky and Anvik Rivers. They will hold off on restricting the Tanana drainage until the run reaches that area.

There were several comments from the fishermen about subsistence restrictions. Many do not want restrictions or feel they wouldn't be necessary as high gas prices will naturally reduce effort. It was mentioned that some elders believe that the run will be late this year. ADF&G requested that teleconference participants, especially upriver, provide comments and suggestions for how best to implement restrictions. Fishers responded that gear restrictions are not favored as most upriver fishermen do not have different sized nets; time restrictions would be better. Some upriver fishermen felt it was premature to be restricting their fishing when they have not even begun fishing but lower river fishermen are approaching the half-way mark in their needs.

There was some discussion about possible disaster relief if the run is as poor as predicted. ADF&G responded that while they don't think there will be a surplus, there are still fish coming in and they are taking actions now because it is unlikely to get a lot of fish. However, disaster declarations would come after the season is over. ADF&G also noted that the last disaster declaration happened because of no commercial fishery and people talking to their legislators and the governor.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #5 – July 1, 2008**

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, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Nenana, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Old Crow, Dawson, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	DFO
USFWS – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Beaver, Galena	TCC
Interior Alaska Fish Processor	Kaltag Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers along the coast and lower Yukon River generally have more than 70% of their subsistence needs met. Chum fishing is under way in the lower river with reports of decent runs. Fishing in the G.A.S.H region up to Ruby is reported as slow, with more effort compared to last year. Fishermen are spending more hours drifting with only a few fish per drift. No one in this area is close to meeting their subsistence needs. The Koyukuk & Tanana Rivers are beginning to catch chums and kings. The Yukon Flats and upper Yukon River are ready and waiting to fish.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The LYTF has identified a second and third pulse of Chinook salmon entering the Yukon River, though Chinook numbers are still below average for this date. The beginning of a second pulse of summer chum was detected on June 24 with high catches for several days. The Pilot Station sonar passage for Chinook salmon through June 30 is 80,000 which is still below average for this date.

The third pulse of Chinook salmon appears to be the strongest to date with catches in excess of 170 fish for three consecutive days. The age composition was 47% 5 year olds and 49% 6 year olds. The projected run is predicted to be 110,000-120,000 thousand Chinook salmon. The summer chum passage has been steadily increasing at Pilot Station sonar. There have been an estimated 917,000 chum past the sonar. The projection is 1.4 to 1.8 million summer chum salmon past Pilot Station.

In an effort to conserve Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing period reductions will continue to be implemented chronologically upriver to protect the third pulse. As the third pulse exits the lower river districts, the regulatory subsistence salmon fishing schedule will return to the two 36 hour periods per week. At that time, it is expected that 75% of the Chinook salmon run would have passed.

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 has conservation concerns. There have been 4 days of good Chinook passage and it is encouraging to see the projected run size increasing, but the higher estimate is still low. A projected run size of 120,000 fish past Pilot Station will not provide for traditional subsistence harvests and US and

Canadian escapement goals. The reduction in fishing time and gear is still necessary and appropriate to ensure enough fish reach their spawning grounds.

DFO Input: It is encouraging that the run has picked up, but it is still unlikely that 45,000 fish will make it to Canadian spawning grounds. It is anticipated that the Chinook salmon run into Canada will be in the Yellow Management Zone. Within this zone, the management response will likely involve the closure of the commercial and domestic fisheries and non-retention in the recreational fishery. Potential restrictions may occur within First Nation Fisheries. The first priority is to meet conservation objectives and the second is to meet the needs of First Nations fisheries.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

The first round of comments began with ADF&G requesting input and suggestions from teleconference participants on how to apply restrictions in Y-4 District and above. The first response was that the restriction on hours adversely affects fishers because they won't be able to catch enough fish. Another caller mentioned that management should hold off on restrictions for at least 2 more fishing periods because many people have not met their subsistence needs, while lower river fishermen have all or most of their needs met. The question was raised from last week about the possibility of using silver salmon gear if there are mesh restrictions. ADF&G is concerned with mesh restrictions as everyone may not have smaller mesh, which is why they are also considering reducing fishing periods further and soliciting input about mesh size restrictions. They also reminded everyone that the goal behind these restrictions is to try and protect the fish.

Other fishermen from Anvik had concerns about lower river fishermen coming into their fishing areas with larger nets and suggested that ADF&G should shorten gear length to 150 feet. A fisherman from Tanana mentioned that if net fishermen go to reduced gear they will only catch lots of chums, which are not even good for dog food up there. The same fisherman mentioned that people with fish wheels in the area will do better than net fishermen and perhaps could share if the wheels could run for 24 hours. Another fisherman suggested that if ADF&G is trying to conserve salmon then mesh size should be reduced. He mentioned that it is not fair to fish on reduced numbers and they should be able to fish the 2nd and 3rd pulses. A fisherman from the lower river suggested that if management is going to be in a conservation mode then there should be restrictions up and down the river, including on the sport fishers. ADF&G responded that the sport fishery division is looking at reducing the bag limit from 3 to 1 fish per day, and that they still have time to decide on restrictions for the Tanana River.

Another discussion began with the question of whether the 2nd pulse was going to the Tanana River or up the Yukon River. ADF&G responded that 21% is bound for the Tanana River. Discussion moved to the question of a Tier 1 fishery, which there is in District 5. Board of Fish would have to designate any area as a Tier 2, which would further restrict fishing.

ADF&G mentioned that they are focused on summer chum and looking at a commercial chum fishery if there is a surplus available. The majority of the rest of the call pertained to a discussion of the details of ADF&G's test fisheries.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #6 – July 8, 2008**

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: Alakanuk, Emmonak, St. Marys, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Nulato, Huslia, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, the Rapids, Rampart, Old Minto, Nenana, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Old Crow, Dawson, Mayo, Pelly Crossing

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	DFO
USFWS – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon	TCC, NPS
Interior Alaska Fish Processor	Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Many subsistence fishers along the lower Yukon River have met their subsistence needs. Chums are abundant and the Chinook still being caught appear to be large and of good color. Fishing in the G.A.S.H region up to Rampart has been slow, with generally more effort expended for less fish. Although the last opener was good, fishers are still concerned with not reaching their subsistence needs. The Koyukuk River reports no kings and some summer chums, but not enough. Fishers from the Tanana River and through the Yukon Flats report that they are beginning to catch kings, of good color and good shape. Kings were caught in Old Crow, but have yet to show up elsewhere on the Canadian portion of the Yukon.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The Chinook salmon passage estimates increased as the third pulse passed the Pilot Station sonar, although the overall run remains weak. The projection is for approximately 130,000 Chinook salmon passed Pilot Station. There will be fishing period reductions implemented in the upper river districts to protect the 2nd and 3rd pulse. The age composition of Chinook salmon through July 3 was 45% 5 year olds and 51% 6 year olds, with females constituting 44% of the sample.

Summer chum salmon continue to enter the Yukon River with a passage estimate of 1.4 million past the Pilot Station Sonar as of July 7th, and a total estimated projection of approximately 1.7 million summer chum salmon. This passage level will be enough to meet escapement goals, subsistence needs, and allow for a directed summer chum commercial fishery.

There is currently a market for summer chum salmon in Districts Y-1, Y-2 and Subdistrict 4-A. Based on the current abundance of summer chum, ADF&G initiated commercial fishing periods with 6-inch or smaller mesh size gill nets on July 2. In an effort to reduce harvest of Chinook salmon, ADF&G attempted to have the open periods when king abundance is low. In addition, Y-4 commercial fishers have volunteered to man fish wheels to release kings back into the water.

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 is glad to see an improved Chinook run projection. There will be no gear restrictions implemented along the upper river but fishing time will decrease in order to ensure enough kings are able to get to the spawning grounds. USFWS believes ADF&G has done a good job with

management of the commercial chum openers, waiting until most of the Chinook have passed and timing the openings for low Chinook abundance. Additionally, the majority of kings at the tail end of the run are of Alaska origin.

DFO Input: Some kings have crossed the border and are up the Klondike River and at Old Crow, although the run appears to be 5-6 days late. DFO is encouraged by the strength of the 3rd pulse, especially as the DNA information shows that there are Canadian origin fish in the pulse. However, it is anticipated that the run into Canada will be in the Yellow Management Zone. Within this zone, the management response will likely involve the closure of the commercial and domestic fisheries and non-retention in the recreational fishery. DFO is in consultation with the First Nations about potential restrictions on those fisheries and will use Eagle Sonar data to help with inseason management.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Questions on restrictions started the discussion. Fishermen from Y-4 asked if ADF&G could lift time restrictions on the last period to a 48 hour period instead of two 24 hour periods so they have a chance to meet at least half of their subsistence needs. ADF&G responded that they understand it is difficult this year and unfortunately people may not meet their subsistence needs. The point of these restrictions is to let the fish go by and get to their spawning grounds and Canada; however ADF&G did remove gear restrictions because upriver fishermen expressed concern over them. Fishermen from Rampart and a legislative staffer on behalf of Rampart fishermen expressed similar concern wondering why there can't be windows of 48 hour periods instead of two 24 hour periods. ADF&G responded that the difference between a 48 hour period and two 24 hour periods is the timing of the run. With this management scheme, fishermen will still be able to fish a portion of the pulse while also letting fish go by in between periods. They are continuously monitoring and assessing the run and restrictions may change.

Other fishermen had a question on where the chums are. ADF&G replied that there are a predicted 1.7 million chums with the 1st pulse of them past Ruby and the 2nd pulse past Kaltag. A fisherman from Anvik wanted to know what the Anvik River run was like. ADF&G responded that there were 190,000 chums through July 7th, which is below average but the chums should be picking up.

Another discussion began with questions about disaster declarations and, in particular, how a declaration can happen and when. The response was that a disaster declaration must come from the Governor and fishermen should write to her and to their representatives. TCC volunteered help to anyone interested in pursuing this, but ADF&G also advised that the run is late and fish are still coming.

Questions ended with how large the most recent spike of fish might be and if anyone is still catching fish along the coast. ADF&G responded that there was a bump of kings on July 6th which should hit Pilot Station by July 9th. More will be known about its size then. ADF&G has heard that fishermen are still catching fish along the coast.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #7 – July 15, 2008**

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, Alakanuk, Emmonak, St. Mary’s, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Nulato, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, The Rapids, Rampart, Nenana, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Galena, Eagle	DFO
USFWS – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Eagle	NPS
Interior Alaska Fish Processors	Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Most lower river fishers are 75-100% done with their subsistence harvests and have stopped fishing. Those fishers not done will target fall chum. Harvested fish were of firm flesh and good color.

In the G.A.S.H. region, fishers are at about 15% of their harvest level. Water conditions are not great for fishing, but people are still targeting kings and chums. The kings have been in poorer condition, but the chums are still looking good.

The Nulato/Galena/Ruby area catch rates have generally been poor. Some fishermen have stopped fishing even though they have not met their harvest goals. Other fishers are still targeting kings and chums and are waiting for the fall run. The fish that have been caught have been in good condition.

Along the Koyukuk River, fishers are about 15% done with their harvests and are targeting kings and chums. Some of the chums have been in poor condition. Through the upper river and in the Tanana River, fishers are experiencing high or rising water levels and increasing levels of debris. Catch has been sporadic in areas, but the fish have been medium to large, with good color and in good shape. The Canadian reaches of the river are reporting high water, some debris and low fishing effort so far.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The Chinook salmon run is nearly complete in the lower river. The projected first quarter point, midpoint, and third quarter point are June 18 (3 days late), June 26 (6 days late), and June 29 (3 days late), respectively. At Pilot Station sonar, it is expected that 134,000 Chinook will pass. The age composition of Chinook from the set net test fishery was 45% age-5 and 51% age-6.

The Tanana River king run has been stronger than anticipated, although still below average. The second pulse of salmon should reach Nenana in the next day or so.

The Pilot Station passage estimate through July 14 is approximately 1.8 million summer chum, with a total estimated projection of 1.86 million. This passage level is enough to meet escapement goals, subsistence needs, and allow for a directed summer chum commercial fishery.

Through July 14, ADF&G has scheduled six commercial fishing periods in Y-1 and five in Y-2. The preliminary harvest during these periods through July 14 is 4,200 kings and 114,200 chums. Y-4A had a 24 hour commercial period opened on July 9, future periods will be implemented concurrently with subsistence fishing periods. In an effort to reduce Chinook and male chum harvest, Y-4 commercial fishers have volunteered to man fish wheels and release fish back into the water.

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: The lower river will be moving to fall season subsistence management on July 16. Subsistence salmon fishing in the lower river districts will be open 7 days a week, with restrictions before, during, and after commercial fishing. The middle Yukon has seen the 2nd and 3rd pulses pass by during reduced subsistence fishing and the subsistence fishing time is being liberalized. The upper Yukon (District 5) is still having the 2nd and 3rd pulses migrate past and are currently on reduced subsistence fishing time. The early counts from Eagle sonar are better than anticipated based on the early passage numbers from Pilot Station. USFWS is hopeful that because of the restricted subsistence in both Alaska and Canada that the goal of 45,000 Chinook salmon to Canadian spawning areas will be reached.

ADF&G Fall Chum Salmon Outlook: Using the summer chum run as an indicator, it is likely that the preseason projection of 1 million fall chum will be accurate. A run of this size should provide for escapement and subsistence uses with a surplus for commercial harvest. Managers will attempt to work with buyers in the lower river to schedule commercial fishing periods, possibly later this week in the Y-1 District. The fall season test fisheries will begin at Emmonak on July 16 and at Mountain Village on July 17. On July 19, Pilot Station sonar will transition to reporting all chum as fall chum.

DFO Input: Management actions taken by Canada to date include initiating non-retention of Chinook salmon (kings) in the sport fishery, closing the area near Tatchun Creek where most sport fishing occurs, and closing the commercial and domestic fisheries. DFO has discussed run strength with the First Nations, which are implementing management actions to reduce their harvest by 50%. DFO is concerned that counts at the Eagle Sonar are below average. They are hoping for late run strength and more favorable ratios of females to males than they are currently seeing. The Eagle sonar information will be used to adjust inseason management actions.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

At the suggestion of a participant, YR DFA has agreed to post an optional general form for people to follow when giving their teleconference reports on the YR DFA website, yukonsalmon.org

Clarification was requested on whether there was a fall season commercial opening in Y-1 later this week and ADF&G responded that they are considering it but are waiting to see. Another participant asked about the existence of a fourth pulse and was informed that one was not seen this year.

Concerns were raised from Rampart about their difficulty in meeting their needs this year. With high water they haven't been able to fish and would like to see restrictions lifted or changed to allow 5 straight days of fishing. The request was also made that Rampart be separate from the Rapids in terms of management decisions. ADF&G responded that unfortunately, the king run is weak and the main goal right now is to protect the 2nd and 3rd pulses. While there is nothing to be done at the moment, ADF&G would consider the comments and concerns.

The issue of not obeying fishing regulations was brought up with multiple stories of fishermen fishing during closed periods and meeting much of their harvest goals, while those abiding by the regulations have not. ADF&G was not able to discuss details, but they assured everyone on the call that they do receive many enforcement issues, USFWS is also aware of them, and some are being investigated. Nothing happens overnight, but concerned fishermen brought up the point that these types of violations have been going on for years and are inherently unfair. The suggestion was made that enforcement take part in the teleconference and perhaps give a report.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #8 – July 22, 2008**

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: Emmonak, Marshall, Holy Cross, Anvik, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, the Rapids, Rampart, Manley, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow, Mayo, Pelly Crossing

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	DFO
USFWS –Fairbanks, Anchorage	Boreal Fisheries, Interior Fish

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers along the lower river are done fishing for kings and are attempting to target fall chum. From the G.A.S.H region up to Rampart, fishers have 40-50% of their subsistence needs met, and are reporting that they are done fishing for kings and are hoping for a strong run of fall chum and coho. Along the Koyukuk River subsistence fishermen are reporting less than 10% of their king harvest needs have been met. The kings being caught are reported as small but healthy. Recent high water conditions have caused fishermen to pull in their nets. The water levels at the Tanana River are high with low debris. Fishermen are catching chums and the quality is good. No one is fishing for kings. From the Yukon Flats to the upper river fishermen are reporting high water levels and heavy debris load, causing fishermen to stop fishing. Some have yet to start fishing; others are from 10-75% done with their harvest needs. The quality of the fish seems to be good with few females. Across the border, the first fish hit Pelly Crossing on July 15, and fishing has been sporadic elsewhere with few fish and high water with debris.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The Chinook salmon run has tapered off in the lower river. The projection for total Chinook salmon past Pilot Station sonar is approximately 133,000 fish. The Eagle sonar cumulative passage estimate through July 21 is 10,000 Chinook, which is below the 3-year average, but the second pulse of fish should be on its way. The Tanana River Chinook run has been stronger than anticipated from the first pulse, but still below average. Overall, most indicators suggest that the 2008 Chinook run is below average and not as strong as the 2007 run.

The Pilot Station passage estimate for summer chum through July 18 is 1,858,110, well above the expected number of 1,263,000 fish. Pilot Station transitioned from summer season to fall season on July 19.

In an effort to conserve Chinook salmon, there have been no directed Chinook commercial fishing periods in the lower or upper river districts. Additionally, reduced subsistence salmon fishing periods were implemented in the lower and upper river for the 2008 season. At this time, Subdistrict 5-D is the last to be on reduced subsistence salmon fishing periods, and as the third pulse exits, the period reductions will be relaxed.

Commercial fishing periods in Subdistrict 4-A have been opened to target summer chum, and it is anticipated that Y-6 commercial periods to target summer chum will begin this weekend.

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 reiterated that the king run is poorer than last year and that escapement numbers are at the low end of the objectives. Eagle Sonar will let us know how we do at passage to Canada. They are concerned about the numbers of females getting to the spawning grounds.

DFO Input: Water conditions are very high in Canadian tributaries and the main stem. The test wheels have caught an above average number of Chinook salmon fish at this point. The average size of the Chinook salmon fish is small and river conditions are high – favorable conditions for the fish wheels. The 8.5 mesh test fishery is having problems due to high water conditions. The Blind Creek weir is not in place yet. The Big Salmon Sonar is in operation, but with the high water it is only running 18 hours a day.

DFO has made no adjustments to their fisheries since last week. The commercial and domestic fisheries are closed, and there is non-retention of Chinook salmon in the sport fishery. Tatchun Creek and the Yukon River near Tatchun Creek confluence is closed to all angling. First Nations are implementing management measures to reduce their harvest by 50%. While the 2nd and 3rd pulses should be stronger, DFO is still concerned with the low Eagle sonar count. They will make a projection of the total number of Chinook salmon expected to cross the border by Wednesday morning. Available information suggests that the run will fall short of the spawning escapement goals.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: Based on the fall chum preseason projection and the current appraisal of the summer chum run performance, the fall season will be managed initially as though the fall chum run size will be near the low end of the projection range of 890,00. A run of this size should be sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence uses with an expected surplus for commercial harvest. At this time, no pulses of fall chum have entered the mouth of the Yukon. Total passage estimate at Pilot Station through July 20 is 18,500 fall chum.

Because fall chum are difficult to predict, commercial periods in District Y-1 and Y-2 have been staggered with the intent of spreading harvest and increasing the chances that a portion of an unexpected pulse would be harvested. However, as experienced in previous years during this transition time period, catches can be exceptionally low.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Comments began with a commercial fisherman from the coast mentioning that there have been no fish during the commercial periods and suggested an emergency opening for when there are fish passing through. ADF&G responded that right now they don't expect too many fish and that it's also difficult to predict what the tide will do in terms of bringing fish in. Once the fish do start moving, ADF&G will tailor the fishing periods better. There was a suggestion from another fisherman that all the commercial fishermen should get together for an emergency meeting with ADF&G to find out where the fish are.

Another fisherman asked for clarification from Ruby fishermen of "silver salmon" and was told it refers to fall chum. There was a question on curtailments in the sports fishery. The response was that restrictions have changed from a daily bag limit of 3 to 1. A closing question was from a fisherman who was wondering where the humpies are coming from. The response was that ADF&G is not sure, but that they are seeing quite a few and will know more postseason.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #9 – July 29, 2008**

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, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Mt. Village, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, the Rapids, Rampart, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon Circle, Eagle

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	DFO
USFWS –Fairbanks	Interior Fish

Subsistence Reports:

Fishing along the coast and lower river has slowed down with most fishers waiting to target fall chum. Water levels are rising in the G.A.S.H region up to Koyukuk and little fishing activity is occurring. Along the Koyukuk River, subsistence fishermen are reporting slow fishing and high water levels. Most fishers are waiting to target silvers. Subsistence fishermen from Galena as far as Rampart are reporting high water levels, and are 25-60% finished with their harvest needs. The water levels at the Tanana River are high with a forecasted flood, causing fishermen to pull their nets and wheels. From the Yukon Flats fishermen are reporting lower water levels and debris since last week. Some fishermen are 75-100% done with their harvest, while others are finding it difficult to meet their needs. Fish quality is good.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The 2008 Chinook salmon run has come to a close in the lower river. Most indicators suggest the run is below average and not as strong as the 2007 run.

In an effort to conserve king salmon, there have been no directed Chinook salmon commercial fishing periods for the 2008 season. Subsistence salmon fishing period reductions have been implemented in the main stem Yukon to protect the 2nd and 3rd pulse in an effort to meet escapement goals. Based on lower than anticipated Eagle sonar counts, additional reductions are being considered in Subdistrict 5-D.

The summer chum run appears to be 3 days later than average. The Pilot Station passage estimate through July 18 is 1.8 million, well above the average for the season. This passage level is enough to meet escapement goals, subsistence needs, and allow for a directed summer chum commercial fishery. Commercial fishing periods are being implemented concurrently with subsistence fishing periods.

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: Time reductions and gear restrictions have been implemented in Alaska and Canada has reduced their harvest goals in an effort to get enough fish to their spawning grounds. The 2nd and 3rd pulses past Eagle seem to be smaller than anticipated, which is disappointing in that escapement goals to Canada may not be reached and that these low numbers make it very hard on subsistence fishermen.

DFO Input: The DFO projection of the Eagle sonar count for the entire season is between 30,000 and 35,000 fish, placing the run in the Yellow Management Zone. It appears that the 2008 spawning escapement goal will not be achieved. DFO believes that the third pulse of fish is currently at Eagle, although it is difficult to determine exactly where the run is within third pulse. There has been 1,031 fish caught in the fish wheel, slightly below the average. High water conditions probably inflated the fish

wheel catch. DFO is concerned that the fish wheel catch is only 17% female. There is also a concern regarding the potential size of Whitehorse Rapids hatchery return since only 2 of 1,031 fish caught in the wheels were from the hatchery. High water levels are causing problems for some of the assessment projects (Blind Creek weir and Big Salmon sonar) and curtailing some aboriginal fishing activity.

DFO has made no adjustments to their fisheries for the last two weeks. The commercial and domestic fisheries are closed, and there is non-retention of Chinook salmon in the sport fishery. Tatchun Creek and the Yukon River near Tatchun Creek confluence is closed to all angling. First Nations are implementing management measures to reduce their harvest by 50%. Someone from the department is traveling to a number of communities this week to collect aboriginal catch information.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: At this time no significant pulses of fall chum salmon have been detected entering the Yukon River. The Pilot Station Sonar cumulative passage estimate through July 27 is 73,000 fish. It is difficult to project run strength before the first quarter point, but early indications are that the run may be smaller than previously projected. Early season expectations are for a run size near or below the low end of the projection range, which should still be sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence uses with a surplus available for commercial harvest.

As the run progresses, inseason assessment projects will be given greater consideration for management. Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day in Districts 1, 2, and 3 except for closures 12 hours before, during, and until 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishing further upriver will continue on the current schedule until fall chum reach those sections of the river.

Because fall chum pulses are difficult to predict, commercial periods in Districts Y-1 and Y-2 have been staggered with the intent of spreading the harvest. However, similar to previous years, catches can be exceptionally low during this early season period. This week the first bump of fish will be watched as it passes Pilot Station to judge its size. Currently it appears that unless fall chum start coming in stronger, a break from commercial fishing may be needed next week.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

The first question was directed to DFO and asked what percentage of hatchery fish return each year. DFO responded that on average about 70% of the returning fish are hatchery origin. Further clarification was requested about reporting of hatchery fish caught in the lower river commercial fishery. Hatchery fish caught in the commercial fishery are reported to DFO. Some fishermen expressed concern that the fishing public should be more concerned about escapement goals to Canada because that is the future salmon run.

Discussion moved to commercial fishing, with one fisherman expressing disappointment that fall chum commercial periods happened before it was clear how the run was developing. Since the run currently doesn't look as strong as was thought, why not wait on commercial periods until it's known how strong the run will be. ADF&G answered that the run may start slow and then pick up and that the commercial periods are implemented in such a way so as to spread the harvest out. Another fisherman wondered if biologists were concerned about the effects of high water in the Tanana on spawning success. ADF&G responded that while high water and temperatures can stress fish, no study has looked specifically at that question. Additionally, past high water events haven't led to catastrophically low returns, but high water certainly doesn't help. Another question was asked about what happens to the Chinook taken during chum commercial periods. ADF&G responded that they sample as many as they can for age, sex, length, and take genetic samples for area of origin. This information is available to the public.

A comment was offered that there are no existing structures for local management but that local input and greater co-management should be encouraged. A final comment was offered that management should implement strategies to better protect the 1st pulse of fish.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #10 – August 5, 2008**

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: St. Marys, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Ruby, the Rapids, Old Minto, Nenana, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow, Whitehorse, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Fairbanks, Pilot Station, Eagle	TCC,
USFWS –Fairbanks	Interior Fish, Kwikpak Fisheries
DFO	Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishers along the lower river to the G.A.S.H. region have started to target fall chum that appear to be nice, big, and bright with a few silvers also being caught. The subsistence fishers from Nulato to Ruby are not fishing at this time due to high water conditions and drift. Along the Koyukuk River subsistence fishermen are reporting rising water levels and some healthy big males. Most fishers are waiting to target silvers. Subsistence fishermen from the Rapids as far as Eagle are reporting that water levels are dropping. While some fishermen have met 100% of their subsistence needs, others have met 0% and some have stopped fishing because of poor catches coupled with high water, lots of drift and high gas prices. Fishers with dogs to feed are concerned they will not have enough fish for winter feed. The water levels at the Tanana River are still high but showing signs of dropping, and all but 1 fish wheel was ruined during the recent flood. Canadian fishers are catching Chinooks, but have voluntarily reduced their harvest levels in order to let fish get to spawning grounds.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The summer salmon fishery is winding down. The Eagle sonar cumulative passage estimate through August 4 is 30,000 Chinook which is below the 3-year average of 59,000 for this date. The majority of Chinook salmon has passed Subdistrict 5-D, so the subsistence salmon fishing schedule will return to a 7 days per week fishing schedule. No summer chum commercial fishing has taken place in District 6 since July 30 due to high water and flooding.

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: The season for summer chum and Chinook is basically over. Subdistrict 5-D went off of subsistence fishing restrictions Monday evening and was the last district to do so. High water levels are reducing fishing effort in the upper river. USFWS is now just watching the summer chum and Chinook passage at the Eagle Sonar. The Chandalar sonar is in place and preparing to count fall chum.

DFO Input: Based on counts at the Eagle sonar, DFO is projecting a total sonar count of approximately 37,000 Chinook salmon. They believe that the peak of the 3rd pulse of Chinook has passed the sonar and daily counts are expected to decline over the next few days. There have been 1,586 fish caught in the test fish wheels, which is above average. High water levels probably inflated the fish wheel catch. The Blind Creek weir was having problems with high water levels and as of August 4 had counted only 19 fish, well below the average of 400 fish for that date. The Big Salmon sonar count is below average but should see increased counts over the next few days as the third pulse migrates past. The Whitehorse Fishway has

counted 0 fish through the facility as of Monday although some salmon have been seen below the fishway. Average return to date is 55 fish. Aerial surveys are planned for mid-August.

DFO has made no recent adjustments to fisheries management. The commercial and domestic fisheries are closed, and there is non-retention of Chinook salmon in the sport fishery. Tatchun Creek and the Yukon River near Tatchun Creek confluence is closed to all angling. First Nations are implementing management measures to reduce their harvest by 50%.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: Although still early in the season, fall chum appear to be on track for a run size of 500,000-700,000 fish, less than the preseason projection but near average. It should be sufficient to provide for escapement and subsistence usage with a surplus available for commercial harvest. The first two pulses of fall chum entered the river in quick succession this past week. The first small pulse entered the river on July 27, with a Pilot Station sonar passage estimation of 37,000 fall chum. The second pulse entered the river on July 30, with a sonar passage estimate to be approximately 75,000 fish. The Pilot Station Sonar cumulative passage estimate for fall chum through August 4 is approximately 232,000 which is below the average of 241,000 fish.

Based on the current abundance of fall chum and the commercial harvest level, commercial periods are being delayed in order to allow additional salmon to pass through the lower river districts. Future periods will be scheduled as warranted dependent upon the projected surplus above a run size of 600,000.

The number of coho salmon has been increasing. Usually the coho run starts building around August 8 and the expectation is for a similar run to last year.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Fall chum questions and discussions dominated this portion of the call. The first question of the session was a clarification of where the first pulse of fall chum were. ADF&G responded that the bulk of the pulse is around Anvik but a few front runners were up at the Rapids. Another fisherman asked when ADF&G predicted the fish would be up the Koyukuk. They responded the pulse should reach the Koyukuk around the 9th of August, and be up around Huslia maybe around the 11th. Another fisherman asked how ADF&G would classify the fall run so far in overall total number? ADF&G answered that the run is on track for average. Another question was whether ADF&G is taking into account the late run timing in their projections. The response was that so far the pulses appear to be arriving in a normal period but they will continue monitoring the run.

Discussion turned to pink salmon with a comment that there were so many pinks migrating upriver that they were interfering with fishermen's nets. In contrast, a fisherman from Husli reported that there were no pinks going up the Koyukuk and speculated that they might be heading up the Gisasa, which ADF&G confirmed. Another question concerned the coho run timing and when they tend to start showing up. ADF&G responded that the cohos usually start picking up on August 8th or 10th.

There was a question of whether staff from the Andreasfky weir join the teleconference. USFWS answered that Andreafsky does not participate on the weekly teleconferences and has just wrapped up counting for the season. Total counts from the weir (shared by ADF&G), as of July 30, were as follows: 4,149 Chinooks, 50,000 summer chum, and 194,000 pink salmon. Since high water levels are reducing fishing effort, a fisherman wanted to know if more fish were getting to their spawning grounds. ADF&G thought there would be plenty of summer chum up at the spawning grounds and less Chinook salmon, but that the spawning success of those fish is unpredictable and high water levels play a role in spawning success.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #11 – August 12, 2008**

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: Emmonak, St. Mary’s, Marshall, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, the Rapids, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow, Dawson, Mayo

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	TCC,
USFWS –Fairbanks	Interior Fish
DFO	Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

There is very little subsistence activity occurring. Most fishers are either waiting for the fall chum and coho run or are unable to fish due to poor weather and river conditions. Generally, water levels are high but are dropping in many places. The fish that are being caught look to still be in great shape.

Fish are currently being harvested around Marshall and the G.A.S.H. region. Fall chum have been moving through the Koyukuk River and fishers in Huslia had been doing pretty well over the last few days. Fall chum have just begun arriving in small numbers at the Rapids. Circle fishers are still seeing some kings mixed with fall chum and silvers. Canadian fishers are largely done with Chinook fishing. They report the season as being terrible.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The 2008 Chinook and summer chum seasons are winding down. Most indicators suggest the Chinook run is below average and not as strong as the 2007 run. Cumulative estimated passage at the Eagle Sonar through August 10 is approximately 35,395 fish, below the 3-year average. Based on this estimated passage, it is anticipated that the escapement goal to Canada will not be met.

This winter, ADF&G will be working with fishers to discuss strategies to get more fish to the spawning grounds in the 2009 Chinook run.

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: The fall chum commercial fishing periods during the early part of the season were allowed based upon a preseason projection of 1 million fall chum. With the good run of summer chum, there was a reasonable expectation of a good fall chum run. While the run may still be good, management is holding off on more commercial fishing periods to ensure enough fish get upriver.

DFO Input: The Eagle Sonar has counted just shy of 36,000 fish, mostly Chinook, some chum. This is well below average. Test fish wheels have caught 1,661 Chinook as of August 11, which is above the 10-year average. High water levels probably inflated the fish wheel catch. Other assessment projects at the Blind Creek weir, the Big Salmon Sonar and the Whitehorse Fishway have all counted below average returns of Chinook. The numbers should all pick up as the 2nd and 3rd pulses pass through.

Based upon DNA analysis of chum caught at Pilot Station, there appears to be a weak component of Canadian fish. As the transition to fall chum continues, the numbers of Canadian fish should increase.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: Fall chum entering the river have slowed down this week, while coho salmon are starting to arrive in small numbers. Calm weather at the coast may be holding salmon offshore and half the fall chum run probably has yet to enter the river, but to date approximately 303,600 fall chum and 17,000 coho have passed Pilot Station Sonar. The projected run size for fall chum is between 500,000 to 700,000 fish, although erratic pulses of fall chum could significantly increase or decrease the projection. The age structure of the run is starting out differently this year: while traditionally the 4 year olds dominate the run, this year it is 5 year olds. The lower than expected numbers of fish seen so far could be due to a weak 4 year old age component. Only the front runners of the coho salmon migration have arrived but the run is projected to be average to above average.

The first pulse of fall chum should be in the vicinity of the Rapids and Tanana River on August 12, while most of the 2nd pulse should be near Kaltag. It is normal to have dramatic pulses of fall chum followed by slow periods as is currently happening. Because the Pilot Station Sonar is projecting that the total run size may be close to 600,000 fall chum, commercial fishing is being delayed in the lower river. As the coho run strengthens, additional commercial fishing opportunities in the lower river may appear. The department implemented the first commercial salmon period in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C on August 8 for 48 hours. Effort and harvest were low. Another 48 hour period begins on August 12. Subsistence fishing in these subdistricts is unaltered and will occur concurrently with the commercial period.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Many of the comments were requests for clarification on ADF&G's and DFO's assessment numbers. One fisher wanted to know why there was a large discrepancy in fish numbers for the test fisheries at Big Eddy and Middle Mouth compared to the passage numbers at Pilot Station. ADF&G replied that there was a lag time between the assessment projects, so low numbers at the test fisheries wouldn't show at Pilot Station for 3 or so days. Additionally, the test fisheries do not measure abundance, rather they indicate whether the fish are increasing or decreasing, whereas the sonar does measure abundance. Another fisher wanted to know if the ADF&G test fisheries fished the tides or at standard times. ADF&G uses standard times, usually 8am and 8pm. A question was asked of DFO of whether there was a count on the Miner River, to which DFO responded that there had not been an assessment in recent years, even though it's a major producer of kings.

One fisher wanted to know what species were coming into the river and if the runs were on time or not. ADF&G responded that there are fall chum and the beginning of the coho run, both of which appear to be basically on time, perhaps a day or two late, although still too early to tell with the coho run. A Canadian fisher had concerns about meeting the escapement goals for fall chum due to the commercial fishery in the lower river and wanted to know what the escapement projection at the border was. DFO responded that as of August 5 there were approximately 76,000 Canadian fish at Pilot Station on their way, and that they expected the proportion of fall chum will go up over time. ADF&G noted that the escapement goal was 80,000 fish and that the commercial fishing has been curtailed and subsistence effort is currently low. Another fisherman expressed his concerns about being able to fish as a lower river commercial fisherman. The perspective was offered that people throughout the river have concerns this year, and there are many other factors affecting the salmon run to consider besides other Yukon River users.

Announcements were made at the end of the call by ADF&G and TCC. ADF&G let everyone know that they are conducting a radio-telemetry study that will tag fall chum with radio tags. ADF&G would like fishermen's help in returning these tags when found. TCC announced they would be convening a river wide transboundary meeting with Canadians concerning the future of fishing on the Yukon River from a tribal/village perspective. The meeting will happen in early November in Fairbanks.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #12 – August 19, 2008**

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: Emmonak, St. Mary’s, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Tanana, The Rapids, Rampart, Nenana, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow, Teslin

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Anchorage, Fairbanks	DFO
USFWS –Fairbanks	Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Water levels are normal-to-low along most of the river, with the exception of The Rapids and Rampart where levels are high. Fishers report good fall chum catches on the mainstem of the Yukon from Tanana down to Marshall. Generally speaking, nobody is fishing on the Koyukuk or Tanana Rivers. In the upper river, including Canada, king salmon fishing is winding down and people are waiting for fall chum.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The cumulative total estimate past the Pilot Station sonar through August 18 is 423,000 fall chum, which is below the average passage of 518,000 for this date. At this time, the current run projection ranges between 500,000 and 600,000 fall chum passing through the lower river fishery. The coho salmon run is building and the cumulative total estimate past the Pilot Station sonar through August 18 is 52,000 fish. At this time, the coho run appears to be on track for an average run.

Weather along the coast has been calm for several days, which may be causing salmon to hold offshore. The first small pulse of fall chum is expected to be in the vicinity of Stevens Village, the second pulse near Tanana, and the third near Russian Mission. Run timing is close to normal.

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.

DFO Input: Through analysis of several U.S. and Canadian assessment projects, DFO has determined that the Chinook salmon run is well below average this year in terms of spawning escapement into Canada. Officials are hoping for late run strength to bolster the low numbers of returning spawners.

DFO estimates that 631,500 fall chum will pass the Pilot Station sonar. Genetic analysis that will be performed this week should provide further insight into implications of this number for Canadian fisheries.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: The fall chum run is expected to be adequate for escapement needs and subsistence uses, therefore no subsistence restrictions are anticipated. However, the fall chum run is not large enough to continue a directed fall chum commercial fishery and the coho run has not yet developed enough to open a directed coho salmon fishery. Consequently, commercial fishing will remain on hold in accordance with the fall chum and coho salmon management plans until abundance of both species increases significantly.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Two fishers asked whether there would be additional commercial periods for fall chum in the U.S. An ADF&G representative responded that there is a good chance of more openings, as long as more fish enter the river. He noted that there is still time for one or two more pulses of fall chum this season.

Another caller inquired about fall chum escapement for parent years of this year's run. ADF&G relayed that there were good escapements, so now the important consideration is the production of those fish.

ADF&G made two further announcements during the call:

1. The annual subsistence salmon survey will be held in September and October in 33 communities, starting in the lower river. A total of 1,400 households will be surveyed. As in the past, surveyors will be working with local assistants. Fishers are asked to share their subsistence salmon harvest calendars with surveyors or staple the calendars shut and mail them back to ADF&G. This year, those returning completed calendars will be eligible for one of six \$100 prizes.
2. The radio-telemetry study that will tag fall chum with radio tags on the Tanana River has begun. Fishers are asked to contact ADF&G if they find a tag.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call # 13 – August 26, 2008**

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: Emmonak, Mountain Village, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, The Rapids, Rampart, Minto, Nenana, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Fairbanks, Pilot Station	DFO
USFWS –Fairbanks, Anchorage	Boreal Fisheries
Interior Alaska Fish Processors	Kwipak Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Water levels are generally dropping throughout the river, except in Eagle where the river is up a bit. Subsistence fishing activity is low throughout the drainage. With the beginning of moose season, berry-picking, and caribou hunting, many people are not fishing. Those who are report normal-to-low catches and normal quality of fall chum and still only a few cohos caught yet.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: As of August 25, the cumulative fall chum passage at the Pilot Station sonar was 496,000 fish, which is below the average of 611,000 for this date. Based on this estimate and historical average run timing, the current run size projection is 600,000 fall chum passing through the lower river. Genetic analyses indicate that the majority of the first three pulses of fall chum are likely bound for the tributaries in the upper Yukon River drainage. As the run progresses, an increasing percentage will contribute to Tanana River stocks as is typical. The coho salmon run is building and it is estimated that 93,000 have passed Pilot Station sonar as of August 25, which is slightly below the average of 112,000 for this date.

Weather along the coast has been calm and clear for several days, which may be causing salmon to hold offshore. The first small pulse of fall chum is expected to be in the vicinity of Circle, the second pulse near Stevens Village, and the third near Koyukuk. Additional smaller groups of chum and coho salmon have entered the river this week and are following behind the third pulse.

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.

DFO Input: Chinook assessment projects are finished for the season. They showed a disappointing return of fish that is less than last year. At the Whitehorse fishway, 285 Chinook have returned so far, with the estimated total projected to be 300-340. The fish are bigger than usual, of high quality, and consist of 30% females, which is an unusually high percentage of females.

A mark-recapture program for fall chum on the Porcupine River near Old Crow begins this week. Since Eagle Sonar switched to fall chum last week, 2,129 fall chum have passed, which is about average (based on last 2 years of data). Based on data collected at Pilot Station, DFO projects there will be enough fall chum of Canadian origin to meet escapement objectives and to provide for a commercial fishing period, possibly at the end of this week.

ADF&G Fall Chum Management: The fall chum run is expected to be adequate to meet escapement needs, provide for subsistence uses, and meet border passage commitments; therefore no subsistence restrictions are anticipated. There is a small surplus available for commercial harvest in accordance with the coho management plan. As the coho run is near its peak and the quality of both coho and fall chum is still very good, two 4-hour openers were announced in Districts 1 (August 25, 8am – noon) and 2 (August 26, 5pm – 9pm) to target coho salmon. Additional periods are dependent upon the results of these two periods and further assessment of the runs.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

One fisher asked about the parent years of next year's Chinook run. ADF&G responded that the run tends to consist of 4-, 5-, and 6-year-olds. So the parent years of next year's run would be 2003 for the 6-year-olds, 2004 for the 5-year-olds, and 2005 for the 4-year-olds.

ADF&G had understood that fishers in the middle river had done okay last week; two fishers from the area commented that this has been the poorest fall chum run ever, and that while some people have done okay that is mostly because there were multiple boats fishing for a single smoke house. ADF&G reiterated that the 3rd pulse should be in the Koyukuk region, after which the cohos will pick up, so they are interested to see how people do in the next few days.

One of the processors on the call asked that ADF&G change the wording in the harvest calendars from "dog salmon" to "summer chum salmon."

Another caller wondered when ADF&G would end their test fishing in Emmonak and the sonar at Pilot Station, and if there would be any commercial openings after that point. ADF&G responded that the Emmonak test net will end on August 28 and the sonar will stop on September 7. There will be other projects still assessing the run, however, so ADF&G will continue to monitor the run for future potential commercial periods. A fisher from the Tanana River wanted to know if ADF&G had ruled out commercial fishing in that region, to which ADF&G replied that they had not. They are watching the proportion of fish heading to the Tanana River at Pilot Station, and based on this data may make a decision late next week.

One fisher wanted to know if many sockeye or other invasive fish had been caught in the assessment projects this year. ADF&G replied that although there had been some sockeye returning to the Andreafsky and Gisasa Rivers, they were resident populations of fish. ADF&G has not seen any other non-resident fish to be concerned with.

ADF&G made one additional announcement:

- The annual subsistence salmon survey will begin in Emmonak on Sept. 5th & 6th. Surveyors will then be in Alakanuk on Sept. 7th & 8th, and in Nunam Iqua on the 9th & 10th. Fishers are asked to share their subsistence salmon harvest calendars with surveyors or staple the calendars shut and mail them back to ADF&G.

**Yukon River Inseason Management Teleconference
Call #14 – September 2, 2008**

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: Emmonak, St. Mary’s, Pilot Station, Holy Cross, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Circle

Government and Other Organization/Entities:

ADF&G – Emmonak, Fairbanks, Anchorage	DFO
USFWS –Fairbanks	Boreal Fisheries

Subsistence Reports:

Subsistence fishing activity is low throughout the drainage this week. At the end of last week a pulse of fall chum went through the lower river, slacking off earlier this week. Most fishers reported people out moose hunting and not fishing. Whitefish are being caught in the G.A.S.H. region, and good salmon fishing was reported last week in Nulato and Koyukuk and Galena. Fish reported from the middle river and the Yukon Flats are reported as still looking good.

Water levels in the lower river are dropping or are low throughout most of the Alaska portion of the river. Circle saw high water last week which caused the loss of three fish wheels. Eagle also saw high water but reports that it is now beginning to drop. There is also a lot of driftwood in Eagle.

Management Updates:

ADF&G Assessment and Management Strategies: The end of the fall salmon runs are approaching in the lower river. An unusually late pulse of fall chum began entering the river on August 25, consisting of 90,000 fall chum. The cumulative Pilot Station sonar estimate of the fall chum passage is 612,000 fall chum as of September 1. What was initially considered the first pulse of salmon should be combined with the second pulse because the two have merged together as they move upriver. This pulse of fish should be near the US/Canada border. The next significant pulse should be near the community of Tanana, while the most recent pulse of fish should be near Holy Cross.

Cohos have been steadily entering the river over the past few weeks. The cumulative coho salmon estimate is 125,000 past the Pilot Station sonar as of September 1, which is slightly below average for this date.

Additional commercial fishing opportunities are planned for this week in Districts 1 and 2 as the abundance of fall chum and coho is enough to meet escapement, subsistence and border passage goals. Subdistrict 4A, 5B, 5C and 6 may all have commercial openers announced this week depending on river and market conditions. Subsistence fishing in these districts will happen concurrently with any commercial periods.

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.

DFO Input: The Chinook run is basically over and DFO has pulled some of the Chinook assessment programs. The run was lower than expected and border passage commitments will not be met.

While it is still early in the fall chum run, DFO expects the numbers to build to a peak in mid to late September. Fall chum counts at the fish wheel projects are low, but the wheels have been down due to high water. Water levels have also kept the Fishing Branch weir from being installed. Based on DNA analysis of fall chum at Pilot Station, the predicted amount of fish expected to reach Canadian waters should be enough to meet escapement targets and provide enough surplus for harvest opportunities. The commercial and domestic fisheries opened on August 31 and closed on September 4. More openings are anticipated.

Local Input & Closing Comments:

Numerous questions were asked about the commercial season to date and how far into the fall the season may go. From ADF&G, it was learned that fishing will continue into September, and perhaps into October on the Tanana River. Assessment projects still operating will end by September 7, and the lower river commercial fishery will end by September 10. To date, the commercial fisheries have taken about 4600 Chinook salmon in chum salmon directed openings with an average weight of 14 pounds.

Another fisher wanted to know what the Chinook numbers were this year through the Gisasa weir and how they compared to previous years. An ADF&G representative responded that 1735 Chinook went through this year, and compared to the past three years that number is reasonable based on the overall run size.

Some discussion took place on the recent change to sonar at Eagle to count fish at the border and how that method compares to the previous mark-recapture method. DFO and ADF&G jointly explained that the two assessment programs ran concurrently for three years, but there were some inconsistencies in the numbers so it is difficult to directly compare them. However, all parties via a Panel decision agreed to use the sonar method for Chinook and chum. Based on these results, the Joint Technical Committee developed and recommended a one year escapement goal to the Panel and the JTC has additional work to do to define an upper end for the goal. Eventually more in-depth information will be available on this transition from ADF&G.

It was decided at the end of the call that this would be the final teleconference of the season.

The ADF&G Emmonak office will likely be closing in the middle of next week. The ADF&G Fairbanks office phone number is 907.459.7274.

APPENDIX D. The 2008 inseason salmon interview project inseason salmon weekly harvest summary sheet.

Preliminary Data

Inseason Salmon Harvest Interview Summary

Interview Week	Weekly Date:	2008					
Village	Interview Date(s)	# of Interviews	Gear Type	Harvest % ^a	Catch Rate ^b	Time Fished ^c	Fishing Days ^d
Emmonak			Drift gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Marshall			Drift gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Holy Cross			Drift gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Nulato			Drift gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Huslia			Drift gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Allakaket			Drift gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Galena			Fishwheel				
			Set gillnet	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Drift gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
Beaver			Fishwheel	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Ft. Yukon			Fishwheel	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				
Eagle			Fishwheel	0 - 25	BETTER	MORE	
			Set gillnet	26 - 75	SAME	EQUAL	
			Combination	76 - 100	POOR	LESS	
			Other				

a Where are you at in your harvest?

b Compared to "LAST" year how were you catch rates?

c Compared to "LAST" year is the amount of time fished?

d Average number of fishing days of all interview participants?

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) administers all programs and activities free from discrimination based on sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood or disability. The YRDFA administers all programs and activities in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. If you believe you have discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, or if you desire further information, please write to: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, 725 Christensen Dr., Ste 3-B, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.