

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 13 - July 19, 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

Deployed at Falls Lake project in the field. Report expected next week.

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

Week ending July 19, 2014; statistical week 29

There have been 107 Stikine River subsistence fishing permits issued. The catch estimate through Saturday, July 19 is 45 Chinook salmon and 1,200 sockeye salmon. This summer's rock slide on the Tahltan River, a major spawning tributary for both sockeye and Chinook salmon, appears to be a total barrier to salmon returning to upstream spawning areas. The Canadian government is initiating a helicopter transport program to move some fish above the barrier to perpetuate the stocks. The goal is to move 300 Chinook and 8,000 sockeye salmon. Pink salmon returns to northern Southeast Alaska are poor and returns to southern southeast are improving. The following link provides a summary of Southeast Alaska and Yakutat commercial fisheries:

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

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, all the setnet fisheries that are usually opened at this point in the season are open except the East River. Four hundred and forty one large Chinook salmon have been counted through the Situk River weir now and ADF&G projects the escapement will end up within their 450 to 1,050 biological escapement goal range. There have also been 73,402 sockeye salmon counted through the Situk River weir and ADF&G anticipates that the sockeye escapement will be well within BEG ranges.

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. Eleven 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 July 19, 1,394 sockeye salmon have entered Neva Lake and 3,717 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

The 2014 General salmon permits for Southeast Alaska are valid through the end of the year. Currently, 227 permits have been issued for this fishery

Most subsistence users are actively fishing marine waters for Chinook salmon and halibut under sport fishing regulations. Subsistence fishing effort at Klawock, Hetta, Sarkar and other locations has begun.

A sockeye salmon weir is currently active and fishing at Hatchery Creek. To date 5,142 sockeye, 10 coho and 1 steelhead have been counted at this project. Total passage at the Hetta Lake weir project is 438 sockeye. Counts at the Klawock weir are 75 sockeye, 10 coho and 9 pink salmon.

Commercial seine openings and drift gillnet openings are in full force. Commercial trolling for Chinook closed on July 7. All troll effort is directed now primarily at coho. Commercial salmon harvests estimated by ADF&G issued news releases are as follows: 8,240 Chinook, 92,290 sockeye, 47,050 coho, 1118,210, pink and 386,450 chum.

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.RI>

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=RI.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

As of July 17, 2014 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 1,069,412 salmon had migrated upstream. This estimate is 175% of the projected escapement objective of 610,154 for this date, or 459,258 more salmon. An estimate of 24,710 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 17th.

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 July 5 are:

- 9,583 Chinook
- 1,948,735 sockeye
- 745 coho
- 1,055 pink
- 42,086 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict opened last week on July 7 and remained open all week through July 13. It immediately reopened on July 14 and will remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries in this subdistrict usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Sixty-seven 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 sixty 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. One permit has been issued.

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 23. As of July 17, 20,961 sockeye and 5 Chinook have been counted through the weir.

As of July 17, 1,938 Chinook have been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak and 176 tagged and 2,329 untagged have been captured at the Canyon Creek wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River was installed on June 4. As of July 17, 1,248 Chinook and 12,480 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.

Five Special Actions 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

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, July 21 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 1.11 million fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 619,000 fish. For the week ending July 19, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 29,545 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 31,424–74,276. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown early the week of July 21. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 8 were 45% Gulkana Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Friday, July 18 was 41,500 sockeye with 297 deliveries reported.

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

A harvest of 1,031 sockeye salmon for the Russian River Falls dip net fishery and a harvest of 42 sockeye salmon for the Kasilof River dip net fishery have been reported through 18 July. Totals of 120 Kenai River permits, 12 Kasilof River permits, and 9 designated fisher permits have been issued through 18 July.

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. The sport fishery for Chinook salmon above Slikok Creek remains closed by the Department through Emergency Order to protect early-run fish and the Department recently issued an emergency order restricting fishing below Slikok Creek to catch-and-release and barbless hooks since projections indicate the late-run sustainable escapement goal of 15,000–30,000 may not be achieved. Therefore, it is warranted to keep the Federal subsistence fishery for Chinook salmon closed to protect spawning fish.

Fish Counts through 17 July:

Russian River early-run sockeye (weir)	44,920	(counts ended on 14 July)
Russian River late-run sockeye (weir)	811	(counts began on 15 July)
Kenai River late-run sockeye (sonar)	310,326	(counts through 16 July)
Kasilof River sockeye (sonar)	279,209	(counts through 16 July)
Kenai River early-run Chinook (sonar)	5,311	(count ended 30 June)
Kenai River late-run Chinook (sonar)	3,458	(counts through 16 July)

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

July 16, 2014 marked the end of the early run for sockeye salmon returning to Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers. As of Wednesday, July 16, the Karluk River early run sockeye salmon run was 236,144 fish and the Ayakulik River was 210,040 fish. These two systems met their respective lower escapement goals. Sockeye salmon have continued to return to Afognak (34,569 fish) and Buskin Rivers (12,795 fish). The Afognak River met its lower escapement goal and Buskin River exceeded its upper escapement goal.

Due to the strong sockeye salmon returns along the west side of Kodiak Island and the numerous commercial openings, very little subsistence activities has occurred during the past week. Reports from villagers are that their needs have been met and they are busy preserving the fish.

Of all the systems that are being monitored on Kodiak Island, only Pasagshak River sockeye salmon returns are poor. This poor return has prompted Alaska Department of Fish and Game to restrict subsistence fishing in this area until the end of the fishing season. It is possible that subsistence fishing could be allowed to occur if the run starts to improve.

Any reports of subsistence activities will be reported during the upcoming week.

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

These areas support abundant returns of salmon, particularly sockeye; as well as some of the largest commercial fisheries for salmon in Alaska. All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the State of Alaska, and provide the basis for any inseason assessment. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in Federally-managed waters, and these subsistence fisheries commence later in June and July.

Bristol Bay:

Preseason forecasts for sockeye salmon run returns to Bristol Bay, Chignik, and the Alaska Peninsula predict that there will be harvestable surpluses in all districts, and that escapement goals will be achieved in all systems.

For Bristol Bay, the forecast for total return of sockeye salmon is similar to 2013 at approximately 26 million, and escapement goals total ~ 8.5 million sockeye, leaving ~ 17 million sockeye available for harvest. Total return to date has exceeded the forecast and is 20.1 million harvest and 9.3 million escapement. Commercial fishing by Emergency Order is occurring throughout all districts. The returns to the Nushagak, Naknek/Kvichak, and Egegik districts are very strong.

Chinook salmon returns have been poor to moderate in recent years throughout most of Alaska, including Bristol Bay. Mesh size is restricted to 5 ½ inches through mid July in the Togiak District.

Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Chignik:

For Chignik, the forecast for total return of sockeye salmon is approximately 0.8 million early run and 0.9 million late run fish. The early-run SEG was reclassified to a BEG starting in 2014. The late-run SEG includes an additional 50,000 sockeye for additional subsistence harvest opportunity. There has been no commercial fishery on early-run sockeye. Currently, genetic sampling is occurring to determine the cut off of early-run fish and the commencement of the late-run. Commercial fishing is likely during the late-run. Sockeye escapement to date is 355 thousand.

The escapement goal for Chinook salmon is 1,300 fish. Inriver return to date through the weir is 1,879 which is the largest since 2005. In 2013, all inriver Chinook salmon fisheries, including the new Federal subsistence fishery, were closed by E.O. (State fisheries) or Special Action (Federal fishery closed effective July 27). No Federal

subsistence harvest was realized for 2013. The Federal subsistence fishery for Chinook is currently open until August 9 with rod and reel from a point 300 feet upstream of the ADFG weir to Chignik Lake with no daily harvest or possession limit under the authority of a Federal subsistence fishing permit. Most of the Chinook return occurs in July. Federal subsistence fishing permits are available in four communities through village or tribal administrators.

Select tributaries to Chignik Lake are open to subsistence fishing. Gillnets and seines are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Several sockeye escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, McLees, and Orzinski rivers. Commercial fishing is underway in most districts and targeting local sockeye returns. Sockeye escapements to select Alaska Peninsula systems are: Nelson River (173.5 thousand); Bear River (142.4 thousand, and McLees (10.3 thousand).

A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Stock Assessment funded under the Subsistence Fishery Resource Monitoring Program:
For 2014, there are no stock assessment projects funded under the Subsistence Fishery Resource Monitoring Program.

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.

Assessment Information

Both the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) and Pilot Station sonar has detected four pulses of Chinook salmon passing through the lower Yukon. Pulse one and two have passed the Canadian border or are reaching their spawning grounds in the Alaskan portion of the drainage. Pulse three fish are in upper Subdistrict 5D or passing into the upper Tanana drainage and pulse four is passing by Fort Yukon and nearing the spawning grounds in the Tanana River. The LYTF and Pilot Station sonar has detected five pulses of chum salmon. The first and second pulses are on the spawning grounds, the third is in the Tanana River and the upper Koyukuk River, the fourth is near Tanana and Hughes and the smaller fifth pulse of summer chum is passing Ruby. The Chinook salmon genetic stock ID program estimates that the first pulse of Chinook salmon to pass the Pilot Station sonar was approximately 50% Canadian origin, the second pulse was 52% Canadian origin, and the third pulse was 24% Canadian origin. The Rapids test fish wheel began operations on June 9, it has detected all four pulses of Chinook salmon, and it appears catches have dropped off for the season. The Eagle sonar began operations on June 27 and has an estimated passage of 34,900 Chinook salmon through July 19. This is well above the average at this time, however the run is considerably earlier than average. Based upon the estimated mid-point at Pilot Station and the Rapids test fishery, the mid-point at the Eagle sonar could be on July 16 or 17. This projects to an estimated Border passage of approximately 52,000 Chinook salmon.

The Andreafsky weir has an estimated passage of 5,580 Chinook, well above average and above the high end of the escapement goal, while 33,636 summer chum have passed, which is slightly below average and may end just below the escapement goal of 40,000. The Anvik River sonar has an estimated passage of 382,873 summer chum through July 19 which is below average, but has already exceeded the lower end of its escapement goal. The Gisasa River weir started late and high water this past week has stopped run assessment, but the weir had passed 1,570 Chinook salmon which is above average and near the run's mid-point point. The Gisasa River weir chum count of 32,137 is above average and past the average run mid-point. The Henshaw Creek weir, Salcha River tower, and the Chena River tower have been hampered by persistent high water in interior Alaska and will not operate this season.

Chum salmon subsistence reports in the lower Yukon have been good. Fishermen have reported finishing most of their chum salmon subsistence needs. Fishermen in the middle Yukon are still fishing for chum salmon and some are waiting for fall chum salmon to finish their subsistence needs. Summer chum do not migrate into the upper Yukon in large numbers and the few that do are typically in poor condition and not ideal for human consumption. Fishermen in the upper Yukon have been supplementing their subsistence salmon catches with other species such as, whitefish.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

Summer season management has ended in the lower Yukon District 1 on June 16. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate on July 18 was 1.9 million summer chum. Based upon the Pilot Station estimate and the commercial harvest below the sonar of 426,000 chum, the summer chum run is projecting above 2 million fish, well above the preseason projected range of 1.5-1.8 million fish.

At this time, based upon the Pilot Station sonar and other assessment information, the Chinook salmon run of 136,500 is coming in slightly higher than the high end of the preseason projected range of 64,000-121,000 Chinook salmon. The Chinook salmon run remains well below the historical average and continued subsistence conservation measures in the upper river will be required to share the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals including the border passage objective into Canada. Based upon the Pilot Station sonar estimates and genetic stock identification program, managers are optimistic that border passage goals will be met however, they do remain cautious due to uncertainty inherent in both projects. No directed Chinook salmon commercial or subsistence fishery is anticipated for the rest of the season.

Management Actions

Managers have been instituting actions consistent with the preseason management plan. The entire Alaskan portion Yukon River has been closed to directed Chinook salmon subsistence and commercial fishing to conserve Chinook salmon. Subsistence fishing for abundant chum salmon and other non-salmon species has been restricted to gear that minimizes the incidental catch of Chinook salmon, such as, dip nets, manned fish wheels, and 4-inch or smaller mesh gear.

Subsistence fishing opportunities for chum salmon were relaxed starting in the lower river districts as the majority of the Chinook salmon move into upriver districts. Subsistence fishing has been relaxed to allow the use of 7.5-inch or smaller gill net gear and unmanned fish wheels in Districts 1-4. Subsistence fishermen may keep Chinook salmon incidentally caught in these gear types. In Subdistricts 5ABC subsistence fishing for chum salmon utilizing live release fish wheels and 6-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear will be relaxed next week.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon has been ongoing in Districts 1 and 2 since June 9. A total of 426,600 summer chum salmon have been harvested in District 1 and 2 with a total of 5,440 Chinook salmon caught and released and 443 Chinook salmon caught but not sold. Summer chum commercial fishing periods were opened in

Subdistrict 4A starting Monday, June 23. These are fish wheel only openings utilizing “fish friendly” fish wheels, with fish wheels manned at all times and all Chinook salmon caught required to be released alive directly back into the water. 87,431 chum salmon have been harvested in this fishery with 241 Chinook salmon caught and released. Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon has been opened in District 6 with a total harvest of 1,605 chum salmon and 140 Chinook salmon caught and released.

Fall Season Outlook and Assessment

District 1 transitions into fall season management on July 16. At this time based upon the relationship between the summer chum run and the fall chum run, managers are anticipating a fall chum run above 850,000 salmon. This is enough to meet escapement goals, provide for a normal subsistence harvest, and provide for commercial opportunities. Fall chum commercial fishing opportunities have already been opened in the lower Yukon. Managers will be balancing the 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. There has been one fall season commercial period in District 1 and one period in District 2 with a combined harvest of 12,526 fall chum salmon and 52 coho salmon. A second period in District 1 was delayed in order to slow the early fall season commercial rate and move those early fall chum upriver for subsistence opportunity.

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 opened the lower river (District 1B) to commercial fishing for chum/sockeye salmon on Monday, July 14 and Friday, July 18. The Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group voted 7-1 on Wednesday to oppose the commercial opening on Friday, due to upriver communities still getting their subsistence needs met. Refuge staff was invited for a tribal consultation in Lower Kalskag on Friday, where we were told by virtually all the leadership upriver (of Kalskag) that their subsistence needs have not been met and that the commercial fishery downriver of Bethel is interfering in that effort. The Bethel Test Fishery indicates that the Chinook and sockeye run are at an end and the chum run is fairly close to having run its course. The coho salmon run is increasing rapidly in both the BTF and the commercial catch. The commercial catch for coho went from less than a 50 on Monday to 1,853 on Friday. A total of 7,116 chum, 847 sockeye, and 3 Chinook were also harvested on Friday. The next working group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 23.

Escapement Projects

Bethel Test Fish: Through July 19th

- The cumulative index for kings was 646.

- For chum salmon the cumulative chum index was 5,804.
- Sockeye salmon have an index of 1,323.
- Coho salmon have an index of 83.

Kwethluk River Weir: Through July 19th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 2,754.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 8,245.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 3,081.

Tuluksak River Weir: Through July 19th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 272.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 4,211.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 318.

Salmon River Weir: Through July 20th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 1,277.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 1,177.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon total 20.

George River Weir: Through July 20th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 2,484.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 10,230.

Tatlawiksuk River Weir: Through July 20th

- King salmon cumulative count total 1,846.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 8,568.

Kogrugluk River Weir: Through July 20th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 2,821.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 15,939.
- Sockeye escapement to date total 1,591.

Telequana Lake Weir: Through July 20th

- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 11,520.

Kuskokwim Bay

Commercial Fishery (*Courtesy of ADF&G, Bethel*)

District 4 and 5 will be open for commercial fishing on Friday and Monday (7/18 and 7/21) for 12 hours on both days.

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

Chum salmon escapement needs have been met throughout Norton Sound with harvestable surpluses remaining for commercial utilization. However, high surf conditions have limited commercial fishing effort in recent days and stormy weather is expected to continue through the weekend. Consequently, ADF&G has announced commercial openings of one week duration beginning at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 17 and closing at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 24 for the Golovin, Elim, Norton Bay, Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts. Permit holders will be restricted to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets of a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The one week openings will allow fishing when weather conditions are safe and conducive to ensure catch quality as well as an orderly fishery.

Preliminary Norton Sound commercial salmon catches this season are: 250 Chinooks, 58,000 chums, 135,000 pinks, 175 reds and 35 silvers by 75 permit holders.

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 7 days a week. Beach seining is open in all fresh waters 7 days a week. All king salmon captured in beach seines must be immediately released in the water unharmed.

The federal waters of the Unalakleet National Wild River remain closed to the taking of Chinook salmon between July 1 and July 31 by federal regulation.

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. Cumulative counts through July 12 were 1,800 kings, 5,000 chums and 115,000 pinks. Through this date the king count is the second best in nearly 20 years, the chum count is third best and the pink count is in the middle. The average historical midpoints at the tower are July 10 for pinks and July 14 for kings; and the first quarter point July 11 for chums.

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. Cumulative counts through July 12 were 1,000 kings, 35,000 chums, 1.1 million pinks, 50 silvers, and 175 reds. Counts for all species by this date are the highest in the 5-year project history, except for chums which were second highest.

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 7 days a week. Beach seining is open in all fresh waters 7 days a week. All king salmon captured in beach seines must be immediately released in the water unharmed.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. It has no escapement goals established. Cumulative counts through July 11 were 2,000 kings, 35,000 chums and 350,000 pinks.

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. Counts for all species by this date are the highest in the 4-year project history, except for kings which are second highest.

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 July 12 were 400 kings, 30,000 chums and 200,000 pinks. The average historical third quarter points at the tower are July 13 for chums, July 17 for pinks and July 18 for kings.

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. Cumulative counts through July 10 were 800 kings, 30,000 chums and 125,000 pinks.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

The Nome Subdistrict will reopen to commercial fishing at a later date when weather conditions improve. High surf conditions are forecasted through the weekend so fishing likely will not occur even if openings are announced.

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. There are no subsistence salmon catch limits in the marine waters.

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. Beach seining is allowed at the same time gillnetting is allowed in both the marine waters and fresh water subsistence areas through July 25. Areas where set gillnetting and beach seining are allowed are listed on the back of the Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon permit.

Effective Monday, July 14 all pink salmon subsistence catch limits throughout the Nome Subdistrict were waived, and except for the Solomon, Penny and Cripple rivers all chum salmon subsistence catch limits were waived throughout Nome Subdistrict. The Penny and Cripple rivers are closed to all fishing for chum salmon by regulation. The subsistence chum salmon catch limit in Solomon River is 40 fish.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project has no escapement goals established. . The weir was fish tight on July 2. Cumulative counts through July 12 were 300 chums and 2,000 pinks.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. Cumulative counts through July 12 were 14 kings, 16,000 chums and 21,000 pinks. The average historical midpoint at the weir is July 12 for pinks and July 15 for chums.

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. The weir was fish tight on July 5. Cumulative counts through July 12 were 2,100 chums, 18,000 pinks and 11 sockeyes. The average historical first quarter point at the weir is July 12 for pinks and July 15 for chums.

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 July 12 were 1,300 chums and 2,000 pinks. The average historical first quarter point at the weir is July 15 for pinks and July 16 for chums.

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. The video system is being used and counts through June 30 were 3 reds. A video system is being used

exclusively this year and cumulative counts through July 3 were 1,000 sockeyes, 1 beaver and 1 otter.

Port Clarence District

The Pilgrim River and Lower Kuzitrin River were closed to all net fishing effective 6 p.m. Monday, July 14. After Monday afternoon, no nets or seines can be put into the Pilgrim River or its tributaries or the Lower Kuzitrin River from 300 yards upstream of the confluence with the Pilgrim River to the mouth of Kuzitrin River.

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 July 12 were 13 kings, 2,300 chums, 1,500 pinks, and 2,530 sockeyes.

Although the average historical midpoint of sockeye salmon passage at the weir is July 18, last year it was July 12, and this year again may be earlier than the average historical midpoint. To date, age composition data of the escapement this season shows that over half the sockeye salmon sampled are from the parent year of 2008 when over 20,000 sockeyes passed the weir. Age-5 fish from the 2009 sockeye escapement of 950 fish and age-4 fish from the 2010 sockeye salmon escapement of 1,650 fish are starting to appear in the escapement, but will likely not be in enough numbers to reach the escapement goal range unless fishing restrictions are taken. The escapement goal range at Salmon Lake is 4,000 to 8,000 sockeye salmon observed by aerial survey.

Kotzebue District

The commercial fishery has had its first two openings on July 10th and 11th and the catch and number of permit holders fishing was the highest since the 1990s. The price of 60 cents a pound for chum salmon was also the highest since the 1990s. The cumulative catch was 14,400 chum salmon by 44 permit holders. A third commercial opening of 8 hours began at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, July 13. A fourth opening of 8 hours began at 4:00 p.m. Monday, July 14, and a fifth opening of 12 hours began at noon on Tuesday, July 15. ADF&G then plans on providing a break in commercial fishing until Thursday, July 17 in order to allow a window of opportunity for fish to pass through the district to provide for subsistence and escapement.

The preliminary catch figures through the first five commercial fishing periods were nearly 48,000 chum salmon with 53 permit holders fishing. Overall, the catch and fishing effort for that first week was the best since the 1990s.

Two additional commercial 8-hour fishing periods were opened beginning at 4:00 p.m. Thursday, July 17 and 4:00 p.m. Friday, July 18. There will be no commercial salmon fishing on Saturday, July 19.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The crew was scheduled to begin fishing on July 17. If the chum salmon catch shows sufficient escapement, commercial fishing will continue with only one or two day closures during the week to allow a window of opportunity for fish to pass through the district to provide for subsistence and escapement.

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