

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 25-31, 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 sent 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 Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the sockeye monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2013, a total of 6,896 sockeye salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated total of 4,550 sockeye salmon were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest

The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir and video-equipped net weir which are scheduled to be operational in mid-June. In 2013, an estimated total of 49,124 sockeye salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On June 27th, 2013, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game set the individual/household subsistence sockeye salmon possession limit at 25 and the individual/household subsistence sockeye salmon annual limit at 100. The preliminary subsistence sockeye salmon harvest in 2013 was 4,336. Also consistent with the management plan, a directed commercial fishery was open targeting Redoubt sockeye salmon for the first time since 2007. The fishery was open eighteen days between July 7th and August 3rd and resulted in the harvest of 3,304 sockeye salmon.

The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weirs which will be operational the first week of July. The final escapement in 2013 was estimated at 1,120 sockeye salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 880 sockeye salmon. Subsistence harvest accounted for over than 98% of terminal area harvest.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
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Week ending May 31, 2014; statistical week 22

The Chinook salmon forecast for the Stikine River is 26,000 large (greater than 30 inches total length) Chinook salmon. This forecast is less than the 28,100 Chinook salmon necessary for a directed Chinook salmon fishery by either the U.S. or Canada. There will be weekly in-season abundance estimates and an “Allowable Catch” if the in-season estimate exceeds 24,500 large Chinook salmon. The Federal Subsistence Board closed the Stikine River subsistence fishery pre-season because the subsistence fishery is defined as a directed fishery in the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Authority to reopen the fishery was delegated to the in-season manager, when there is an Allowable Catch.

The pre-season forecast for Stikine River sockeye salmon is 152,000 fish, well below the previous 10-year average. A return forecast of this size results in a U.S. Allowable Catch of 44,000 sockeye salmon. The subsistence fishery is a component of this allocation and no management action is necessary. 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

The sockeye salmon runs and subsistence fisheries have not yet begun in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. Project personnel are preparing for the sockeye salmon monitoring projects at Kook Lake, Neva Lake, and Sitkoh Lake which are scheduled to begin in mid-June.

In the Yakutat area, steelhead fishing on the Situk has been good and as of June 1 ADF&G personnel have counted 4,307 kelts through the Situk weir. Sockeye salmon runs usually begin in earnest in the Yakutat area in mid-June.

The Southeast Alaska purse seine fishery will begin on Sunday June 15 at Point Augusta and Hidden Falls with a 15-hour opening.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest.
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The Federal Salmon/Trout/Char Subsistence fishery ended on December 31, 2013. A total of 292 permits were issued across the southeast region for this fishery. To date, we have received back 87 percent of the permits issued. The total reported harvest from these permits is: 876 sockeye, 781 coho, 552 pink, and 25 Chinook. Also reported were 36 cutthroat trout, 13 rainbow trout, 48 Dolly Varden char and 10 steelhead.

The Prince of Wales Winter Subsistence Steelhead fishery ended on February 28, 2014. A total of 42 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. To date, we have received back 76 percent of the permits issued. The total reported harvest from these permits is 3 steelhead. The steelhead were harvested from the following locations: 2 from the Thorne River and 1 from Eagle Creek.

The Prince of Wales Spring Subsistence Steelhead fishery ended on May 31, 2014. A total of 63 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. Permits from this fishery are just starting to be returned and are not due back until June 15. The total reported harvest from permits returned to date is 5 from the Thorne River and 1 from Staney Creek.

The Unuk River eulachon fishery was again closed pre-season. It is anticipated that several more years of pre-season closures will occur to complete a life cycle of these fish. USFS personnel again monitored for the presence of eulachon in the Unuk River and other locations within District 1. A small number of eulachon returned to the Unuk during mid-March, however the noted abundance was well below numbers seen in 2011 and 2012 and is believed to be less than that seen in 2013. Eulachon were noted in the Wilson/Blossom River.

A sockeye salmon weir is currently active and fishing at Hatchery Creek. To date no sockeye have been counted at the Hatchery Creek weir.

No commercial fishing has opened yet within fishing Districts 1-4.

Southeast Alaska Web Links

Tongass National Forest News Room

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area

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

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

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

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

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

As of May 31, 2014, the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 308,309 salmon had migrated upstream. This estimate is 192% of the projected escapement objective of 160,518 for this date, or 147,791 more salmon. An estimate of 44,127 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on May 31. The sonar equipment on both banks of Miles Lake became fully operational on May 12.

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

- 5,543 Chinook
- 671,809 sockeye
- 37 coho
- 2 pink
- 22,333 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict fisheries are scheduled to open on June 7. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened on May 15 and is expected to remain open until September 30. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen subdistrict opened on June 1.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open but there are no participants at this time. The Tanada Creek weir was installed on May 23. No salmon have migrated through the weir as yet, they usually arrive in mid-June.

800 Chinook have been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak and 37 have been recaptured at the Canyon Creek wheels.

Two Special Actions have been issued by the park this season:

- Setting the tentative preseason schedule for the Chitina subdistrict.
- Delaying the starting date of the Chitina River Federal subsistence salmon fishery.

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 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period on Monday, June 2. Cumulative Miles Lake sonar count to date is 264,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 145,000 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 36-hour period that began on Thursday, May 29 was 189,000 sockeye and 1,200 Chinook salmon with 910 deliveries reported. The anticipated harvest for this fishing period was 89,000 sockeye salmon

A total of 9 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

The 2014 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon will begin on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers 15 June and 16 June, respectively. Seasons and areas for subsistence fishing with rod and reel are the same as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations. Most of the initial rod and reel subsistence effort will be focused at sockeye salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opens on June 11.

Totals of 61 Kenai River permits and 3 Kasilof River permits have been issued through 29 May. No permits were issued for the Tustumena Lake ice fishery this past winter.

The Cook Inlet preseason outlook is well below average for Chinook salmon and average for sockeye salmon. Based on a preseason forecast of about half of the 5,300 minimum escapement goal for early-run Kenai River Chinook salmon, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issued an emergency order to close the sport fishery through 30 June. A Federal Special Action will likely be issued to prevent harvest of Kenai River Chinook salmon prior to the 15 June season opener if the run comes in as projected.

Chinook salmon are starting to enter the Kenai River. The lower river DIDSON sonar has been operational since 16 May; a total of 189 Chinook salmon have been counted through 26 May. Early-run sockeye salmon should now be entering the lower Kenai River and will start to show in the upper Kenai and Russian rivers over the next week or two. The weir on the Russian River is typically operational by 10 June to monitor the return of early-run sockeye salmon.

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
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Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

Sockeye salmon returns to the Buskin River near Kodiak City have begun and appear to be slightly earlier than the past 5 years according to ADF&G weir count data. Subsistence fishing efforts near the mouth of this river began about two weeks ago, and have been intensive during recent good weather windows. Results have been mixed with reports of low catch per unit effort more common than high success to date.

Sockeye escapement at the Litnik River on Afognak Island appears to be ramping up. Local residents who have fished there are reporting mixed success with some residents catching nothing and others harvesting their limit.

While no reports have been received from village residents in other areas of the island, the Karluk River early sockeye escapement is currently double what it was last year at this time which was the largest run in more than ten years.

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 waters under Federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction, 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 2014 at approximately 26 million, and escapement goals total ~ 8.5 million sockeye, leaving ~ 17 million sockeye available for harvest. Harvestable surpluses are projected for all systems. The largest returns are predicted for the Egegik, the Naknek/Kvichak, and Nushagak districts. ADFG Commercial Fisheries Division has strategies in place for all

mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. The commercial fishing seasons open by regulation in early June. In most districts, weekly fishing schedules are in place until later in June.

Chinook salmon returns have been poor to moderate in recent years throughout most of Alaska, including Bristol Bay. In 2013, there was one directed opening for Chinook salmon in the Nushagak District and that remains a possibility this year depending upon run strength. Some conservation measures are in place for most districts to conserve Chinook salmon, including mesh size restriction to 5 ½ inches through mid to late July (depending on district) and reduced fishing time in June (varies by 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 forecasts for both early-run and late-run sockeye are in excess of escapement goals. 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. Commercial fishing management is based on early run assessment until July 4; then late run assessment after that. Harvestable surpluses are projected for both runs, and escapement goals should be met.

The escapement goal for Chinook salmon is 1,300 fish. Projected commercial harvest in the Chignik Management Area is 5,000 Chinook salmon and is based upon anticipated fishing time for sockeye. In 2013, all inriver Chinook salmon fisheries, including the new Federal subsistence fishery, was 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. Preseason forecasts are made for only the Nelson (500 thousand) and late-run Bear (400 thousand) river sockeye stocks. The largest fisheries are managed under management

plans. Management objectives vary by district and time; and include: local sockeye escapements; more distant sockeye returns to Bristol Bay or Chignik; and local pink, chum, or coho returns.

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

Federal staff arrived in Emmonak on May 27 to open the Emmonak Field Office for summer management activities. The office is operational can be contacted by calling (907) 949-1798.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The summer chum run is projected to be average to above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of 300,000 to 500,000 summer chum is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest, however the commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook salmon run. The Chinook salmon outlook is projecting an extremely poor run. The run size is projected to be between 64,000 to 121,000 Chinook salmon with managers anticipating the run near the low end based upon recent productivity. Subsistence conservation measures will be required to share the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. No directed Chinook salmon commercial fishery is anticipated. Public meetings were held throughout the winter and spring to inform fishers of the outlook. The following management strategies were formulated after extensive public input:

- Before Chinook salmon enter the river, subsistence fishing opportunity for non-salmon species will be provided and gillnets may be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.
- As Chinook salmon arrive in each district, subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon will be closed. The closure is expected to be in place for most of the run through each section of river. Fishermen in the Coastal District, Koyukuk, Innoko, and Tanana Rivers should expect some closed fishing time to protect Chinook salmon in those areas. Closures will be initiated in the Coastal District and District 1 when assessment information indicates that the first Chinook salmon have begun their migration along the coast and into the river. This closure will be similarly implemented in upriver fishing districts and subdistricts based on migratory timing.
- During subsistence salmon fishing closures, non-salmon species may be harvested using 4-inch or smaller mesh size gillnets not exceeding 60-feet in length. However, no targeting of Chinook salmon with this gear type will be allowed. This opportunity to harvest non-salmon will be discontinued if this gear is used to target Chinook salmon.
- When summer chum salmon become abundant, subsistence and commercial fishing opportunities will be provided with selective gear such as dip nets, beach seines, and manned fish wheels. Fishermen must carefully and immediately release Chinook salmon alive when encountered in these gear types.
- Fishermen are strongly encouraged to avoid fishing when and where Chinook salmon may be encountered.
- Subsistence restrictions will be relaxed after the Chinook salmon run has passed through each section of river. If confidence is high that the Chinook salmon run is much better than anticipated, the use of 6-inch gillnets may be considered to allow for summer chum salmon harvest.
- The sport fishery for Chinook salmon will be closed in the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage (including the Tanana River drainage). Sport fishing for Chinook salmon, including catch-and-release fishing will be prohibited. Chinook salmon may not be retained or possessed.

- The fall chum salmon run is anticipated to be of sufficient size to provide for full subsistence opportunity and a surplus for commercial harvest.
- The fall chum commercial salmon fishery is expected to begin in the Lower Yukon in the middle of July.

YRDFAs teleconferences began on May 27, and Federal and State managers have already visited the upriver communities of Steven's Village, Beaver, Venetie, and Fort Yukon and are scheduled for the coastal communities of Scammon Bay and Hooper Bay to discuss management strategies and address fishermen's concerns. Additional visits to other communities are anticipated this season.

Assessment Information

Ice out on the lower Yukon River was one of the earliest on record with the ice going out at Alakanuk on May 9, fourteen days earlier than average. Additionally, Bering Sea ice has retreated off the coast, leaving the Yukon River mouth ice free. With ice out earlier than average, managers are anticipating earlier entry timing for Chinook and summer chum salmon. The first subsistence caught Chinook salmon was reported on May 19, the earliest report in a decade. The ADF&G Big Eddy and Middle Mouth test fishing projects have begun. The projects have reported a few Chinook and chum salmon in both the drift and set net test fisheries. All Chinook salmon caught in the drift fishery are being released alive to conserve Chinook salmon. The department also plans to discontinue the Chinook salmon set net fishery when fish numbers increase to conserve Chinook salmon. At this time it is too early to assess the strength of either the Chinook or the chum salmon runs. The Pilot Station sonar crew is preparing the camp and deploying the sonar system. They anticipate the sonar to be up and running on June 1. Subsistence fishermen catch reports indicate that whitefish harvests were good since ice out.

Management Actions

Until assessment data become available, management decisions will be consistent with the pre-season projections. 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. Subsistence fishing utilizing 4-inch or less mesh gear is still allowed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Subsistence salmon fishing in the southern portion of the Coastal District is anticipated to be closed for 5-7 days beginning on about June 4. This coincides with the predicted $\frac{1}{4}$ point of the Chinook salmon run passing through the southern portion of the Coastal District. Subsistence salmon fishing in the Lower Subdistrict 4A, Upper Subdistrict 4A, and Subdistricts 4B/C are scheduled to be closed on May 31, June 2, and June 4, respectively. Subsistence fishing 24/7 is still allowed with 4-inch or less mesh gear. Subsistence fishing in Yukon River District 5 is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, restricted to 7.5-inch or less mesh gear. District 6 is open on their normal subsistence fishing schedule of two 42-hour periods each with gillnets restricted to 7.5 inch or less mesh size. The sequential activation of subsistence fishing restrictions will continue in all districts moving upstream.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the State Board of Fish meeting, and the Yukon River Panel meetings. YRDFA hosted its annual meeting in Fort Yukon where participants shared their fish management concerns. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Fairbanks that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. Immediately after this meeting a Yukon River International Summit combined the Alaska participants with a Canadian delegation to allow fishermen on both sides of the border to share their concerns face-to-face. In addition to regular meetings, state and federal managers have visited several villages in person to discuss fish management and hear local's concerns. Additional meetings are planned during the season as the run progresses.

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

Since 2010, the Kuskokwim River has suffered from poor Chinook salmon returns. 2013 was the lowest return on record, and 2014 is expected to be just as poor. The 2014 State of Alaska Chinook salmon forecast is for a return of 94,000 Chinook (range of 71,000-117,000). The drainage-wide escapement goal is 65,000–120,000.

In the wake of Federal Subsistence Board Special Action FSA-14-03, Special Actions 3-KS-01-14 and 3-KS-02-14 went into effect on 20 May. The former closed Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River to fishing for Chinook salmon to non-Federally qualified users to provide for escapement. The latter closed Chinook salmon fishing to all users in conservation sections 1 and 2 on the Kuskokwim River drainage. Specifically, gill net fishing in those sections was restricted to set gillnets, 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length. On 27 May, Special Action 3-KS-03-14 extended the closure and gill net restrictions upriver from the vicinity of Tuluksak to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge boundary at Aniak.

The State of Alaska issued Emergency Orders #3-S-WR-01-14 and #3-S-WR-02-14 on May 21 and 29, respectively. These orders, taking effect on June 1, will close subsistence salmon fishing in State-managed waters both above the refuge boundary at Aniak (up to the Holitna) and in the marine waters beyond the refuge boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim. Between Aniak and the Holitna, only the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less size mesh, not exceeding 60 feet in length, and 45 meshes in depth will be allowed for the harvest of non-salmon species such as whitefish. These restrictions will be extended upriver to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim on June 4. In the state's marine waters adjacent to the mouth of the Kuskokwim (described in EO 02), all subsistence fishing will be closed as of June 1.

Beginning on June 11 and extending through the end of the month, there will be a limited social and cultural harvest of Chinook salmon for federally qualified subsistence users living in the 32 communities identified in the OSM 804 analysis. The total number of Chinook salmon allocated drainage-wide for this permit harvest will not exceed 1,000. In addition, because both the State Board of Fish and the Federal Subsistence Board approved the use of dip nets for subsistence purposes along the Kuskokwim River, there will be a dip net fishery for chum and sockeye beginning in June once good numbers of those species are in the river; any Chinook salmon captured while dip netting will have to be released immediately.

Beginning in the last week of June, the in-season Federal manager may allow limited openings with 6" mesh gill nets to allow for additional harvest of chum and sockeye *if* data from the Bethel Test Fishery indicate that Chinook run strength, Chinook run timing, and the ratio of chums and sockeyes to Chinook salmon are favorable.

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.

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There is not much fishing activity to report. Being this far north our fisheries cycles including run timing and fishing activity tend to be days to several weeks behind those further south. A lot of the ice has gone out and some marine waters have opened up

earlier than last year. Currently the waters south of Nome including Norton Sound are basically free of sea ice. However, the area north of St. Lawrence Island and through the Bering Strait including Kotzebue Sound still has ice of varying conditions including drifting pack ice. This has affected local subsistence users in varying degrees depending upon where they live. For example hunters from the community of Shishmaref are currently engaged in active sea mammal hunting, and appear to be headed toward a very good harvest of bearded seal. Meanwhile, about 150 miles to the northeast, residents of Kotzebue are finding the sea ice conditions are making it difficult to hunt marine mammals and also hampering their access to camps along the coast and north of town. So while some herring fishing is occurring near town, some other subsistence activities are temporarily on hold.

Norton Sound

ADF&G bases its salmon outlooks on qualitative assessments of parent-year escapements, sibling relationships, and subjective determinations of freshwater overwintering and ocean survival. The Chinook salmon run is expected to be very weak this year. No commercial fishing targeting Chinook salmon is expected in Norton Sound. Subsistence restrictions aimed at protecting Chinook salmon are also expected for southern Norton Sound. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is currently holding meetings in eastern Norton Sound communities to discuss possible restrictions. ADF&G is seeking input from the communities as to how best to maximize returns of Chinook salmon while providing harvest opportunities for other fish such as chum salmon. Chum salmon runs are expected to be average, but there is likely to be less commercial fishing targeting chum salmon in northern Norton Sound because of expected weaker runs in the area of Golovin (Subdistrict 2) and Elim (Subdistrict 3). As a result of a continued increase in buyer interest, the commercial harvest of chum salmon could be 80,000 to 110,000 fish. The pink salmon run is expected to be average for an even numbered year. The coho salmon run is expected to be average based on ocean survival conditions in recent years. The sockeye salmon run in the Port Clarence District appears problematic at this time. The commercial fishery will remain closed in the Port Clarence District this year and there may be subsistence closures in the Pilgrim River in order to protect the sockeye salmon run.

ADF&G closed the waters of the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik river drainages to the sport fishing take of Chinook salmon by emergency order effective May 30, 2014. The closure also prohibits the use of bait for sport fishing in those waters. Another emergency order to go into effect Monday, June 2 will expand the closure of the sport fishing take of Chinook salmon to additional waters in Norton Sound.

Kotzebue District

The outlook for the Kotzebue District chum salmon run is based on parent year escapement and returning age classes observed in the commercial fishery and in the test fish samples from the Kobuk River in 2013. The four-year-old component of the run is expected to be above average. The five- year-old component of the run is expected to be

average. The three and six-year-old age classes are much smaller components of the run and are expected to be average. The commercial harvest is expected to fall within the range of 250,000 to 275,000 chum salmon depending on whether or not market conditions can accept that level of harvest.

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