



Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
Box 31094
Whitehorse YT, Y1A 5P7
yssc.harvey@icloud.com

January 15, 2019

Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200 Kent St
Station 15N100, Ottawa On K1A 0E6
min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Dear Minister Wilkinson:

Re: Alsek River Salmon Public (Recreational) Salmon Angling Close Time/Period Proposed Public Fishery Management Action for 2019 -

On November 5, 2018, the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) received the following Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) proposed Public Fishery Management Action for 2019:

Prohibition of public (recreational) angling for salmon in the Alsek River watershed prior to August 15. The specific proposal involves establishing a "condition of licence" on the Yukon Salmon Catch Card that will limit the period of time within which the Yukon Salmon Catch Card authorizes the licence holder to angle for salmon in the Alsek River watershed. If implemented, this change will result in the prohibition of angling for salmon, including catch and release angling, in the Alsek River watershed between April 1 and August 14. The condition of licence (i.e. prohibition) could be enacted on any year when the abundance of a salmon stock is below the minimum conservation threshold.

The YSSC, mandated as "the main instrument of salmon management in the Yukon" and in accordance with Chapter 16, Section 16.7.17.12 of the Yukon First Nation Final Agreements recommends:

The Minister accept the proposal to establish a "condition of license" on the Yukon Salmon Catch Card that will limit the period of time within which the Yukon Salmon Catch Card authorizes the license holder to angle for salmon in the Alsek River.

The YSSC distributed DFO's proposal to Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nations, White River First Nation, Kluane First Nation, Yukon Renewable

Resources Councils, Yukon Fish and Game Association, Yukon Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Dalton Post Lodge, and recreational fishers asking for their feedback.

The public angling fishery on the Alsek is within the CAFN's Traditional Territory. CAFN strongly support the proposed regulation change. Since the late 90's, CAFN has seen a decrease in Chinook and early sockeye salmon abundance and in recent years the spawning escapement, set by the International Pacific Salmon Treaty, was not met. Out of respect for the salmon, CAFN citizens voluntarily reduce their harvest, and in 2018 CAFN passed a resolution for a full closure on their subsistence fishing.

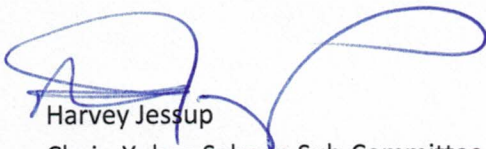
While CAFN has made these sacrifices, the angling fishery has been open to non-retention (catch and release). In 2018, CAFN's Game Guardians were explaining to citizens why they could not fish while watching anglers catching and releasing salmon. CAFN finds this unacceptable and it makes encouraging and enforcing a closure for CAFN citizens extremely difficult.

Anglers also responded in support of the proposal to ensure that the fishery does not impact the spawning escapement. Anglers prioritized meeting the spawning escapement goal over a catch and release fishery.

The YSSC understands this regulation is a temporary fix for the 2019 fishing season specific to the Alsek River. In the meantime, regulation proposals more general to the whole of Yukon pertaining to directed salmon angling are being developed with the goal to broadly consult prior to the 2019 season.

Should you require further information or clarification please contact Elizabeth MacDonald, Executive Director of the YSSC, at 867- 393- 6725

Sincerely,



Harvey Jessup
Chair, Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee

CC: Steve Gotch, Area Director Fisheries and Oceans Canada