

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF September 14-20, 2014.

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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.

Following this weekly summary, the Yukon River weekly summary will be the last report distributed for the remainder of the 2014 season. The remaining summary authors have signed off for the season. Contact information from other weekly summary authors is available in previously posted updates.

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Fall Season Outlook

The fall chum run in the lower Yukon River is nearly over, and the current in-season assessment estimates the total run size is near 813,000, based upon the reconstructed Pilot Station sonar estimate, and indicates the drainage-wide fall chum escapement will fall within the goal range of 300,000 and 600,000 fish after harvest is removed from the total run. This season's fall chum run is expected to meet all tributary escapement goals (except the Fishing Branch River), provide for a normal subsistence harvest, and provide for commercial fishing opportunities. Although the run is essentially over in the lower Yukon River, fall chum take 30 days to travel to the Canadian border and longer in the Tanana River so managers will continue monitoring the fall chum run into October and November.

Fall Season Assessment

Most assessment projects in the lower Yukon are finished for the 2014 season. The LYTF, operated by the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA), will continue through September 20 to monitor the tail of the fall chum and coho salmon runs. Through September 18 the fall chum Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) is tracking well above average. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) finished operations on September 9 and ended below average. The Pilot Station sonar finished operations on September 7 and has passed an estimated 650,400 fall chum, which is slightly above the average passage of 615,127 fall chum. The LYTF, MVTF, and Pilot Station have detected six

pulses of fall chum entering the lower Yukon with the fifth pulse passing over 250,000 fall chum salmon.

The Rapids test fish wheel project in the upper Yukon passed the 3/4 point on September 7 and is tracking 10% below average. The fifth and largest pulse of the season peaked on September 13 at the Rapids test wheel and CPUE is steadily declining over the last few days. The Chandalar River sonar estimated passage of 150,400 fall chum through September 18 is on average. The 3/4 quarter-point for the Chandalar River sonar project is September 18 and the run size will surpass the upper end of the BEG range of 152,000 fall chum as the largest pulse of the season is just now peaking at that location. The Tanana River test fish wheel at Manley began on August 9 and is above average at this time with the migration now past the average 3/4 point in run timing on September 16. The Eagle sonar switched to fall chum assessment on August 13 and is tracking near average; however, it's still early for this project. The average mid-point of the Eagle sonar is September 22 and the largest pulse has not yet passed the project.

Fall Season Management Actions

In Districts 1 and 2 the combined commercial harvest through September 5, the last day of commercial fishing in the lower Yukon, is 111,000 fall chum salmon and 103,000 coho salmon. Fall chum directed commercial fishing closed by regulation on September 1 in the lower Yukon. Additional commercial fishing opportunities in District 1 after September 1 were directed at the above average coho salmon run, which closed by regulation on September 10. Commercial fishermen in Subdistrict 5-B and 5-C harvested 1,264 fall chum. Commercial fishermen in District 6, near the village of Nenana, harvested 1,335 fall chum and 656 coho.

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

Coho Salmon

Coho salmon overlap with the second half of the fall chum run and the strength is well above average at this time. The Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA) will continue operating the LYTF through September 20 to assess the tail end of the coho salmon run. At this time, for coho salmon, the LYTF is above average. The Mt. Village Test Fishery is below average and ended operations on September 9. The Pilot Station sonar has an estimated passage of 247,000 coho salmon through September 7 (the last day of operations), which is almost twice the average. The reconstructed Pilot Station sonar passage through September 7 is 336,000 coho which indicates the 2014 coho salmon total run size is near the largest on record. The current total commercial harvest of 104,000 coho is the second highest on record since 1961 and subsistence fishermen have reported no shortage of coho salmon in their harvest. The Tanana River test fish wheel at Manley began on August 9 and is well above average for coho salmon.

The three quarter-point of the project is on September 19. The only established escapement goal for coho salmon within the Yukon River is for the Delta Clearwater River and assessment is by boat survey at a later date when fish are on the spawning area.

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

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/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

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Updated Information

This will be the last weekly summary provided for the 2014 season.

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

MILES LAKE SONAR ESTIMATES (TOTAL SALMON)

Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate
1978	107,011	1987	483,478	1996	906,867	2005	854,268
1979	237,173	1988	488,398	1997	1,148,079	2006	959,731

1980	276,538	1989	607,797	1998	866,957	2007	926,438
1981	535,263	1990	581,895	1999	848,921	2008	614,999
1982	467,306	1991	579,435	2000	587,592	2009	709,330
1983	545,724	1992	601,952	2001	833,569	2010	924,010
1984	536,806	1993	797,902	2002	819,000	2011	914,285
1985	436,313	1994	715,181	2003	695,233	2012	1,271,354
1986	509,275	1995	599,265	2004	669,646	2013	1,267,060

Commercial harvests in the Copper River District of Prince William Sound as of September 11 are:

- 9,626 Chinook
- **2,068,418 sockeye**
- **313,822 coho**
- 11,614 pinks
- 42,610 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict will remain open for the rest of the season – through September 30. **Eighty-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 eighty seven Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1st.

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

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 23. As of September 21, 28,257 sockeye and 5 Chinook have been counted through the weir.

The Long Lake weir, on the McCarthy Road was installed and operational on July 25. As of September 19, 15,208 sockeye and 67 coho have been counted through the weir.



Photo of sockeye salmon pass through the Long Lake weir, NPS 2014

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

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River was installed on June 4. Its final day of operation was August 12. The final count at the tower for 2014 was 2,598 Chinook and 22,920 sockeye. The tower is located approximately 9 miles upstream of the Sourdough boat launch.

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

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

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

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

Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

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

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

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

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

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

Prince William Sound Federal Subsistence Regulations including Copper River.

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