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INTERNATIONAL JOINT STATEMENT - April 27, 2020

Notice: Due to the unprecedented nature of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated international cooperative efforts to combat the spread of this illness, the Yukon River Panel (Panel) cancelled its regularly-scheduled 2020 Pre-season public meeting. Although this was a difficult decision, it was prudent for the Panel to adopt this approach in order to facilitate the health of Panel members, advisors, agency representatives, support staff, associated family members, and communities. In lieu of the in-person meeting, and to facilitate international cooperation in the management, conservation, restoration and enhancement of Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon stocks, the Panel is releasing this joint statement to: communicate information on 2019 and 2020 salmon runs, provide management recommendations for the coming season, and convey decisions on 2020 Restoration and Enhancement Fund project funding selections.

The Panel, which operates under the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement (Pacific Salmon Treaty)*, consists of 12 Alaska and Yukon Territory residents from throughout the Yukon River system, and is supported by regional advisors, scientists, and managers from Canada and the United States.

2019 Canadian-origin Salmon Run, Harvest, and Escapement Estimates

Chinook Salmon (Yukon River Mainstem)

- Total estimated run size: ~72,620
- Harvest: ~27,804* (U.S.), ~2,764 (Canada)
- Spawning escapement: ~42,052

Chum Salmon (Yukon River Mainstem)

- Total estimated run size: ~177,839
- Harvest: ~75,342* (U.S.), ~2,759 (Canada)
- Spawning escapement: ~99,738

Chum Salmon (Fishing Branch River (Porcupine Drainage))

- Total estimated run size: ~29,164
- Harvest: ~10,333* (U.S.) ~660 (Canada)
- Spawning escapement: ~18,171

*Estimate

2020 Canadian-origin Salmon Escapement Goals and Preseason Forecasts

Chinook Salmon (Yukon River Mainstem)

- Interim Management Escapement Goal: 42,500 – 55,000*
- Pre-season estimate forecast outlook range: 59,000 – 90,000

Chum Salmon (Yukon River Mainstem)

- Interim Management Escapement Goal: 70,000 – 104,000**
- Pre-season estimate forecast outlook range: 207,000 – 261,000

Chum Salmon (Fishing Branch River (Porcupine Drainage))

- Interim Management Escapement Goal: 22,000 – 49,000**
- Pre-season estimate forecast outlook range: 33,000 – 42,000

**IMEG for 2020 season*

***IMEG renewed for 2020, 2021 and 2022 seasons*

2020 Management Recommendations

The Panel reviewed information on 2019 management strategies and outcomes for Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon stocks and outlooks for 2020. The Yukon River Panel provides the following recommendations for the 2020 season:

1. The Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run should be managed to ensure escapement falls within the 2020 IMEG range (42,500 – 55,000) and provide for agreed harvest shares in both countries as outlined within the Yukon River Salmon Agreement.
2. To provide for Canadian-origin Chinook salmon conservation, limit use of gill nets to 6" mesh or smaller upstream of the Tanana River / Yukon River Mainstem confluence for the duration of the Chinook salmon migration consistent with the regulatory structures in both countries.
3. Environmental conditions, in particular extreme events, should be considered in-season to inform fishery management measures implemented and resulting harvest opportunities.
4. In the event that in-season assessment programs are unable to operate in 2020 due to circumstances beyond Agency control, fishery harvest opportunities should be provided conservatively based on 2020 pre-season outlooks and associated Total Allowable Catch and harvest share allocations.

Further information may be found in the Yukon River Salmon 2019 Season Summary and 2020 Season Outlook at: <https://www.yukonriverpanel.com/publications/yukon-river-joint-technical-committee-reports/>

Restoration and Enhancement Fund

The Panel has approved \$1.2 million USD of funding for 27 project proposals to address salmon and habitat Restoration and Enhancement projects in Alaska and Yukon to be undertaken in 2020 (see attached table for 2020 selected project list). In addition, the Panel will be investing in directed communication initiatives to improve public awareness of the Yukon River Salmon Agreement and Yukon River Panel goals and objectives. The Panel has allocated nearly \$19.0 million USD since 2002 to community-based projects, including stewardship projects, that directly support the management and recovery of Yukon River salmon stocks originating in Canada.

Yukon River Restoration and Enhancement Fund – 2020 Project Proposals Selected for Funding*

1	Genetic Stock Identification of Pilot Station Chinook Salmon, 2020
2	Genetic Stock Identification of the Subsistence Harvest (Coastal and District 1), 2020
3	Klondike River Chinook Salmon Sonar Project
4	Chinook Salmon Sonar Enumeration on the Big Salmon River
5	Pelly River Chinook Salmon Sonar Program
6	Tatchun Creek Chinook Enumeration
7	Juvenile Chinook Salmon Outmigration at the Yukon River Mouth
8	KDFN Michie Creek Salmon Monitoring Project
9	Temperature monitoring of Yukon River Chinook Salmon habitats in Canada
10	Surveying Chinook Salmon spawning areas in the Beaver River
11	Ta'an Kwäch'än Council - Fox Creek Salmon Restoration Project
12	Deadman Creek Chinook Salmon Restoration Project
13	Tay River Chinook Salmon Access Project
14	Assessing the fate of returning Upper Yukon River Chinook Salmon
15	Klondike River Chinook Instream Incubation Trial
16	Fishing Branch River Chum Instream Egg Incubation Trial
17	Ibex River Chinook Incubation Trial
18	Mica Creek Chinook Restoration
19	Morley River Chinook Stock Restoration
20	Whitehorse Rapids Fishway Stewardship
21	Teslin Tlingit Salmon Steward
22	Southern Lakes Community-Based Salmon Planning
23	Na'Cho Nyäk Dun Salmon Planning
24	Yukon River Salmon Summer Pre-Season Preparation Meeting
25	Enhanced Education and Outreach – Salmon in the Schools
26	Porcupine River Chum Harvest Guideline Community Signage
27	Promoting the Chum Salmon Angling Fishery (in Canada)

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** Proponents of Yukon Restoration and Enhancement Fund projects selected for funding in 2020 are responsible for ensuring that project activities comply with all applicable local community, regional or national public health requirements and guidelines relating to COVID-19.

The Yukon River Panel's 2020 Post-season meeting will be held in Fairbanks, Alaska in early December 2020 or late January 2021. Confirmation of meeting details, including specific dates, location, venue and agenda will be available on the Yukon River Panel's website in advance of the meeting: www.yukonriverpanel.com/meetings/