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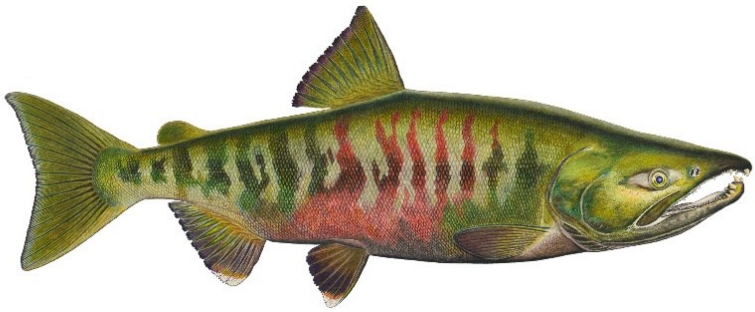
YUKON RIVER SALMON UPDATE



Thursday, October 2, 2025

Note: This update is intended to inform fish harvesters. Information provided is preliminary and subject to change. The focus will be on Chinook salmon to start and then will transition to Chum salmon in early September. For more information, please refer to the contacts identified at the end of this update.

Chum Salmon

Escapement Goals and Revised Projection

The spawning goal for Canadian-origin Fall Chum Salmon for the Yukon River mainstem is **70,000 – 104,000** fish. The spawning goal for Fishing Branch Chum Salmon (Porcupine drainage) is **22,000 to 49,000** fish. These goals were set by the Yukon River Panel and are intended to ensure populations are healthy enough to meet conservation needs and sustain fisheries in both countries.

The pre-season drainagewide forecast for both Canadian and U.S. origin Fall Chum Salmon was for 218,000 (114,000 – 322,000) fish. The preseason forecast for Canadian-origin Yukon River Chum Salmon was approximately 22,000 fish and approximately 9,000 for Fishing Branch River Chum Salmon.

This year's U.S. Summer Chum Salmon run came in below the preseason forecast and was the second lowest on record, at approximately 356,000. The age-4 component of the return (33%) was below average (48%), while the age-5 component was above average.

Lower Yukon River assessment projects concluded operation in early September. Fall Chum Salmon passage at Pilot Station is 282,000 for the 2025 season, including approximately 37,000 Canadian-origin (Table 1). Estimates of Fall Chum Salmon passage at all assessment sites along the Yukon River are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Current and Historical In-season Chum Salmon Passage Estimates (US and Canada).

Assessment Site		Date	Count to Date				Average % Passage (avg timing)
			2025	2024	10-year avg	Project avg	
Pilot Station Sonar (Lower Yukon River)	Fall season[1]	Final	343,426	246,664	657,126	700,212	100%
	Total Fall Chum[2,3]	Final	282,561		N/A		
	CND Yukon River[2,4]	Final	30,254		N/A		
	CND Porcupine R. [2,5]	Final	7,266		N/A		
Eagle, AK		Oct 1	16,638	10,456	85,701	130,847	78%
Porcupine River Sonar		Sept 22	8,243	6,338	18,431		72%
Fishing Branch River		Oct 1	6,137	4,219	10,181	27,719	72%

[1] Fall season estimate at Pilot Station is all Chum Salmon passage starting on July 19, including a component of late returning Summer Chum Salmon.
[2] Estimate based on genetic mixed stock analysis of samples collected during test netting at Pilot Station and passage estimate at the Pilot Station sonar.
[3] Estimated passage at Pilot Station sonar of Fall Chum Salmon during the 2025 season (including both summer and fall seasons).
[4] Estimated passage at Pilot Station sonar of Fall Chum Salmon which originate from mainstem Yukon River stocks in Canada, including Mainstem (Big Creek, Tatchun, Minto, and Pelly) and Upper Canada (White and Teslin).
[5] Estimated passage at Pilot Station sonar of Fall Chum Salmon which originate from the Canadian Porcupine River (Fishing Branch).

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Run Timing

Chum Salmon that enter the mouth of the Yukon River after July 16th are considered to be Fall Chum and may later be confirmed and adjusted with the use of genetics. Chum typically take 39 days to travel from the mouth of the river to the international border and are expected to start arriving at the international border in late August.

Genetics, Age, Size

Samples are collected for age, sex, length and stock composition through Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Lower Yukon Test Fishery. Fall Chum Salmon typically return as age 4 fish and this year's age 4 component is higher than average (Table 2). This year's Canadian-origin Chum Salmon component has been approximately 10% (Table 3), which is in line with the preseason projection, but well below the long term average of approximately 25-30%.

Table 2. Chum Salmon age and sex estimates, collected at Lower Yukon Test Fishery by Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Data current to September 10, 2025 (Number sampled = 470, Scales aged = 458).

	% Female	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6
2025	59.1	5.2%	78.0%	16.8%	0.0%
Average (2001-2024)	58.2	3.4%	69.0%	28.1%	0.9%

Table 3. 2025 Chum Salmon genetic mixed-stock analysis results, collected at the Pilot Station sonar project, approximately 120 miles upstream of the mouth of the Yukon River. Percent Canadian-origin Chum Salmon is based upon fall season (July 19) Chum Salmon passage.

Strata date ranges	Percent Canadian-origin Chum
July 19 – 30 (Fall 1)	8.7%
July 31 – Aug 15 (Fall 2)	9.9%
Aug 16 – 26 (Fall 3)	11.7%
Aug 27 – Sep 9 (Fall 4)	8.3%

Chinook Salmon

Escapement Goals and Pre-Season Forecast

For 2025, in-line with the agreed upon measures in the Agreement, a rebuilding target of 71,000 Canadian-origin Chinook Salmon international border passage has been adopted by both Canada and the U.S. This rebuilding target is intended to help stem the persistent decline of Chinook Salmon by ensuring that enough salmon reach the spawning grounds each year to sustain the population and provide future harvest opportunities. The Yukon River Panel recommended no Chinook Salmon fishing in 2025 based on the pre-season forecast and measures outlined in the Agreement.

The 2025 pre-season forecast framed the prediction of 18,000 Canadian-origin Chinook Salmon across the Canada/U.S. border after accounting for anticipated enroute mortality. The return of Canadian-origin Chinook Salmon will not be significant enough to achieve the rebuilding target, nor provide for harvest opportunities in either Alaska or Canada.

In-Season Assessment

Information from the Pilot Station sonar project in the lower Yukon River in Alaska provides an early-season indication of run strength and timing for Canadian-origin Chinook Salmon. There is uncertainty associated with the Pilot Station estimate due to two principal challenges: 1) co-migration of Chinook Salmon with several other fish species of similar size (species apportionment uncertainty), and 2) distinction of Canadian-origin Chinook Salmon from U.S-origin Chinook Salmon (stock identification uncertainty based on genetic analysis). The Yukon River is also extremely large at this site (width and volume of water).

In the upper Yukon River, the estimate of the number of Chinook Salmon returning to Canada is obtained from the Eagle sonar assessment project located downstream of the international border near Eagle, Alaska. There is a higher degree of confidence in the estimated number of Chinook Salmon migrating past the Eagle Sonar assessment program as the fish community is less abundant and diverse in this location, Chinook Salmon are more readily differentiated from other fish species and the overall size of the Yukon River is considerably smaller at this location.

For the 2025 season, in addition to the Pilot Station and Eagle sonar assessment projects, eight assessment projects will be delivered within the Yukon. Six of these projects are implemented in collaboration with Yukon First Nation governments, while the remainder are operated or partnered with government, contractors or non-government organizations.

Table 4 outlines the current counts for each assessment project, the equivalent count to date last season and the average count to date in the past 10 years and in the project's history.

Table 4. 2025 comparison of current and historical in-season Chinook Salmon abundance estimates for Alaskan and Canadian assessment projects.

Assessment Site	Date[1]	Count to Date				Average % Passage (avg timing)	Run Size Projection (Based on % passage and average timing)
		2025	2024	10 Year avg	Project avg		
Lower River, Pilot Station[2] (ADFG)	Final	60,407	64,198	142,649	162,443	100%	60,407
Upper River, Eagle (ADFG & DFO)	Final	23,806	24,183	44,879	48,452	100%	23,806
Porcupine River Sonar (VGFN & DFO)	Final	333	458	2,504		98%	340
Klondike River Sonar (TH)	Final	184	276	425	1,155	99%	195
Pelly River Sonar (SFN)	Final	3,033	2,548	5,130		100%	3,040
Big Salmon Sonar (Private Contractor)	Final	3,027	1,831	4,284	4,609	100%	3,041
Tatchun River Video Weir (LSCFN)	Final	260	149	406		100%	260
Takhini River Sonar (KDFN)	Sept 3	554	946	889		96%	577
Whitehorse Fish Ladder (YEC & YFGA)	Final	803[3]	355	638	1,026	100%	959
Nisutlin River Sonar (TTC)	Final	613	610	623		99%	617

[1] Projects listed as final are considered to be preliminary until post-season review confirms 2025 passage.
[2] Pilot Station Sonar Counts (includes both Canadian and U.S origin fish).
[3] Daily monitoring of the fish ladder ended on September 9, 2025, however video continues to be recorded and post-season review will verify the final 2025 passage.

Run Timing

This season's return at the Pilot Station sonar site is estimated to be 5 days later than average, which is near the latest on record. It's currently too early to determine the run timing at Eagle, however, historical data shows a strong relationship in run timing between these two sites, suggesting the timing at Eagle will also be later than average and possibly as late as identified at Pilot Station. Timing at Eagle has a large impact on the projected run size, therefore it is important to continue to monitor updates as they are made available.

In-Season Projections

Chinook Salmon passage at Eagle is completed for the season, with the crew having transitioned to Chum Salmon on August 27. The preliminary final passage estimate at Eagle is 23,806 (Table 4) and is similar to the 2024 return and the two in-season projections that were provided (Pilot Station passage and genetics estimate: 24,871 and Pilot Station passage and run timing estimate: 24,000).

Genetics, Age, Size

Chinook Salmon are being sampled for age, sex, length (ASL) and genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) at both the Pilot Station and Eagle sonar assessment sites (Eagle MSA is not available in-season). Preliminary average length for 2025 Chinook Salmon is the lowest on record for the Pilot Station Sonar assessment and test netting program (Table 5).

Table 5. Chinook Salmon age, sex and length (mm) data, collected at Pilot Station sonar, Alaska. Data updated July 29, 2025 (n=366).

	% Female	Avg Length	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8
2025	38.8	695		18.1%	64.5%	15.6%	1.9%	
Average (1998-2024)	42.7	739	0.8%	10.7%	46.9%	39.3%	2.5%	0.2%
10-year average	46.2	732	0.7%	11.1%	48.1%	37.7%	2.6%	0.2%

Table 6. 2025 Chinook Salmon genetic mixed-stock analysis results at Pilot Station sonar, Alaska.

Strata date ranges	Percent Canadian-origin Chinook	10-year average percent Canadian-origin Chinook
June 6 – 19 (Strata 1)	50%	45–54%
June 20 – July 4 (Strata 2)	42%	42%
July 4 – August 7 (Strata 3)	36%	TBD

Canadian Fisheries Management

Chinook Salmon Management Summary

- First Nation Fishery: The 71,000 (rebuilding target) will not be met and as a result there will be no Chinook Salmon harvest opportunities for 2025.
- Public Angling Fishery: Suspended (closed) beginning in 2024 through 2030.
- Commercial Fishery: Suspended (closed; long term closure in place since 2021).
- Domestic Fishery: Suspended (closed; long term closure in place since 2021).

Chum Salmon Management Summary

- First Nation Fishery: No harvest opportunities for 2025.
- Public Angling Fishery: Closed for 2025
- Commercial Fishery: Suspended (closed; long term closure in place since 2021).
- Domestic Fishery: Suspended (closed; long term closure in place since 2021).

Information Links and Notifications About Fishery Management Actions:

Yukon River Panel (Pacific Salmon Treaty) – the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement* can be found at: https://www.yukonriverpanel.com/

Canadian First Nation Subsistence Fisheries – Fisheries and Oceans Canada communicates directly with Yukon River First Nation Governments by way of pre-season, in-season and post-season meetings.

Canadian Recreational, Domestic, and Commercial Fisheries – Information is available via the Fishery Notification System at: http://notices.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm Fishers are encouraged to subscribe to receive automatic notifications on fisheries of interest via email at: http://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?pg=pub_reg

U.S. Fisheries – Information on fisheries in U.S. portion of the Yukon River is available at: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareayukon.salmon

Joint Technical Committee (of the Yukon River Panel) - Further information on Canadian-Origin salmon escapement goals and preseason forecasts may be found in the Yukon River Salmon 2024 Season Summary and 2025 Season Outlook Report at: https://www.yukonriverpanel.com/publications/yukon-river-joint-technical-committee-reports/

Contacts

For questions about the information provided in this update or additional information please contact:

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