

Site Surveys for Kuskokwim River Basin Salmon Assessment Projects

Abstract: Fisheries managers are continually searching for ways to improve the quality of information used to assess the abundance of species in a given fishery. Fisheries management is by nature an imprecise science and much of the best information about abundance comes after the season in the form of information from escapement projects. The inseason usefulness of this information is directly related to the proximity of the project to the associated fisheries. Postseason information about escapement is very valuable for assessment of inseason management strategies and for providing information about future returns. The best and most accurate methodology currently available is via the specciated counts that weirs can provide.

Kuskokwim River, escapement coverage and therefore salmon population health assessment has been incomplete until just recently. A series of weirs have been established on major salmon producing tributaries throughout the drainage. Although coverage is still incomplete, it is improving. Objectives of this study were to list tributaries with suitable sites for salmon escapement/assessment weir projects if future funding becomes available.

Surveys were conducted beginning in June of 2000, before funding was actually received from the Federal Office of Subsistence Management. Survey startups used resources already in place through other field projects. The last survey was conducted in August of 2001. Tributaries surveyed included the Aniak River and its major tributaries, the Holitna, Holukuk, Telequana (tributary of the Stony), Kisaralik, Kasigluk, Tuluksak, Gagaryah, and Cheneetnuk (tributaries of the Swift) rivers. Suitable sites were located on the Holitna, Tuluksak Telaquana, Holukuk, Kipchuck and Salmon (Aniak) rivers.

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