

Yukon River In-season Salmon Teleconferences, 2011

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ABSTRACT

Teleconference calls are a practical and useful method for discussing the complexities of salmon management and for gaining immediate real-time information from fishers along the expanse of the Yukon River. As such, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) hosted weekly in-season teleconference calls during the 2011 Yukon River salmon fishery season, from early June through the end of August. The teleconference calls, held every Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time), 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 regarding subsistence harvests and perceived abundance, in-season harvest interviewers were hired in 9 communities along the Yukon River to collect and report subsistence harvest information each week. In addition to reports of local observations, the calls provided information to fishers regarding research and escapement monitoring tools operated by management entities, and facilitated information sharing and capacity building amongst all interested parties. Calls were typically 1-2 hours in length. Summaries of each call were written and distributed to teleconference participants within three days. In total, 13 teleconferences were held in the 2011 fishing season.

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
LIST OF APPENDICES	v
INTRODUCTION	1
OBJECTIVES	1
METHODS	2
PRE-SEASON.....	2
IN-SEASON	3
POST-SEASON.....	5
<i>Teleconferences.....</i>	<i>Error! Bookmark not defined.</i>
<i>In-season Harvest Interviews.....</i>	5
RESULTS	6
TELECONFERENCES	6
IN-SEASON HARVEST INTERVIEWS	7
<i>2011 Perceived Run Strength and Fishing Success</i>	8
<i>Village Results.....</i>	8
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
TELECONFERENCES	11
IN-SEASON HARVEST INTERVIEWERS	11
CONCLUSIONS	12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	12
LITERATURE CITED	14

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Comparison of weekly participation as measured by the number of communities on each call each week. 2003-2011.....	19
Figure 2. Comparison of average annual participation by U.S. & Canadian communities as measured by the average number of communities actively participating in each call each season. 2003-2011.....	19
Figure 3. Average number of communities participating in each call. 2003-2011.....	20
Figure 4. Number of phone lines used vs. ADF&G Pilot Station Sonar Passage Estimates for Chinook salmon. 2011.....	20
Figure 5. Number of phone lines used vs. ADF&G Pilot Station Sonar Passage Estimates for Fall Chum salmon. 2011.....	21
Figure 6. Number of Canadian Communities Actively Participating vs. Rapids Daily Counts for Chinook Salmon. 2011.....	21
Figure 7. Number of Canadian Communities Actively Participating vs. Rapids Daily Counts for Fall Chum Salmon. 2011.....	22
Figure 8. Active participation by communities. 2011.....	22
Figure 9. Participation by No. of Communities Based with In-Season Harvest Interviewer Communities Broken-Out.2011.....	23
Figure 10. Community participation & phone line usage. 2011.....	23

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. YRDFA teleconferences attendance by local hires during the 2011 salmon fishing season in the Yukon and Koyukuk River villages.....	25
Table 2. Results of household responses to the 2011 in-season subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in lower and middle Yukon River villages.....	26
Table 3. Results of household responses to the 2011 in-season subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in Koyukuk River and upper Yukon River village.....	27
Table 4. Results of household responses to the 2011 in-season subsistence interview questions for summer chum salmon in lower and middle Yukon River villages.....	28
Table 5. Results of household responses to the 2011 in-season subsistence interview questions for summer chum salmon in upper Yukon River villages.....	29
Table 6. The 2011 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in lower, middle, and upper Yukon River villages.....	30

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Promotional Postcard and Flyer.....	32
APPENDIX B. Weekly Teleconference Summaries.....	33
APPENDIX C. Interview Data Collection Form.....	58
APPENDIX D. The 2011 in-season salmon interview project in-season salmon weekly harvest summary sheet.....	59
APPENDIX E. Interview Consent Form.....	61

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).

Since its inception in 1994, the in-season 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 immediate real-time information across the more than 2,000 mile expanse of the Yukon River. Facilitated by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA), these teleconferences have enabled local users to provide valuable insight to fisheries managers on in-season salmon subsistence needs, river conditions, and abundance and quality of salmon available.

Beginning in 2002, in-season 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. These in-season 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. 2009). However, this information is only collected postseason and therefore unavailable for in-season management. In-season interviews provide managers insight on subsistence harvest progression within multiple villages located on the Yukon River for use in in-season 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. Additionally, the program provides managers with real-time subsistence harvest data for

use in in-season management decision making. Objectives for the In-season Salmon Teleconferences include:

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

METHODS

Pre-Season

To organize and carry out weekly teleconference calls during the 2011 summer and fall fishing season, YRDFA first looked back at the 2010 teleconferences, which were the best attended on record, to see what worked and what did not. Also, YRDFA consulted managers from ADF&G and USFWS. All parties agreed that the calls needed to focus on in-season issues, rather than external factors such as by-catch, to keep calls shorter and more productive. In the past some calls were as long as 3 hours, and in the interest of respecting participants' time this change was made. However, on the slower calls, callers would be given more latitude, recognizing that the teleconferences do provide a useful forum for dissemination of all sorts of fisheries information.

Also, in 2010 there was some finger pointing between districts regarding responsibility to conserve salmon. While one purpose of the calls is to share viewpoints, some comments are simply not productive and instead cause animosity. As such, YRDFA moderators dedicated themselves to watching for such attitudes and limiting these comments to a minimum.

Lastly, all parties agreed that during busy calls segmenting the public comment period into a few key topics helps to focus discussions and decreased repeat questions. As such, it was decided that on the busier calls the public comment period would be divided as follows: (1) run assessment (sonar, test fish, what people think of the run), (2) management actions, and (3) other issues.

Agenda items included village identification and subsistence reports, management updates and strategies, and public comments. Calls were slated to be held every Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time) and to last no more than two hours, and ideally one hour.

Prior to the first teleconference of the season, YRDFA launched a promotional campaign targeting fishers and user groups river-wide. Postcards were mailed to more than 2,100 fishery stakeholders in the U.S. and Canada. 750 full-page flyers were distributed in batches of ten to 48 U.S. Tribal Councils and 27 Canadian First Nations, Renewable Resource Councils, and other fisheries-related groups (Appendix A). In addition, the teleconferences were promoted in YRDFA's spring newsletter and the May and June editions of YRDFA's E-News. Teleconference information was posted on YRDFA's homepage, and staff handed-out decks of

promotional playing cards at meetings and during travel on the river. While this was a reasonably comprehensive campaign, it was not as large as in 2010, which included waterproof mailers, advertisement in regional newspapers, and weekly targeted phone calls. Given the high participation rates in 2010, YRDFA staff felt that the public was well aware of the program and chose to simply remind stakeholders of the key details. Also, there was additional funding in 2010 for promotions through another grant source; this funding was not available in 2011.

To prepare for the 2011 season, YRDFA met with managers to hear their feedback on the program. At the request of managers, YRDFA revised the in-season harvest survey form and the participating communities. As part of the survey form revision process, YRDFA contacted managers, post-season survey managers, previous local hires for the harvest survey program and others to discuss changes to the form, what worked and what didn't work. YRDFA reviewed the post-season harvest survey form and the Kuskokwim River in-season harvest survey form. The revisions to the form include removing the gear questions, changing the question about fishing time to a question about fishing success, changing the question about catch rates to a question about perceived run strength. A question about household harvest goals was added and a larger comment section was added. Appendix C shows the final survey form that was used for the 2011 season. Additionally, a consent form was piloted in 2011 (Appendix E) to ensure that participants were informed of project goals.

YRDFA hired in-season harvest interviewers in 9 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 at the request of Yukon fishery managers. As a result of the preseason meeting with managers, Emmonak, Allakaket, and Circle were not included in the 2011 program and Russian Mission, Kaltag, and Nenana were added for 2011. Interview collection and summary techniques were based on methods developed in 2003 (Gerken and Holder 2005).

Individuals were selected as interviewers based on their in-depth knowledge about their community, local fishing activities, and availability. Interviewers were employed by YRDFA. YRDFA personnel trained and consulted with interviewers at the onset of the fishing season on an individual basis. In six communities, YRDFA was able to re-hire the past interviewer. In three communities (Russian Mission, Kaltag, and Nenana) YRDFA, worked with the Tribal Council to select and hire a new interviewer. In one community (Huslia), an interviewer was not able to be hired to conduct the interviews.

In-season

From June 7 to August 30, 2011, 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 35 and 120 minutes, depending on the level of participation and amount of discussion. A brief summary of each call was written and emailed to teleconference participants within 3 days after each call (Appendix B). The summaries were also posted on the YRDFA website, along with summaries of every in-season teleconference held since 2003. As a change, this year the summaries were streamlined to focus on fishers' reports and questions/comments. Website links were provided for most of the agency information, which is

available online. The goal was to keep the summaries focused on new information and make them as brief and to the point as possible.

For the in-season interviewers, household lists from ADF&G postseason subsistence surveys were used to identify potential interview contacts. Information from ADF&G postseason surveys categorized households into unique strata dependent upon their degree of harvest during the last five fishing seasons. These harvest strata were: Unknown harvester, Do Not Fish harvester, Light harvester (1-100 salmon), Medium harvester (101-500 salmon), or Heavy harvester (> 500 salmon) harvester (Busher et al. 2009). 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. In each community, the in-season interviewer would review the list, in some cases, with the tribal council, and determine the appropriate families that were active fishers.

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. In the 2011 season, we implemented informed consent to guide this discussion and explain the purpose, length, and benefit of participating in the project. In addition the informed consent explained the funding source, volunteer nature of the project, and option to remain anonymous. Interviewers either read the form or explained it in their own words to each fishing family on their first interview of the season.

Interviews 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. This year, at the request of the managers, interviews were conducted between Friday and Monday. Interviewers collected information on: 1) days fished that week; 2) relative comparison to fishing in the 2010 season (“worse”, “same”, “better”) for this week; 3) relative comparison for run strength compared to the 2010 season (“worse”, “same”, “better”); 4) how many fish they caught during the past week; 5) the harvest goal progress (expressed as a percentage in 25% increments) that households were making toward completing their subsistence harvest; and 6) general comments from fishers related to the salmon run (Appendix C). As a new question on this form, each fishing family interviewers was asked during the initial interview, “how many fish do you plan to catch this year?” The revised survey form continued to have a space to collect summer chum salmon data along with the Chinook salmon data if the fishers provided that information to the interviewer but was not required to be collected.

Interviewers summarized the results and provided the information to the YRDFFA project leaders, who compiled the weekly subsistence information from all villages and distributed written weekly summaries to managers. Harvest progression was reported weekly as a total of all the interviews for each village conducted for that week. Verbal summaries describing fishing conditions and subsistence harvest progress for each village were presented at the weekly YRDFFA teleconferences. Household specific interview information was confidential and no information that could identify an individual household was released to the general public.

Data were analyzed in three ways. First, to evaluate in-season harvest progression a weekly average percentage was reported by village. 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 2011 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-season this was reported as a total of interviews conducted during that week. 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 in-season in a weekly harvest summary datasheet (Appendix G).

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 in-season in a weekly harvest summary datasheet (Appendix G).

Post-Season

To assess the success of the 2011 in-season salmon teleconferences, YR DFA gathered data from a number of sources. Specifically, GCI—the phone company hosting the call—provided a breakdown of the number of phone lines and line minutes for each teleconference. ADF&G provided preliminary information from in-season assessment projects. YR DFA staff provided detailed notes from each teleconference, which yielded information on which communities actively participating each week. With this data, YR DFA analyzed participation relative to: past years, salmon run timing, location of communities, and whether communities had in-season harvest interviewers. In addition, YR DFA consolidated the 2011 weekly teleconference summaries into a single PDF and posted it on the organization's website.

In the post-season period, YR DFA applied the weighted percentage approach to the weekly average percentage of harvest progression for each village collected through the harvest

interviews. The final percentage was the weighted average from all interviewed households during the 2011 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 in-season by managers typically involve historical averages. The historical run-timing (1989-2010) of these quartile points in the lower river for Chinook salmon, indicated by ADF&G lower Yukon River test fishery were June 15, June 21, and June 26. 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 ADF&G lower Yukon River test fishery for Chinook salmon and 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 (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).

Interviewers were invited to attend the 2012 YRDFA Annual Meeting, held in Galena February 13-16. If an interviewer was unable to attend, a key interviewee from the same village was invited. By bringing these individuals to this river-wide fisheries meeting, YRDFA hoped to broaden their knowledge base to assist them in disseminating information to fishing households, facilitate in-person interaction between interviewers and managers, and to give the interviewers the opportunity to share their insights with other meeting attendees.

RESULTS

Teleconferences

During the 2011 salmon fishing season, YRDFA organized and carried out a total of 13 in-season management teleconferences. Participation in terms of number of communities actively participating was equal to previous 5-year average, though it was down 8% from 2010 (Figure 1). This drop was due to lower participation from U.S. communities; Canadian community participation held steady (Figure 2). Average participation for the entire season was above the 9-year average, though below that of the previous three years (Figure 3).

As is typical, overall call volume tracked well with Chinook salmon run timing past Pilot Station sonar and was additionally held steady in timing with the fall chum passing through Pilot Station, indicating that fishers wanted to learn about pulse timing and run strength as the fish were coming in the river (Figures 4 & 5). This was driven by U.S. participation; there are more communities in the U.S. portion of the drainage. Canadian participation tracked reasonably well with Chinook and fall chum salmon run timing past Rapids Video Test Fishwheel, indicating that Canadian fishers wanted to learn about pulse timing and run strength shortly before the fish were to enter Canadian waters (Figures 6 & 7).

Active participation—direct verbal input from a caller—varied by community. As usual, it was strong in a number of communities, notably including the 10 U.S. communities with in-season harvest interviewers; and participation was also notably strong in the lower river (Figures 8 & 9). The number of communities actively participating in each teleconference tracked well with the number of phone lines in use during each teleconference (Figure 10).

Anecdotally, there was quite a bit of information sharing on the teleconferences. For example, DFO explained the scope and practices of the fall chum commercial fishery in Canada, which helped to clear-up misconceptions held by fishers in the U.S. There was also information broadcasting, such as when the Office of Subsistence Management made announcements regarding a comment period for proposed regulatory changes and ADF&G promoted upcoming projects in the field. Some fishers did bring up issues external to in-season management, and they were either answered briefly or put in contact with experts to speak with outside of the teleconferences.

Summaries for each teleconference provided highlights on fishers' reports, questions, and comments, along with key management updates. These summaries, each 1 to 2 pages in length, were shared with teleconference participants and other interested parties through email and on YR DFA's website within 3 days of each call.

In-season Harvest Interviews

A total of 137 households were contacted with a combined total of 414 interviews conducted in the villages of Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Galena, Nenana, Ft. Yukon, and Eagle during the 2011 Chinook and summer chum salmon fishing season. Interviews were conducted between June 6 and August 30, 2011. Data were summarized and presented verbally on 13 YR DFA teleconferences occurring in 2011 (Table 1).

The consent form was effective in some communities and less successful in other communities. Feedback from the interviewers suggest that it would be better received in a paragraph format with a verbal acknowledgment rather than a full page document requiring a signature and address.

Some subsistence harvest information for summer chum salmon was collected in Marshall, Russian Mission, Kaltag, Nulato, Galena, Nenana, and Fort Yukon. Fishers reported fishing success and perceived run strength as compared to last year (2010). Data were summarized and presented verbally on 7 YR DFA teleconferences occurring in 2011 (Table 4 and 5).

2011 Perceived Run Strength and Fishing Success

Information regarding relative comparison to fishing last year, and perceived run strength was used to evaluate if subsistence fishermen were changing their fishing practices as compared to 2010. Information was collected between June 6 and August 30, 2011 for Chinook salmon. A total of 236 responses comparing fishing to this week last year and 235 responses comparing perceived run strength between 2011 and 2010 were collected during the Chinook salmon fishing season. The majority of these households indicated that 2011 was worse fishing by week than in 2010, but the communities of Kaltag, Nenana, and Galena reported better fishing by week than in 2010. Finally, the majority of households in Russian Mission reported the same fishing by week as compared to 2010. The majority of households in Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Fort Yukon, and Eagle indicated worse perceived run strength by week as compared to 2010 but in Marshall the majority of households indicated better perceived run strength by week as compared to 2010 and Galena had an almost equal number of household reporting worse and better perceived run strength as compared to 2010. Finally, in Russian Mission and Nenana the majority of households reported the same run strength as 2010 (Tables 2 and 3).

Interviews captured some information pertaining to summer chum salmon harvest households in Marshall, Russian Mission, Kaltag, Nulato, Galena, Nenana, and Fort Yukon between June 12 and August 14, 2011. A total of 138 responses were provided by households during the summer chum salmon fishing season regarding relative comparison to fishing last year, and 139 responses regarding perceived run strength as compared to 2010. Households indicated that fishing was the same in Kaltag, Russian Mission, and Galena in 2011 while households in Marshall and Nenana indicated fish was better in 2011 as compared to the 2010 fishing season. Interviewed households in Fort Yukon indicated that fishing was worse in 2011 as compared to the 2010 fishing season. Interviewed household indicated that the perceived run strength in 2011 was the same in Kaltag and Russian Mission while it was better in Marshall and Nenana and worse in Fort Yukon as compared to the 2010 fishing season (Tables 4 and 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 (Tables 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 throughout the fishing season and does not assume a harvest percentage in weeks where an interview for a household was not conducted (Tables 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 31% to 93%. The summer chum harvest progression data analysis was not conducted because that task is outside the scope and objectives of this project.

During the week of 6/19/11, fishers reported that they were working on nets and gear and debris in the water making it difficult to fish. Most communities reported the Chinook run to be weaker than last year or fish not running yet with the exception on Galena where they reported a better season than last year. During the week ending 6/26/11, more fishers reported beginning fishing but others were waiting for more fish to arrive. In Marshall and Russian Mission, fishers were able to work towards meeting their harvest goals. During the week of 7/3/11, many fishers reported low fish numbers. High water was reported in Kaltag, Galena, and Nenana. In Kaltag, fishers also reported strong winds and were upset about the five-day closure. During the week ending 7/10/11, many fishers in the lower river did not fish either because they were finished or had personnel issues. In the middle river (Kaltag, Nulato, and Nenana) fishers stated that the water was dropping but complained that didn't have enough time to fish. In Eagle, fishers stated that the fish quality was not good and they have caught many large male Chinook salmon. During the week ending 7/17/11, fishers began reporting that they were finished fishing for Chinook salmon. In Kaltag, fishers caught Chinook salmon with scarring and pus but good quality yet pale meat. During the week ending 7/24/11, some fishers reported frustration over the closures or access to Chinook for the season, stating that they did not get all the Chinook salmon they had hoped to catch.

Marshall:

Interviews occurred between June 2 and August 30, 2011. Nine to fourteen households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 19, June 25, and June 30. The weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon on these three dates were 39%, 51%, and 62%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 69% occurring on July 10, 2011.

Russian Mission:

Interviews occurred between June 2 and July 5, 2011. Ten to twelve households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 20, June 26, and July 1. The weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon on these three dates were 71%, 71%, and 81%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 92% occurring on July 10, 2011.

Holy Cross:

Interviews occurred between June 2 and August 23, 2011. Four to fifteen households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 22, June 28, and July 3. The weekly average percentage for Chinook salmon on the three dates was 13%, 34% and 34%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 63% occurring on July 10, 2011.

Kaltag:

Interviews occurred between June 9 and July 26, 2011. Five to eight households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 27, July

3, and July 8. The weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon on the three dates were 31%, 31%, and 53%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 88% occurring on July 17, 2011.

Nulato:

Interviews occurred during the week of July 4 to 11, 2011. Eleven households were interviewed. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 28, July 4, and July 9. Interviews occurred during the historical mid-point and three-quarter point. The weekly average percentage for Chinook salmon on those dates were 28% and 28%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 28% occurring on July 10, 2011.

Galena:

Interviews occurred between June 9 and August 23, 2011. Six to fourteen households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were June 29, July 5, and July 10. The weekly average percentage for Chinook salmon on those dates was 76%, 78% and 78%. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 89% occurring on July 17, 2010.

Nenana:

Interviews occurred between June 30 and August 16, 2011. Four to ten households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 8, July 14, and July 19. The weekly average percentage for Chinook salmon on those dates were 9%, 41% and 45%. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 59% occurring on July 24, 2011.

Ft. Yukon:

Interviews occurred between June 2 and August 9, 2010. Ten to seventeen households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 12, July 18, and July 23. The weekly average percentage on those dates were 3%, 14%, and 14%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 46% occurring on August 14, 2011.

Eagle:

Interviews occurred between June 2 and August 30, 2011. Five to eight households were interviewed weekly. The historical quartiles for Chinook salmon run-timing were July 18, July 24, and July 29. Interviews were conducted during the historical quarter and mid-point. The weekly average percentages for Chinook Salmon for those dates were 61% and 61%, respectively. The final percentage for Chinook salmon harvest from all interviewed households was 76% occurring on July 24, 2010.

Interviewers from Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Marshall and Fort Yukon were brought to the YR DFA Annual Meeting in Galena for capacity building, and the interviewer from Galena also participated. They witnessed a number of presentations and participated in many formal and informal fisheries-related discussions.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teleconferences

Participation was strong relative to the 9-year average, but it did decrease relative to the record-setting prior 3 years. This decrease was probably due to a number of factors, chiefly:

- Decreased promotion of the program;
- Since this was the third year of low run strength, stakeholders have grown more accustomed to poor Chinook salmon returns.

Participation levels likely remained higher than average because the Chinook salmon runs are still low and stakeholders are seeking information and a means to communicate their thoughts with management in-season.

The stronger concentration on in-season issues did help confine the teleconferences to no more than 2 hours each, which was less of a burden on participants, kept the phone bills within the budget, and did not seem to diminish the value of the calls. Those callers who brought up issues external to in-season management still received the information they sought, but by directing the bulk of those discussions to take place outside of the teleconferences each call maintained its primary focus as set by the objective of the program.

Lastly, given that communities with in-season harvest interviewers showed much greater participation rates on the teleconferences, it would be beneficial to analyze the utility and viability of expanding that program. Having more communities actively sharing information on the teleconferences benefits all stakeholders, and such opportunities need to be pursued.

In-season Harvest Interviewers

Yukon River subsistence fishers are a diverse group utilizing a variety of different gear types, fishing locations, and techniques to harvest salmon. The active nature of these fishers is one reason that in-season 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. As a result, interviewers conduct weekly interviews face to face in local villages at fishers' houses or fish camps, village boat launches, and, to a lesser extent, over the telephone and VHF. This dynamic interview process is important for managers because the information includes input from a variety of subsistence fishers on a range of topics, but the interviews are also valuable for fishers because they often receive updated management information, i.e., News Release or Fishery Updates, and river-wide fishing news from interviewers.

In-season harvest interviews assist managers in evaluating whether fishers met their subsistence harvest goals in-season. Based on the information collected during the 2011 Chinook and summer chum salmon fishing season, most interviewed households did not meet their subsistence harvest goals for Chinook salmon, in fact, no community reported reaching 100% of their harvest goals. Information collected during interviews indicated that of the six communities that we could compare to 2010 (because of consistency in data collection), only two communities, Galena (89% in 2011 as compared to 73% in 2010) and Fort Yukon (46% in 2011 as compared to 36% in 2010), experienced improved harvest completion. Most households in six of the nine communities reported worse fishing success than in the 2010 fishing season but three communities reported better fishing success than in 2010. Lower river villages reported better perceived run strength than 2010, upper Yukon River villages reported worse perceived run strength than in 2010 with the exception of Galena who reported a very mixed run strength and Nenana where they reported the same run strength. Villages had a season ending harvest percentage ranging from 28% in Nulato to 92% in Russian Mission.

CONCLUSIONS

The in-season management teleconferences have proved a valuable resource for members of the public, Yukon River fishers and community members, Tribes, First Nations, managers, fish processors, and others. Teleconference calls are an effective and rapid means to extend real-time knowledge about the salmon fishery across hundreds of miles. This project is a model for managers and local users on how to communicate and share information about the condition of salmon runs and management strategies. Teleconferences provide fishers with a simple, viable means of informing and influencing management. Hearing in-season subsistence reports and learning what percentage of the local subsistence harvest goals has been met allows managers to anticipate fishing activity and provides pieces of information to better understand and manage the salmon run. In-season harvest interviewers provide consistent, detailed information from a broad range of villages throughout the river, allowing for a better understanding of both fishers' actions and the salmon run than would otherwise be available. Further, this sharing of information allows subsistence fishers along the river to better anticipate, plan for, and harvest their subsistence catch.

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 FWS Agreement No. 701818J698, Reference Number 08-253. Additional funding for the in-season 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 2011 weekly teleconferences, whether this was their first season or they've been calling for years. A strong, regular presence from all stakeholders—fishers, Tribes, First Nations, managers, processors, in-season harvest interviewers, and others—maximizes the

effectiveness and utility of the calls and goes a long way in building understanding of the run in real time throughout the drainage.

We gratefully thank all of the subsistence fishers who were willing to share their harvest information with interviewers throughout the season. Our appreciation goes to the interview personnel: Ohogamiut Tribal Council local hire Norma Evan, Iqurmiut Tribal Council local hire Jeremy Wigley; village of Holy Cross local hire Rita Paul, Kaltag Tribal Council local hire Craig Semaken, Nulato Tribal Council local hire Robyn George, village of Galena local hire Sandy Scotton, Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments local hire Andrew Firim, and village of Eagle local hire Dana Helmer.

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FIGURES

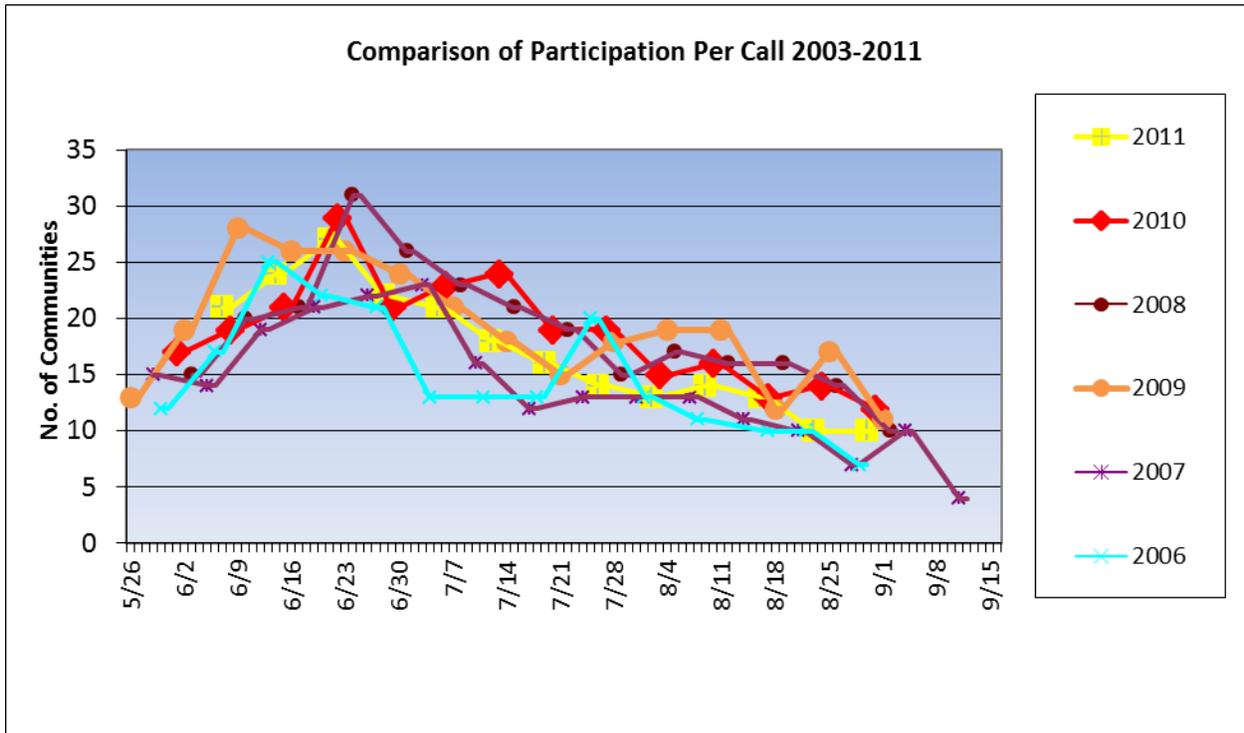


Figure 1. Comparison of weekly participation as measured by the number of communities on each call each week. 2003-2011.

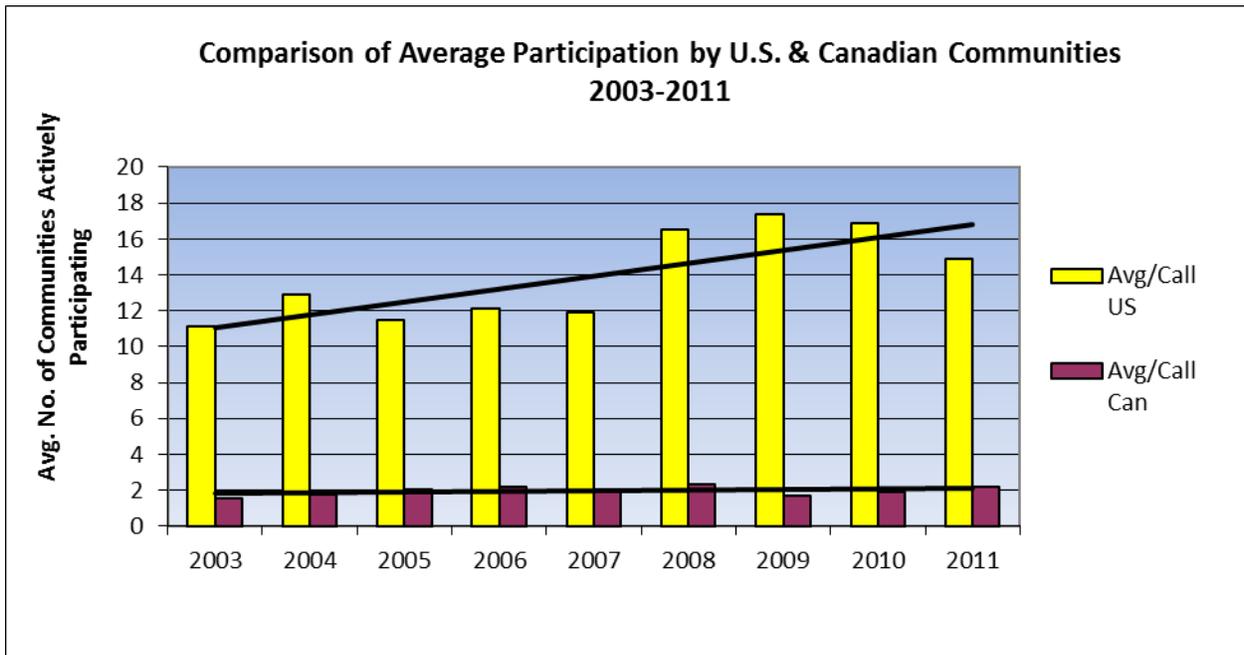


Figure 2. Comparison of average annual participation by U.S. & Canadian communities as measured by the average number of communities actively participating in each call each season. 2003-2011.

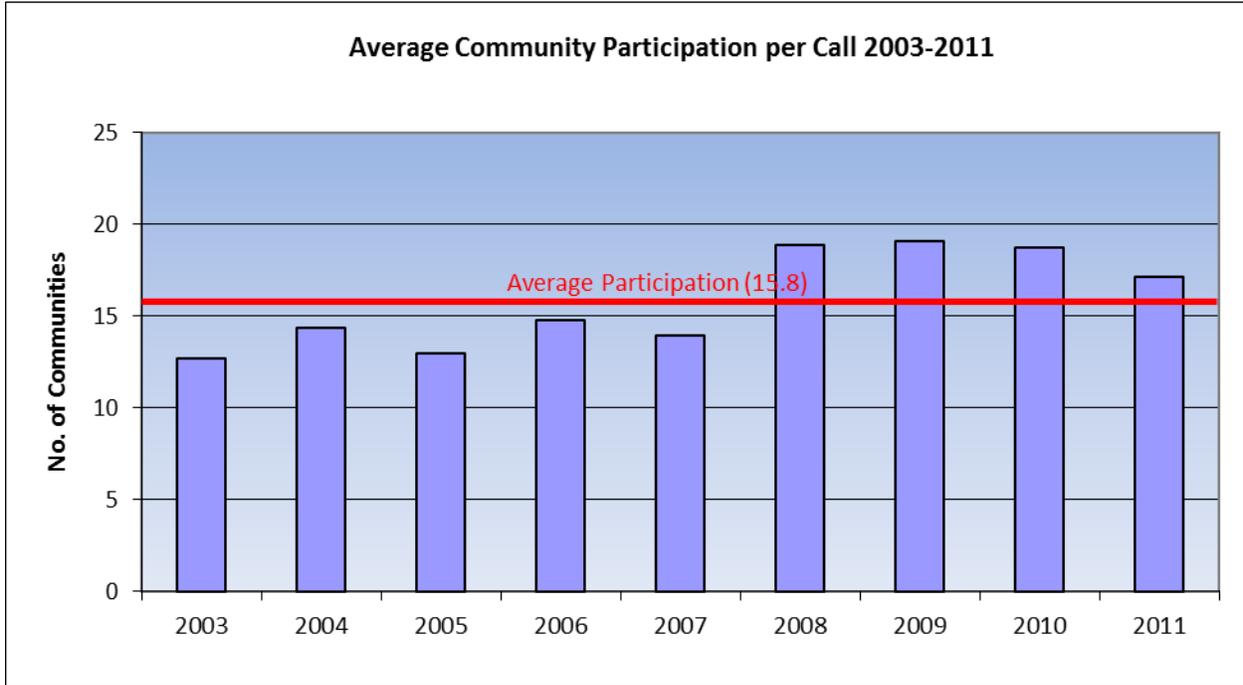


Figure 3. Average number of communities participating in each call. 2003-2011.

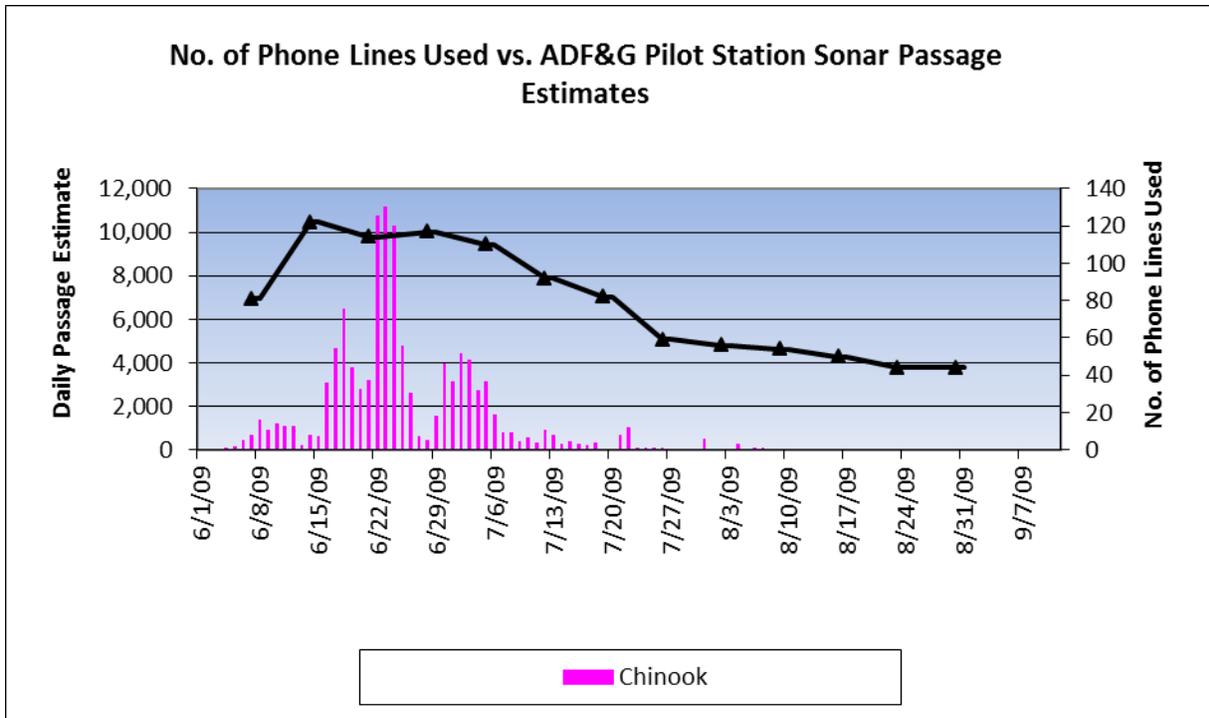


Figure 4. Number of phone lines used vs. ADF&G Pilot Station Sonar Passage Estimates for Chinook salmon. 2011.

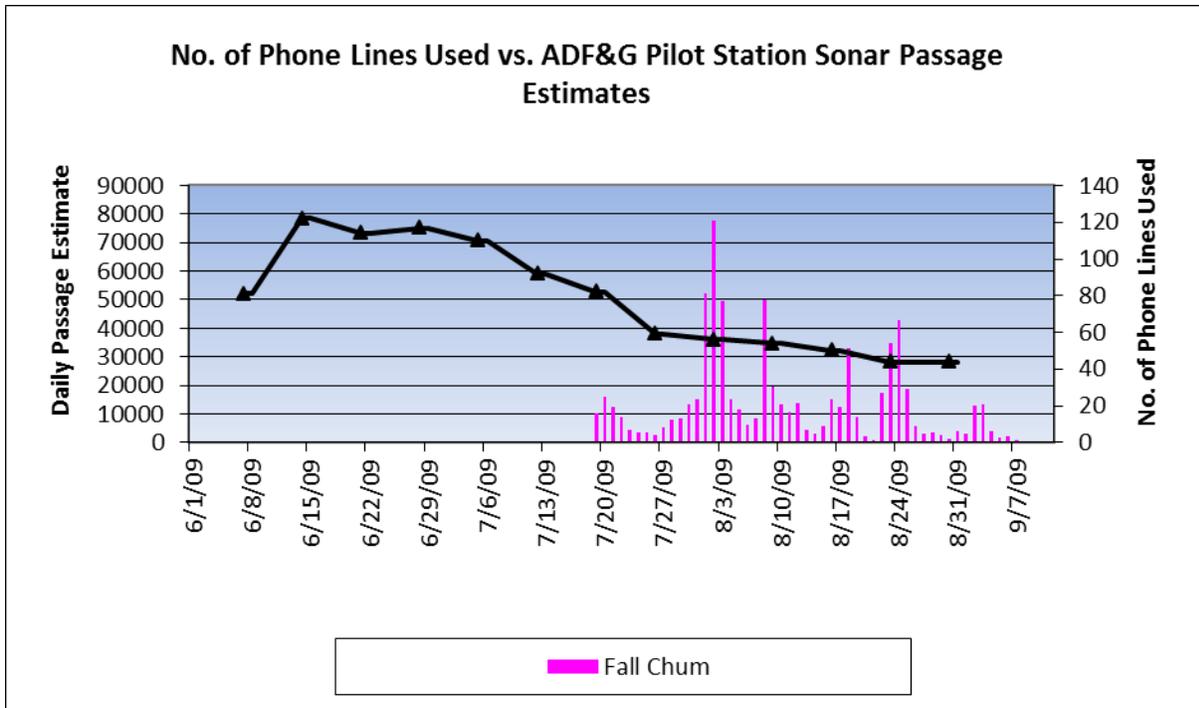


Figure 5. Number of phone lines used vs. ADF&G Pilot Station Sonar Passage Estimates for Fall Chum salmon, 2011.

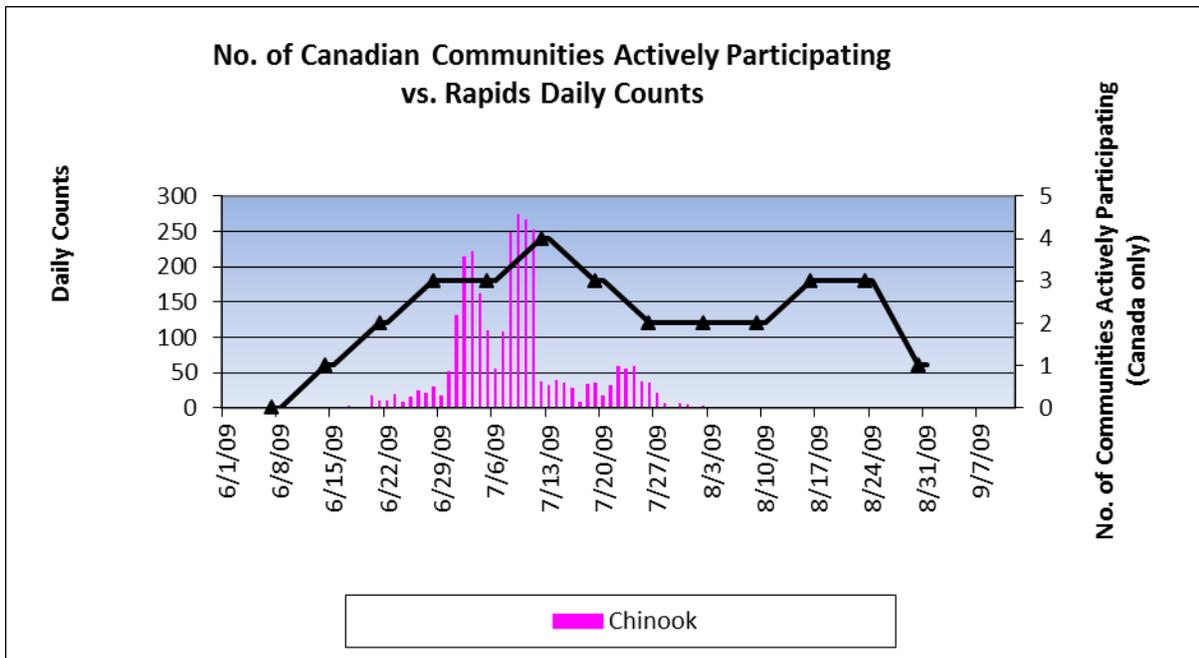


Figure 6. Number of Canadian Communities Actively Participating vs. Rapids Daily Counts for Chinook Salmon, 2011.

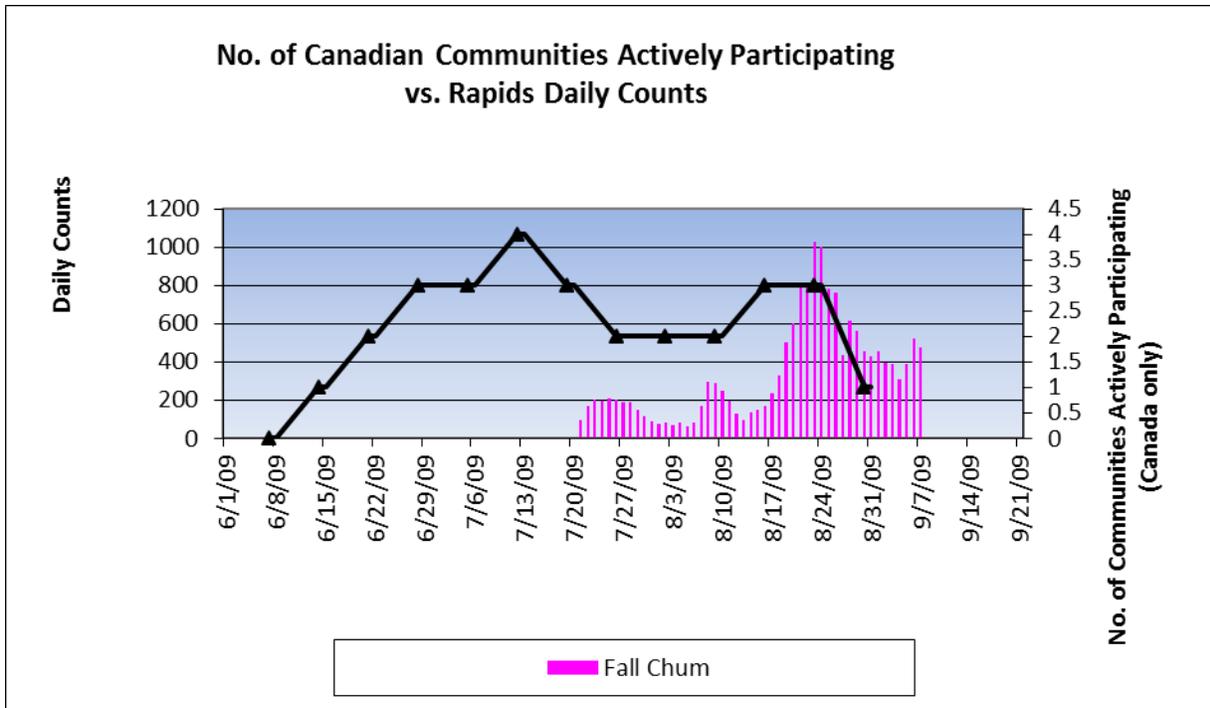


Figure 7. Number of Canadian Communities Actively Participating vs. Rapids Daily Counts for Fall Chum Salmon, 2011.

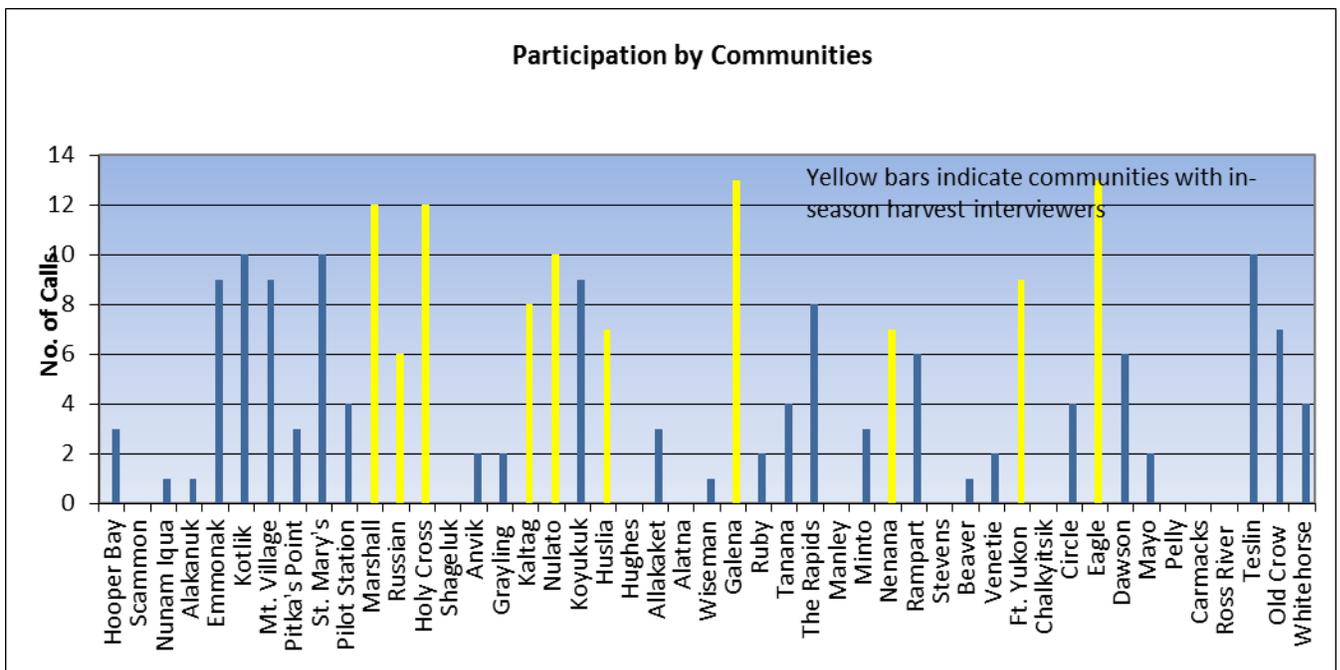


Figure 8. Active participation by communities, 2011.

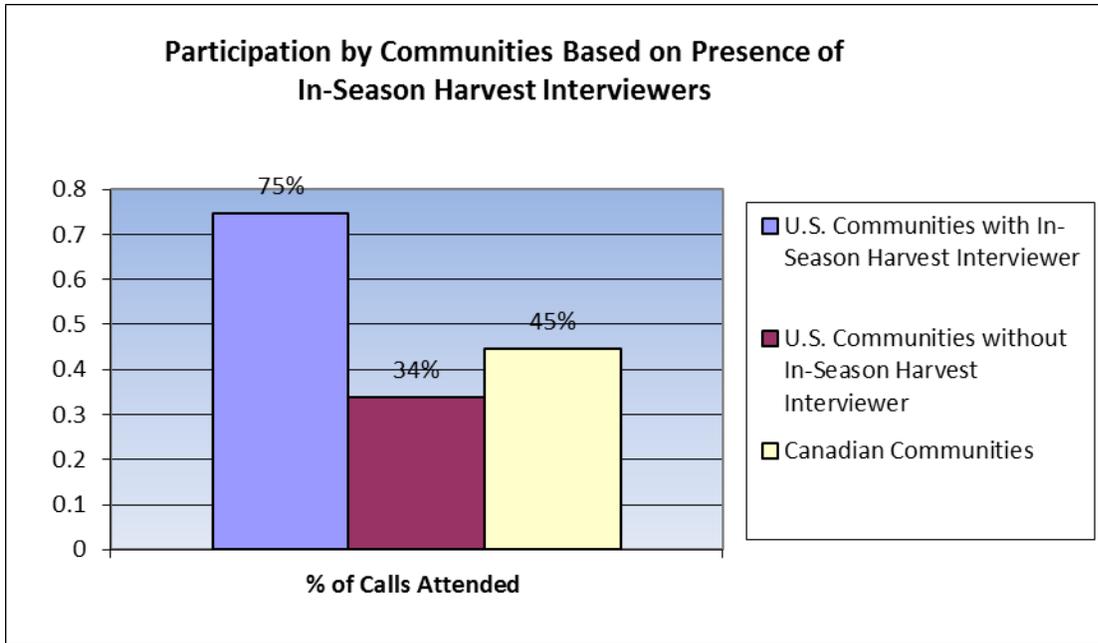


Figure 9. Participation by No. of Communities Based with In-Season Harvest Interviewer Communities Broken-Out.2011.

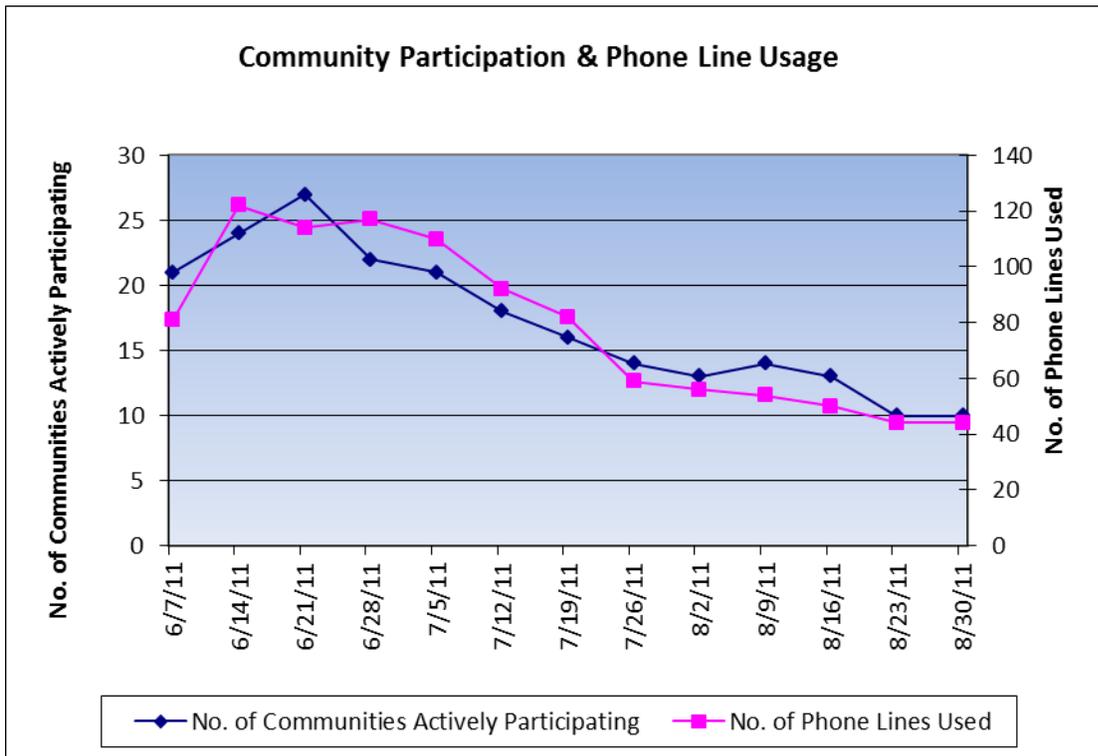


Figure 10. Community participation & phone line usage. 2011.

Table 1. YRDEFA teleconferences attendance by local hires during the 2011 salmon fishing season in the Yukon and Koyukuk River villages.

Week Ending	Marshall	Russian Mission	Holy Cross	Kaltag	Nulato	Huslia	Galena	Nenana	Ft. Yukon	Eagle
5-Jun	x	x	x						x	x
12-Jun	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
19-Jun		x		x	x		x		x	x
26-Jun	x	x	x	x			x		x	x
3-Jul	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
10-Jul	x			x	x		x		x	x
17-Jul	x		x	x			x	x	x	x
24-Jul	x		x	x			x	x	x	x
31-Jul	x		x				x			x
7-Aug	x		x		x		x	x	x	x
14-Aug	x		x		x		x	x		x
21-Aug	x		x				x			x
30-Aug	x									x
Total	12	5	10	7	5	0	11	5	9	13

Table 2. Results of household responses to the 2011 in-season subsistence interview questions for Chinook salmon in lower and middle Yukon River villages.

Compared to last "YEAR" how was fishing for this past week?																											
	Marshall			Russian Mission			Holy Cross			Kaltag			Nulato														
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better																								
6/12/11	4	4	3	0	0	8	1	1	0	No Data This Week			No Data This Week														
6/19/11	3	1	2	5	2	0	6	1	0	0	1	1	No Data This Week														
6/26/11	1	3	2	0	10	0	5	4	0	2	2	2	No Data This Week														
7/3/11	1	2	2	0	2	0	3	3	3	0	0	7	No Data This Week														
7/10/11	3	0	0	Done fishing for Chinook			6	2	1	3	0	2	11	0	0												
7/17/11	1	0	0				Done fishing for Chinook			Done fishing for Chinook			2	2	1	No Data This Week											
7/24/11	0	2	0										Done fishing for Chinook			Done fishing for Chinook			No Data This Week								
7/31/11	Done fishing for Chinook																		Done fishing for Chinook			Done fishing for Chinook			No Data This Week		
8/14/11	Done fishing for Chinook																								No Data This Week		
Compared to last "YEAR" how strong is the run for this past week?																											
	Marshall			Russian Mission			Holy Cross			Kaltag			Nulato														
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better																								
6/12/11	1	4	6	0	0	8	1	1	0				No Data This Week														
6/19/11	1	2	2	5	2	0	7	0	0	1	0	1	No Data This Week														
6/26/11	1	3	2	0	9	1	5	4	0	4	1	1	No Data This Week														
7/3/11	0	1	4	0	1	1	3	5	1	0	3	4	No Data This Week														
7/10/11	2	0	1	Done fishing for Chinook			6	3	0	4	1	0	11	0	0												
7/17/11	0	1	0				Done fishing for Chinook			Done fishing for Chinook			3	1	1	No Data This Week											
7/24/11	0	2	0										Done fishing for Chinook			Done fishing for Chinook			No Data This Week								
7/31/11	Done fishing for Chinook																		Done fishing for Chinook			Done fishing for Chinook			No Data This Week		
8/14/11	Done fishing for Chinook																								No Data This Week		

Table 3. Results of household responses to the 2011 In-season Subsistence Interview questions for Chinook salmon in upper Yukon River villages.												
Compared to last "YEAR" how was fishing for this past week?												
	Galena			Nenana			Ft. Yukon			Eagle		
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better
6/19/11	0	0	6	No Interviews Received			No Interviews Received			No Interviews Received		
6/26/11	6	3	3									
7/3/11	3	2	6	2	1	0						
7/10/11	3	3	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	2	3	0
7/17/11	3	1	2	0	3	1	7	0	0	2	0	1
7/24/11	Done Fishing for Chinook			1	0	1	11	0	0	1	1	0
7/31/11				No Interviews Received			11	4	0	Done Fishing for Chinook		
8/14/11				Done Fishing for Chinook			3	2	0			

Compared to last "YEAR" how strong is the run for this past week?												
	Galena			Nenana			Ft. Yukon			Eagle		
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better
6/19/11	1	0	5	No Interviews Received			No Interviews Received			No Interviews Received		
6/26/11	7	2	3									
7/3/11	3	1	7	2	1	0						
7/10/11	3	3	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	2	3	0
7/17/11	3	1	2	0	2	2	7	0	0	2	0	1
7/24/11	Done Fishing for Chinook			0	1	1	11	0	0	1	1	0
7/31/11				No Interviews Received			10	5	0	Done Fishing for Chinook		
8/14/11				Done Fishing for Chinook			3	2	0			

Table 4. Results of household responses to the 2011 In-Season Subsistence Interview questions for summer chum salmon from interviewed households in the lower and middle Yukon River Villages.

Compared to last "YEAR" how was fishing for this past week?															
	Marshall			Russian Mission			Kaltag			Nulato					
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better			
6/12/11	1	5	1	0	1	11	No Data This Week			No Data This Week					
6/19/11	2	1	2	9	3	0	3	5	1						
6/26/11	1	3	2	0	9	0	1	2	2						
7/3/11	1	1	3	1	11	0	0	5	0						
7/10/11	1	1	1	2	10	0	0	3	0	1	1	1			
7/17/11	1	0	0	No Chum Data			0	0	2	No Data This Week					
7/24/11	0	2	0				No Chum Data						No Chum Data		
7/31/11	No Chum Data														
8/14/11	No Chum Data														
Compared to last "YEAR" how strong is the run for this past week?															
	Marshall			Russian Mission			Kaltag			Nulato					
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better						
6/12/11	0	3	4	0	0	12	No Data This Week			No Data This Week					
6/19/11	1	2	2	9	3	0	6	3	0						
6/26/11	1	2	3	0	8	1	4	1	1						
7/3/11	0	0	4	1	10	0	0	4	1						
7/10/11	2	0	1	2	10	0	0	3	0	1	1	1			
7/17/11	0	1	0	No Chum Data			0	0	2	No Data This Week					
7/24/11	0	2	0				No Chum Data						No Chum Data		
7/31/11	No Chum Data														
8/14/11	No Chum Data														

Table 5. Results of household responses to the 2011 in-season subsistence interview questions for summer chum salmon in upper Yukon River villages.

Compared to last "YEAR" how was fishing for this past week?												
	Galena			Nenana			Ft. Yukon					
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better			
6/19/11	No Chum Data			No Interviews Received			No Interviews Received					
6/26/11	1	2	1									
7/3/11	No Chum Data			No Chum Data			No Chum Data					
7/10/11				1	1	0				1	1	0
7/17/11				0	0	2	No Chum Data					
7/24/11				0	1	1	7	0	0			
7/31/11				No Chum Data			No Chum Data			2	0	0
8/14/11							No Chum Data			0	4	0

Compared to last "YEAR" how strong is the run for this past week?												
	Galena			Nenana			Ft. Yukon					
Week Ending	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better	Worse	Same	Better			
6/19/11	No Chum Data			No Interviews Received			No Interviews Received					
6/26/11	3	1	1									
7/3/11	No Chum Data			No Chum Data			No Chum Data					
7/10/11				1	1	0				1	1	0
7/17/11				0	0	2	No Chum Data					
7/24/11				0	1	1	7	0	0			
7/31/11				No Chum Data			No Chum Data			2	0	0
8/14/11							No Chum Data			1	4	0

Table 6. The 2011 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in lower and middle Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Marshall		Russian Mission		Holy Cross		Kaltag		Nulato	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average								
5-Jun										
12-Jun	11	27%	12	27%	4	13%				
19-Jun	14	39%	12	43%	15	10%	8	0%		
26-Jun	14	51%	10	71%	9	13%	7	8%		
3-Jul	13	62%	12	81%	9	34%	7	31%		
10-Jul	12	63%	12	92%	11	60%	6	53%	11	28%
17-Jul	13	63%	12				6	75%		
24-Jul	9	63%					5	75%		
31-Jul										
7-Aug										
14-Aug										
Total # of interviews	87		58		48		39		11	
Total # of weeks	7		5		5		6		1	
Final weighted percentage ^b	87	69%	58	92%	48	63%	39	88%	11	28%

^a Number of households interviewed calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence Chinook salmon harvest completion.

Table 7. The 2011 weekly average percentages for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest from interviewed households in the upper Yukon River villages.

Week Ending	Galena		Nenana		Ft. Yukon		Eagle	
	<i>n</i> ^a	Weekly average						
5-Jun								
12-Jun								
19-Jun	6	43%						
26-Jun	14	57%						
3-Jul	12	76.00%	4	3%				
10-Jul	8	78%	4	9%	10	3%	7	49%
17-Jul	8	73%	6	41%	12	3%	8	55%
24-Jul			4	45%	13	14%	5	61%
31-Jul					16	29%		
7-Aug					4	35%		
14-Aug					10	44%		
Total # of interviews	48		18		65		20	
Total # interview weeks	5		4		6		3	
Final percentage ^b	48	89%	13	59%	51	46%	14	76%

^a Number of households calculated in the average.

^b Estimate of subsistence Chinook salmon harvest completion.

APPENDIX A: Promotional Postcard and Flyer

Yukon River Fisheries Inseason Management Teleconferences

*Tracking
the run,
one week
at a time*

**EVERY
TUESDAY**
JUNE THROUGH AUGUST

1:00 pm Alaska Time | 2:00 pm Yukon Time

1-800-315-6338
Participant Code YUKON# (98566#)

The flyer includes a map of the Yukon River basin, showing the river's course through Alaska and Canada, and is divided into six districts: DISTRICT 1, DISTRICT 2, DISTRICT 3, DISTRICT 4, DISTRICT 5, and DISTRICT 6. The map also shows various towns and geographical features like the Yukon Delta and the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Yukon River Fisheries Inseason Management Teleconferences

Agenda

- Subsistence Reports
- Management Update and Strategy
- Local Input, Questions, and Closing Comments

Subsistence Questions

- Are your catches up or down relative to last year?
- How far along are local fishers in their subsistence harvests? (are they 25% done? 50% done? 100%?)
- What is your assessment of run strength?
- What is the quality of the fish?
- What are the current river conditions? (water level, clarity, amount of debris)
- Each year, please note when the first king salmon is caught in your community

**EVERY
TUESDAY**
JUNE THROUGH AUGUST

1:00 pm Alaska Time | 2:00 pm Yukon Time

1-800-315-6338

Participant Code YUKON# (98566#)

Get Involved

Discuss fishing conditions & management strategies with managers and fishers throughout the Yukon River Drainage

Tracking the run, one week at a time



Facilitated by YRFMA - yukonrivers.org

Sponsored by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel

APPENDIX B: Weekly Teleconference Summaries

(also available at <http://www.yukonsalmon.org/Teleconferences/2011summaries.pdf>)

Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference Call # 1 – June 7, 2011

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

Communities participating this week: Hooper Bay, Nunam Iqua, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Saint Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Tanana, Fairbanks, Minto, Nenana, Rampart, Fort Yukon, Circle, Eagle

Subsistence Reports: Salmon are just entering the Yukon River and some people are already out fishing while others are still getting ready. People from the villages of Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Mountain Village, Saint Mary's, Marshall, and Russian Mission had reported harvests of Chinook and summer chum salmon. People in Kotlik are catching smelts and herring and people in Marshall caught smelts, as well. The lower river was seeing swift water and debris up until Holy Cross. In the middle river around Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, and Galena, no one is fishing yet; the water is clear, calm, and dropping. People on the Tanana River were also getting some sheefish. The water is dropping, relatively calm, and there is no debris. Around Rampart, the water was also reported as dropping and calm, but in Fort Yukon and Eagle there is high water and little debris.

Public comments, questions, and answers: Due to the new gear regulation, people are hanging new nets and some people are still waiting to receive their new webbing. It was asked what to do if people have not received their new 7.5 inch webbing; management responded that they can use any gear they have that is smaller, but not bigger.

As this was the beginning of the season, it was asked if the fish are coming in all three mouths of the Yukon River (north, middle, and south). Traditional knowledge states that if fish come in all three mouths, it should be a good year for fishing. Management reported that fish were coming in all three mouths. People also discussed when the first king salmon were caught. On June 3 the lower Yukon test fishery reported its first king and on May 27 in Hooper Bay they caught king salmon. Around May 28 and 29 king salmon were reported in Alakanuk.

People asked questions about the test fisheries and the sonar, about the types of technology used, and whether both banks of the river were being counted. Management responded that they were using split beam, Didson, and side scan from a boat, as well as a suite of nets at the sonar site. There has been debris and this has impacted the test fishery operations, but they are working around the clock to resolve it. Other questions were about other test fisheries in the river, run timing, and when the first pulse closures will take place. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game discussed the Yukon Advisory Group, made up of U.S. representatives to the Yukon River Panel, which will be meeting via teleconference to discuss critical fisheries management decisions as they arise throughout the summer. There was some discussion about how Panel members and advisors are selected and who is currently serving in these roles on the Alaskan side of the Yukon River.

**Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference
Call #2 – June 14, 2011**

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

Communities participating this week: Hooper Bay, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Mary's, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Wiseman, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: Fishers in Hooper Bay are catching large summer chum salmon. In the lower river, water levels are dropping and there is not much debris. In Emmonak, fishers are catching sheefish, king salmon, and smelts. In Kotlik they are catching herring; it was reported that king salmon have not entered the north mouth of the river yet. From Mountain Village to Russian Mission some fishers are far along in their king salmon harvest while others are just beginning. Holy Cross and Grayling reported low king salmon harvests, and the first kings were caught in Kaltag and Galena this week. From Galena to the U.S./Canada border water is higher than normal, there is little-to-no drift, and people are getting ready to fish. In Old Crow fishers are catching whitefish.

Public comments, questions, and answers: The vast majority of questions and comments regarded ADF&G's sonar at Pilot Station and the fishing schedule in the Alaskan portion of the drainage.

Several callers asked whether the first pulse of king salmon had passed the sonar. ADF&G replied that while a strong group of early fish has passed the sonar, it was not considered the first pulse; it does appear that the first pulse is entering the mouth of the river at this time. ADF&G also noted that fish passage numbers from the sonar last week are "conservative" due to difficulties caused by high water, heavy silt loads, and drift. However, at this point their confidence in the sonar numbers is high.

There were a number of questions regarding when fishing schedules started in different districts. This information can be found at the bottom of the U.S. pre-season management flyer:
<http://yukonsalmon.org/news/ENews/ManagementFlyer.AK.5-11.pdf>

Other fishers asked when a period would be cancelled in their fishing districts to protect the first pulse of king salmon. ADF&G replied that notice will be short—roughly 24 hours—and fishers should watch their normal means of receiving information, including faxes to Tribal offices and emails. ADF&G indicated that they anticipate cancelling the next fishing period in Y-2. ADF&G will assess the run to determine whether additional closures are necessary.

Lastly, a middle river fisher shared his belief that fisheries management agencies really are working to help the people on the Yukon River and all users have to work together.

Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference
Call #3 – June 21, 2011

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

Communities participating this week: Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Kotlik, Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Rapids, Rampart, Nenana, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Venetie, Circle, Eagle, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: From Hooper Bay to Mountain Village, most people have just about met their subsistence needs for king salmon, and some are doing well harvesting summer chum salmon. In St. Mary's and Marshall some people are doing well in their king salmon harvests and others are not; also, a few red kings and colored chum are showing up. From Russian Mission to Rampart king salmon fishing is slow, with some families just getting started, others one-third to one-half done, and at least one household that is done fishing. In Anvik and Grayling set nets are catching better than drift nets, and in Ruby fish wheels are catching better than set nets. On the Koyukuk River, there aren't many fish and isn't much fishing activity. The first king salmon was just caught in Nenana, and from Ft. Yukon to the border there's no fishing and water is still high but dropping. Water levels are dropping in Teslin and are quite high in Old Crow, where there has been quite a bit of rain. Throughout the drainage water levels are variable and there is little to no debris.

Management Update: The king salmon run appears to be weak, warranting further U.S. protection measures to get fish to the spawning grounds. In addition to pulling a fishing period during the first pulse of king salmon, a period will be pulled during the second pulse, as well. Due to the timing of this decision, District Y-1 will fish under two shortened periods during the second pulse, as there was not time to announce a full closure in that district. For additional information, visit <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingcommercialbyarea.interior>.

Public comments, questions, and answers: The majority of the discussion focused on fishing schedules, management communication, clarification of the first pulse versus early fish, bycatch, and low fish returns.

Fishing schedules and management communication: Several fishers relayed strong concerns over local confusion and uncertainty regarding changes to fishing schedules. With closures announced for the U.S. on both the first and second pulse of king salmon, fisheries managers recommend that all fishers watch for daily schedule updates. Updates are broadcasted in a number of ways, including press releases, announcements on VHF, faxes to Tribal Council offices, and on a toll free hotline (1-866-479-7387). Some teleconference participants suggested further promotion of these last minute schedule changes to be sure that fishers receive the information in as timely a manner as possible, and managers indicated that they would work to improve their communication efforts.

First pulse versus early fish: These terms caused confusion for many participants and ADF&G tried to clarify the difference. The early fish are the front runners of the run that trickle in to the river in

relatively low daily numbers before the first big pulse, or concentrated group, of fish is seen. Early fish start entering the river several days before that first pulse.

Bycatch: Several participants expressed concerns over bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery and there was a brief discussion on related points. Everyone seemed to agree that bycatch is something that must be watched.

Low fish returns: At least one participant expressed concern over the low number of king salmon that have entered the river to date. He commented that it seems we're behind by roughly 50 percent, and management agreed. A biologist with ADF&G shared that to achieve decent border passage there needs to be more than 135,000 king salmon past the Pilot Station sonar, and we're not even a quarter of the way there despite being past the quarter point in the run already.

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 4th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, June 28, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitkas Point, St. Marys, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Anvik, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Tanana, Fairbanks, Minto, Rapids, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Old Crow, Dawson, Teslin (participating via the Salmon Summit in Whitehorse).

Subsistence Reports: In the upper Canadian headwaters, the water dropped, but it is raining again, there are people fishing for trout and whitefish and there was a report of a salmon jumping in the Dawson area. In Eagle, people are waiting until after July 4 to begin fishing and in the Yukon Flats region, the water is high and a few individual fish have been caught. In the rapids above Tanana fishing is slow but they are expecting the first pulse in a day or two. On the Tanana River people from Minto caught 2 king salmon and they are catching whitefish too. In Tanana there was too much drift and wheels were shut down to prevent losing them. Galena mentioned that the set netters are doing well and the first pulse is passing through. On the Koyukuk River, it is raining; there are a lot of sticks and some villages have heard of small male kings being caught and a lot more chum salmon while others have no salmon reports yet and are at camps getting ready. In the middle river area of Koyukuk, Nulato and Kaltag people are disappointed with the salmon closures and think it is a poor run. Some people have not yet fished and missed the early fish as they went by. Some have caught salmon, and they heard that Bishop Mountain is doing well. In the GASH region, Anvik said a big run passed by and they only got a few and then it slowed down. It was also reported here that set netters are doing better than drifters and Holy Cross said it was slow. In the lower river people are almost done with their subsistence harvests and fish has moved into the smokehouses and people are canning and salting fish. There have been commercial chum openings where people caught jacks and saw big king salmon roll off the nets. At the north mouth of the river, it was reported that they are seeing big pulses of salmon go through and several households are fishing and sharing. There is a good pulse going up now, tides bring the fish in and a southeast wind still led fish to come in the middle mouth which was unusual. The commercial chum fishery was slow in the north mouth but middle mouth did well and people took the kings home for subsistence and were not allowed to sell them.

Management reports, public comments, questions, and answers: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service reported on fisheries data, management strategies and fishing schedules. The vast majority of questions and comments regarded fishing times and periods in the Alaskan portion of the drainage.

There have been fishing period closures due to low Chinook salmon returning to the Yukon River and these salmon in the first two pulses are being protected with fishing period closures to ensure fish make it upriver and will be protected up to the border for passage into Canada. It was brought up that people in the lower Yukon River have had access to fish and the middle river area is having a challenging time

meeting their subsistence needs and the fish are passing them by. They discussed the possibility of a fishing extension and the department said they would see if they could adjust it but they do need to protect the fish. People discussed the fish pulses, where they are in the river and what stocks comprise these pulses. People are trying to understand the assessment of the salmon fisheries by asking questions related to the test fisheries, the sonar counts and the genetic test results from the salmon samples taken. Commercial chum salmon fisheries did take place in the lower river and incidental king harvests were not allowed to be sold, but had to be brought home for subsistence. If the fish could not be used by families, the processor will donate it to someone in need.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

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

Have a great weekend,
Jason Hale
Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 5th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, July 5, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Huslia, Galena, Minto, Nenana, The Rapids, Rampart, Beaver, Fort Yukon, Eagle, Fairbanks, Old Crow, Dawson and Teslin.

Subsistence Reports: In the upper Canadian headwaters, there hasn't been that much rain, the water has dropped, 6-7 fishers have caught 10 Chinook salmon, many fishers are absent due to a wedding, they appreciate the actions that have taken place along the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River and said thank you towards conserving Chinook salmon for the spawning grounds. They have also taken the similar measures for the past few years to conserve the Chinook salmon. In Eagle, the water is high but starting to drop and the community has just starting their fishing. In the Yukon Flats region, the water is high and they have not been catching that much fish so far. The Tanana River area's water temperature has been average, the water is dropping, pulse one has passed, pulse two is starting up, they have been catching a few fish but they are concerned about the restrictions on fishing. The Koyukuk River area's water is raising and the Chinook salmon that are caught have been reported as small, and some families are done with their subsistence fishing. The lower river's water has been dropping, some families are still subsistence fishing and some are done, the week has been reported as good, high numbers in catches on subsistence of Chum salmon have been reported and a boat has been sighted by local people and reported for fishing during a closure. The coastal waters have been reported as high, the weather has been mostly windy, high numbers in Chum salmon catches have been reported, and not many Chinook salmon have been caught.

Management reports, public comments, questions, and answers: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service reported on fisheries data, management strategies and fishing schedules. Discussion focused on the fishing schedules due to the fishing period closures happening in various districts along the Yukon River at different times. Additionally there are sub-districts within districts that are also being closed and opened at different times, leading to a lot of information to relay to fishing families about when they can and cannot fish. Additionally, fishers wanted to discuss where the first and second pulses are in the river and the managers were discussing the third pulse that was in the lower river still. There was some encouragement from fishermen in Alaska related to the closures in order to continue to move the fish upriver and to spawning grounds to have fish for the future, but overall many people in many parts of the Yukon River are concerned about getting enough fish to eat and to share with others who also eat the salmon and are disappointed in the amount of fishing time they have had. There have continued to be commercial summer chum salmon fisheries with restricted gear to 6 inches and no Chinook salmon can be sold.

Canadian fishers expressed appreciation and thanks to the Alaskans for moving the Chinook salmon up the river to the Canadian border and mentioned how they too have conserved over the past years when the runs were low. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada is taking a conservative approach

and will close the recreational fishery to zero retention later this week. They also appreciate the U.S. efforts by the managers and the people along the river.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

I hope you'll join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon Time). As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).

Have a great weekend,

Jason Hale

Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 6th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, July 12, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Kotlik, Mountain Village, Pitka's Point, St. Mary's, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Rampart, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Dawson, Mayo, Whitehorse, and Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Generally speaking, fishers reported that the run is worse than last year. In the lower river, there is very little subsistence fishing activity, and fishing conditions are poor due to rain, wind, and high water. Kotlik indicated there are no more king salmon entering the river. Reports from Pitka's Point and St. Mary's revealed that commercial summer chum salmon fishing has generally been poor in District Y-2, though some fishers have done well. In the middle river from Kaltag to Nulato, many fishers are 50 percent done with their subsistence harvests, with some doing better than others; there are also high winds and variable water conditions. In the upper river from Rampart to Eagle, water is high but dropping and most fishers are not very far along in their harvests. In the Yukon Territory, the first king salmon are being caught in Dawson and Old Crow, and people are gearing up for fishing in Mayo.

Management Update: ADF&G is projecting that the final king salmon count past the Pilot Station sonar will be 107,000 fish; this is a conservative number due to difficult conditions early in the run. The third pulse of king salmon appears to be weaker than expected. Alaskan management strategies have followed the pre-season plan and protected king salmon up the river. The first and second pulses were protected in districts 1 through 5, commercial summer chum salmon fishing was delayed to let king salmon pass, and a number of actions are being taken in districts with commercial salmon fishing to not increase fishing pressure on the king salmon run. In the Yukon Territory, DFO will take a precautionary approach to management, with a normal aboriginal fishery but zero retention in the recreational fishery.

Fall chum salmon management begins in the lower river on July 16. The projection is for 605,000 to 870,000 fish, which ADF&G indicated should provide for escapement, subsistence, and commercial fishing.

Public comments, questions, and answers: There was quite a bit of discussion regarding mesh size. Some lower river fishers requested the 6 inch mesh restriction, which is in place in districts with commercial summer chum salmon fishing (Y-1 and Y-2), be lifted from subsistence users so that they can target more king salmon with 7.5 inch mesh. ADF&G said they would consider this and pointed out that the restriction was implemented to provide commercial fishing opportunity without taking more king salmon than would have been harvested without commercial fishing. Several callers asked why test fisheries are allowed to use mesh larger than 7.5 inch when it is illegal for fishers to do so. ADF&G explained that they need to continue past practices for continuity in the data and more accurate run assessment, and further pointed out that there are only a few nets in use with larger than 7.5 inch mesh.

A few callers asked about establishing test fisheries in new areas, possibly run by Tribes. ADF&G noted that anyone can apply to the Yukon River Panel's Restoration and Enhancement Fund to operate a test fishery, but warned that many of these projects can be fairly expensive and involved. They also indicated that anyone interested in such a project would be welcome to call ADF&G and USFWS staff to discuss it. Ft. Yukon expressed concern that their next opener is only 2 days in length, followed by a pulse closure. Catches have been poor in that community to date, so they requested an extension. ADF&G said that they would watch the Eagle sonar numbers and consider the request. For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3131 or look for us on the web at www.yukonsalmon.org.

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

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

Have a great week,

Jason Hale

Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 7th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, July 19, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Huslia, Galena, Nenana, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Eagle, Fairbanks, Old Crow, Dawson and Teslin.

Subsistence reports: The lower river's water is dropping, debris is present, most households are nearly done with their Chinook salmon subsistence harvest, the weather has been windy and rainy which prevented some from getting to camp, in the Saint Mary's area some are still hanging fish, the weather has been reported as rainy, wet and the water is high. The middle river reported that most were done with their subsistence harvest, recently had lots of rain and that they are waiting on silvers. The Koyukuk area's water is high, some are waiting on Fall Chum to arrive, they recently had lots of rain, subsistence fishers report to be about 90% complete with their Chinook salmon harvest, 2 active camps are now closed, a culture camp has set a net for Fall Chum salmon and thanks went out to Yukon River fishers for cutting back on their harvest and they stated that it helps a lot. The Tanana area's water is high, fishing is reported good, they are thankful for downriver using 7.5" mesh, they stated that it's working, the Chinook salmon in the area are running good, subsistence fishers report that most are 50%-75% done, the quality of Chinook salmon is better and the people are happy. Fort Yukon stated that they were catching low Chinook salmon numbers, the quality of the fish is low and that there is drift debris heading down river.

Venetie reported that 5 fish were caught on the Chandalar River but haven't caught any fish for the past 3 days, the water is high but going back down. Eagle, the water is high, they have reported getting low numbers of fish and the quality is poor, the fish seem smaller and they stated that they reduced their subsistence catch and suggested closing all of Y5-D so more fish can go to Canada. In the upper Canadian headwaters, the water is high but going down, Old Crow has 80-100 Chinook salmon and need to get more, Dawson caught 30 Chinook salmon with 5 nets and they are hoping for better numbers next week and the water on the Stuart River is high.

Management reports, public comments, questions, and answers: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service reported on fisheries data, management strategies and fishing schedules. The season has transitioned to fall chum management, but the Eagle sonar is being monitored for Chinook salmon passage and management will determine if closures need to be added in the Y-5D district. The first pulse of Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar was detected on July 11 and on July 18, 11,590 fish were counted. The LYTF caught 11,200 Fall Chum salmon and their average weight was 7.6 pounds. Discussion took place between fishers and ADF&G about commercial fishing for Fall Chum salmon. ADF&G stated that the buyer/processor only has the capacity to buy in Y-1 and one period has been held so far. Some fishers in the Y-2 district expressed concern for wanting to participate in commercial fishing. A question came up about the use of fish wheels in the lower river and they are legal for subsistence use in Y-1, 2, and 3 districts. Another question came up about the tracking of individual runs in the Yukon River in-season. There are projects in individual rivers to see what fish go

there and there are tributary escapement goals. Genetic information is used to look at post-season data; it is also used in Canada as well. Those projects take place in both in-season and post-season.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?YukonRiverDrainageFi/2352ae9511/TEST/08c7905e23/adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

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

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?YukonRiverDrainageFi/2352ae9511/TEST/ca7e224de0>

I hope you'll join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).

Have a great week,

Jason Hale

Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 8th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, July 26, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Mountain Village, Marshall, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Rampart, Nenana, Ft. Yukon, Circle, Eagle, Mayo, and Teslin.

Subsistence Reports: There is very little fishing for king salmon in Alaska, with some effort still occurring in the upper river. Fishers from Holy Cross to Eagle reported that they are waiting for fall chum. Water levels are very low in Mountain Village, dropping through Holy Cross, and generally high from Kaltag to Rampart. Kaltag fishers met their king salmon needs, though in Koyukuk and Rampart many people only met one-quarter of their needs, and Ft. Yukon and Circle fishers are doing poor and unable to fish due to closures. People are catching lots of chum salmon in Galena. In Eagle people are not fishing for king salmon at this point, either because they never started or they are cutting back this year. In Nenana the water is stable, lots of king salmon have passed by, people met 25-50% of their needs, and commercial summer chum salmon fishing has been good.

In Mayo and Teslin water levels are high and catch rates are low. The first king salmon was caught in Teslin on July 23.

Management Update: ADF&G reported that fall chum should be arriving between Anvik and Kaltag, and management is still operating under the pre-season projection of 750,000 fish, which should provide for escapement, subsistence, and commercial fishing. Three commercial fishing periods for fall chum have been held in the lower river. As for king salmon, escapement goals are being met within Alaska, and it is uncertain whether escapement and harvest share goals will be met at the Canadian border. As such, in addition to protecting the first and second pulse of king salmon throughout the Alaska portion of the drainage, the third pulse is being protected in the upper river with additional fishing closures. A detailed fishing schedule for the Alaskan portion of the drainage is available at 1-866-479-7387.

DFO reported that they are still operating in the conservative yellow management zone. There has been low effort in the Aboriginal fishery to date, with 300 king salmon harvested so far. High water is a contributing factor.

Public comments, questions, and answers: A number of callers from upper river communities expressed great concern over a lack of equality in management between the lower and upper river in Alaska. They pointed out that upper river fishers are being restricted on the third pulse and not meeting their needs, while many people in the lower river did meet their needs. They called for more stringent management in the lower river in future years to be sure enough fish reach the upper river. Some middle and upper river fishers expressed concern over fall chum directed commercial fisheries, as they are depending on fall chum to make up for low king salmon harvests. ADF&G responded that the

projection indicates a surplus of fish, but they are taking it easy on the commercial openers until they have more in-season information. They noted that the first quarter point should be this weekend. One caller asked whether the Eagle sonar is operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to count all the king salmon that were protected. ADF&G confirmed that this is the case. Another caller stated that due to smaller mesh used in Alaska fishers caught more male king salmon and more females should reach Canada. He noted that this means higher quality of escapement and more eggs in the gravel, though he also noted the importance of getting enough fish on the spawning grounds.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

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

Have a great week,

Jason Hale

Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 9th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, August 2, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Kotlik, Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, The Rapids, Rampart, Fairbanks, Eagle, Dawson, and Teslin

Subsistence Reports: Wet weather and good looking chum salmon were reported through much of the river. In St. Mary's and Marshall, high quality, good sized fall chum are being harvested in the commercial fishery and people have begun picking berries. Through Holy Cross, people are not subsistence fishing and water levels are dropping. The fall chum arrived in Koyukuk on Friday, and one fisher got 40. In Huslia and from Galena to Rampart the water is still high. At The Rapids, the king salmon run is basically over, with only a few low quality kings passing each day, and people are catching chum, split evenly between summer and fall chum. Fishers in Rampart are waiting for fall chum, in Fairbanks they are seeing lots of good looking chum, and in Eagle no one is fishing and the water is rising.

In Teslin a local fisher set a net for 44 hours this weekend. She caught 2 king salmon on Saturday and 2 on Sunday.

Management Update: The fall chum run size projection to date is 197,000 fish. The midpoint should be August 11. ADF&G is no longer restricting the sale of king salmon and not restricting mesh to 6 inch in commercial fisheries.

King salmon escapement and harvest share goals into Canada should be met, with a projected border passage of 48,000-52,000 fish. A minimum of 42,500 fish need to get across the border to meet escapement goals, along with at least another 5,000 fish for harvest share.

DFO reported that they are still operating in the conservative yellow management zone. In the Aboriginal fishery 746 king salmon have been harvested in the mainstem and 136 king salmon have been harvested on the Porcupine River to date. Fishing has been good in Carmacks and Pelly Crossing.

Public comments, questions, and answers: There was a brief discussion of the effects of smaller mesh used in Alaska this year on quality of escapement. ADF&G noted that it's too early to tell, though some callers offered optimistic viewpoints.

Also, the USFWS reminded people of a looming deadline regarding customary trade. The Tri-RAC subcommittee on customary trade of Yukon River king salmon met in May and made several suggestions for changes in regulations. The subcommittee is now seeking public response to these suggested changes; the deadline for comments is August 15. The subcommittee will meet again in late August to consider any responses to these suggestions. For more details, visit the OSM website at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/deadline.cfml>, and feel free to contact Fred Bue, USFWS, at 907-455-1849 with input.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

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

Have a great week,

Jason Hale

Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 10th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, August 9, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, Pilot Station, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyokuk, Huslia, Galena, The Rapids, Nenana, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Lake LeBarge, Teslin.

Subsistence Reports: Wet weather and limited fishing was reported throughout much of the river: the rain is just clearing today. In Pilot Station there is no subsistence fishing taking place and river conditions are high for this time of year. In Holy Cross there has been little fishing activity because of the weather, but some silvers are being caught now. In Nulato the water is dropping and fishers are waiting for the first pulse of silvers to hit and have been catching whitefish and sheefish. In Koyokuk the water has risen in the past couple days and fishers have been catching whitefish, summer chum, pinks and kings and no fall chum have been caught yet. In Huslia the water is also up and fishers are still catching summer chum in limited numbers. In Galena and Nenana there has not been much fishing this week because of the weather. At The Rapids the 2nd group of fall chum have hit, but fishers have put cutting on hold because of the rain. Water temperature is high and height is record high. In Ft. Yukon fishing is slow and fishers are having difficulty in getting their kings and in Eagle people are not fishing, water is down and there is little to no driftwood.

At Lake LeBarge, the Ta'an Kwäch'än caught 22 kings at their family fish camp and 2 families are out fishing now. In Teslin, 3 families are fishing and caught a total of 19 healthy-looking kings (13 male/6 female) in 97.5 hours.

Management Update: The fall chum run size estimate to date is 490,000 fish as of August 8 based on the Pilot Station Sonar. The total run size projection is for greater than 800,000 fish. The midpoint should be August 11. To date 93,000 fall chum and 3,000 coho salmon have been harvested in districts Y-1, Y-2 and Y-5B and C.

At this point, ADF&G has determined that King salmon escapement and harvest sharing obligations will likely be met. The current border passage at Eagle is 49,269 king salmon as of Aug. 8. A minimum of 42,500 fish needed to meet the Canadian escapement goals, along with at least another 5,000 fish for harvest share.

DFO reported that they are still operating in the conservative yellow management zone. They are considering opening the sport fishery in Tatchun Creek.

Public comments, questions, and answers: One caller asked whether ADF&G projects in Emmonak closed early. ADF&G staff clarified that all projects are still running and will continue to run, but the office in Emmonak is closed for the season. Fishers in Y-4B requested that fishing be open for 7 days/week to accommodate people in fish camps. Fishers in Koyokuk requested that ADF&G eliminate

the windows schedule after mid-September as it interferes with fall fishing. ADF&G responded that they would consider these requests. A fisher in Canada asked DFO what the trigger is to go to green zone management and if they are planning to open a commercial fishery: DFO responded that 53,000 king salmon at Eagle sonar is the green zone trigger and currently they do not have plans to open a commercial fishery.

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3141 or look for us on the web at www.yukonsalmon.org.

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?YukonRiverDrainageFi/8996dbb3ea/d6d2997965/5c25fa1292/adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

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

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?YukonRiverDrainageFi/8996dbb3ea/d6d2997965/93b9ba1ca7>

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

Have a great week,
Becca Robbins Gisclair
Policy Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 11th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, August 16, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, St. Mary's, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, The Rapids, Nenana, Fairbanks, Eagle, Dawson, Whitehorse, Teslin

Subsistence Reports: As a welcome relief to all the rains of late, good weather was reported through most of the drainage. In Emmonak, St. Mary's, Marshall, and Holy Cross there are a few people still fishing for coho and fall chum salmon; Emmonak reported that a good pulse of fall chum just past, and Holy Cross noted good coho salmon catches. In Nulato, Koyukuk, and Galena people are catching high quality fall chum; the first pulse of fall chum arrived in Koyukuk on Saturday. In The Rapids fall chum numbers are low and poor weather has limited fishing, but there have been plenty of fish for people-food and good numbers of sheefish. In Nenana and Eagle fishers are waiting for fall chum salmon to arrive.

In Dawson, people are done fishing for king salmon, and they harvested what they needed for themselves while fishing conservatively and not catching for other families. They reported that the run was good, and they will fish for fall chum in late September, when the weather is cooler. In Teslin, they fished three setnets this past weekend and harvested 25 king salmon, which were reported to be in good condition. They are also once again buying salmon from the Taku River to allow more Yukon River king salmon to reach the spawning grounds. The entire Aboriginal harvest for the Yukon Territory is roughly 2,000 king salmon to date, with a projected total harvest of 6,000 fish by the end of the season.

Management Update: The fall chum salmon run is projected to be 800,000 to 1,000,000 fish. To date, 142,000 fall chum and 24,800 coho salmon have been harvested in commercial fisheries in the Alaskan portion of the drainage. As of yesterday, 51,000 king salmon have past the Eagle sonar; the community of Eagle's harvest will need to be subtracted from that number to determine border passage into Canada. International spawning escapement and harvest share goals have been met.

Based on the number of fish that have entered Canada, DFO has reopened the recreational fishery. However, they are not considering opening the commercial or domestic fisheries.

Public comments, questions, and answers: One fisher asked about escapement in the Koyukuk drainage, and USFWS reported that it was above average for king salmon and well above average for summer chum salmon. Another fisher asked for some statistics on king salmon from The Rapids video wheel project: the percentage of females recorded at that project is 19% and the average weight is 14 pounds (roughly the same average weight as in 2009, which is well above the average weight of 9 pounds in 2008 and 2010; the project operator attributed this to pulse protection in 2009 and 2011).

A caller asked when drifting will close in sub-district Y4-A, and ADF&G replied that it will be allowed above Stink Creek whenever the fishery is open through the remainder of the season. Lastly, a caller asked how the coho salmon run is doing, and ADF&G shared that it's slightly above average for this date.

For further information, please contact the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association at 907-272-3141 or look for us on the web at www.yukonsalmon.org.

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?YukonRiverDrainageFi/8996dbb3ea/d6d2997965/5c25fa1292/adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.interior>

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

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?YukonRiverDrainageFi/8996dbb3ea/d6d2997965/93b9ba1ca7>

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

Have a great week,
Jason Hale
Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 12th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, August 23, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Galena, The Rapids, Eagle, Whitehorse, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: The fishing season is winding down through much of the drainage, and teleconference participation is following suit. There is still some fishing activity, but many have turned their attention to harvesting moose and berries. Fall chum salmon quality remains high, as reported in the lower and middle river in Alaska.

In the lower river, no one is fishing for subsistence, but some people are still commercial fishing for fall chum and coho salmon; water levels are dropping. In the middle river, a few people are still subsistence fishing for fall chum, but many have stopped for the season. Water levels are rising in Tanana and Eagle, and fishers in Eagle are gearing up to harvest fall chum.

In Teslin, the king salmon run is cooling down and water levels are rising. In Old Crow, there are some "good looking" chum salmon and water levels are dropping.

Management Update: The fall chum salmon run is projected to reach 800,000 to 900,000 fish. To date 185,300 fall chum and 45,800 coho salmon have been harvested commercially.

The annual Alaska Department of Fish & Game subsistence fishing survey will be taking place along the Yukon River in September and October. During September, surveyors will visit lower Yukon River communities up to Grayling, and in October they will continue up the Yukon and Koyukuk rivers. Faxes will be sent to local post offices, schools, and stores announcing the expected survey dates, however these dates may change due to weather and travel delays.

Public comments, questions, and answers: One caller asked how much more commercial fishing can be expected in the lower river. ADF&G replied that there should be fishing periods through the first couple days of September, at which time the fall chum salmon run should be dropping off.

A representative of the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) thanked Kwik'Pac Fisheries for a generous donation of salmon. Kwik'Pac processed this salmon and delivered it to CYFN, who in turn distributed the salmon to Elders across the Yukon Territory. The donation was much appreciated.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

I hope you'll join us on the next teleconference, Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). This will be the final in-season teleconference for this year. As a reminder, the toll free number is 1-800-315-6338 and the code is YUKON# (98566#).

Have a great week,
Jason Hale
Communications Director

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 13th Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference held this past Tuesday, August 30, 2011.

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

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Nulato, Galena, The Rapids, Eagle, and Teslin

Subsistence Reports: Kotlik reported that there are no more salmon in the river; some people are catching whitefish. In the rest of the lower river, nobody is subsistence fishing, having turned to harvesting moose, birds, and berries. In the middle river they are still seeing high quality fall chum salmon. In Galena, some people are still putting up the nice fall chum for strips and the poor fall chum for dog food. The Rapids reported that the first pulse of fall chum just passed, nearly all camps have emptied, and people are setting up to fish for dry fish and crib fish in Tanana. In Eagle, fishers are getting ready to harvest fall chum, and one family is already fishing.

Nobody fished for king salmon in Teslin this past week.

Management Update: It seems to be nearing the end of the chum salmon entering the river, though it's not unprecedented for one more pulse to appear. To date 219,300 fall chum and 62,500 coho salmon have been harvested commercially in the Alaskan portion of the drainage; both runs are above average for this date.

The commercial buyer in District Y-2 has shut its doors for this season. Any fisher with a commercial permit for Y-2 who would like to switch to Y-1 should contact ADF&G. Likewise, if there are any catcher-sellers interested in fishing in Y-2, they should contact ADF&G.

The fall chum salmon pulses are expected to be in the following locations:

- 1st pulse: between Beaver and Ft. Yukon
- 2nd pulse: between Rampart and Stevens Village
- 3rd pulse: Koyukuk
- 4th pulse: Anvik

In Canada, they are wrapping up king salmon management season. Aboriginal harvest is projected to reach 4,000 king salmon; the reported harvest to date is 2,831 fish in the mainstem and 135 fish on the Porcupine River. Canada should be in the green management zone for fall chum salmon. There was a commercial fall chum opener August 26-29, and another 4-day opener is anticipated for this weekend. Effort in the commercial fishery is expected to be low.

Public comments, questions, and answers: A fisher asked ADF&G whether the counts reported from assessment projects are adjusted to include projected harvest numbers. ADF&G replied that they are not; the numbers reported are the actual number of fish counted at each project. Another fisher asked

for more details on the commercial fishery in Canada. DFO responded that it mostly takes place around Dawson with set gillnets and fishwheels, effort is typically low, and there is not a big commercial market—the fish is mostly used for feeding dogs.

Lastly, a caller asked Alaskan managers to provide information on how the mesh size reduction has affected the fishery. USFWS replied that they will be looking at that issue, but did note that it will be complicated due to the fishing restrictions that were in place this season.

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

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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

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

This was the final in-season management teleconference for this year. I'd like to sincerely thank everyone who participated. You made these calls a useful tool for fishers and managers throughout the drainage. I hope to hear your voice the first Tuesday of June 2012 as we start it all over again!

Have a great winter,
Jason Hale
Communications Director

APPENDIX C: Interview Data Collection Form

Date: _____ Village: _____

Household Name	Did you fish this week? (If no, use code below)	How many days did you fish this week?		Compared to LAST year how was fishing for this past week?	Compared to LAST year how strong is the run for this past week? (Circle one)	How many fish did you catch this past week?	How many fish do you plan to catch this year?	Where are you in your harvest? (Circle a percentage)
			Kings	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Chum	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Comments					
			Kings	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Chum	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Comments					
			Kings	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Chum	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Comments					
			Kings	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Chum	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Comments					
			Kings	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Chum	Worse Same Better	Worse Same Better			0 25 50 75 100
			Comments					

Did Not Fish Codes: (1) Bad weather/poor fishing conditions (2) Low # of fish (3) Closure (4) Personal reasons (5) Mechanical/Gear issues (6) Have not begun fishing (7) Out of town (8) Other

APPENDIX D. The 2011 In-season salmon harvest interview summary sheet format.

Preliminary Data

YRDFA/USFWS In-season Chinook Salmon Harvest Interview Summary

Weekly Date

Village	Interview Date(s)	# of Interviews	Harvest %^a	Fishing Success^b	Run Stren
Marshall			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. =	DNF =	DNF =
Russian Mission			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. = %	DNF =	DNF =
Holy Cross			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. = %	DNF =	DNF =
Kaltag			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. =	DNF =	DNF =
Nulato			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. = %	DNF =	DNF =
Galena			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. = %	DNF =	DNF =
Nenana			0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
			26-75:	Same:	Same:
			76-100:	Better:	Better:
			Unavailable:	Unavailable:	
			Weekly avg. =	DNF =	DNF =

Ft. Yukon	0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
	26-75:	Same:	Same:
	76-100:	Better:	Better:
	Weekly avg. =	Unavailable: DNF =	Unavailable: DNF =
Eagle	0-25:	Worse:	Worse:
	26-75:	Same:	Same:
	76-100:	Better:	Better:
	Weekly avg. =	Unavailable: DNF =	Unavailable: DNF =

a Where are you at in your harvest?

b Compared to "LAST" year how was fishing for this past week?

c Compared to "LAST" year how strong is the run for this past week?

d Average number of fishing days of all interview participants?

e Average of number of fish caught.

**DNF = Did not
fish.**

APPENDIX E.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Inseason Subsistence Salmon Harvest Survey**

Funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management

**Project carried out by the _____ Tribal Council and the Yukon
River Drainage Fisheries Association**

Contact: Catherine Moncrieff or Jill Klein
725 Christensen Dr. Ste. 3-B
Anchorage, AK 99501
Telephone: 907-272-3141, ext. 107
E-mail: Catherine@yukonsalmon.org or jill@yukonsalmon.org

I, _____, understand that the purpose of this project is to collect information from subsistence fishers during the fishing season to better inform managers of the current conditions on the Yukon River. I also understand that this project is funded by the USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management.

I understand that this project will last for six (6) weeks and the local interviewer will return to ask me the same questions every week during the king salmon season.

The benefit to participating in this project is that I will receive information about fisheries management and managers will receive information about fishers' observations, knowledge, and harvest thus influencing their decision-making and improving Yukon River fishery management.

I am willing to take part in this project and I understand that I can end my participation in this project at any time during or after the interview.

I understand that if I wish I can remain anonymous, meaning my name and harvest information will be kept confidential by the tribal council and by YR DFA.

____ check here to remain anonymous

Interviewee: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Interviewer: _____

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFFA) administers all programs and activities free from discrimination based on sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood or disability. The YRDFFA 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.