



# ALSEK RIVER SALMON UPDATE

Note: This update is intended as a message to fish harvesters. Information provided in this update is preliminary and subject to change. For more information contact the individuals listed at the end of this update.

**Wednesday, 21 August 2019**

## **Fisheries Management Summary:**

### Canadian Fisheries:

In response to poor pre-season forecasts and ongoing concerns over low returns of Chinook and early-migrating Sockeye salmon, angling for salmon in the Alsek River watershed was prohibited through August 15, 2019. Specifically, the prohibition applied to “catch and release angling”. The 2019 return of Chinook salmon to the Klukshu River (and the upper Alsek River watershed) has exceeded the pre-season forecast. With approximately 99% of the run complete (to date), the total return to Klukshu River is anticipated to reach 1,600 fish. A run of this abundance is of sufficient size to achieve the upper end of the spawning escapement goal range (1,200) and provide for a full allocation for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations subsistence fishery (200).

In response to the better than expected return to the Alsek River, the Chinook salmon catch limits were increased to 1 per day and 1 in possession for public (recreational) angling in the waters of the Tatshenshini River upstream of the Village Creek and Tatshenshini River confluence to the Yukon and British Columbia border, beginning August 16th, 2019.

**NOTE:** in addition to the area closures and restrictions identified on pages 19 to 22 of the 2019-20 Yukon Fishing Regulations Summary, the area in the vicinity of the confluence of Village Creek and the Tatshenshini River will be closed to angling to prevent disruption of staging and pre-spawn sockeye and Chinook salmon.

Anglers are reminded of their responsibilities when crossing First Nation lands (identified on pages 19 to 22 of the 2019-20 Yukon Fishing Regulations Summary). The retention of sockeye salmon will continue to be prohibited until further notice. Any sockeye salmon caught must be released live / unharmed and recorded on the anglers salmon catch card. For information on current fishery management measures, please subscribe to the Fishery Notification System where you will receive email notifications about the selected fishery or area of interest. Subscription to the Fishery Notification System can be completed by accessing:

[www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?pg=pub\\_reg](http://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fns-sap/index-eng.cfm?pg=pub_reg)

## U.S. Fisheries:

Regular updates on fisheries occurring in U.S. waters can be found on the following website:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.main>

## Stock Assessment

### Chinook

The Klukshu River video counter assessment program is the principal monitoring tool for Alsek River Chinook. The preseason forecast for Klukshu River origin Chinook salmon was 1,100 (Alsek River 4,500) which is a below average run size. The Klukshu River assessment program was operational as of June 9<sup>th</sup>, and the first Chinook arrived on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Current projections suggest that the Klukshu River return will be ~1,600 Chinook salmon, above the upper end of the escapement goal range (800 – 1,200).

A pilot project using sonar technology to estimate the passage of large Chinook (> 72cm fork length) into the Blanchard River was operational as of June 10<sup>th</sup>. Operations have been very successful to date.

<b>Assessment Program</b>	<b>Date (as of)</b>	<b>Count/Catch</b>	<b>Average (as of Date)</b>
Klukshu River	August 20	1,584	1,183 Chinook
Blanchard River	August 19	~1,499	N/A
U.S. Dry Bay Fishery Index	August 20	75 Chinook (25 jacks)	~400 Chinook

### Sockeye

The Klukshu River video counter assessment program is the principal monitoring tool for Alsek River sockeye. In addition, sockeye salmon passage into Nesketahin Lake is monitored using a video counter installed in Village Creek. The post-season estimate of total Alsek River sockeye salmon abundance is determined through a combination of genetic stock identification information and counts from upper Alsek River assessment programs. The 2019 preseason forecast for Klukshu sockeye salmon was 10,400 (Alsek River 45,000) which is a below average run size.

The Klukshu River and Village Creek assessment programs were operational as of June 9<sup>th</sup> and June 12<sup>th</sup> respectively, with the first Klukshu sockeye arriving on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and the first Nesketahin sockeye on June 24<sup>th</sup>. The U.S. Dry Bay Fishery index indicates Alsek River sockeye salmon abundance is average.

The pilot sonar project to estimate the passage of large Chinook (> 72cm fork length) into the Blanchard River is also enumerating sockeye mixed in with non-large Chinook. We anticipate the ability to produce a crude estimate of Blanchard sockeye passage in the post season.

<b>Assessment Program</b>	<b>Date (as of)</b>	<b>Count/Catch</b>	<b>Average (as of Date)</b>
Klukshu River	August 20	5,026	3,803 Sockeye
Village Creek	August 20	~1,360	734 Sockeye
Blanchard River		TBD post season	N/A
U.S. Dry Bay Fishery Index	August 20	9,786	13,591 Sockeye; no effort for the last 2 weeks

### **Contacts**

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

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