

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 6 - July 12, 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

To be updated next week.

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

Week ending July 12, 2014; statistical week 28

There have been 98 Stikine River subsistence fishing permits issued and harvest conditions good. The catch estimate through Saturday, July 12 is 40 Chinook salmon and 900 sockeye salmon. Pink salmon returns to the Southeast Region remain weak with the Hawk Inlet test fishery only catching 27% of the recent 10 year average. Halibut are abundant in the sport fishery. The following link provides a summary of Southeast Alaska and Yakutat commercial fisheries:

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, all the setnet fisheries that are usually opened at this point in the season are open except the East River. There are still restrictions on the commercial, sport, and subsistence harvest of Situk River Chinook salmon. Three hundred and forty

eight 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 47,559 sockeye salmon counted through the Situk River weir and ADF&G anticipates that the sockeye escapement will be well within BEG ranges. We installed a double video net weir to count sockeye escapements into Italio Lake this week.

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. Fifteen 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 12, 692 sockeye salmon have entered Neva Lake and 62 have entered Kook Lake. As of July 11, ADF&G reports that 26 sockeye salmon have been counted through their picket weir at the outlet of Kanalku Lake and that 182 sockeye salmon have swam through their double video weirs below the falls.

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, 212 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 5,045 sockeye, 8 coho and 1 steelhead have been counted at this project. Total passage at the Hetta Lake weir project is 418 sockeye. Counts at the Klawock weir are 52 sockeye, 2 coho and 6 pink salmon.

Commercial seine openings and drift gillnet openings are in full force. Commercial trolling for Chinook closed on July 7. All troll effort now is directed primarily at coho. Commercial salmon harvests estimated by ADF&G issued news releases are as follows: 8,200 Chinook, 53,990 sockeye, 388,210 coho, 37,210 pink and 241,650 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.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=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 10, 2014 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 990,201 salmon had migrated upstream. This estimate is 181% of the projected escapement objective of 545,707 for this date, or 444,494 more salmon. An estimate of 14,924 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 10th.

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 10 are:

- 9,558 Chinook
- 1,903,988 sockeye

- 658 coho
- 869 pink
- 41,902 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict opened this week on July 7 and will remain open all week through July 14. It will immediately reopen on July 15 and will remain open the entire week through July 20. The water level in the Copper River is still high. The state and federal fisheries in this subdistrict usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Sixty-four 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 fifty three 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 - no permits have been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 23. As of July 10, 18,889 sockeye and 5 Chinook have been counted through the weir.

As of July 10, 1,938 Chinook have been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak and 170 tagged and 2,270 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 10, 10,894 Chinook and 10,560 sockeye have been counted. Between June 19 and July 2 (14 days) high and muddy water prevented fish counts for on eight days and allowed for only partial counts on two other days but since July 5, daily counts have been recorded.

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.

A field crew was in Grizzly Lake last week for a burbot population assessment and monitoring.

Four 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 week of June 30 – July 6 and providing the tentative schedule for future fishing periods.
- amending the preseason schedule for the week of July 7 – July 13, allowing a full week of fishing.
- Amending the preseason schedule for the week of July 14 – July 20, allowing for a full week 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

The Copper River District opened at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 10 for a 48-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 964,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 532,000 fish. For the week ending July 5, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 43,875 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 28,229–66,722. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 2 were 43% Gulkana Hatchery and 3% Main Bay Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 8 was 49,900 sockeye and 15 Chinook salmon with 422 deliveries reported.

A total of 43 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.

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

Subsistence harvest has slowed in the Russian River Falls dip net fishery and other rod and reel fisheries in the upper Kenai River as the early run of sockeye salmon has tapered off and the late run has not yet arrived in the upper river. A harvest of 1,027 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 11 July. Totals of 113 Kenai River permits, 12 Kasilof River permits, and 9 designated fisher permits have been issued through 12 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 Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates that 5,311 early-run Chinook salmon have passed their DIDSON sonar site in the lower Kenai River, which just exceeded the lower bound of the escapement goal range (5,300 to 9,000) and does not provide a harvestable surplus. The sport fishery for Chinook salmon above Slikok Creek remains closed by the Department through Emergency Order to protect early-run fish, and it is warranted to keep the Federal subsistence fishery for Chinook salmon closed to protect early-run fish as they transition to spawning areas.

Fish Counts through 10 July:

Russian River early-run sockeye (weir)	43,161	(counts end on 14 July)
Russian River late-run sockeye (weir)		(counts begin on 15 July)
Kenai River late-run sockeye (sonar)	150,927	(counts through 9 July)
Kasilof River sockeye (sonar)	212,521	(counts through 9 July)
Kenai River early-run Chinook (sonar)	5,311	(count ended 30 June)
Kenai River late-run Chinook (sonar)	1,524	(counts through 7 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

Update next 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 temporarily closed until 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 fish have passed the Canadian border or are reaching their spawning grounds in the Alaskan portion of the drainage. Pulse two fish are in upper Subdistrict 5D or passing into the upper Tanana drainage. Pulse three is passing by Steven's Village and Nenana and a small pulse four is passing by Tanana. The LYTF and Pilot Station sonar has detected five pulses of chum salmon. The first pulse is near Nenana, the second is passing Tanana, the third has passed Ruby, and the fourth pulse is approaching Grayling. A smaller fifth pulse of summer chum is passing Holy Cross. 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 and has detected the first three pulses of Chinook salmon and should be tailing off for the season. The Eagle sonar began operations on June 27 and has an estimated passage of 15,873 Chinook salmon through July 11. This is well above the average at this time, however the run is considerably earlier than average. Based upon the estimated $\frac{1}{4}$ point at Pilot Station, the $\frac{1}{4}$ point at the Eagle sonar could be July 10.

The Andreafsky weir has an estimated passage of 4,896 Chinook, well above average and approaching the high end of the escapement goal, while 28,281 summer chum have passed, which is slightly below average, but on track to meet the escapement goal. The Anvik River sonar has an estimated passage of 318,299 summer chum through July 11 which is slightly above the average. The mid-point of the Anvik sonar is July 9, and the project is on track to meet its escapement goal. The Gisasa River weir started late but has passed 1,423 Chinook salmon which is above average and near the $\frac{1}{4}$ point, and 29,709 chum have passed which is above average and near the mid-point. The Henshaw Creek weir, Salcha River tower, and the Chena River tower have been hampered by high water in interior Alaska and are not yet operational.

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 is coming to an end in the lower Yukon. District 1 will switch to fall season management on June 16. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate on July 11 was 1.8 million summer chum. Additionally, commercial fishermen have already harvested nearly 340,000 summer chum below the Pilot Station sonar and 55,000 in Kaltag. Based upon the Pilot Station estimate and the commercial harvest below the sonar, 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 is coming in slightly higher than the high end of the preseason projected range of 64,000-121,000 Chinook salmon. The Pilot Station sonar has an estimated passage of 135,000 Chinook salmon. The current preliminary in-season run projection is for a Chinook salmon run approaching 137,000 salmon. Regardless, the Chinook salmon run remains well below the historical average and continued subsistence conservation measures 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 are being relaxed starting in the lower river districts as the majority of the Chinook salmon move into upriver districts,. The Coastal District has been relaxed to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear. 6-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear is being reinstated in Districts 1-4, including the Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers, while dip nets and beach seines are being discontinued. In District 4 subsistence fishing for chum salmon utilizing live release fish wheels has also been reinstated.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon has been ongoing in Districts 1 and 2 since June 9. A total of 335,000 summer chum salmon have been harvested in District 1 and 2 with a total of 5,450 Chinook salmon caught and released, and 275 Chinook salmon have been 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. 53,314 chum salmon have been harvested in this fishery with 181 Chinook salmon caught and released.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon has been opened in District 6 however no harvests have been reported, yet.

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 is opening the lower river (District 1B) to commercial fishing for chum/sockeye salmon on Monday, July 14. The Bethel Test Fishery has been in the low single digits for a week for Chinook salmon and the sockeye salmon run appears to be at an end as well. Subsistence fisherman in the middle river report that improving catch for chum and sockeye salmon has occurred and subsistence fishermen are less concerned about meeting their subsistence needs. It is still unclear whether the restrictions on Chinook fishing will have allowed for escapement goals to be met. The Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group will meet on Wednesday, July 16.

Escapement Projects

Bethel Test Fish: Through July 12th

- The cumulative index for kings was 636.
- For chum salmon the cumulative chum index was 5,153.
- Sockeye salmon have an index of 1,282.
- Coho salmon have an index of 12.

Kwethluk River Weir: Through July 11th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 2,144.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 4,523.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 2,455.

Tuluksak River Weir: Through July 11th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 176.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 1,771.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 139.

Salmon River Weir: Through July 12th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 830.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 867.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon total 7.

George River Weir: Through July 12th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 1,930.

- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 5,160.

Tatlawiksuk River Weir: Through July 12th

- King salmon cumulative count total 1,710.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 4,261.

Kogrugluk River Weir: Through July 12th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 1,679.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 6,418.
- Sockeye escapement to date total 443.

Telequana Lake Weir: Through July 12th

- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 2,556.

Kuskokwim Bay

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

District 4 and 5 will be open for commercial fishing on Monday and Wednesday (7/14 and 7/16) 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

Chinook escapement counts have shown a great improvement over recent years throughout Norton Sound. Chum salmon have shown great early run strength, and the pinks are starting to skyrocket in catches in southern Norton Sound. Pink counts were starting to shoot up at numerous counting towers and weirs this last weekend. Preliminary Norton Sound commercial salmon catches through the morning of July 6 were: 215 Chinook salmon, 32,500 chums, 88,000 pinks, 62 reds and 1 silver by 62 permit holders. Last year 124 permit holders fished at least once during the season. Chum salmon abundance throughout Norton Sound has been well above average for the first week in July so commercial openings directed at chum salmon are expected in the Nome, Shaktoolik, and Unalakleet Subdistricts. ADF&G has been coordinating with the buyer in setting up commercial salmon fishing periods. The buyer has become swamped with fish in the Golovin, Elim and Norton Bay Subdistricts.

All waters from Rocky point to Point Romanof remain closed to sport fishing for Chinook salmon.

Other Southern Norton Sound Waters (Black Point to Point Romanof)

Effective July 1, all marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point reopened to subsistence salmon fishing 7 days a week, 24 hours a day for the remainder of the season.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

Chum and pink salmon passage estimates at southern Norton Sound escapement projects are well above average for early July. Escapement goals for chum and pink salmon to the Unalakleet River drainage have already been achieved. It also appears that the severe conservation measures taken this summer have led to much improved Chinook salmon escapement from recent years.

The Subdistrict reopened to commercial salmon fishing on Tuesday, July 8 for one 24-hour period beginning at 6:00 p.m. On July 9, that opening was extended by an additional 24 hours to close at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 10. An additional 72-hour opening began Friday, July 11 at 6:00 p.m. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Subsistence salmon gillnet fishing, with nets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size, reopened in the marine waters 7 days a week effective July 7.

Beach seining opens in all fresh waters 7 days a week effective Monday, July 7. Nets are restricted to a mesh size 4 ½ inches or less. All king salmon captured 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 5 were 900 kings, 2,100 chums and 31,000 pinks. Through this date the king count is the second best in nearly 20 years, the chum count is fourth best and the pink count is in the middle. The average historical quarter points at the tower are July 5 for pinks, July 6 for kings and July 11 for chums. Current projections for the North River Tower indicate the escapement goal range of 1,200-2,600 king salmon will be reached for the first time since 2010.

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 5 were 229 kings, 15,862 chums, 172,866 pinks, and 74 reds. Counts for all species by that date are the highest in the 5-year project history.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

The Subdistrict reopened to commercial salmon fishing on Tuesday, July 8 for one 24-hour period beginning at 6:00 p.m. On July 9, that opening was extended by an additional 24 hours to close at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 10. An additional 72-hour opening began Friday, July 11 at 6:00 p.m. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Subsistence salmon gillnet fishing, with nets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size reopened in the marine waters 7 days a week effective July 7.

Beach seining opens in all fresh waters 7 days a week effective Monday, July 7. All king salmon captured 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 4 were 900 kings, 12,000 chums and 31,000 pinks.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

The Subdistrict reopened to commercial salmon fishing for two 48-hour periods beginning at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 8, then again at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 12. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length with a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

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 5 were 3,000 kings, 63,000 chums, and 44,000 pinks. Counts for all species by that date are the highest in the 4-year project history.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

The Subdistrict reopened to commercial salmon fishing for two 48-hour periods beginning at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 8, then again at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 12. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length with a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

For subsistence fishing, the retention of king salmon is prohibited and the use of bait when using hook and line is banned 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 5 were 306 kings, 23,500 chums and 75,000 pinks. The king count is the best in 10 years through that date. The chum count ranks fifth best in the 50-year project history. The average historical midpoints at the tower are July 6 for chums, July 9 for kings and July 10 for pinks.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

The Subdistrict reopened to commercial salmon fishing for two 48-hour periods beginning at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 8, then again at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 12. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. At this time the department is managing the Golovin Subdistrict chum salmon fishery based on the Kwiniuk River tower escapement counts. Comparing Niukluk River tower chum salmon counts (1995-2012) with Kwiniuk River tower chum salmon counts of the same year there has been agreement between both rivers achieving or not achieving their respective escapement goals in 16 of 18 years. The department will also evaluate catch per unit of effort (CPUE) in the commercial fishery for additional fishing time. Pink salmon escapement had been reached every year that the Niukluk River tower was operational and is ensured again this year.

For subsistence fishing, the retention of king salmon is prohibited and the use of bait when using hook and line is banned 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 crew has been counting since June 18. Cumulative counts through July 5 were 500 kings, 15,000 chums and 12,500 pinks. This is the first year of the Fish River project. Past radio telemetry projects show approximately one-third of the chum salmon would be bound for Niukluk River and a preliminary projection shows that the past Niukluk River tower chum salmon escapement goal will be reached this year.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

The Nome Subdistrict escapement range of 23,000-35,000 chum salmon is projected to be easily exceeded for the fifth consecutive year. Chum salmon escapement needs east of Cape Nome have already been achieved, and chum escapement needs west of Cape Nome are at near record levels for early July. A 24-hour commercial fishing opening directed to chum salmon was announced this week in the Nome Subdistrict marine waters from Cape Nome east to Topkok Head opening 6:00 p.m. Saturday July 5 to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 6. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length with gillnets of a mesh size of 6 inches or less. An additional two 24-hour commercial salmon fishing period opened at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 9 and 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 12. Permit holders were restricted to set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Subsistence catch limits for chum and pink salmon in Safety Sound, Bonanza Channel, and Eldorado, Flambeau and Bonanza rivers were waived effective Monday, July 7.

The Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule went into effect June 15, 2014. A Nome Subdistrict subsistence permit is required to harvest salmon when subsistence fishing.

The weekly schedule for all marine waters west of Cape Nome is from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Saturday. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will remain open seven days a week for subsistence gillnet fishing.

The schedule for all fresh waters in the Subdistrict is from 6 p.m. Monday until 6 p.m. Wednesday and from 6 p.m. Thursday until 6 p.m. Saturday. Specific fresh waters open to gillnet fishing are listed on the permit. Gillnets up to 50 feet in length are allowed, but no more than one-half of any channel may be blocked by gillnets.

Beach seining is allowed during subsistence gillnet fishing periods at the same time as gillnetting is allowed in both the marine waters and fresh water subsistence areas.

Subsistence hook and line fishing is open at all times. Sport fish bag limits apply when using hook and line outside of Nome Subdistrict subsistence areas.

The Penny and Cripple rivers are closed to both sport and subsistence chum salmon fishing.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project has no escapement goals established. . The weir was fish tight on July 2. Cumulative counts through July 5 were 18 chums and 7 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 5 were 1 king, 5,942 chums and 1,322 pinks. The average historical quarter point at the weir is July 8 for pink salmon and July 10 for chum salmon.

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. The counts were 15 chums and 4 pinks.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The weir was fish tight on July 5. The counts were 42 chums and 34 pinks.

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. The next scheduled swap out of the video system is July 7 and the video will then be reviewed to update the counts.

Port Clarence District

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 5 were 3 king, 198 chums, 36 pinks, and 329 reds. In 3 of the previous 5 years the cumulative red count was 0 by this date and in the other 2 years was in the single digits. The department does have concerns with the red run because of an expected weakening of the run later in the season. Although the 6-year old reds returning this year had a parent-year escapement at the weir of 20,000 fish, the 5-year old reds only had a parent-year escapement of 953 fish in 2009.

Kotzebue District

ADF&G expects a good run of chum salmon this year and the commercial harvest forecast is 250,000 to 275,000 chum salmon. There are now four registered buyers but they may not all be able to buy fish at the same time. Buyer capacity may impact fishing schedules.

The season's first commercial opening began July 10 with an announced 10-hour opening from 12 noon to 10 p.m. That opening was the best opening day chum salmon harvest with the highest number of permit holders participating since the 1990s. Two buyers reported a combined catch of nearly 6,000 chums from 24 permit holders. A second commercial salmon opening for 8 hours was announced for Friday, July, 11 from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is scheduled to begin in mid-July.

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