



Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
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North Pacific Fishery Management Council
1007 West Third Ave., Suite 400
L92 Building, 4th Floor
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252
USA

RE: *Pacific Salmon Treaty* requirements for marine captures of Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon

Dear North Pacific Fishery Management Council,

We regret that we are not able to testify in person at your April meeting as we are members of the Yukon River Panel and the Panel's meetings overlap with yours. Instead, we are submitting these written recommendations. Please consider them fully and let us know how they have integrated into your management actions.

The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) is established as "the main instrument of Salmon management in the Yukon" under Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, which are constitutionally entrenched "land claims agreements" in Canada. In addition, the YSSC makes up "the majority of the Canadian representatives to the Yukon River Panel". You can learn more about us at <https://yssc.ca/about-us/>.

We have two recommendations for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

- 1. We recommend no marine harvest of Canadian-origin Yukon River Chinook, chum and coho salmon, including indirect harvest.**

Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon are in a crash. We have had several consecutive years of record low returns for all 3 species and have not met spawning goals in many years. Our salmon are on the brink of functional extinction. To prevent this, we are diligently working to maintain healthy habitat and to ensure as many salmon as possible reach their spawning grounds. Last year, YSSC recommended no harvest of Chinook and chum salmon to both DFO and Yukon First Nations¹. We anticipate making the same recommendations again this year.

¹ Yukon First Nations manage their own fisheries.

2. We recommend you uphold the *Pacific Salmon Treaty* requirements related to marine catches of Yukon River salmon.

The *Pacific Salmon Treaty* (PST), Chapter 8 section 12 requires that:

The Parties shall maintain efforts to increase the in-river run of Yukon River origin salmon by reducing marine catches and bycatches of Yukon River salmon. They shall further identify, quantify and undertake efforts to reduce these catches and by-catches.

This requires you to not only continue to reduce the harvest of our salmon in your fisheries but also to identify them (to stock of origin) and to quantify this harvest where they may inadvertently occur. This harvest will count against the US harvest share of Canadian-origin salmon. We fully expect that there will be no harvestable surplus in 2024, which means any harvest will result in an overharvest by the US.

The PST also states (Section 1):

The Parties recognize:

b) that subsistence fisheries in Alaska have priority over other fisheries in Alaska;

c) that aboriginal fisheries in Yukon have priority over other fisheries in Yukon;

This section reinforces our request. With no anticipated harvest shares and the likely closures of both the subsistence and First Nation fisheries on the river, there should be no other fishery on these salmon.

We urgently need your support to ensure that our salmon continue to exist. We rely on salmon for food, culture, ceremony and so much more. Yukon First Nations have made many sacrifices for their salmon. At the headwaters in Canada these sacrifices started with harvest closures 30 years ago. We need your support to ensure these sacrifices are not in vain.

Salmon also performs an extremely important role in our ecosystem. Without salmon, the productivity of our boreal forests will be impacted. Each year the boreal forest removes massive amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. If these forests become less productive, this carbon capture will decrease, further contributing to climate change and negative effect for both salmon and humans.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to a time when Yukon River salmon once again contribute to the livelihoods and well-being of Yukon River fisheries in both the Canada and the United States, including marine harvests in the United States.

Mähsi,



Tim Gerberding
Chair, YSSC