

FOR RELEASE
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Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee at Yukon River Panel Meeting in Alaska

ANCHORAGE—The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) and a delegation of Yukon First Nation governments, Renewable Resources Councils, and fishers are at the Yukon River Panel (YRP) meetings in Anchorage, Alaska, being held from December 7 to 11.

The December meetings wrap up a year of unprecedented restrictions, voluntary closures and sacrifices on both sides of border. Based on an estimate from the Eagle sonar station on the Yukon River, more than 64,000 Chinook salmon crossed into Canada in 2014, exceeding the border and spawning escapement goal of 42,500-55,000 that was set by the YRP.

“The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee would like to express its sincere thanks and appreciation to the fishers, communities, state and federal agencies in Alaska for their efforts this past summer to put fish on the spawning grounds in Canada,” said Pauline Frost, chair of the YSSC. “Having these Chinook make their way back to Yukon for spawning is like putting money in the bank for the future.”

Yukon First Nations voluntarily did not fish this year in support of the Alaskan restrictions and sacrifices, as well as their concern about the quality of the fish crossing the border to spawn in the Yukon.

“While the number of salmon crossing the border was promising, we’re concerned that 70 per cent of those fish were males. The fish are also smaller and, therefore, not as productive,” said Wolf Riedl, with the YSSC. “We’ll have to keep monitoring and factoring this information into our recommendations for managing the Chinook salmon.”

Some Yukon First Nation communities have been voluntarily restricting their catch for more than a decade in an effort to conserve Yukon River Chinook salmon, which are essential for historical, traditional and cultural ceremonies. This comes at a great economic hardship for Yukon First Nation governments and demonstrates their commitment to conserve these fish and to keep their traditions alive.

“Community leaders in Alaska are spreading the word about Yukon River Chinook conservation and this year Alaska and Canada worked together and shared the burden on our jointly managed stock,” added Frost. “It will take us all working together, regardless of which side of the border we’re on, to bring the Yukon River Chinook back to historical levels.”

The December Yukon River Panel meeting brings together governments and stakeholders from Alaska and Yukon for a post-season review, to hear public testimony from Yukon River fishers, to identify research priorities and review Restoration and Enhancement Fund proposals.

Agenda for the December 7–11, 2014 meetings

http://yukonriverpanel.com/salmon/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/yrp_agenda_dec_2014_11-17-14f1.pdf

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BACKGROUND

The management of salmon stocks originating from the Yukon River in Canada is the joint responsibility of American and Canadian governments. To facilitate international co-operation, the Yukon River Panel (established pursuant to Chapter 8 of the Pacific Salmon Treaty) is responsible for making recommendations to management entities concerning the conservation and coordinated management of Canadian-origin salmon stocks.

Approximately 50 per cent of the Yukon River Chinook salmon stocks that enter into the Yukon River system spawn in Canada.

The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) was established under Chapter 16 of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) to act as “the main instrument of salmon management in the Yukon”. The YSSC makes up the majority of the Canadian portion of the Yukon River Panel. The Yukon River Panel develops and implements agreed upon research and management programs, makes recommendations to management agencies, sets and adjusts spawning escapement objectives, and oversees the use and administration of the Restoration and Enhancement Fund.

The YSSC works throughout the year to gather information and priorities through numerous regular committee meetings, community visits and outreach activities. This information and the associated priorities are then shared and utilized where appropriate by the Canadian contingent of the Yukon River Panel.