



YUKON RIVER SALMON UPDATE July 23, 2010

RUN SIZE ESTIMATES

Alaskan Portion Run Assessment: Chinook

Available in-season assessment information from U.S. programs on the lower river suggests that the 2010 Yukon River Chinook salmon run into Canada will be below average; this is consistent with the preseason outlook. Data from the Pilot Station sonar program, lower river test fisheries and Rampart Rapids fish wheel index program is summarized below. The Pilot Station sonar estimate to July 21 is 114,127 Chinook, approximately 82% of the 2000-2009 average. Very few additional Chinook are anticipated. The lower Yukon Test Fishery index program ended on July 15th. The cumulative CPUE at the endpoint was 84% of average. Preliminary genetic analysis indicates that 50% of the Pilot Station Chinook passage is of Canadian-origin.

Chinook entry into the mouth of the river was delayed by ice conditions, adding to the level of uncertainty in early season projections. Run timing data still suggests that run is about a week later than normal at the front end, but normal at the tail end. This appears to be holding true at Rampart Rapids where cumulative index values are running well below normal; the cumulative CPUE on July 21st was 689.17 Chinook/day vs. an average cumulative CPUE of 2187.8.

Run Assessment Program	Date (as of)	2010	Comments
Pilot Station Sonar	July 21	114,127	average = 138,594 (2000-2009)
Lower Yukon Test Index*	July 15 program end)	18.67	average = 22.22 (1989-2008)
Rampart Rapids Fish Wheel Index*	July 21	689.17	Average = 2187.8 (2000-2009)

**average number of fish caught per unit effort of fishing (CPUE) – gives relative abundance for comparison among years.*

Canadian Portion Run Assessment: Chinook

The 2010 assessment of Chinook salmon entering the Upper Yukon River drainage is being determined from a joint U.S./Canada sonar program located near Eagle Alaska. This will be the third year that this program has guided Canadian management actions.

The first Chinook salmon was recorded at the Eagle sonar site on July 03. The daily numbers have climbed steadily and sharply in the last week, from 318 on July 15th to 1819 on July 22nd, bringing the total Chinook passage estimate to 9356. The contribution of Fortymile flood water and debris last week may have slowed fish migration between Rampart Rapids and Eagle. The end of the first pulse will provide a much better indication

of the run strength, as the late run and unusual water conditions have limited the value of comparison with past years. Although there is a much uncertainty at this early stage of the Chinook run into Canada, current run timing estimates and Eagle sonar border passage estimates indicate that the Chinook passage into Canada is likely near the quarter point, producing a preliminary run forecast of 37,500 Chinook salmon, well below average, and below the spawning escapement goals of 42,500. Estimates from the Eagle sonar project in the next few days will reduce the uncertainty in the forecast.

The first Chinook salmon was recorded at the Klondike River sonar on July 9. The cumulative count to July 21 was 334 salmon, only 14% of the 2009 estimate at this date. Big Salmon sonar and Blind Creek weir assessment projects were set up this week; no Chinook counts have been reported at these projects to date.

Run Assessment Program	Date (as of)	2010	Comments
Eagle Sonar	July 21	9356	average =24594 (2005-2009)
Klondike Sonar	July 21	334	2394 at this date in 2009

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

U.S. Fisheries:

There has been no U.S. commercial fishing directed at Chinook salmon in the lower Yukon River. However, there have been openings for summer chum salmon with mesh sizes restricted to 6 inches or less; Chinook salmon are caught incidentally during these openings. In District Y-1 which is the area closest to the river mouth, there have been four 6-hour openings over the period June 28- July 06 and four 9-hour openings over the period July 08-15. In Y-2, which extends from below Mountain Village upstream to below Russian Mission, there have been one 4-hour, five 6-hour and one 9-hour openings over the period from July 01-17. In District Y-4a, which extends from below Anvik upstream to below Galena, there have been four 12-hour and two 120-hour openings over the period from July 07-21. The openings were delayed until the majority of the Chinook salmon was thought to have passed, i.e. after the $\frac{3}{4}$ point in the run. The total combined area commercial catch to date is 214,068 summer chum and 9,842 Chinook salmon. In District Y-4a, there has been no incidental catch of Chinook salmon reported.

Subsistence fisheries are not being restricted along the Yukon River, although there has been a request for voluntary cutbacks to allow for the required number of Chinook to reach the Canadian border. Specific information on the US management of the subsistence fishery can be found at: www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/yukhome.php

Canadian Fisheries:

Management of Canadian fisheries will be based on projections of total run size and the number of salmon passing into the Canadian section of the upper Yukon River.

The preseason run outlook was for a below average to average run with a total run size of 77,800 to 113,100 and a border escapement of 50,600 to 61,300 chinook salmon.

At this time, all indicators in Alaska are below average and suggest that the 2010 Chinook salmon run size will be below or possibly at the low end of the preseason outlook, as noted above. The U.S. border passage obligation for a run in this range is 47000 to 51000, but actual border passage is expected to be lower, as noted above. The expected border passage would place the run in the YELLOW management zone.

Currently, the First Nation fishery is not restricted and there is fishing taking place on the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers. Salmon are reported as far upstream as the Carmack's area.

Canadian Management actions for Chinook salmon Projections in the various zones are as follows:

The Red Zone is a Border Escapement Projection in the 1-30,000 range: this will result in closure of all fisheries except a test fishery;

The Yellow Zone is a Border Escapement Projection in the 30,000 to 51,000 range: this will require closures in the commercial, domestic and recreational fisheries and restrictions will be considered in the First Nations' fishery; and

The Green Zone is a Border Escapement Projection greater than 51,000: this will allow for a "normal" (unrestricted) First Nations fishery and commercial, domestic and recreational fisheries will be allowed but managed according to available abundance within the Green Zone.

Fishery	Status	Comments
Upper Yukon First Nations Fishery	OPEN	
Recreational Fishery	CLOSED	Daily catch and possession limits for Chinook salmon in the Yukon drainage are reduced to zero midnight July 09, 2010.
Domestic Fishery	CLOSED	
Commercial Fishery	CLOSED	

For more information please contact:

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