

Yukon River Panel  
**Project CC-01-12**

Yukon River In-Season Salmon Management Teleconferences, 2012  
Final Report

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*The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views the funding entity.*

## **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 2012 Yukon River salmon fishery season, from June through 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 users drainage-wide to communicate. 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 2012 fishing season.

Funding for the Yukon River In-Season Salmon Management Teleconferences was provided by the Yukon River Panel, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Office of Subsistence Management.

**Key Words:** Alaska, Canada, Chinook, chum, commercial fisheries, fisheries management, in-season management, salmon, subsistence harvest, teleconference, Yukon River, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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 (YRDFFA), 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. In addition to reports of local observations, the calls have provided information to fishers regarding research and escapement monitoring tools operated by management entities, and have facilitated information sharing and capacity building amongst all interested parties.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this program are:

1. Promote, coordinate, facilitate, and summarize weekly in-season management teleconferences in the summer of 2012 for fishers, managers, processors, and other stakeholders in Yukon River drainage fisheries.
2. Provide a forum for sharing information and ideas, building understanding and capacity, among all user groups in the Yukon River drainage.

## **METHODS**

### **Pre-Season**

To organize and carry out weekly teleconference calls during the 2012 summer and fall fishing season, YRDFFA first looked back at the 2011 teleconferences to see what worked and what did not. Also, YRDFFA consulted managers from ADF&G and USFWS. All parties agreed that the calls needed to continue to focus on in-season issues, rather than external factors such as bycatch, to keep calls shorter and more productive. 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, 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 again 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 riverwide. Postcards were mailed to more than 2,150 fishery stakeholders in the U.S. and Canada. 730 full-page flyers were distributed in batches of ten to 47 U.S. Tribal Councils and 26 Canadian First Nations, Renewable Resource Councils, and other fisheries-related groups (Appendix A). In addition, the teleconferences were promoted in YRDFA's spring newsletter, the June edition of YRDFA's E-News, and on YRDFA's homepage. Further, staff distributed decks of promotional playing cards and promotional filet knives at meetings and during travel on the river throughout the winter and spring; these items were purchased at the end of the previous teleconference season (Appendix B). While this was a reasonably comprehensive campaign, it was not out of line with what has become the typical approach. Given the relatively high participation rates in recent years and the consistency of the timing of details of these teleconferences, YRDFA staff felt that the public was well aware of the program and chose to simply remind stakeholders of the key details.

### **In-Season**

From June 5 to August 28, 2012, teleconference calls were facilitated by YRDFA staff every Tuesday at 1 p.m. Alaska time (2 p.m. Yukon time). Each call lasted between 45 and 130 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.

### **Post-Season**

To assess the success of the 2011 in-season salmon teleconferences, YRDFA 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. YRDFA staff provided detailed notes from each teleconference, which yielded information on which communities actively participating each week. With this data, YRDFA analyzed participation relative to: past years, salmon run timing, location of communities, and whether communities had in-season harvest interviewers. In addition, YRDFA consolidated the 2011 weekly teleconference summaries into a single PDF and posted it on the organization's website.

## **RESULTS**

During the 2012 salmon fishing season, YRDFA organized and carried out a total of 13 in-season management teleconferences. This year broke two big records: number of phone lines used in a single week and average number of phone lines used over the entire season (Figures 1 & 2).

On the last teleconference of June—in the heat of the king run in the lower river—a whopping 174 phone lines were plugged in to the weekly teleconference. The next highest usage on record was 156 phone lines, which took place during the same week in 2009. That's an 11.5% increase in participation over the highest level ever. Given that many people call in on speaker phones in rooms full of others, 174 lines could easily translate into several hundred people.

Over the course of the season, an average of 94 phone lines per call were in use. That is 9% above the previous record of 86 phone lines in 2010.

As usual, participation in terms of the number of communities actively engaging tracked well with the number of phone lines used (Figure 3), but it did not exceed records (Figure 4). Also, active participation by U.S. and Canadian communities was fairly normal (Figure 5), and as usual the presence of an in-season harvest interviewer in a community increased the participation rate for that community (Figure 6). All of this seems to indicate that the increase in terms of number of phone lines used resulted from more passive participants on the teleconferences. In other words, more people are calling in to hear firsthand and in real time what is happening with the run. It is reasonable to assume that this increase in interest was caused by concerns due to the poor Chinook salmon returns. This assumption is further backed by the fact that participation in terms of number of phone lines used tracks well with the timing of Chinook salmon entering the river (Figures 7, 8, & 9).

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 within 3 days of each call (Appendix C).

### **Measure of Success**

As it was stated in the detailed proposal for this project, the best indicator of success seems to be participation in terms of number of phone lines. People do not need to actively participate to find value in the teleconferences, and many phone in to listen and learn, so looking at the number of phone lines in use is the best indicator of how many people and communities were involved in and impacted by the project. YRDFA looks for a rate that is equal to or greater than the average of the previous five years. This time frame helps to balance out any peaks or valleys caused by a presence or lack of major changes in the fishery, while keeping the analysis more current.

As noted above, by this measure the teleconferences were the best attended to date, and thus the most successful to date.

### **Financial Statement: Budgeted Versus Actual Expenditures**

Spending on this project matched up almost perfectly with the original budget. The only variance was in Contractual. A relatively small sum of money—\$200—was slated to supplement payment of the cost of designing promotional items. However, the promotional designs from 2011 were deemed sufficient for another year's use, so that expense was avoided.

It should be noted that teleconferencing phone bills were higher than average due to the record breaking participation in the program. However, this expense was covered through other supporting grants.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Sadly, a dramatic increase in participation is typically caused by poor salmon returns. In poor years fishers really need to know what's going on with the fish, and they want to provide input to managers. If things were going well, many fishers would likely just do what they do best—go fishing.

Still, the silver lining is that people clearly continue to see value in these teleconferences, now more than ever. The calls have become something people can depend on. Regardless of run size, managers and fishers from throughout the drainage can work together and discuss the run in real time.

The stronger concentration on in-season issues and more focused public comment periods once again helped confine the teleconferences to roughly 1 to 2 hours, 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.

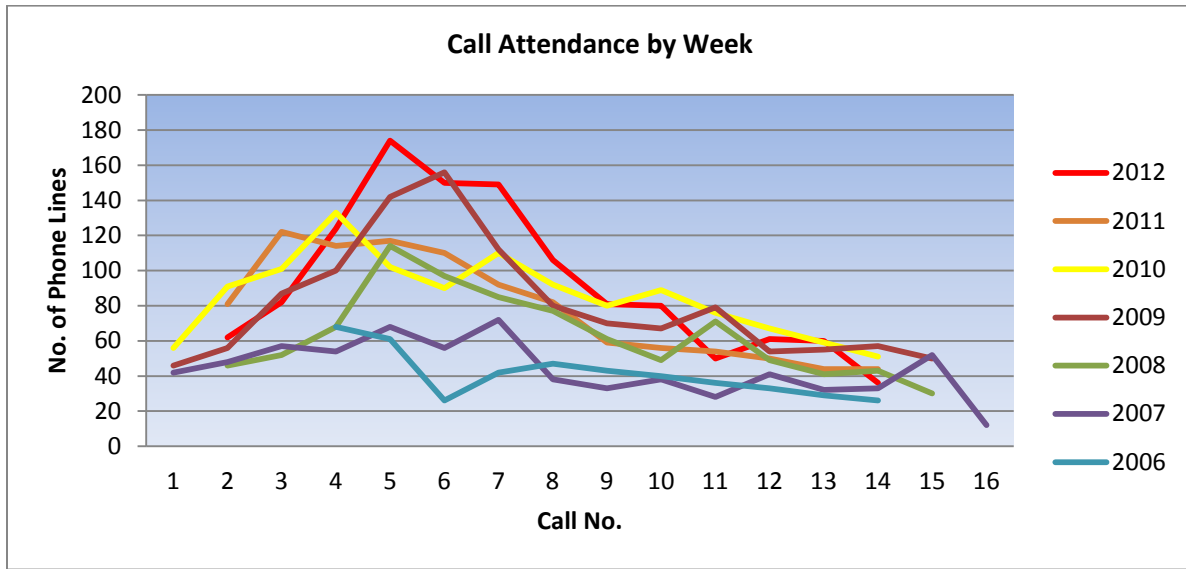
The in-season management teleconferences have proved a valuable resource for members of the public, Yukon River fishers and community members, managers, Tribes, First Nations, fish processors, and others. These teleconferences are a model for managers and local users on how to communicate and share information about the condition of salmon runs and management strategies.

Hearing in-season subsistence reports and learning what percentage of the local harvest has been met allows managers to anticipate fishing activity and provides pieces of information to better understand and manage the salmon runs. Further, this sharing of information allows fishers along the river to better anticipate, plan for, and harvest their catch. It also provides them with a simple, viable means of informing and influencing management. Teleconference calls are an effective and rapid means to extend real-time knowledge about the salmon fishery across hundreds of miles.

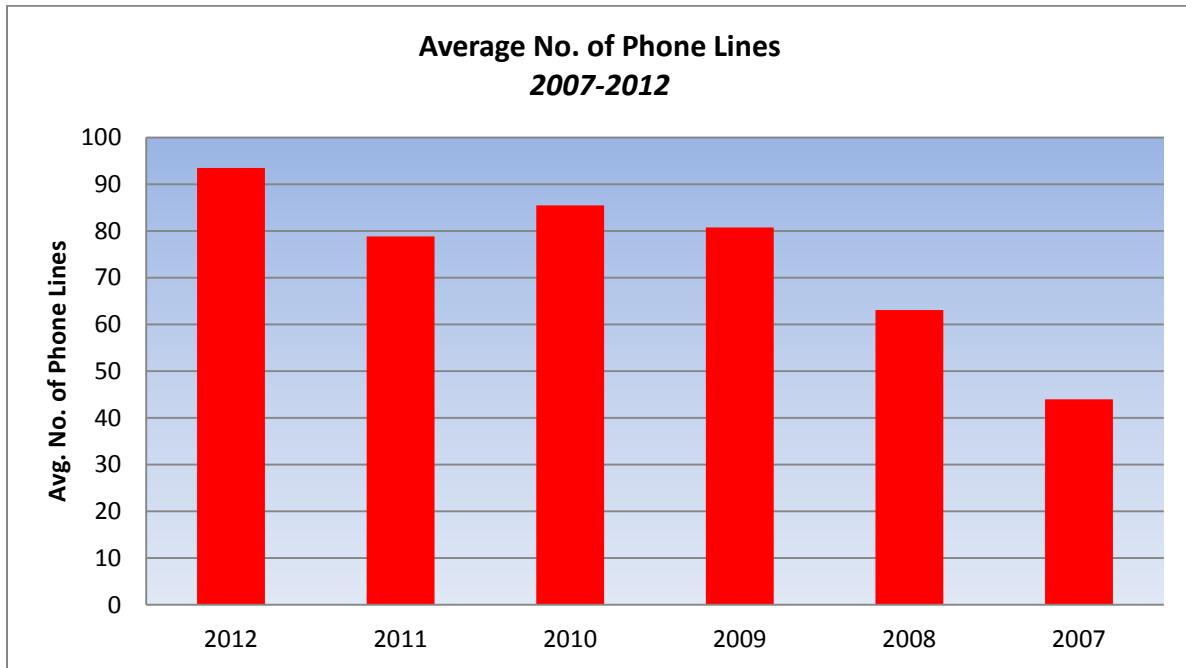
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Funding for the Yukon River In-Season Salmon Management Teleconferences was supported by the Yukon River Panel, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Office of Subsistence Management. In addition to our funders, YRDFA would like to offer special thanks to everyone who dialed in to the 2012 weekly teleconferences, whether this was their first season or they've been calling for years. A strong, regular presence from all stakeholders—fishers, managers, Tribes, First Nations, processors, inter-tribal consortiums, and others—maximizes the effectiveness and utility of the calls and goes a long way in building understanding and stronger management of the run in real time throughout the drainage.

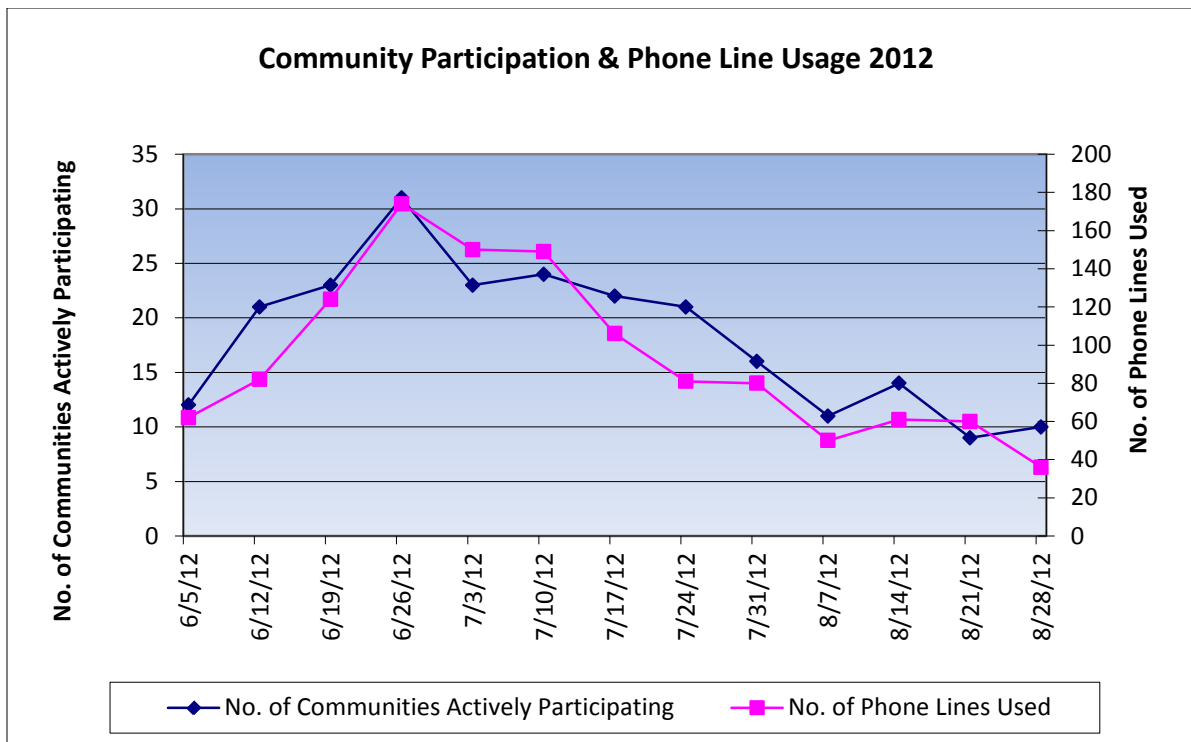
**FIGURES**



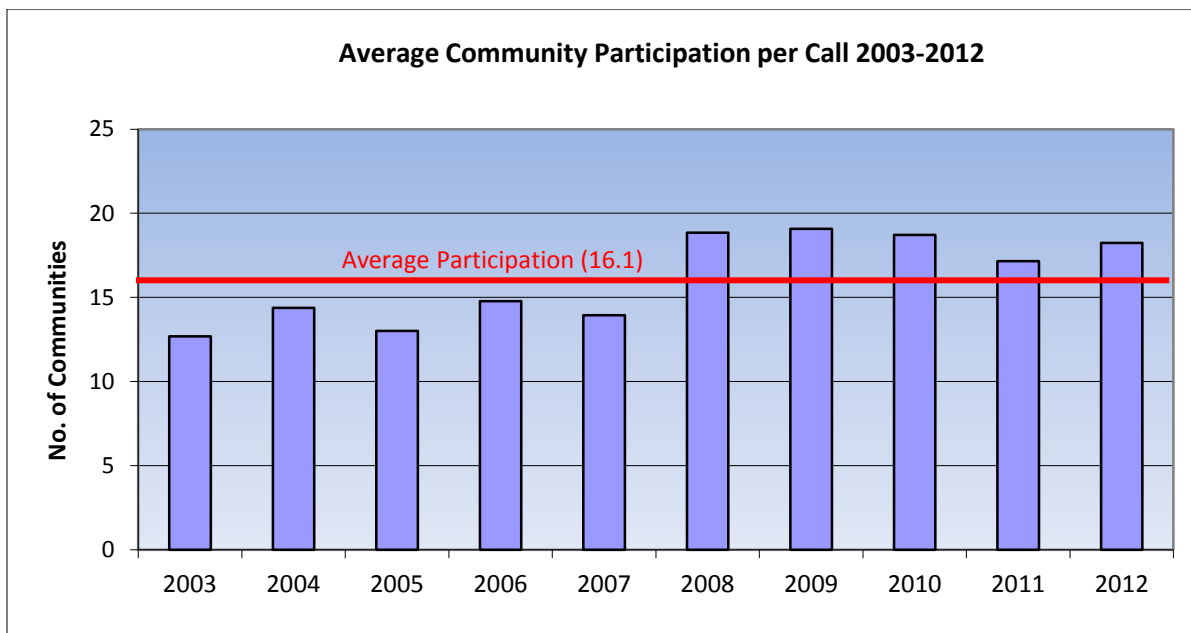
**Figure 1.** Comparison of number of phone lines used on each call each season. 2006-2012.



**Figure 2.** Average number of phone lines in use throughout teleconference season. 2007-2012.

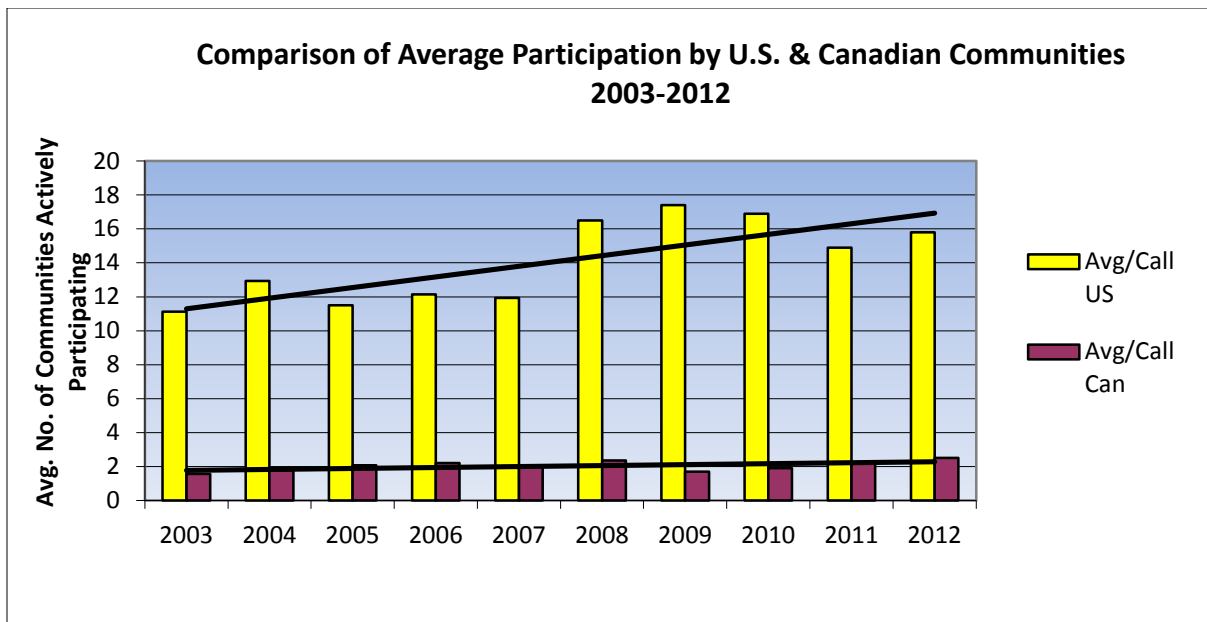


**Figure 3.** Community participation & phone line usage. 2012.

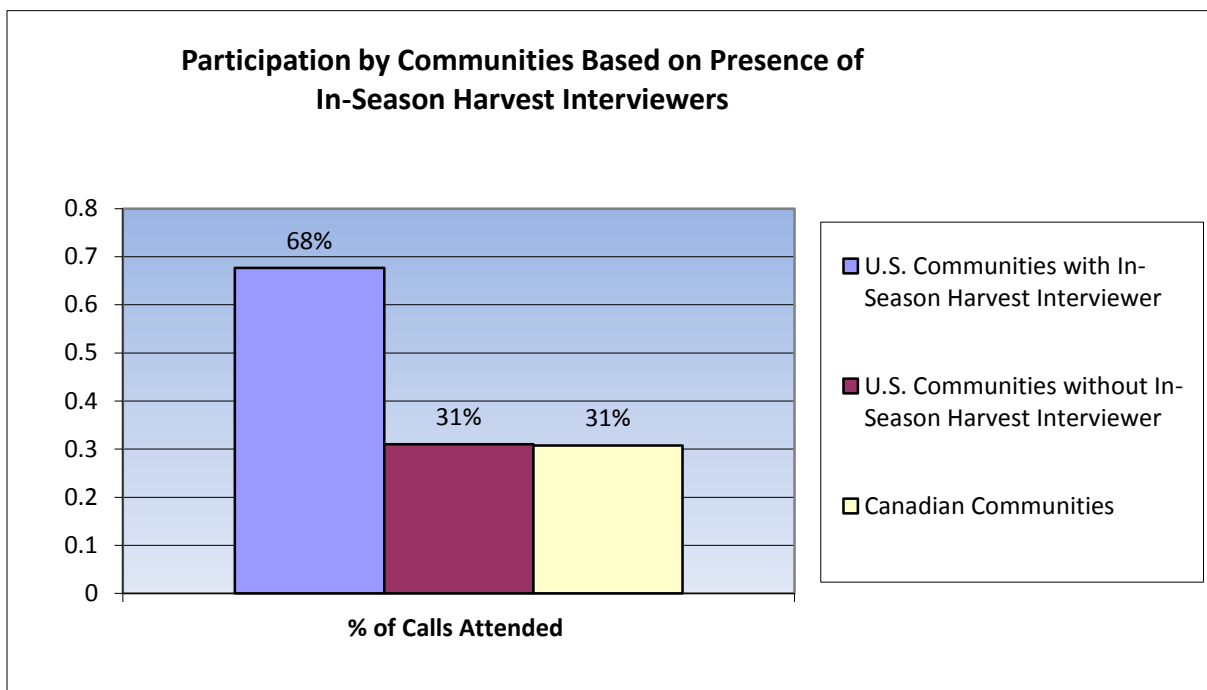


**Figure 4.** Average number of communities participating in each call. 2003-2012.

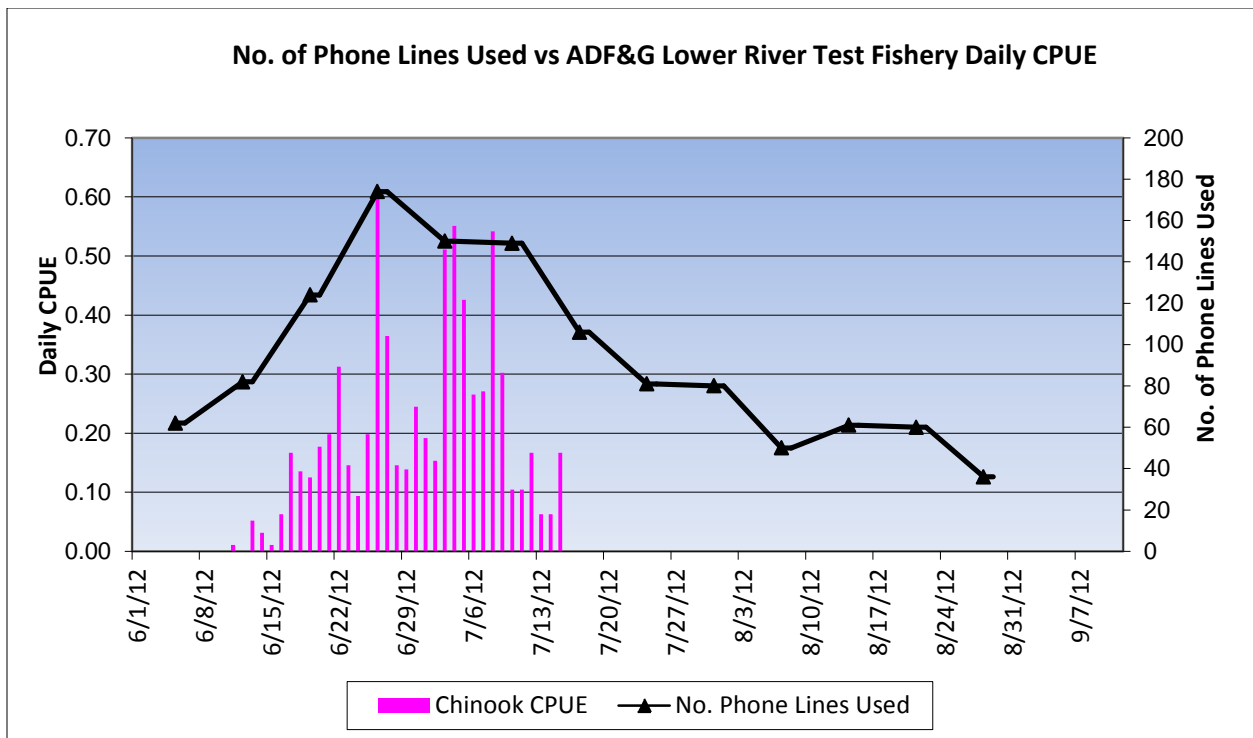




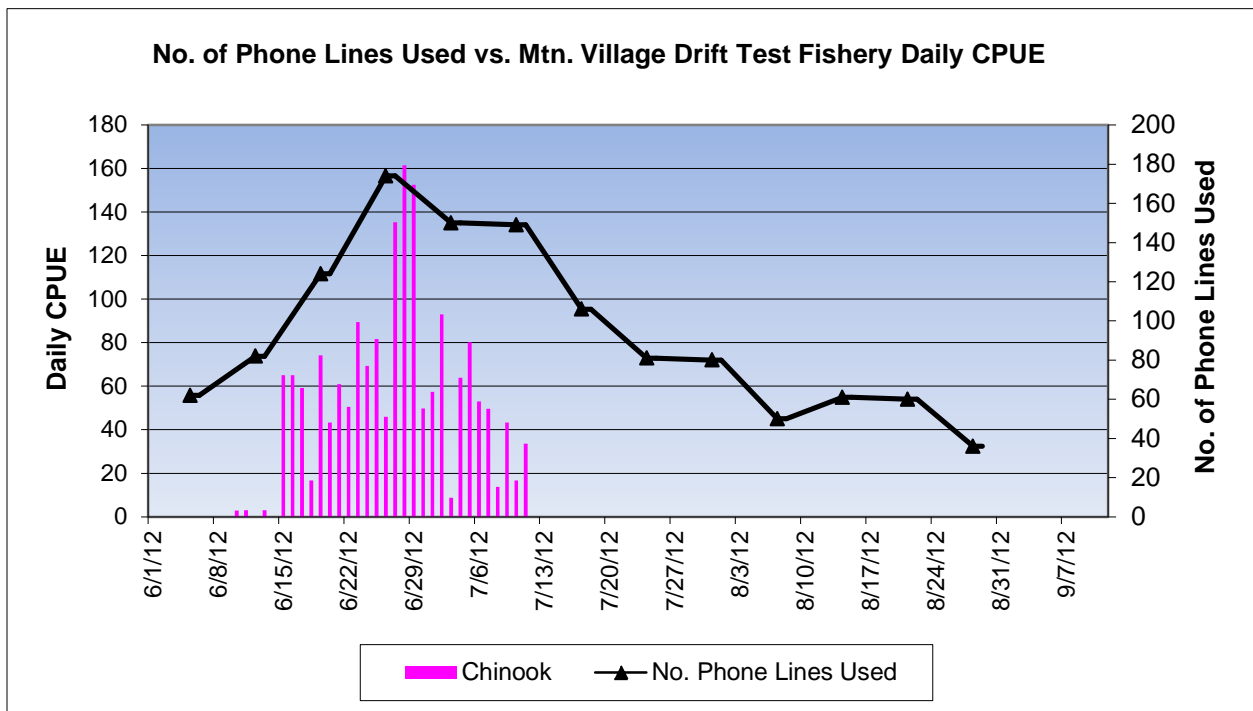
**Figure 5.** Comparison of average annual participation by U.S. & Canadian communities as measured by the average number of communities actively participating in each call each season, 2003-2012.



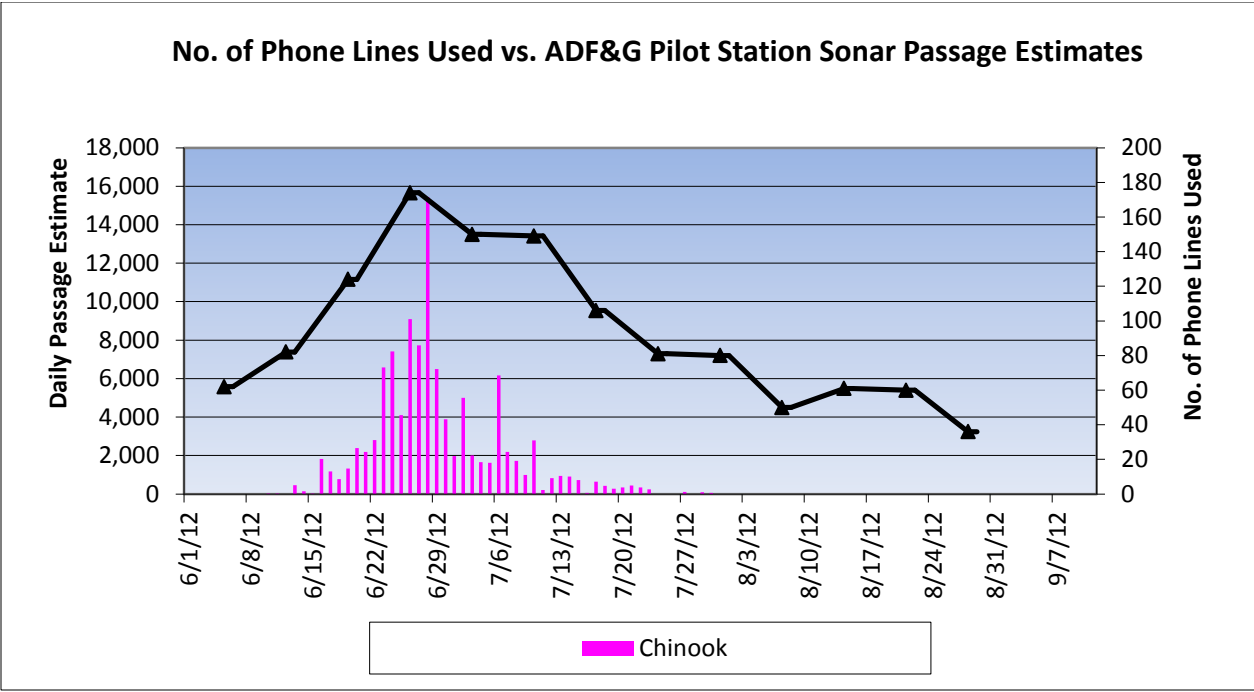
**Figure 6.** Participation by No. of Communities Based with In-Season Harvest Interviewer Communities Broken-Out.2012.



**Figure 7.** Number of phone lines used vs. ADF&G Lower River Test Fishery Daily CPUE for Chinook salmon, 2012.



**Figure 8.** Number of phone lines used vs. Mountain Village Drift Test Fishery Daily CPUE for Chinook salmon, 2012.



**Figure 9.** Number of phone lines used vs. ADF&G Pilot Station Sonar Passage Estimates for Chinook salmon, 2012.

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#)

# 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*



YUKON RIVER SUBSISTENCE ASSOCIATION

Facilitated by YRDM - [yukonriversubsistence.org](http://yukonriversubsistence.org)

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

## APPENDIX B: Promotional Playing Cards and Knives



Note: some small detail maynot be lasered out



## **APPENDIX C: Weekly Teleconference Summaries**

(also available at <http://www.yukonsalmon.org/Teleconferences/2012summaries.pdf>)

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 1st Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference, held this past Tuesday, June 5, 2012.

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, Holy Cross, Nulato, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Tanana, Fairbanks, Ft. Yukon, Eagle, Carmacks, Whitehorse

Subsistence Reports: People across the drainage reported no salmon, high water, and varying levels of debris in the river. At the mouth of the river, the ice is out and smelts have already come through. In St. Mary's people are catching a few sheefish. On the Koyukuk River fishers are catching pike and whitefish. In the middle river and around Ft. Yukon there is lots of debris, but Tanana and Eagle reported low levels of debris. Fishers in Eagle are planning to voluntarily reduce their harvest of king salmon in light of the poor run projection. People are getting ready for the summer and fishing. Lastly, the water around Carmacks is dirty.

Management Update: Breakup at the mouth occurred on May 25, which is 2 days later than average. The run outlook for king salmon is poor to below average, and the run could be worse than last year. Alaskan management strategies will include a closure of the first pulse, no retention of sportfish in the mainstem, and no sale of king salmon caught incidentally in the summer chum commercial fishery. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery and ADF&G sonar at Pilot Station are both operational, but as of Tuesday no salmon have been detected. Based on the run outlook, Canadian management will be conservative, with commercial fishing likely closed and zero retention likely for the recreational fishery.

The run outlook for summer chum salmon is good—similar to last year—with a projection of 1.5 to 2 million fish. This includes 500,000 to 1 million summer chum salmon that could be available for commercial harvest.

Public comments, questions, and answers: One caller requested information regarding the level of enforcement on the river this summer, expressing concern over illegal fishing in a year with such a poor outlook for king salmon. Managers replied that they have done some planning with enforcement staff, and that help is needed from the public. That caller then requested a weekly enforcement update on future teleconferences.

Another caller asked when the first king salmon is typically caught, and ADF&G shared that in recent years it has occurred on June 6. A concern was raised regarding possible contamination of our fish from the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, and ADF&G replied that information is available at [http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/Food/radiation\\_news.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/Food/radiation_news.htm). YRDFA followed up, relaying that according to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the radiation will not affect our fish.

Lastly, an Alaskan fisher asked what mesh size may be used to fish during closures. ADF&G replied that 4 inch or smaller mesh nets not exceeding 60 feet in length are permitted during closures.

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](http://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/index-eng.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,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant



Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary for the 2nd Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference, held this past Tuesday, June 12, 2012.

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. These calls are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Alakanuk, Emmonak, Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Nenana, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Circle, Eagle, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports People across the drainage are reporting high water and a lot of drift. 8 kings were caught in Alakanuk and 1 in Emmonak. 2 kings total caught in Mt. Village. The high cost of gas is keeping people from going to fish camp. Koyukuk reported that the water is dropping and no drift. On the Koyukuk River fishers are mainly catching whitefish and pike, and sometimes sheefish. People in the Upper River and Yukon Flats are getting ready. Old Crow and Teslin reported the water is high with no debris.

Management Assessment: Ice break up in the lower river occurred on May 25. This is later than the average break up date of May 23. Coastal ice is still present near the river mouths. In the lower river, the water level continues to be high and the debris load is moderate. The first reported Chinook and summer chum salmon caught in the subsistence fishery occurred on June 8 near the South Mouth cost. Subsistence salmon fishing effort in the lower river continues to be minimal. Coastal ice is delaying the run.

Public Input, Questions and Comments: Most people were feeling the run was late and did not relate a sense that fish were being missed by assessment projects. There were also discussions around the early implementation of the windows schedule and the use of small mesh gillnets during closed subsistence salmon fishing periods as a means to provide opportunity to harvest other fish species while avoiding king salmon.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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Have a great week, Marilyn Woods, Program Assistant  
Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 3rd Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference, held this past Tuesday, June 19, 2012.

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, Mountain Village, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Hughes, Allakaket, Galena, Tanana, the Rapids, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, Stevens Village, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Eagle, Dawson, Whitehorse

Subsistence Reports: Across the drainage residents report that the water is high with debris and the water is slowly dropping. Fishermen in Emmonak, Mt. Village, St. Mary's, and Pilot Station are catching chums and utilizing the great weather. Across the drainage people are reporting late run for kings, a few have been caught in the lower river area. Upper river residents are waiting for fish. Residents in Huslia are fishing for whitefish and pike. Whitefish is being caught at the Rapids. People are waiting for the kings in all areas.

Management Update: The king salmon run is late and the outlook is poor to below average, unless the run does not improve decisions regarding conservation measures will need to be discussed. The summer chum run size is estimated at 1.5-2 million fish and should provide for escapement, a normal subsistence harvest, and a potential surplus. The Dall Point Test Fishery, Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery, Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery, Pilot Station sonar project, and the Anvik River sonar project are operational. Data suggests that the king salmon run is just beginning. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Public comments, questions, and answers: One caller asked when more decisions will be made about possible closures. Managers replied that more information is needed, the next date for a decision is June 21st. If the run does not improve difficult decisions for conservation will need to be made.

Another caller asked about examining communities on the drainage related to outmigration of residents, have policies changed due to the number of residents moving to urban areas? Managers replied that policies for subsistence fisheries have not changed recently.

A caller asked if the first pulse has hit the Yukon yet. Managers responded that the first pulse has not hit and residents need to pay attention to news releases about upcoming pulse closures.

Another caller stated that management of chum salmon should be better so we don't lose the chum next. Managers stated that the projection is 1.5-2 million chums this year which is a surplus, and there is the potential for supplementing harvests with chums due to low king salmon returns.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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Have a great week,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 26, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Alakanuk, Emmonak, Pitka's Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, Rapids, Rampart, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, Beaver, Fort Yukon, Dawson, Carmacks, Whitehorse, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: The coastal area reports that nets are in the water and fishermen are catching chum and some kings in Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay. Rainy and windy weather reported in the lower river area. Water is still high and dropping steadily across the drainage. Due to the closure no one has been fishing in St. Mary's, Pilot Station, and Marshall. Poor fishing for kings is being reported in the lower reaches of the drainage and fishermen are reporting a lot of summer chums. No activity reported in the Tanana River or Yukon Flats area but residents are getting fishing gear ready.

Management Update: The king salmon run continues to be tracking late and current data suggests that the run is at the lower end of the preseason outlook of 109,000. The summer chum run is building and fishermen report good catches, the run is on track with the preseason outlook estimate of 1.5-2 million. The assessment projects currently operational are the Dall Point Test Fishery, Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery, Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery, Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG, Anvik River sonar project/ADFG, Gisasa River weir/USFWS, and test fishing at the Big Eddy location. Due to the poor preseason outlook and current information, additional measures are being taken to conserve king salmon. Further assessments will be made when the 2nd pulse hits. Managers added that people need to pay attention to news releases about possible closures.

Public comments, questions, and answers: Most of the discussion focused on the use of fish wheels due to the restriction by managers on the users of fish wheels to allow all king salmon released alive by chutes. People on the phone brought up the use of fish wheels and different conservation ideas and the reasons why this restriction is necessary. People discussed the use of the leads, the way the chute works and that it needs to be overseen by someone.

Another focus of the conversation was about why more restrictions are not being placed on the salmon bycatch in the pollock fishing industry. This is of great concern to people along the Yukon River as they have taken conservation measures and also want other sources of mortality for king salmon to be limited too.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 3, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, Pitka's Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Shageluk, Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Huslia, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Manley Hot Springs, Nenana, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Dawson, Whitehorse, Teslin

Subsistence Reports: A report for the coastal area mentioned the late arrival of fish at the north mouth by Kotlik and that in Emmonak and Alakanuk people prioritized chums and then closures started so people are short on king salmon. Pitka's Point, Saint Mary's and Pilot Station reported wind and rain and Pilot mentioned that people were worried about rain leading to mold on some fish that has been hung. Russian Mission and Holy Cross reported there was no fishing due to closures. In Shageluk, nets were pulled because of the reduction to 6 inch or smaller. In Anvik people are just getting started and in Grayling they are waiting to be able to use 7&1/2 inch mesh again and Kaltag also mentioned not many fishing because of decrease mesh requirement. On the Koyukuk River, people just started fishing and also hardly anyone has 6 inch mesh. The Tanana River area is reporting minimal fishing activity and high water, rain, and a lot of drift. No fishing reported yet in the Yukon Flats and upper Yukon River area of Canada. Teslin reported they are receiving their fish shipments of fish being flown in from the Taku River to supplement their fish needs due to expected low salmon returns.

Management Update: Based on current data from the Pilot Station sonar the run for king salmon is coming in at the lower end of the preseason outlook estimate of 109,000 or potentially lower. Summer chum is on track with the preseason outlook estimate of 1.5-2 million based on data from the Pilot Station sonar. Due to the lower king salmon run fishing periods have been cancelled in lower river districts to protect the first and second pulses and similar actions are being implemented in upriver fishing districts based on the migratory timing of the run. Gear restrictions are being implemented to six inch mesh size or smaller. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water. The current assessment projects that are operational are the Dall Point Test Fishery, Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery, Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery, Andreafsky River weir, Pilot Station sonar project, Anvik River sonar project, Gisasa River weir, Henshaw Creek Weir, Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel, and the Big Eddy location.

Public comments, questions, and answers: The fish exchange between Kwik'pak and Fort Yukon was described; fish from Kwik'pak that was from test fisheries or unneeded subsistence fish was donated to the upriver community of Fort Yukon in lieu of fishing by people in Fort Yukon. Kwik'pak offered to do this exchange with other interested villages.

The remainder of the discussion focused on the mesh size restriction to 6 inch nets or smaller gear. People on the teleconference commented that fishermen do not have 6 inch mesh in some areas, notably in Y-3, Y-4 and the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers. Managers wanted to remind people that they can use mesh size smaller than 6 inch as well. People also asked about different mesh sizes and wanted

to understand which size nets are more efficient and why 7&1/2 inch mesh was distributed when they cannot even use it to go fishing.

Another focus of the conversation was about the pulse closures. People are concerned about meeting their subsistence needs. Managers tried to encourage people that conservation measures are in place to meet escapement goals and people need to expect that all their subsistence needs may not be met and to consider supplementing with chums because they are a surplus in the river currently.

Some people discussed the commercial fishing taking place for summer chum salmon in the lower river.

For fishing updates people can call 1-866-479-7387 to get recorded Alaska Department of Fish and Game updates and fishing schedules.

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](http://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/index-eng.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,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 10, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the Office of Subsistence Management and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Hooper Bay, Emmonak, Mountain Village, Pitka's Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Huslia, Galena, Ruby, Rampart, Nenana, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Eagle, Dawson, Mayo, Whitehorse, Old Crow.

Subsistence Reports: Hooper Bay reported that they are almost 100% done with their subsistence catch and fish is getting dried in the smokehouses. Emmonak reported that people are pretty much caught up with their harvests and there are a lot of chum salmon. Some people were still not able to meet their subsistence needs. Saint Mary's, Pitka's Pt. and Pilot Station reported water dropping, not much new activity; there were a lot of chums and fish is drying, being smoked and put away. Russian Mission and Holy Cross reported some fishing activity after their pulse closures and mentioned again how people don't have the right size nets; some did not fish and are concerned about the sonar counts. Another report from Holy Cross stated they did catch king salmon and there are fish out there to go get. In Nulato, people are waiting for subsistence fishing to open and a lot of people to date have not met their needs for Chinook salmon. In Huslia some people fished and others don't have the right size nets. They thanked Kwik'pak for the fish donation. Galena expressed they will have the need to fish more on silvers and Ruby is waiting for an opening and people currently don't have enough king salmon. Rampart reported water was too high to go fishing anyway when it was closed. People there did not yet meet their needs and are looking for more openings even though they know we need to make escapement. The Tanana River still has minimal fishing activity and a lot of drift. Fort Yukon reported single digit harvests of king salmon, and lots of drift. A report from Dawson said water is high, a lot of rain and drift and usually nets are in this week, but they have not started yet. Whitehorse has high water and flood warnings in the area and Old Crow said water is high and some people have nets in for whitefish.

Assessment and Current Management: Chinook salmon run timing continues to track considerably below historical averages, similar to trends observed in Chinook salmon runs throughout the state of Alaska in 2012. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 96,000 Chinook salmon through July 8 is well below the historical average of 138,000 for this date, and is also below the average passage estimates at this point for late run years, of approximately 123,000.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the second pulse of Chinook salmon past Pilot Station sonar (June 26 – 30) revealed that approximately 47% were Canadian-origin Chinook salmon suggesting the Canadian run size is weak and similar to 2008 and 2010. The department is currently analyzing the third pulse of Chinook salmon past Pilot Station sonar.

Summer chum salmon passage through July 8 at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 1.85 million, which is above the historical median of 1.2 million for this date. The third quartile of the summer chum run at Pilot Station is July 3. Based on historical run timing, the summer chum run is on track with the upper end of the preseason outlook estimate of 2.0 million.



Consistent with preseason management strategies, subsistence fishing periods have been canceled in Districts 1-4 and Sub-districts 5-A,B&C to protect the first and second pulses of Chinook salmon and similar actions will be implemented in Sub-district 5-D based on migratory timing of Chinook salmon. Based on the assessment information to date, the Chinook salmon run is poor, and additional measures are being taken to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement. Following the pulse closures subsequent subsistence fishing periods have been reduced in time and gear restrictions have also been implemented in the Coastal District and Districts 1-4 in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon and allow subsistence fishermen the opportunity to target summer chum salmon.

The fall season was briefly discussed. A projection of over 800,000 fall chum is likely to provide for escapement, subsistence, and commercial fisheries.

Public comments, questions, and answers: The fish exchange between Kwik'pak and other villages was discussed; fish from Kwik'pak was from test fisheries or unneeded subsistence fish was donated to upriver communities in exchange for decrease fishing effort by these same upriver communities. Some places have expressed concern over the fish exchange noting it takes away from their aboriginal right to fish and is like a welfare program. Other areas that are voluntarily not fishing for Canadian origin king salmon like Eagle politely declined the salmon saying they want to save their livelihood, would like to see drainage wide conservation and think this program promotes fishing. Tanana also expressed some concern over the commercial fishing and that it is hard to hear of the king salmon being caught in the commercial fishery on a year like this. Communities that did receive the salmon, especially the king salmon were thankful for receiving the fish as it is much needed by people in their communities.

Other discussion focused on the following topics:

There is a feeling of discrepancy from Y-2 that more commercial periods for summer chum are taking place in Y-1 than in Y-2. Management explained that Y-2 still had king salmon going through their district and they are trying to allow commercial fishing where they can, which is only a sub-portion of the Y-1 district in the south mouth where king salmon counts have been low.

People also asked about the drift fishery and when it will be ending or if it will be extended. People wanted to know if they should prepare to have more fishing time or fish as much as they can in the current opening. Management said there will not be an extension on the drift period.

The 6 inch and smaller nets were discussed as some people in the areas such as Y-3, Y-4 and the Koyukuk River do not have these nets.

For fishing updates and schedules: call 1-866-479-7387 to get recorded Alaska Department of Fish and Game updates and fishing schedules.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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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,  
Marilynn Woods

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 17, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby, Tanana, The Rapids, Manley Hot Springs, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks area, Beaver, Eagle, Carmacks, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: People across the drainage reported that they have not caught many kings and people are waiting for fall chums; due to closures most fishermen have not met their subsistence needs. A fisherman in Kotlik reported catching 100 kings and he was curious about which fish he was catching at this late date. Water levels have been dropping across the drainage and little debris reported. The lower river region reported that people are mainly drying their fish. The middle river area is waiting for silvers to show up. The Koyukuk River has reports of 3-14 king salmon being harvested and the water is dropping. People are beginning to put gear in the water in the Tanana River region as there has been high water and lot of debris. The upper Yukon area is experiencing high water and waiting for an opening so they can begin to fish. The Dawson area is beginning to see some salmon activity. Carmacks and Teslin reported high water and no salmon yet. Old Crow has caught a couple of King salmon.

Management Update:

Fall season: The Yukon Area will begin Fall Season management in the lower river districts on July 16. Based the 2012 summer chum salmon run performance, the fall chum salmon run size is projected to be greater than 880,000 fish. This level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and subsistence priorities and provide for commercial harvest.

Summer season: Consistent with preseason management strategies, subsistence fishing periods have been canceled in Districts 1-4 and Subdistricts 5-A,B&C to protect the first and second pulses of Chinook salmon and similar actions are being implemented in Subdistrict 5-D based on migratory timing of Chinook salmon. Based on the assessment information to date, the Chinook salmon run is poor, and additional measures are being taken to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement. Following the pulse closures subsequent subsistence fishing periods have been reduced in time and gear restrictions have also been implemented in the Coastal District and Districts 1-4 in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon and allow subsistence fishermen the opportunity to target summer chum salmon.

Canadian update: The first fishing activity is reported in Dawson. Due to the low run of king salmon the management implications are that commercial and domestic fisheries are closed and likely to stay closed. The sport fishery is at zero retention right now and will not close until salmon are moving through those areas (to allow for other species retention). Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) met with the First Nations to discuss the need for a precautionary approach this year. DFO is taking a conservation approach and watching the border passage.

Public comments, questions, and answers: Fishers asked questions about the fall chum salmon projection and said that people would be targeting silvers because it is their second choice of fish after the king salmon.

One caller expressed concern about commercial and subsistence openings being concurrent and the impact this has on subsistence fishermen. He brought up the Shanks Case and managers expressed that the difference between the time of Shanks and now is that no King salmon can be sold, so even if subsistence fishermen tried to sell subsistence fish, the buyer cannot legally buy it.

A caller from Beaver stated that due to the high water people are unable to fish there and they are wondering when they can put their nets in now that the water has dropped. Managers responded that on July 20th they will let people know about the next opening.

One caller asked managers about tagging of salmon and is concerned about the effectiveness of this method and would like to see the results of this data collected by tagging when available. Managers responded that the tagging method is providing data on where the salmon are passing through the sonar area near Pilot Station. Hopefully data will be available next year.

A fisher from Pilot Station brought up that they have sacrificed more than their share of salmon per family and that it is hard to change their diet from the fish they prefer to the less preferred fish; people are not accustomed to these new fish.

Managers wanted to thank everyone who called in for their input because it does help with making decisions about management.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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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,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 24, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Tanana, The Rapids, Manley Hot Springs, Nenana, Fort Yukon, Eagle, Mayo, Whitehorse, Teslin, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: People across the drainage reported that they have not caught many kings and people are waiting for fall chums; due to closures because of the low run size most fishermen have not met their subsistence needs. Water levels have been dropping across the drainage, although overall water level remains high and little debris was reported. The lower river region reported that people are waiting for fall chum and that the water is dropping. The middle river area is waiting for silvers to show up. The Koyukuk River region is also waiting for fall chum and some people are fishing for dog salmon in Huslia. The upper Yukon area is waiting for another opening so they can fish, few people fished during their opening because it was rainy and many people were working. The Tanana River region is closed and fishermen are waiting for another opening as well. The Yukon Flats area is closed and fishermen are waiting for an opening and the fall chum. The Mayo area is beginning to see some salmon activity. Carmacks and Teslin reported that no one is fishing yet. Old Crow has caught a couple of King salmon and the water is high.

Management Update:

Fall season: The Yukon Area began fall season management in the lower river districts on July 16. Based on the size of the 2012 summer chum salmon run, the fall chum salmon run size is projected to be greater than 900,000 fish. This level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and subsistence priorities and provide for commercial harvest.

Summer season: The current passage through Pilot Station sonar is 106,500 Chinook salmon as of July 23, well below the average for late run years of 131,000 fish. It looks like run size will be at or below the low end of the pre-season projection of 109,000. Conservation measures have been discontinued in Districts 1-4 now that the majority of Chinook salmon have passed through these districts. The summer season commercial fishery is over in Districts 1 and 2. Consistent with management actions taken in downriver districts, additional measures are being implemented in Districts 5 and 6 in order to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement.

Canadian update: The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is taking a conservative approach and monitoring the border passage. The commercial and domestic fisheries are closed, recreational catch limits are set at zero, and the First Nations fishery is open but a conservative approach is recommended. First Nations are currently developing their response to the need for a conservative approach. As more data becomes available recommendations for management actions will be developed.

Public comments, questions, and answers: A caller expressed concern regarding the number of openings in the lower river versus the number of openings in the upper Yukon area (subsistence and commercial). He stated that more openings need to be available in Y-5 and Y-6 and hopes that managers are not forgetting that fishermen have the right to subsistence fish over commercial fisheries. Managers responded that throughout the season that they have been informing people that the run would be poor this year and that people should not expect to meet their subsistence needs for Chinook salmon.

One caller stated that no one met their subsistence needs this year across the drainage due to the poor run and that we knew this was going to be the case from pre-season management discussions. ADF&G did what was needed based on the preseason projection and the data that has been available throughout the run this season, and that ADF&G has gone above and beyond to let us get some salmon. The caller expressed appreciation for the fish donations from the lower river and thanked ADF&G for their efforts. Another caller echoed these sentiments.

Callers discussed the difference between summer and fall chum and how to tell them apart. Managers stated that the fall chum come in later and are larger and have a higher oil content compared to summer chum that aren't going as far. Managers also informed callers that based on timing charts the front end of the fall chum is around Holy Cross and the first pulse should be around Russian Mission.

Several callers raised the issue of salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. They noted that trawlers are having an impact on the fish, and they should be restricted too. It's not fair that in-river fishers are restricted and the regulations don't restrict the trawlers as much " this is all part of management of our fisheries. One caller stated that in discussing trawlers we should be looking at it in an international level, not just a national level.

One caller expressed the need to get together and work on all of these issues, and that we need to work together across the border.

Several callers discussed the salmon donations from the lower river. A Kwik'pak representative reported that so far king and chum salmon from lower river fisheries were delivered to 13 upriver villages. A total of 4,300 pounds of king salmon have been delivered to 6 upriver villages while 16,700 pounds of chum salmon have been delivered to 13 upriver villages. Village government representatives interested in receiving donations of chum salmon should e-mail [gjsandone@gci.net](mailto:gjsandone@gci.net). Some callers expressed gratitude for the program, others were concerned that it is better for people to catch their own fish.

Additional information from Kwik'pak regarding donation: In most cases, fishers receiving king salmon were asked to curtail or eliminate their fishing efforts for kings. Some kings were donated for memorial potlatch ceremonies. There were no obligations attached to the gift of chum salmon.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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

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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,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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, July 31, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Galena, Ruby, The Rapids, Manley Hot Springs, Minto, Nenana, Fairbanks, Eagle, Whitehorse, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: People across the drainage reported that they are berry picking. Water levels have been dropping across the drainage and little debris was reported. The lower river region reported that the fall chum are looking big and fishermen in Emmonak are beginning to fish for them. Conditions were rainy and windy throughout the river over the last week, with few people fishing or drying fish. Due to the rain in the GASH region no one has been fishing but they are waiting for the fall chum to meet their subsistence needs. The upper Yukon area reported wind and rain, no one is currently fishing but they are waiting for the fall chum. The Rapids area is reporting fishing for fall chums. No one is fishing in the Tanana River region, fishermen are waiting for fall chum and the water is high. The Yukon Flats community of Eagle reported that no one is fishing because of the closure and it is raining. Old Crow is waiting for fall chum.

Management Update:

Fall season: Based on run timing, the first pulse should be around Kaltag and the second pulse should be around Russian Mission. The fall chum that have passed through Emmonak should be around Koyukuk and Galena as of July 31. The subsistence schedule is being relaxed as Chinook salmon move up the river. Commercial fishing schedules will be adjusted as more information is available about the strength of the fall chum salmon run. Current management is based on the pre-season fall chum salmon run projection of greater than 900,000 fish. That run size would be adequate to meet escapement needs, provide for subsistence opportunity, personal use, and commercial harvest.

Summer season: The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 107,000 Chinook salmon through July 29 is well below the historical average of 148,000 for this date. Based on this assessment the Chinook salmon run is poor. Summer season management is almost done and the focus now is on the number of Chinook salmon crossing the border. Projected escapement into Canada is for 34,400-42,400 Chinook salmon, which is below the Interim Management Escapement Goal (IMEG) agreed upon by the Yukon River Panel. Based on these escapement projections, restrictions are still in place in Subdistrict 5D to protect Chinook salmon as they pass through.

Canadian update: The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is taking a conservative approach and monitoring the border passage. Management is in the yellow with fishing open only to First Nations. First Nations have been meeting and are applying conservative approaches early on.

Public comments, questions, and answers: A caller asked about the genetics of the fall chum and whether it is being monitored closely to determine whether they are summer or fall chum passing



through. Managers responded that they are monitoring this as genetics are available. For the period of July 19 through July 24, 73% of the chum were summer chum based on the genetic stock identification. Managers are continuing to keep monitor of the proportion of summer versus fall chum in the river.

One caller expressed concern about the federal and commercial boundaries in the Kotlik area. Managers responded that there is confusion about the boundaries and they are intending to travel to Kotlik in the next few days to talk to fishermen about the boundaries.

One caller asked about the test fishery focus on Chinook and whether the test fishery included greater than 7.5 in. mesh to target king salmon. Managers responded that beginning on July 19 to the 8.5 in. mesh at the Pilot Station sonar project was no longer fished, but they are still using 7.5 in. mesh.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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Have a great week,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 7, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Holy Cross, Huslia, Galena, Tanana, The Rapids, Nenana, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Eagle, Whitehorse, Old Crow

Subsistence Reports: Conditions were rainy and colder throughout the drainage over the last week. The lower river community of Emmonak reported that people are fishing. In the GASH region some people are fishing in Holy Cross, fishermen are freezing or jarring their fish. The Koyukuk River area is reporting that not many fishermen are fishing in Huslia, mostly fishing for chums and some silvers. The upper Yukon area reported rain and colder weather, no one is currently fishing but they are planning to start next week in Galena. The Rapids area is reporting fall chum and a lot of rain. The Tanana River region is reporting rain and the river has dropped, people are starting to collect wood and the fish look good in Nenana. The Yukon Flats community of Fort Yukon reported that no one is fishing because of the closure, Eagle fishermen are waiting for the fall chum and the water is low. Old Crow reports high water and not many people are fishing, some people are catching chum and fishing for fresh water fish.

Management Update:

Fall season: Subsistence fishing at this time is now on the full regulatory schedules in the lower and middle river sections, yet remains restrictive in the middle and upper portions of Subdistrict 5-D due to the conservation of Chinook salmon. Based on run timing as of August 7th, the first pulse should be around Ruby and Tanana, the second pulse should be around Anvik and Kaltag, and the third pulse should be around the Holy Cross area. Commercial fishing is likely to follow a normal schedule, managers will consider additional opportunities dependent upon the current assessment. Fishermen should be aware that commercial periods may be announced with short notice.

Summer season: The Chinook salmon run is winding down, based on assessment information to date the run appears to have come in at the lower end of the preseason outlook estimate of 109,000. The summer season commercial fishery is over in Districts 1,2, and Subdistrict 4-A. Conservation management actions are still being taken in the middle and upper portions of Subdistrict 5-D in an effort to pass more Chinook salmon across the border for escapement.

Canadian update: The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is taking a conservative approach and monitoring the border passage. Management is in the yellow with fishing open only to First Nations.

Public comments, questions, and answers: Managers asked DFO what fishermen are seeing across the border in Canada. DFO responded that people are commenting about the small size of the fish on the Pelly and that the catches are small.

One caller expressed concern about the number of openings in the Tanana region in comparison to District Y-1 and Y-2. Managers responded that most districts are on their full regulatory schedule,

including Tanana, and the schedule will be maintained and possibly modified depending on continued assessment of the fall chum run. Another caller voiced support of utilizing subsistence fishing across the drainage.

A caller asked about the genetics of the fall chum and whether it is being monitored closely to determine whether they are summer or fall chum passing through and if an analysis report has been done. Managers responded for the period of July 19 through July 24, 73% of the chum were summer chum based on the genetic stock identification. One genetic report has been returned and they are waiting on the second, managers stated that they would provide the caller with a report.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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

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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,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 14, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, Kotlik, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Koyukuk, Galena, Tanana, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Eagle, Whitehorse, Teslin.

Subsistence Reports: Water levels have been dropping and sunny weather has been reported across the drainage this week. The lower river region is reporting that fishermen are slowing down on subsistence fishing for fall chum and people are berry picking. In Marshall and Holy Cross, people did fish and got fall chum that were good in size. Koyukuk reported hardly any fall chum at Bishop Mountain and Galena reported that fishermen have been fishing for silvers and that the fish are a nice size and red. The Yukon Flats and Eagle are waiting for an opening to begin fishing for fall chum.

Management Update:

Fall season: Subsistence fishing is now on a full regulatory schedule in lower and middle river. The middle and upper sections of Subdistrict 5-D will go on their full regulatory schedule on Wednesday, August 15. There have been no commercial openings in Districts 1 and 2 since August 9 because of the low number of fall chum salmon entering the river. The first pulse of fall chum as of August 14 is around Stevens Village, the second pulse is around Ruby and Tanana, the third pulse is around Koyukuk, Ruby, and Galena, and the fourth pulse is around Holy Cross. Managers will consider additional opportunities dependent upon in-season assessment. Fishermen should be aware that commercial periods may be announced with short notice.

Summer season: The summer season is winding down and management actions are coming to a close. Once data has been compiled a summer season summary will be available. To date the projection of 33,500 Chinook salmon is not going to meet escapement goals into Canada despite the restrictions that were used this season.

Public comments, questions, and answers: A caller stated that people are economically struggling in the lower Yukon and asked how late the fall season would be open so fishermen could have an economic opportunity to fish. Managers stated that by regulation the fall season ends at the end of August and also mentioned that the Coho salmon will be entering the river too and that fall chum fishing depends on how the Coho salmon are doing too.

People were inquiring about the fall chum runs and when more fall chum would enter the river. Managers discussed how the fall chum usually enters the river when there is more windy or stormy weather to push them in. Fishers reported hot and sunny weather across the drainage and managers mentioned that we are in a lull right now, which is normal and it is a matter of waiting on the weather to change to help bring in more fall chum salmon.

Someone asked about the Pilot Station sonar and if the sonar numbers are accurate. Management responded that Eagle sonar is doing fine and even if Pilot Station sonar had missed 10,000 fish, it would not have gotten us out of this situation we are in with low king salmon numbers.

Another caller asked why when we have closures for Canadian bound fish, why fishing is not allowed on the tributaries for other types of fish. Managers stated that the restriction measures are in place for the Alaskan and Canadian sides in order to protect fish stocks in Alaska and Canada. It is not just the Canadian stocks that are doing poorly, but the Alaskan stocks are also.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

For Alaskan management information, please visit:

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

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Have a great week,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

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 21, 2012.

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. The teleconferences are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, and the Yukon River Panel.

Communities participating this week: Emmonak, St. Mary's, Grayling, Nulato, Koyukuk, Huslia, Galena, Fairbanks, Eagle, Dawson.

Subsistence Reports: Emmonak was just listening in. St. Mary's reported nothing going on. Grayling said there was rain and it was pretty slow, about 2-3 fish per boat. Nulato reported 150 silvers in 4 drifts, it was rainy and rough but people still went out. Koyukuk reported rain and wind and no fish. Galena said there was hardly any fish there right now and people were not doing super well. Virgil in Fairbanks reported he was just back from the rapids and they have a lot of fish there right now. Eagle reported a few people fishing and they are waiting for the main pulse of the fall chum salmon to arrive. Roberta Joseph of Dawson said people were conservative this year and there were twelve fishers all season, people are finished with Chinook salmon and no one is fishing fall chum salmon. Department of Fisheries and Oceans reported that 678 Chinook salmon were harvested in the main stem Yukon River in Yukon Territory and 160 Chinook salmon were harvested in Old Crow.

Management Update:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game: In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a total run ranging from 800,000 to 1.0 million fish is adequate for escapement needs, full subsistence opportunity, and has a surplus available for other uses. Subsistence fishing is now on full regulatory schedules in all portions of the river.

A substantial fifth pulse has entered the Yukon River and commercial fishing has resumed in the lower Yukon River. Managers will consider additional opportunities dependent upon inseason assessment. Fishermen should be aware that commercial periods may be announced with short notice.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada: The Canadian management for Chinook salmon remains in the Yellow zone and Yukon First Nations have applied conservative management measures; catch and effort observed is low. The commercial, domestic, and recreational fisheries are closed.

Canadian Test Fishery Updates:

Whitehorse Fishway 437 to Aug 20th (below average)

Teslin Sonar 2240 to August 19th (first full year - no comparative data)

Big Salmon Sonar 2241 to August 19th (below average)

Blind Creek 123 to August 16th (below average)

For fall chum salmon it is likely to be in the green management zone with an unrestricted First Nation fishery and opportunities in the commercial and domestic fisheries early in the run.

Public comments, questions, and answers:

People wanted to know where the pulses of the fall chum salmon are in the river. Management responded that pulse 1 is by Fort Yukon, pulse 2 is by Stevens Village, pulse 3 is by the rapids, pulse 4 is by Ruby, and pulse 5 is by Russian Mission.

People in the middle Yukon River area of Nulato and Koyukuk asked for 7 days per week fishing. People from other areas were supportive of this request acknowledging there will not be many fishing and it will not make much of an impact; also recent bad weather was hampering people's efforts to go out and fish. Management said they would be discussing this soon and asked everyone to stand by on this for more information.

A caller from Minto asked about the strength of the Tanana River stocks and at the time management said it is too early to tell but all indicators lead them to believe it should be OK.

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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,  
Marilynn Woods  
Program Assistant

Greetings from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association!

Here is a summary of the 13th and final Yukon River Salmon In-Season Management Teleconference, held this past Tuesday, August 28, 2012.

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, Mountain Village, Marshall, Holy Cross, Nulato, Huslia, Galena, The Rapids, Minto, Ft. Yukon

Subsistence Reports: In general, there are still a few people fishing for fall chum salmon and some whitefish, and many people are turning their attention to moose as the season changes. In the lower river, fall chum commercial fishing is winding down this week and some whitefish are coming in. In Nulato, people did well fishing for fall chum, and more people participated than normal due to the poor king salmon run. In Huslia, the summer and fall chum are still looking good. Several Galena fishers will fish the last big pulse of fall chum later this week. In The Rapids, Minto, and Ft. Yukon, people are going to turn their efforts to putting up fall chum for dogs soon.

Management Update: Commercial fishing for fall chum salmon will end in the lower river by regulation at the end of this month. If the Coho salmon run were stronger there could still be directed commercial Coho fishing, but this year's run is below average so this is very unlikely.

Five pulses of fall chum salmon have entered the river; it is unlikely that there will be another pulse. Their locations are as follows: 1st pulse—Canadian border, 2nd pulse—Stevens Village, 3rd pulse—Stevens Village, 4th pulse—Rampart (and reaching the Tanana River), 5th pulse (which is large)—Kaltag (and should reach the Tanana River on September 6).

ADF&G subsistence harvest surveys will begin in Emmonak on September 6 or 7, and continue upriver through October. Also, this year's prizes for returned catch calendars are: \$500 (1 award), \$250 (2 awards), and \$100 (6 awards).

Lastly, the ADF&G office in Emmonak will close this Thursday.

Public comments, questions, and answers: One caller asked when harvest numbers for fall chum salmon and whitefish would be available, pointing out that many people relied more heavily on those fish due to the poor king salmon run. ADF&G shared that the information will be included in the Joint Technical Committee report, which is due out in early spring.

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](http://www.yukonsalmon.org).

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This was the final in-season management teleconference of 2013. Special thanks to everyone who participated. It was a tough year, but working together and sharing information really makes a difference.

Have a great winter,  
Jason Hale  
Communications Director