

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 29-July 5, 2014.

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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
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Sockeye

The Forest Service operates the picket weir and video-equipped net weir at Redoubt Lake. The picket weir was fish tight the evening of June 16th. On July 6th 439 sockeye passed the weir bringing the season total to 4,392. The in-season model is predicting 45,420 sockeye will enter the lake this year with mean absolute percent error 27,292-63,549. Based on this model we typically have a good idea what the total escapement will be by mid-July. In 2013, an estimated total of 49,124 sockeye migrated into Redoubt Lake. The video equipped net weir was installed Wednesday June 25th.

The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weirs. The Falls Lake trap was installed Tuesday 7/1 and the dual video net weirs will be installed early this week. As of 7/5 no fish have been trapped. Sockeye have been observed in the bay and at the falls. As of 7/6, 421 sockeye have been harvested in the subsistence fishery. 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 than 98% of terminal area harvest.

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the sockeye monitoring weir at Klag Bay. As of 7/5 no sockeye have been counted at the Klag Bay weir and 114 sockeye 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
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Week ending July 5, 2014; statistical week 27

There have been 84 Federal Stikine River subsistence fishing permits issued to date for this season with an estimated catch to date of 10 Chinook salmon and 350 sockeye salmon. The catches of sockeye salmon in the Canadian commercial and food fisheries indicate a strong return to the river. The test fishery and aerial surveys on the Tahltan River have not documented any salmon above the slide area. In the Southeastern Region, there is a lower than normal abundance of pink salmon and higher than normal abundance of Chinook and sockeye salmon. 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
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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. Two hundred and fifteen 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.

In the Northern Inside area, the purse seine openings have targeted chum salmon returning to hatchery releases in the Hidden Falls and Amalga areas. Few pink salmon have been caught and the pink run appears to be consistent with the low return forecasted. The runs of sockeye salmon to the Chilkat and Taku Rivers appear relatively strong, as are the runs of hatchery chum salmon in the Lower Lynn Canal and Taku/Snettisham areas. Management actions have been taken to protect Chilkat and Taku River Chinook salmon and Chilkoot River sockeye salmon.

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 3, 407 sockeye salmon have entered Neva Lake and five have entered Kook Lake. As of July 1, ADF&G reports that 14 sockeye salmon have been counted through their picket weir at the outlet of Kanalku Lake and that 49 sockeye salmon have swam through their double video weirs below the falls. The sockeye salmon runs to each of these lakes are just beginning. There has been some subsistence take of sockeye reported in Excursion Inlet (Neva) and Kanalku Bay this past week.

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, 192 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 is now beginning.

A sockeye salmon weir is currently active and fishing at Hatchery Creek. To date 3,360 sockeye, 4 coho and 1 steelhead have been counted at this project. Total passage at the Hetta Lake weir project is 372 sockeye. Pickets were placed in the Klawock River weir on July 1.

Commercial seine openings in District 2 and drift gillnet openings in District 1 have been ongoing for several weeks now. Commercial trolling for Chinook began on July 1 to target approximately 171,300 Chinook salmon and is now scheduled to close at 11:59 p.m. on July 7. Commercial salmon harvests estimated by ADF&G issued news releases are as follows: 6,135 Chinook, 20,640 sockeye, 15,450 coho, 37,210 pink, and 90,650 chum salmon.



Hatchery Creek sockeye salmon being sampled at weir in sampling net, 2014

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 5, 2014 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 933,587 salmon had migrated upstream. This estimate is 182% of the projected escapement objective of 511,868 for this date, or 421,719 more salmon. An estimate of 7,964 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 5th.

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:

- 9,539 Chinook
- 1,845,516 sockeye
- 610 coho
- 626 pink
- 41,612 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict opened last week on June 30 and remained open all week through July 6. It immediately reopened on July 7 and will remain open the entire week. After some good rain and a couple of hot days, water level in the Copper River is high. The state and federal fisheries in this subdistrict usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Sixty-two 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 forty six 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 6, 18,092 sockeye and 5 Chinook have been counted through the weir.

As of July 5, 1,936 Chinook have been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak and 169 tagged and 2,233 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 2, 486 Chinook and 9,228 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.

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.

Three 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.

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.

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The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 3 for a 48-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 890,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 486,000 fish. For the week ending June 28, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 33,620 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 17,627–41,665. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown on 3 July. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 20 were 29% Gulkana Hatchery and 4% Main Bay Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, July 2 is not yet available.

A total of 38 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. A harvest of 967 sockeye salmon for the Russian River Falls dip net fishery and a harvest of 35 sockeye salmon for the Kasilof River dip net fishery have been reported through 2 July. Totals of 111 Kenai River permits, 11 Kasilof River permits, and 8 designated fisher permits have been issued through 2 July.

An emergency Special Action to close all waters under Federal subsistence management jurisdiction in the Kenai River drainage downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake to subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon remains in effect through 11:59 p.m., Monday, July 14, 2014. As of June 30, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates that 5,311 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). The Department estimates run timing was 4 days earlier than average, most fish (65%) were less than 30 inches, and only 21% were female. 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 early-run Chinook salmon closed.

Fish Counts through July2:

Russian River early-run sockeye (weir)	39,584	(counts end on 14 July)
Russian River late-run sockeye (weir)		(counts begin on 15 July)
Kenai River late-run sockeye (sonar)	19,632	(counts begin on 1 July)
Kasilof River sockeye (sonar)	155,965	(counts through 25 June)
Kenai River early-run Chinook (sonar)	5,311	(counts through 30 June)
Kenai River late-run Chinook (sonar)		(counts began 1 July)

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

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 Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

This week the Buskin is seeing fewer boats with nets out in front (up to 4 during the day) and fish numbers have slowed at the weir near the lake. Pasagshak and Saltery Rivers, also adjacent to the road system, are beginning to see a show of sockeye, with Saltery over 1,000 and Pasagshak under 200 sockeye at the weir this week. These two systems are also used by local subsistence harvesters in late June and throughout July.

Most families in village communities are harvesting the sockeye salmon they need up to this point. One family of 5 households in **Akhiok** made 5 trips and received 250 salmon. They went way up to Olga Bay and fished bays closer to home. **Old Harbor** is setting a few gillnets in bays outside the village and reportedly harvesting 80 to 100 reds with

dogs, humpies and silvers showing up as well. **Port Lions** residents are also reportedly harvesting the sockeye they need so far.

Dig Afognak's Harvest and Earth Camp took place this last week near the Old Village of Afognak where children, elders, and adult mentors harvested, prepared and preserved sockeye salmon and many other traditional Alutiiq foods from the land. It was an opportunity to teach youth the importance of protecting our natural resources, environmental risks we face today and to respect and preserve our lands for future generations.



A Fisherman gillnets for salmon from a small skiff in Women's Bay just off shore of the Buskin River outlet with another gillnet set behind him. (photo by Tonya Lee)

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 1,199 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.
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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

Assessment information is confirming that the Chinook salmon run timing is early this year and appears to be winding down in the lower Yukon. The summer chum run timing appears to be 2-3 days early and is just past the average $\frac{3}{4}$ point of the run at Pilot Station. 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 are passing across the Canadian border or into the Tanana River drainage. Pulse two fish are in Subdistrict 5D or passing Nenana. Pulse three is passing by Tanana and a small pulse four is passing by Kaltag. The LYTF and Pilot Station sonar has detected five pulses of chum salmon. The first pulse is near Manly, the second is near Ruby, the third is passing Koyukuk, and the fourth pulse is passing Holy Cross. A fifth pulse of summer chum should be passing Pilot Station on July 5-6. 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 two pulses of Chinook salmon. The Andrafsky weir has an estimated passage of 1,071 Chinook and 18,538 summer chum. The Anvik River sonar has an estimated passage of 216,077 summer chum. The Gisasa River weir has just started, and the Henshaw Creek weir will start operations as soon as high waters at the weir site recedes. The Eagle sonar began operations on June 27 and has an estimated passage of 5,441 Chinook salmon through July 5.

Chum salmon subsistence reports along the coast have been good and reports in the lower Yukon have indicated good catches with dip nets when summer chum have been available in large enough numbers to make dip nets effective. Subsistence fishermen in District 4 are just getting started with subsistence fishing with dipnets and live release fish wheels. Summer chum salmon abundance is expected to continue rising in Districts 4 and 6 (Tanana drainage). Most subsistence fishermen have been conserving Chinook salmon and targeting summer chum salmon and other fish. However, recently, reports from LE and subsistence fishermen have indicated that a few fishermen in a couple of areas have been targeting Chinook salmon with 4-inch or less mesh gear. Managers closed Subdistricts 5A, 5B, and 5C to subsistence fishing with all gill net gear on June 30 and will reopen to 4-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear on July 7.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The average $\frac{3}{4}$ point of the summer chum run at Pilot Station is July 3, however it appears that the summer chum run may be 2-3 days earlier than average. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate on July 5 was 1.7 million summer chum. Additionally, commercial fishermen have already harvested nearly 286,000 summer

chum below the Pilot Station sonar and 40,000 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 132,000 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 below average and 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. On May 16 the Coastal District and Districts 1 & 2 were restricted to 6-inch or less mesh gear to protect early run Chinook salmon while providing fishermen the opportunity to harvest whitefish. On May 26, subsistence salmon fishing was closed in the northern portion of the Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, and 3 to conserve Chinook salmon. Similar subsistence fishing closures were followed sequentially to District 4 and 5 as Chinook salmon arrived in those areas. District 6 started open on the normal subsistence fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods with gillnets restricted to 7.5 inch or less mesh size, then was closed for two periods starting June 29-July 7. Subsistence fishing utilizing 4-inch or less mesh gear is still allowed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week in most areas. Subsistence chum salmon fishing with dip nets was opened in Districts 1, 2, and 3 on June 1 which required the release of all Chinook salmon back into the river. On June 10, Districts 1 and 2 were put on a concurrent subsistence/commercial fishing schedule with dip nets and beach seines targeting chum salmon with Chinook salmon released alive back into the river with subsistence only open Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. until midnight. The Koyukuk and Innoko Rivers were closed to subsistence salmon fishing on June 18 and June 19, respectively. District 4 has been opened to subsistence chum salmon fishing utilizing dip nets and fish wheels (with live release of Chinook salmon). The Anvik River was opened to subsistence chum salmon fishing utilizing dip nets and beach seines under the *Anvik River Special Management Area* plan. Subsistence fishing with 4-inch or less mesh gear is allowed 24/7 throughout the drainage during closures.

As the majority of the Chinook salmon move into upriver districts, subsistence fishing opportunities for chum salmon are being relaxed starting in the lower river districts. Short subsistence periods were opened in Districts 1 and 2 starting on June 28 allowing the use of 6-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear, however dip nets and beach seines were not allowed during this opening. A short subsistence fishing opportunity utilizing 6-inch

or less mesh gill net gear was opened in District 3 on July 3 and District 3 will return to two 36 hour periods per week utilizing 6-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear starting July 9. The southern portion of the Coastal District was relaxed to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear on July 5. Districts 1 and 2 were relaxed to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, except 6 hours before, during, and after commercial fishing periods, restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gill net gear with dip nets and beach seines discontinued. The Innoko River drainage was reopened to 6-inch or less mesh gill net gear on June 28 and the Koyukuk was reopened on July 2.

Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon has been ongoing in Districts 1 and 2 since June 9. Commercial fishing gear was restricted to dip nets and beach seines only with live release of Chinook salmon required until July 3 when commercial fishing utilizing 6-inch or smaller gill net gear was allowed. A total of 286,675 summer chum salmon have been harvested in the 23 openings in each of Districts 1 and 2, and a total of 5,447 Chinook salmon have been caught and released. 33 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. 39,354 chum salmon have been harvested in this fishery with 81 Chinook salmon caught and released.

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

Kuskokwim River

The Kuskokwim Salmon Management Group (KSMWG) met this week and ADF&G is proposing at some point soon to have a directed chum/sockeye commercial fishing opportunity. The KSMWG is going to further discuss the merits of a commercial opening on Tuesday, July 8th. The Chinook counts at the Bethel Test Fish project are tapering off with fewer than 10 fish per day noted in the last two days. Chum and sockeye salmon appear healthy in numbers, although there is concern that subsistence needs from upriver may not be met for fisherman upriver. All weirs are in operation and this next week will begin to gauge the effectiveness of the Chinook closures on total escapement as the salmon return to the spawning grounds.

Escapement Projects

Bethel Test Fish: Through July 5th

- The cumulative index for kings was 624 and at this time last year the passage was 231 and the year before 347. This suggests a level of abundance that is projected at minimum to achieve the lower in river Chinook salmon escapement goal.
- For chum salmon the cumulative chum index was 3,992 and at this time last year the passage was 2,527 and the previous year was 3,239.

- Sockeye salmon have an index of 1,129 compared to this time last year of 937 and the previous years was 778.

Kwethluk River Weir: Through July 6th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 1,578.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 2,330.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 245.

Tuluksak River Weir: Through July 6th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 176.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 641.
- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 29.

Salmon River Weir: Through July 6th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 456.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 358.

George River Weir: Through July 6th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 999.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 1,456.

Tatlawiksuk River Weir: Through July 6th

- King salmon cumulative count total 1,274.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 1,586.

Kogruluk River Weir: Through July 6th

- Cumulative king salmon counts total 494.
- Cumulative chum salmon counts total 314.
- Sockeye escapement to date total 40.

Telequana Lake Weir: Through July 6th

- Cumulative sockeye salmon counts total 1.

Kuskokwim Bay

Commercial Fishery (Courtesy of ADF&G, Bethel)

District 4, Quinhagak, will open to commercial salmon fishing for 12 hours from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9, 2014. As of July 5, total passage through the Kanektok River weir is 123 king; 63,325 sockeye; and 1,819 chum salmon. King and chum salmon escapements are below average, while the escapement of sockeye salmon is highest on record for this time. ADF&G intends to fly an aerial survey in the coming weeks, weather permitting, to get an idea of how many fish are in the river below the weir site.

District 5, Goodnews Bay, will open to commercial salmon fishing for 12 hours from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9, 2014. As of July 5, there have been 121 king; 24,066 sockeye; and 1,663 chum salmon have passed through the Middle Fork Goodnews River weir. The king salmon passage is well below average. Sockeye escapement is the third highest on record and the lower end of the escapement goal range has been achieved. Chum salmon escapement is slightly below average at this time.

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/>

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Norton Sound

Chum and pink salmon runs throughout Norton Sound are showing strong early run strength. Chum salmon escapements to northern Norton Sound drainages are tracking well above average for late June with escapement goals either already achieved or projected to be easily reached. In southern Norton Sound, chum and pink salmon are just

now moving upstream past escapement projects with large numbers milling in the lower reaches of major rivers. Therefore, subsistence fishing restrictions and closures will be incrementally relaxed beginning July 1. Additionally, several directed pink and chum salmon commercial openings have been announced throughout Norton Sound.

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)

Two commercial salmon fishing periods opened in the Subdistrict. The first opened for a 24-hour period effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 1. Permit holders were allowed to use 150 fathoms of net but gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 4.5 inches or less. The second opening was for a 48-hour period effective 12:00 noon Thursday July 3. Permit holders are allowed 100 fathoms of net with gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Any Chinook salmon incidentally caught during any commercial opening may not be sold for commercial purposes, but must be recorded in the personal use section of each fish ticket at the time of delivery.

The marine waters of the Subdistrict reopened to subsistence salmon fishing for two fishing periods. The first was a 24-hour period beginning at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 1, with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 4.5 inches or less. The second was a 48-hour period beginning 12:00 noon Thursday, July 3 with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The freshwaters of the Subdistrict were reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with beach seines for 24 hours effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 28 until 6:00 p.m. Sunday, June 29. Beach seine mesh size could not exceed 4.5 inches and Chinook salmon inadvertently captured must be immediately returned to the water alive and unharmed. An additional two 36-hour subsistence fishing periods were also opened. The first of these beach seining periods opened 12:00 noon Tuesday, July 1. The second was from 12:00 noon Friday, July 4. Any Chinook salmon incidentally caught in beach seines was required to be immediately released to the water alive and unharmed.

The federal waters of the Unalakleet National Wild River were 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. Counts started on June 14 with the first salmon spotted on June

21. Cumulative counts through June 26 were 0 kings, 66 chums and 258 pinks. It is still early as historically the run is at the 1% point of king passage for that date.

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. High water delayed the installation of the weir. However, the weir was expected to be fish tight the night of June 28 so counts should be available next week.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Two commercial salmon fishing periods opened in the Subdistrict. The first opened for a 24-hour period effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 1. Permit holders were allowed to use 150 fathoms of net but gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 4.5 inches or less. The second opening was for a 48-hour period effective 12:00 noon Thursday July 3. Permit holders were allowed 100 fathoms of net with gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Any Chinook salmon incidentally caught during any commercial opening may not be sold for commercial purposes, but must be recorded in the personal use section of each fish ticket at the time of delivery.

The marine waters of the Subdistrict reopened to subsistence salmon fishing for two fishing periods. The first was a 24-hour period beginning at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 1, with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 4.5 inches or less. The second was a 48-hour period beginning 12:00 noon Thursday, July 3 with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The freshwaters of the Subdistrict were reopened to subsistence salmon fishing with beach seines for 24 hours effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 28 until 6:00 p.m. Sunday, June 29. Beach seine mesh size could not exceed 4.5 inches and Chinook salmon inadvertently captured must be immediately returned to the water alive and unharmed. An additional two 36-hour subsistence fishing periods were also opened. The first of these beach seining periods opened 12:00 noon Tuesday, July 1. The second was from 12:00 noon Friday, July 4. Any Chinook salmon incidentally caught in beach seines was required to be immediately released to the water alive and unharmed.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. It has no escapement goals established. Cumulative counts through June 26 were 87 kings, 1,416 chums and 876 pinks.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict were opened to commercial salmon fishing for 24 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. This yielded a catch of 40 kings, 2,052 chums and 2,557 pinks by 6 permit holders. Kings were not purchased by the buyer and were retained for personal use. Both the chum and pink catches were above average

for that date. An additional commercial salmon opening for 24 hours was announced to begin effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June, 28. Permit holders in this directed pink salmon commercial fishery were restricted to nets with a stretched mesh size no larger than 4 and one-half inches in length. Any salmon retained for subsistence purposes are required to be recorded in the personal use section at the bottom of the fish ticket. Two 48-hour chum salmon directed commercial openings were also announced for this week. The first period opened at 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 30. The second opened at 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 4. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Effective July 1, all Norton Bay Subdistrict marine and freshwaters of the Inglutalik and Ungalik River drainages reopened to subsistence salmon fishing 7 days a week, 24 hours a day for the remainder of the season.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. The crew started counting on June 20. Cumulative counts through June 26 were 289 kings, 3,037 chums, and 1,791 pinks. Counts for all species by this date are the highest in the 4-year project history.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict were opened to commercial salmon fishing for 24 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. This fishery yielded a catch of 34 kings, 2,579 chums and 1,976 pinks by 13 permit holders. Kings were not purchased by the buyer and were retained for personal use. An additional commercial salmon opening for 24 hours was announced to begin effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June, 28. Permit holders in this directed pink salmon commercial fishery were restricted to nets with a stretched mesh size no larger than 4 and one-half inches in length. Any salmon retained for subsistence purposes are required to be recorded in the personal use section at the bottom of the fish ticket. Two 48-hour chum salmon directed commercial openings were also announced for this week. The first period opened at 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 30. The second opened at 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 4. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Escapement of chum salmon in the Subdistrict is being indexed using the ADF&G's Kwiniuk River Tower which has been in operation since 1965. As of June 29, 12,000 chum salmon have been enumerated which is above the lower end of the escapement goal range of 11,500-23,000 chum salmon.

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 June 27 are 102 kings, 11,520 chums and 10,212 pinks. Nearly 5,000 chums passed Saturday, June 27. Through this

date the king count is the best in over 10 years and the chum count is the best in the 50-year project history.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

The marine waters of the Subdistrict were opened to commercial salmon fishing for 24 hours beginning at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 25. This fishery yielded a catch of 2 kings, 3 reds, 1,178 chums and 113 pinks by 7 permit holders. Kings were not purchased by the buyer and were retained for personal use. An additional commercial salmon opening for 24 hours was announced to begin effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June, 28. Permit holders in this directed pink salmon commercial fishery will be restricted to nets with a stretched mesh size no larger than 4 and one-half inches in length. Any salmon retained for subsistence purposes are required to be recorded in the personal use section at the bottom of the fish ticket. Two 48-hour chum salmon directed commercial openings were also announced for this week. The first period opened at 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 30. The second opened at 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 4. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Escapement of chum salmon in the Subdistrict is being indexed using the ADF&G's Kwiniuk River Tower which has been in operation since 1965. As of June 29, 12,000 chum salmon have been enumerated which is above the lower end of the escapement goal range of 11,500-23,000 chum salmon.

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 June 27 were 156 kings, 4,260 chums and 2,829 pinks. This is the first year of the project. A second counting tower is scheduled to be erected on the west bank next week.



Aerial Picture of Fish River counting tower with flash panels installed on bottom of river located downstream from the confluence with the Niukluk River – Courtesy of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Nome, Alaska

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Two 24-hour commercial fishing openings directed to chum salmon were announced this week in the Nome Subdistrict marine waters from Cape Nome east to Topkok Head. Periods were from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 2 to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 3, and from 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. The Eldorado River is used to assess escapement of chum salmon east of Cape Nome. Escapement through June 29 was 1,604 fish, the highest on record for that date. Projections of chum salmon escapement based on early run timing models indicate the upper end of the escapement goal range of 6,000-9,200 chum salmon will be exceeded for the 5th consecutive season.

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. Gillnets up 300 feet in length are allowed in the marine waters. Drift netting is not allowed.

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. Drift netting is not allowed.

Beach seining is allowed during subsistence gillnet fishing periods from June 15 through July 25.

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 is scheduled to be fish tight by July 1.

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 weir was fish tight on the afternoon of June 23. Cumulative counts through June 27 were 814 chums and 56 pinks. Thousands more chum salmon were observed by aerial survey in the lower Eldorado River on June 27.

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 crew has camp set up and is starting to put the weir in.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The crew is scheduled to set up the first week of July.

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 crew flew in today to set up the video system that is scheduled to start monitoring the salmon run on June 30.

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 based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The weir was fish tight on the afternoon of June 25. Cumulative count through June 27 was 1 red.

Kotzebue District

Four buyers have expressed interest in the commercial salmon fishery, but none have registered yet. The expected opening date is July 10.

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