



Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
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PRESS RELEASE

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**Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee Supports a Closure of Yukon River Chinook
Salmon Fishing on Both Sides of the Border**

In light of the dismal projections for the 2014 Yukon River Chinook stocks the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) is supporting a drainage wide closure of the Chinook fishery. Projections from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) call for pre-season forecast of 32,000 to 61,000 Canadian-origin Chinook salmon. This is considered an extremely poor run and possibly the worst on record. It should be noted that despite a correction factor added since 2009, the run has materialized consistently on the lower end of that range, resulting in escapement not being met in five of the last seven years.

The Yukon River Canadian Management Plan calls for a complete closure of the Canadian portion of the Yukon River Chinook fishery, including commercial, domestic, recreational and First Nation fishery should the run not meet the minimum spawning escapement target of 42,500 for the Canadian portion of the stock. The target is set under the Yukon River Salmon Agreement between the United States and Canada is not likely to be met, meaning that there will be no total allowable catch (TAC) available for either country.

Pauline Frost states that “the YSSC supports the Canadian management plan and a full closure of the Chinook fishery should spawning escapement not be met. Yukon First Nations, Canadian commercial fishers and the public have been sacrificing and bearing the brunt of conservation for many years as it relates to Yukon River Chinook. With such a long term decline and issues with fish productivity we need to continue leading by example and conserving these fish”.

Alaska has recently confirmed through their management plan that there will be no subsistence Chinook fishing along the Yukon River in the U.S.. This unprecedented management approach on the part of ADF&G states that as Chinook salmon arrive in each Alaskan district, subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon will be closed. Pauline Frost, Acting Chair of the YSSC states: “we are extremely pleased that ADF&G has instituted this subsistence closure prior to the Chinook season on the Yukon River. In the

recent past there has been some fishing of Chinook and we are in a time where every fish counts and we need them to get to the spawning grounds”.

The YSSC encourages DFO and Yukon First Nations to work together to develop salmon management plans and the implementation of the closure. The YSSC will be traveling throughout the territory over the next month meeting with First Nation Governments, communities, Renewable Resource Councils and other stakeholders to discuss the status of the poor outlook for the 2014 Yukon River Chinook run and the related management implications and options. By early June the YSSC will make a recommendation to the Minister of Department of Fisheries and Oceans regarding the management plan for 2014. The YSSC will then have an in-season meeting later in the summer when the Canadian origin run strength is determined at Eagle Sonar in order to once again review the management plan and make a recommendation.

The YSSC encourages all Yukon salmon stakeholders to participate in the weekly Yukon River Fisheries In-season Management teleconferences in order to monitor the progress of the Yukon River Chinook Run. The teleconference occurs every Tuesday from June through August, call number 1-800-315-6338, participant code: YUKON# (98566#).

Background:

The 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.

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