

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF August 3 – August 9, 2014.

Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, George_Pappas@fws.gov
Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report posted on the Office of Subsistence website by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 jpkoller@fs.fed.us

Redoubt Lake

On August 9th, 27 sockeye passed the weir bringing the season total to 16,453. The in-season model is predicting 20,762 sockeye will enter the lake this year with mean absolute percent error 19,399-20,125. Based on the predicted escapement and in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game increased the subsistence sockeye individual/household limit to 25 in possession and 100 annual effective July 16th. The sport bag and possession limit was increased to six sockeye.

Falls Lake

The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weirs. As of August 9th, 1,403 sockeye have been trapped and about 1,300 sockeye have been harvested in the subsistence fishery. Preliminary estimates indicate that there are about 2,300 sockeye in the lake. The final escapement in 2013 was estimated at 1,120 while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 880. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 98% of terminal area harvest.

Klag Bay

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the sockeye monitoring weir at Klag Bay. As of August 8th, 859 sockeye have been counted at the Klag Bay weir and 3,253 have been harvested in the subsistence fishery. In 2013, a total of 6,896 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated total of 4,550 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907) 772-5930 robertlarson@fs.fed.us

Week ending August 9, 2014; statistical week 32

There have been 121 Stikine River subsistence fishing permits issued. The U.S. subsistence catch estimate through Saturday, August 2 is 50 Chinook salmon, no coho salmon and 2,000 sockeye salmon. The Canadian aboriginal food fishery has harvested 1,000 Chinook and 9,700 sockeye salmon. The Canadian commercial fishery catch is 2,200 Chinook and 30,000 sockeye salmon. The U.S. commercial catch in the District 8 terminal area is estimated at 2,800 Chinook and 20,000 sockeye salmon (the U.S. catch of Stikine River-Canadian origin salmon will be computed once genetic sampling is completed).

Chinook salmon are having difficulty passing pass the slide on the Tahltan River although sockeye salmon are passing in good numbers. The total sockeye salmon escapement past the weir on Tahltan Lake is 37,000 (exceeds the upper end of the escapement goal range) and the escapement into the Little Tahltan River is very low at only 169 Chinook salmon (the average for this date is 5,000 Chinook salmon). In the Southeast Region, the weight of coho and pink salmon harvested in the commercial fisheries is above average. Catch rates for coho salmon are also above average. Pink salmon are abundant in Southern Southeast and coastal areas with the weekly catch exceeding 9 million fish. The total catch is projected to approach 30 million fish. The troll fishery will stand down for four days then reopen to catch the remaining 36,000 Chinook salmon U.S./Canada Salmon Treaty allocation.

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.salmonfishery_updates

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907)-789-6257 bvanalen@fs.fed.us or Jake Musslewhite (907) 789-6256

In the Yakutat area, 475 large Chinook salmon have now been counted through the Situk River weir and this number is within their 450 to 1,050 biological escapement goal range. The weir count for sockeye salmon is now over 101,000.

In the Northern Inside area, purse seine boats have caught few pink salmon and the pink run appears to be consistent with the low return forecasted. Less than three purse seine boats fished the 15-hour opening at Point Augusta this past week.

Project personnel have been using double video net weirs to get validated counts of fish into Neva Lake since June 16 and Kook Lake since June 19. As of August 10, 2,323 sockeye salmon have entered Neva Lake and as of August 6, 6,825 have entered Kook Lake.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649 jreeves@fs.fed.us

No report expected until third week in August.

Southeast Alaska Web Links

Tongass National Forest News Room

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Prince William Sound – Copper River – Molly McCormick, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve. (907) 822-7280 Molly_McCormick@nps.gov

The ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) was shut down on July 28, 2014. By that date an estimated 1,177,005 salmon had migrated upstream. This estimate is 169% of the projected escapement objective of 696,799 for this date, or 480,206 more salmon. An estimate of 6,678 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 28th.

MILES LAKE SONAR ESTIMATES (TOTAL SALMON)

Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate
1978	107,011	1987	483,478	1996	906,867	2005	854,268
1979	237,173	1988	488,398	1997	1,148,079	2006	959,731
1980	276,538	1989	607,797	1998	866,957	2007	926,438
1981	535,263	1990	581,895	1999	848,921	2008	614,999
1982	467,306	1991	579,435	2000	587,592	2009	709,330
1983	545,724	1992	601,952	2001	833,569	2010	924,010

1984	536,806	1993	797,902	2002	819,000	2011	914,285
1985	436,313	1994	715,181	2003	695,233	2012	1,271,354
1986	509,275	1995	599,265	2004	669,646	2013	1,267,060

Commercial harvests in the Copper River District of Prince William Sound as of August 7 are:

- 9,618 Chinook
- 2,061,179 sockeye
- 12,610 coho
- 11,406 pink
- 42,588 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict will remain open for the rest of the season – through September 30. Eighty-one Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. Starting on June 16, 2014, the state personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was closed to the retention of Chinook salmon for the remainder of the season, by Emergency Order from ADFG.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15th and is expected to remain open until September 30th. Two hundred eighty one Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1st.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. Two permits have been issued so far this year.

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 23. As of August 6, 24,759 sockeye and 5 Chinook have been counted through the weir.



Image of male sockeye migrating through the Tanada Creek video weir

The Long Lake weir, on the McCarthy Road was installed and operational on July 25. As of August 6, 554 sockeye have been counted through the weir.

1,938 Chinook were tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak: and 180 tagged and 2,368 untagged were captured upriver at the Canyon Creek wheels. July 27, 2104 was the final day of this project.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River was installed on June 4. As of August 6, 2,466 Chinook and 16,788 sockeye have been counted.

By Emergency Order of the state of Alaska starting June 14, 2014, Chinook salmon harvest in the upper Copper River drainage sport fisheries was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook 20 inches or more in length.

Six Special Actions relating to fisheries have been issued by the park so far this season:

- setting the tentative preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict and delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict federal salmon fishery
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of June 30 – July 6 and providing the tentative schedule for future fishing periods.
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 7 – July 13, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing.

- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 14 – July 20, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 21 – July 27, increasing the number of fishing hours allowed to 156 hours
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 28 – August 3, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing.

Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Subsistence User's Guide

<http://www.nps.gov/wrst/historyculture/upload/Subsistence%20brochure.pdf>

Prince William Sound Federal Subsistence Regulations including Copper River.

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Prince.pdf

PWS and Copper River Flats – Milo Burcham, Forest Service, Cordova.

(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

A total of 47 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued to residents of Cordova for fresh waters of the Copper River Delta. Harvest is not reported until after fish reports are returned at the end of the season. Sixty-five permits were issued for the 2013 season with a reported harvest of 358 coho salmon and 102 sockeye salmon.

The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 11 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. The last day of sonar operation for the 2014 season was July 28. The cumulative sonar count through July 28 was 1.22 million fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 697,000 fish. For the week ending August 2, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 34,825 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 32,568–76,979. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown when weather permits. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 29 were 35% Gulkana Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closes Friday, August 8 is not yet available.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 Jeffrey_Anderson@fws.gov

A harvest of 1,212 sockeye salmon for the Russian River Falls dip net fishery and a harvest of 45 sockeye salmon for the Kasilof River dip net fishery have been reported through 7 August. Totals of 128 Kenai River permits, 16 Kasilof River permits, and 9 designated fisher permits have been issued through 7 August.

An emergency Special Action was issued to extend the closure to subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon in all waters under Federal subsistence management jurisdiction in the Kenai River drainage downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, August 17, 2014.

Fish Counts through 6 August:

Russian River early-run sockeye (weir)	44,920	(counts ended on 14 July)
Russian River late-run sockeye (weir)	18,602	(counts began on 15 July)
Kenai River late-run sockeye (sonar)	1,093,272	(Counts ended on 4 August)
Kasilof River sockeye (sonar)	437,869	
Kenai River early-run Chinook (sonar)	5,311	(count ended 30 June)
Kenai River late-run Chinook (sonar)	15,489	(count through 4 August)

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR

(907) 487-2600/0230 AnneMarie_LaRosa@fws.gov or
Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

This will be the final Kodiak Area weekly report for the 2014 season.

The sockeye salmon returns to the Kodiak Archipelago continues to be satisfactory. Stocks returning to most systems have exceeded lower escapement goals, and those which continue to return, such as the late-runs of the Ayakulik and Karluk Rivers, are expected to exceed lower escapement goals.

Although sockeye salmon escapement into the Buskin River diminished throughout July, a few fish continued to enter the river in early August. As of 8 August 2014, a total of 13,466 fish had migrated past the ADF&G weir.

Sockeye salmon escapement to the Litnik River on Afognak Island has slowed considerably. As of 8 August 2014, a total of 36,272 fish have passed through the weir. Port Lions villagers reported that most of their needs have been met for this season.

Escapement of sockeye salmon to the Karluk River continues to be strong this period with a total of 280,928 sockeye salmon passing through the weir as of 8 August 2014. Subsistence users from Karluk village and Larsen Bay are expected to meet most of their

needs because of satisfactory escapement of sockeye salmon coupled with their traditional reliance on this species.

Chinook returns to the Karluk River have concluded and the stock did not meet the lower escapement goal. The total escapement for Karluk Chinook was 1,177 as of August 8, 2014. To protect this fish stock, State and Federal managers issued a special action closing the Karluk River to subsistence fishing to Chinook salmon on June 19, 2014.

Chinook returns to the Ayakulik River also have concluded. As of 8 August 2014, escapement of Ayakulik Chinook totaled 786, the lowest recorded since monitoring was initiated in 1970. To protect this fish stock, State and Federal managers issued a special action closing the Ayakulik River to subsistence fishing to Chinook salmon on June 19, 2014.

As of 8 August 2014, a total of 18 Federal Subsistence Fish Permits were issued. Federal subsistence users do not have to return these permits until 31 January 2015.

Coho salmon are beginning to congregating in nearshore areas island-wide, and subsistence fishermen are expected to increasingly target them in and near natal rivers through August. It is too early to determine the strengths of the returns and subsistence fishermen's rates of harvest success.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kodiak.pdf

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Doug McBride Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office

(907) 271-2871 Doug_McBride@fws.gov

Reporting completed for 2014 season.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf

Southcentral Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

(907)455-0406 Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov or

Fred Bue Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is open for the fall season.

Summer Season Assessment Information

The summer season is nearly over in the Alaskan portion of the drainage. Most Chinook and summer chum have reached their spawning grounds or are passing into Canada. The preliminary summer chum total run size is projected to be above 2 million fish, well above the preseason projected range of 1.5-1.8 million fish. The preliminary Chinook salmon estimate past Pilot Station of 136,500 is slightly higher than the high end of the preseason total run size projection of 64,000-121,000 Chinook salmon. An estimate of total Chinook salmon run size will be determined post season. The Eagle sonar has an estimated passage of 63,750 Chinook salmon through August 9. This is above average and above the Canadian stock escapement goal of 42,500-55,000 Chinook. Chinook salmon past the Eagle sonar is beginning to tail off for the season, and will switch to fall chum assessment on August 18.

Fall Season Outlook

District 1 transitioned into fall season management on July 16. Districts 2 through 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C have transitioned into fall season management chronologically based upon the swimming speed of fall chum. Subdistrict 5-D will be transitioning to fall season management this week. Based upon the relationship between the summer chum run and the fall chum run, the fall chum salmon pre-season projection is for a run above 850,000 salmon. This is enough to meet escapement goals, provide for a normal subsistence harvest, and provide for commercial fishing opportunities. Managers are beginning to transition into managing based upon in-season assessment. At this time in-season assessment is indicating a run size below the pre-season projection of 850,000 fall chum; however, fall chum typically enter in short, erratic pulses timed with south west winds and tides making assessment difficult. Fall chum runs in five of the last seven years have been later than average, and it's not unusual for a large pulse to enter

the river and push the in-season projection back up. Currently, weather conditions in the lower Yukon have not been favorable for pushing fall chum into the river.

Fall Season Assessment

Projects in the lower Yukon are passing the mid-point of the fall chum run. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) is tracking above average while the Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) is tracking below average. The Pilot Station sonar is tracking slightly below average. The LYTF, MVTF, and Pilot Station have detected three pulses of fall chum entering the lower Yukon. The Rapids test fish wheel project in the upper Yukon has detected the first pulse of fall chum and is tracking well above average. Pulse two should be arriving at the Rapids on August 10. Subsistence fishermen as far up as the Rapids have reported good harvests of “red fleshed” chum, indicating that fall chum have reached these areas.

Fall Season Management Actions

Fall chum commercial fishing opportunities have been on hold in Districts 1 and 2. Managers are balancing commercial fishing opportunities with the needs of subsistence fishermen who will be looking for fall chum to supplement their subsistence harvests in place of Chinook salmon. Also, the fishermen and processor don't want to waste gas and resources fishing when fall chum abundance is low. There has been four fall season commercial periods in District 1 and three periods in District 2. The combined harvest through August 9 is 52,673 fall chum salmon and 1,863 coho salmon.

Subsistence fishing was returned to the normal regulatory schedules at the end of the summer season. To allow additional opportunity on the projected surplus of fall chum and to make up for missed opportunity on Chinook salmon, subsistence salmon fishing in District 4 and Subdistrict 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was recently relaxed to 24 hour per day, seven days per week. Additionally, upper Subdistrict 4-A was opened to drift gill net fishing six days early.

Coho Salmon

The coho salmon run overlaps the second half of the fall chum run. Coho are trickling into the lower Yukon; however, it is still too early to assess the strength of the coho run.

Kuskokwim River – Neil Lalonde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Brian McCaffery@fws.gov or Robert Sundown (907) 543-1007 Robert_Sundown@fws.gov

Weekly Summary

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has announced a commercial fishing period for coho salmon on Monday, August 11. There is a growing consensus that while subsistence needs are not met, they are on their way to being met by upriver residents and the intent of the special action requests to allow for a subsistence priority are being met. The Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group met on Wednesday, August 6th.

There was in principle no opposition to allowing a commercial fishery to take place beginning the week of August 11. A vote took place with three nays that killed the motion to consider the opening, however, two of the nay votes were because they wanted the commercial fishing to start sooner than the week of August 11th. Another Working Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 12th. There has been a respectable showing of coho salmon in the Bethel Test Fishery and a spike in numbers since the 5th of August. Escapement of coho in several projects are near highest in the last seven years.

Escapement Projects

Bethel Test Fish: Through August 9th

- Coho salmon have an index of 2,335.

Kwethluk River Weir: Through August 8th

- Cumulative coho salmon counts total 2,128.

Tuluksak River Weir: Through August 8th

- Cumulative coho salmon counts total 913.

Salmon River Weir: (3 day block missing) Through August 9th

- Cumulative sockeye salmon total 135.

George River Weir: (highest in previous 7 years) Through August 9th

- Cumulative coho salmon counts total 823.

Tatlawiksuk River Weir: (Second highest in previous 7 years) Through August 9th

- Coho salmon cumulative count total 1,239.

Kogrugluk River Weir: (Second highest in previous 7 years) Through August 9th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 466.

Kuskokwim Bay (courtesy of ADF&G)

District 4, Quinhagak, will open to commercial salmon fishing for 12 hours from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Monday, August 11, 2014. The preliminary harvest from the August 8 opener was 26 king, 425 sockeye, 168 chum, and 4,682 coho salmon. The harvest of coho salmon was above average while the catch rate was below average.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf

NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.

(907) 443-2522 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound

Preliminary Norton Sound commercial salmon catches this season are: 280 kings, 93,000 chums, 180,000 pinks, 400 reds and 16,000 silvers by 80 permit holders. The chum salmon harvest will fall within the ADF&G's forecast range of 80,000 to 110,00 fish, but the pink salmon harvest will fall short of the department forecast of 250,000 to 500,000 fish. The silver salmon forecast range for the commercial fishery is a harvest of 60,000 to 90,000 fish.

The ADF&G has now shifted to silver salmon management. Good silver catches are occurring in the commercial fishery and silver escapement counts are average for this early in the season.

The Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts reopened to commercial salmon fishing for 48 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, August 9. These openings are directed at harvestable surpluses of coho salmon available for commercial utilization based on assessment information. Early August projections show escapement needs of coho salmon will be achieved in the Golovin and Elim Subdistricts. While there is currently no ground-based escapement information from available for the Norton Bay Subdistrict, comparative catch statistics for coho salmon have been average to above average since the beginning of August.

Dropping river levels to the east of Nome have allowed most of the escapement counting projects to resume operations.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

Sport Fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited and the use of bait is banned until August 15 or subsequent emergency order in the Unalakleet River drainage. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Subsistence salmon gillnet fishing with nets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size, is open in the marine waters and in the Unalakleet River drainage, below the Chiroskey River and in all other fresh waters.

North River Tower – A cooperative project of Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) with assistance from Fish & Game. It has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings; 25,000 pinks; 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey); and no goal yet established for chums. The tower crew was unable to count for 12 days because of high water and resumed counting on July 26 with half day counts and full day counts beginning on July 29. Cumulative counts through July 31 should be considered minimal for all species and were 2,300 kings, 10,000 chums, 142,000 pinks and 300 silvers.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir – A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, United States BLM and NSEDC with major funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. There are no weir escapement goals yet. The weir crew was unable to count for nearly six days because of high water and full day counts resumed on July 27. Cumulative counts through July 31 should be considered minimal for all species and were 1,000 kings, 40,000 chums, 1.2 million pinks, 185 reds and 1,000 silvers.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Sport Fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited and the use of bait is banned until August 15 or subsequent emergency order in the Shaktoolik River drainage. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Subsistence salmon gillnet fishing, with nets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size, is open in the marine waters and in all fresh waters.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. It has no escapement goals established. Cumulative counts through July 13 were 2,000 kings, 38,000 chums and 395,000 pinks. The crew has been unable to count since July 13 due to high water. When the crew cannot count from the tower the sonar counts are then used, but on July 14 the sonar tumbled into the deepest part of the channel, but with water now dropping the crew is attempting to retrieve it.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Sport Fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Subsistence fishing is open 7 days a week.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts through July 12 were 1,600 kings, 61,000 chums, and 62,000 pinks. The camp was washed out during the high water and is no more.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

Sport Fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Subsistence fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited when hook and line fishing until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Kwiniuk River Tower – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC. It has escapement goals of 300-550 kings, 11,500 – 23,000 chums, 8,400 pinks, and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). Cumulative counts through August 1 were 426 kings, 40,000 chums, 325,000 pinks and 700 silvers. The chum count ranks seventh best in the 50-year project history. The average historical first quarter point for silvers in August 8.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Sport Fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Subsistence fishing: The retention of king salmon is prohibited when hook and line fishing until August 15 or subsequent emergency order. Any king salmon incidentally hooked must be immediately released in the water.

Fish River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. No escapement goals established. The tower crew was unable to count for 11 days because of high water and resumed counting on July 26. Cumulative counts through August 1 should be considered minimal for all species and were 900 kings, 42,000 chums, 200,000 pinks, 15 reds and 1,300 silvers.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

For the fifth consecutive year the Nome Subdistrict escapement goal range of 23,000-35,000 chum salmon has been exceeded.

The subsistence set gillnet fishing schedule in the marine waters west of Cape Nome is from 6 p.m. Monday until 6 p.m. Saturday. The marine waters east of Cape Nome are open seven days a week. The fresh water subsistence area set gillnet schedule is from 6 p.m. Monday until 6 p.m. Wednesday and from 6 p.m. Thursday until 6 p.m. Saturday. Check the back of the Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon permit for the subsistence areas where set gillnetting is allowed. Beach seining is not allowed.

All pink salmon subsistence catch limits throughout Nome Subdistrict are waived, and except for the Solomon, Penny and Cripple rivers all chum salmon subsistence catch limits are waived throughout Nome Subdistrict. The Penny and Cripple rivers are closed to all fishing for chum salmon by regulation. There are no subsistence salmon catch limits in the marine waters. The Solomon River chum salmon catch limit is 40 fish. Check the back of the subsistence salmon permit for the silver salmon catch limits that vary by river.

Commercial salmon fishing will remain closed until the department projects there are sufficient silvers for both subsistence and escapement.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project has no escapement goals established. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 1,249 chums and 18,500 pinks. Last year by this date the count was 1,153 chums with a final count of 1,377 chums.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. The project completed operations on July 27 with cumulative counts of 18 kings, 27,054 chums and 46,693 pinks. The chum salmon escapement ranked second highest in 18 years and this year was the fifth consecutive year the chum salmon escapement goal range has been exceeded.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 3,200 pink salmon. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 4,600 chums, 82,000 pinks, 13 reds and 25 silvers. The average historical third quarter point of chum passage at the weir is August 1. The last four out of five years the chum salmon escapement goal range has been met or exceeded.



Photos are of the boating on the Nome River, second photo is the Nome River weir, and the third photo is of Alaska Department of Fish and Game Nome crew leader John Norris counting salmon escapement through a counting gate at the Nome River weir. Courtesy of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Nome, AK.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 5 kings, 3,300 chums, 15,000 pinks, 13 reds and 4 silvers. The average historical third quarter point of chum passage at the weir is July 28. The last four out of five years the chum salmon escapement goal range has been exceeded.

Glacial Lake Weir – A cooperative project between and Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 800 – 1,600 sockeyes based on aerial survey. A video system is being used exclusively this year and cumulative counts through July 14 were 3,970 reds, 1 beaver and 1 otter. The counts are the highest since 2006, but have dropped off since July 8.

Port Clarence District

The Pilgrim River and Lower Kuzitrin River have reopened to net fishing effective 12 noon, Saturday, August 2. Enough sockeye salmon were expected to reach Salmon Lake by August 2 to achieve the escapement goal range of 4,000 to 8,000 sockeye salmon. There have been 240 Pilgrim River subsistence salmon permits issued this season; the third highest number in the 51 years permits have been required.

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 4,000 – 8,000 sockeyes (reds) based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 43 kings, 11,400 chums, 4,000 pinks, 12 silvers and 8,000 sockeyes (reds). Sockeye passage has been building, and the August 1 count of 586 sockeyes passing was the fourth highest daily count of the season.

Kotzebue District

The next commercial salmon fishing period is a 4-hour opening Friday evening, August 8. Thursday night's (August 7) catch was nearly 20,000 chum salmon by 60 permit holders. The harvest through August 7 is over 416,000 chum salmon and is on track to be the fifth greatest in the 53-year history of the commercial fishery. There are three major buyers this year compared to only one major buyer for the previous ten years. A quiet fishery has suddenly heated up. The price has been dropping throughout the past week from a season high of 78 cents a pound to 45 cents a pound. The ex-vessel value of the fishery has surpassed one million dollars for the first time since 1988.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. Chum salmon catches at the ADF&G test fish project in Kiana have been record setting and are the highest in the 22-year history of the project. Shortening fishing times has done little to slow the catch and Kiana residents have been busy cutting fish provided by the test fish crew. The crew will start taking some days off to slow down the amount of fish that are being harvested and relieve cramping hands.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue and Norton Sound Areas

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kotz.pdf

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Norton.pdf