

**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 8-14 , 2020.** Report #3  
Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [George\\_Pappas@fws.gov](mailto:George_Pappas@fws.gov) Office of  
Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report 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.

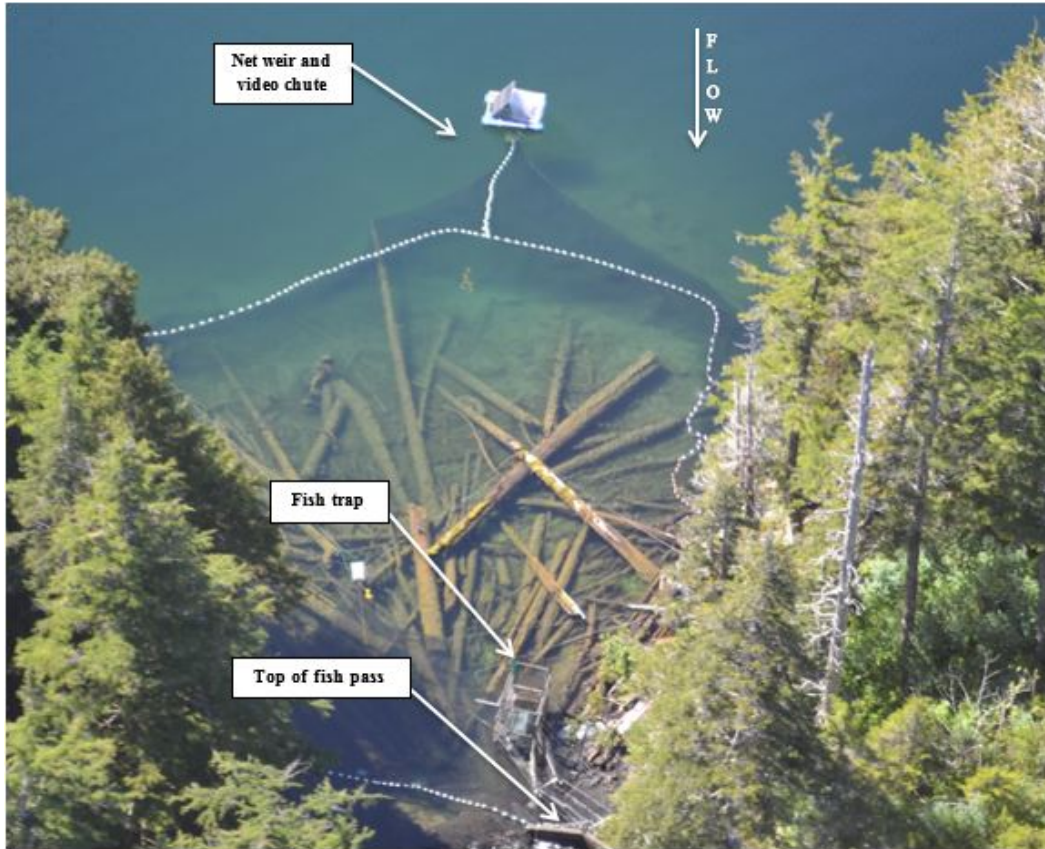
### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA**

**Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**  
Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 [jpkoller@fs.fed.us](mailto:jpkoller@fs.fed.us)

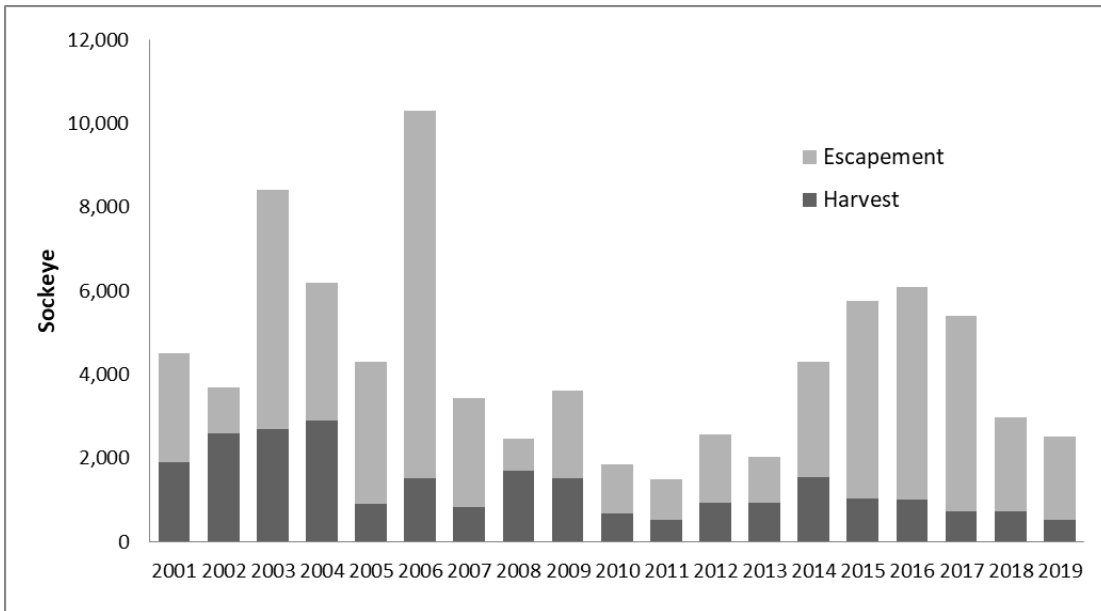
No new information to report this week. Expect an update for next week.

**Herring** – There was no commercial herring fishery in Sitka Sound in 2020. Please see this [summary of Sitka Sound herring 2020](#). Also, [summary of southeast Alaska herring 2020](#).

**Falls Lake** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which will be operational the last week of June. The final escapement estimate in 2019 was 1,983 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 528. Subsistence harvest accounted for 92% of terminal area harvest.

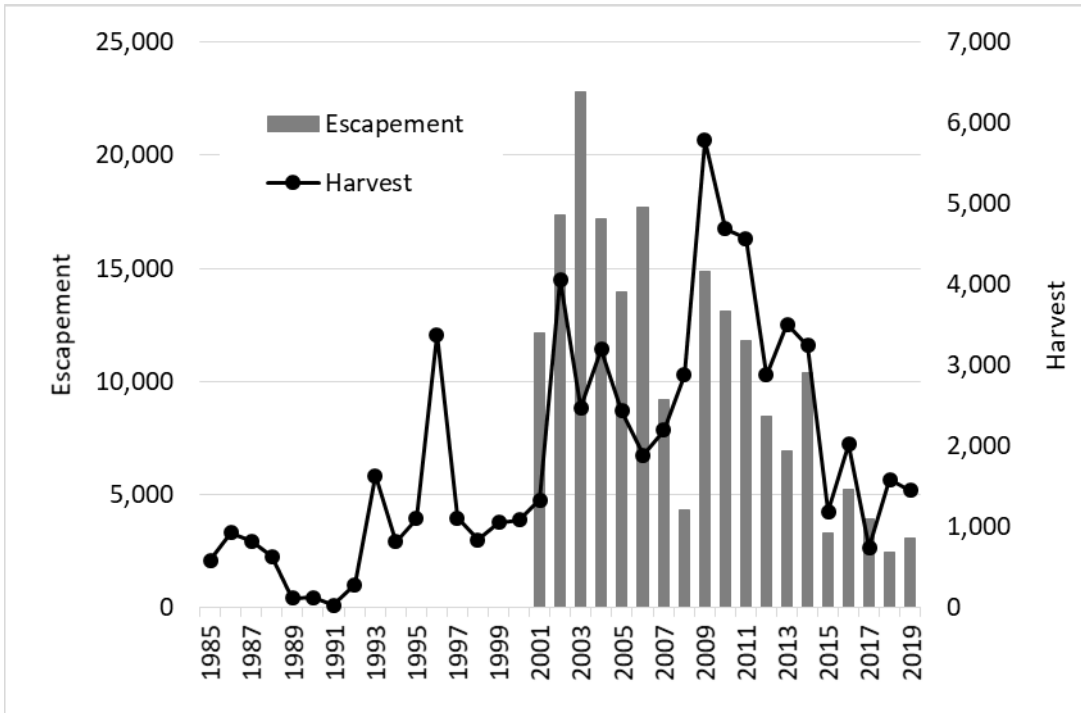


**Figure 1.** Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.



**Figure 2.** Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2019.

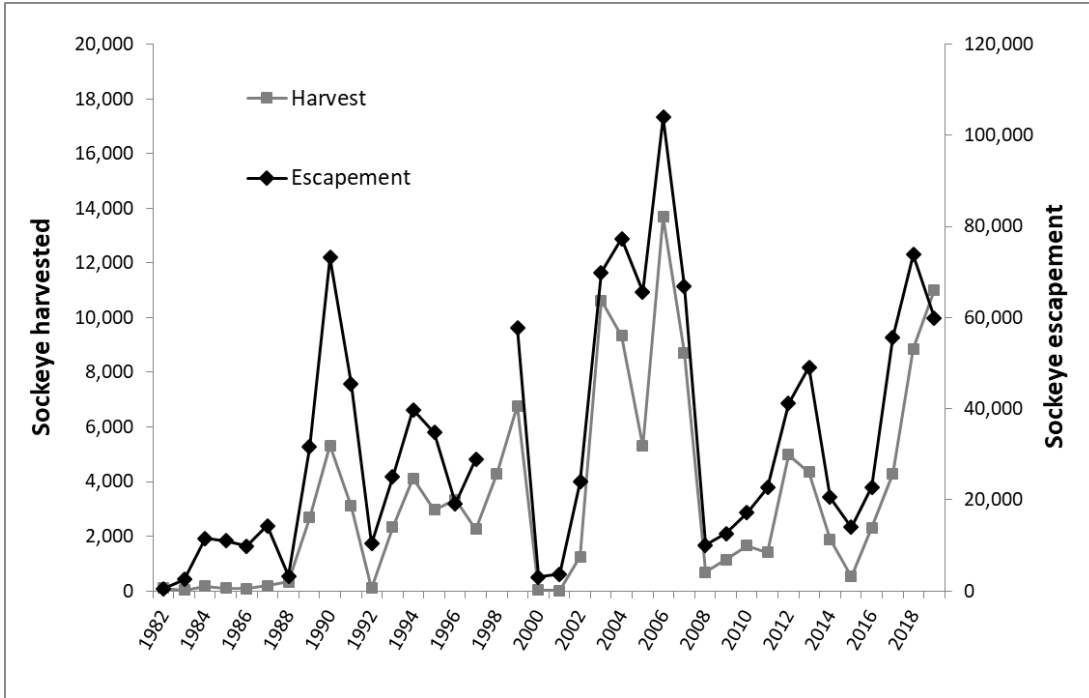
**Klag Bay** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2019, approximately 3,036 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,450 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.



**Figure 3.** Reported harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2019.

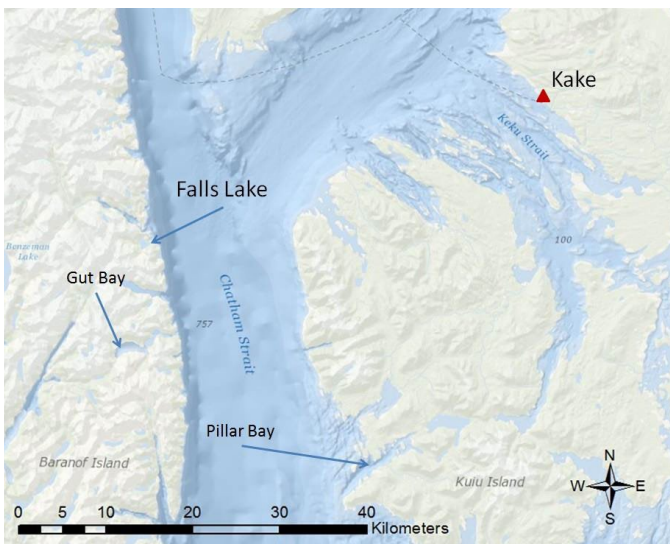
**Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which is scheduled to be operational in mid-June. In 2019, an estimated 59,917 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake and about 11,000 were harvested. On July 3, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence sockeye possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence sockeye annual limit was set at 100. Almost 30,000 sockeye were harvested in commercial fishery openings throughout the season.

[News release, sockeye limits 2019](#)



**Figure 4.** Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake and subsistence harvest for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2019. The weir was not operated in 1998.

**Gut Bay** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake monitor escapement and harvest of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon. Gut Bay is located south of Falls Lake on Baranof Island and an important source of sockeye for the village of Kake. Very little is known about the magnitude of this sockeye run. In 2019, 881 sockeye were counted at the weir and about 200 were harvested in the state subsistence fishery. The camp and equipment will be installed this week.



**Figure 5.** Location of Gut Bay in relation to Falls Lake and the village of Kake

**Petersburg and Wrangell Area – Robert Cross, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest Robert Cross, (907)772-5944 [robert.cross@usda.gov](mailto:robert.cross@usda.gov)**

Nothing to report this week.

**Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; [jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us](mailto:jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us)), Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

The Sockeye Salmon subsistence fisheries will be starting this month in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. The Forest Service and the Hoonah Indian Association will be installing the Neva Lake video weir around June 24. The Sitkoh Lake weir will be installed in early July by a Forest Service and Angoon Community Association crew. Both projects will use underwater video to record Sockeye Salmon and other fish swimming through a pair of weirs, and the video will be transmitted to an offsite computer. Project personnel will use motion-triggered recordings to make daily counts of salmon swimming through the weirs.

The first purse seine and gillnet fisheries of the year will begin on June 21, with the Pt. Augusta and Hidden Falls areas open for seining, and Districts 11 and 15 open for gillnetting. These early openings are mainly directed at hatchery chum salmon returns, and are the season's first indications of run strength for these stocks.

In Yakutat, the Situk River weir was installed on May 13, and is currently focused on counting Steelhead moving downstream after their spawning migration. As of June 11, a total of 5,531 Steelhead had been counted downstream, with more continuing to be counted on their way upstream. Later in the season, the focus will shift to counting Chinook and Sockeye. Due to conservation concerns for Chinook in the area, the mouth of Situk River and nearby areas have been closed to subsistence and commercial fishing until further notice. Subsistence fishermen are reminded that when fishing in the Situk River they are required to attend their gillnet at all times, and to report and turn over any Chinook caught to the Yakutat Fish and Game office. The preseason forecast for Situk Chinook is for a total run of 850 large fish, which would meet the escapement goal of 450-1,050 fish as long as conservation measures are in place.

**Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649 [jreeves@fs.fed.us](mailto:jreeves@fs.fed.us)**

The 2020 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has 89 permits issued for the fishery.

The 2020 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko spring subsistence steelhead fishery ended on May 31st. A total of 38 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this

fishery. Permits from this fishery are being returned and are not due back until June 15. The total reported harvest to date is 15 Steelhead Trout.

Although Chinook Salmon abundance has been determined to be low this year, hatchery production Chinook Salmon are present in the local Craig and Klawock area are being harvested by subsistence users fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. The State of Alaska increased harvest opportunity in outside waters by increasing the daily harvest limit to three fish starting June 15.

Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of Sockeye Salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July. Recent visits to Hatchery Creek and Sarkar showed above average water levels but no fish. It is hoped the fish are delayed. Continued visits will occur weekly.

There are currently commercial Chinook Salmon troll fisheries occurring within terminal harvest areas in the Craig and Ketchikan areas. While the Craig area opened on May 1, the Ketchikan area harvest areas just recently opened on June 1. Harvest to date is 1571 Chinook Salmon from the terminal harvest areas. The Kendrick Bay (District 2) terminal seine fishery for Chum Salmon and the Tree Point (District 1) drift-gillnet fishery will both begin on June 21.

There are two Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funded projects funded on Prince of Wales Island this season. The Hetta Lake weir became operational on June 8 but has not had any Sockeye Salmon pass through yet. The Eek Lake weir will be installed towards the end of the month. This project will also combine mark-recapture efforts to Eek Lake as well as establish new population determination efforts at Kasook Lake.

### **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](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**

#### **Copper River, 6/15/2020 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 205-0544, dave\_sarafin@nps.gov**

In January of 2020, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) provided preseason forecasts of 60,000 Copper River Chinook salmon and 1,422,000 wild stock Copper River sockeye salmon. Relative to recent 10-year averages, these forecasts are 20% above average for Chinook salmon and 33% below average for sockeye salmon. In early May, Federal and State fisheries managers met to discuss this forecast, anticipated early season management strategies, and plans for maintaining communications with local stakeholders regarding the run strength assessments and management actions throughout the season.

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has been limited in response to low numbers of salmon observed in run strength indices. Only four open commercial fishing periods have occurred this season. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 71,370 sockeye salmon and 5,751 Chinook salmon. The ADFG reported this to be the third lowest commercial harvest in the last 50 years for the district.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began recording salmon passage on May 19. As of June 14, 230,419 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 70% of the cumulative management objective of 330,132 salmon for this date. Estimates of the past few days have improved; a daily estimate of 14,710 salmon migrated by the sonar on June 14.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 2,122 Chinook Salmon through June 14. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 663 Chinook Salmon through June 14, of which, 48 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

Performance in the commercial fishery and in river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary early season assessments of the salmon return to the Copper River. Based on long-term average run timing and harvests, both indicators are well below the expected levels for this date of the season. The overall returns of sockeye and Chinook salmon could both be very weak or simply delayed in run timing. Federal managers will continue to monitor run strength indices to evaluate the need for appropriate fisheries management actions in the Copper River Drainage. No Federal Special Actions have been issued by the in-season manager this season.

A Cordova resident submitted a Special Action Request (FSA20-04) to allow Federal subsistence harvest of salmon in the lower Copper River due to public safety / food security concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Federal Subsistence Board responded to this and several similar requests by issuing letters to local field managers (USFS, NPS, FWS, or BLM, as appropriate), authorizing field managers to issue emergency special actions related to food security and public safety in their local community. In this particular case, the "delegation of authority letter" (DAL) was issued on June 6 to the U.S. Forest Service Cordova District Ranger, as this manager would be

most closely familiar with the concerns of the Cordova community. The specific scope of authority is completely distinct and separate from the authority delegated to the WRST Superintendent to issue emergency special actions pertaining to Federal subsistence fisheries in the Copper River Drainage. With this DAL, the Cordova District Ranger is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action in response to this request. WRST staff will be providing technical support as needed, particularly as it relates to coordination with up-river managers and stakeholders.

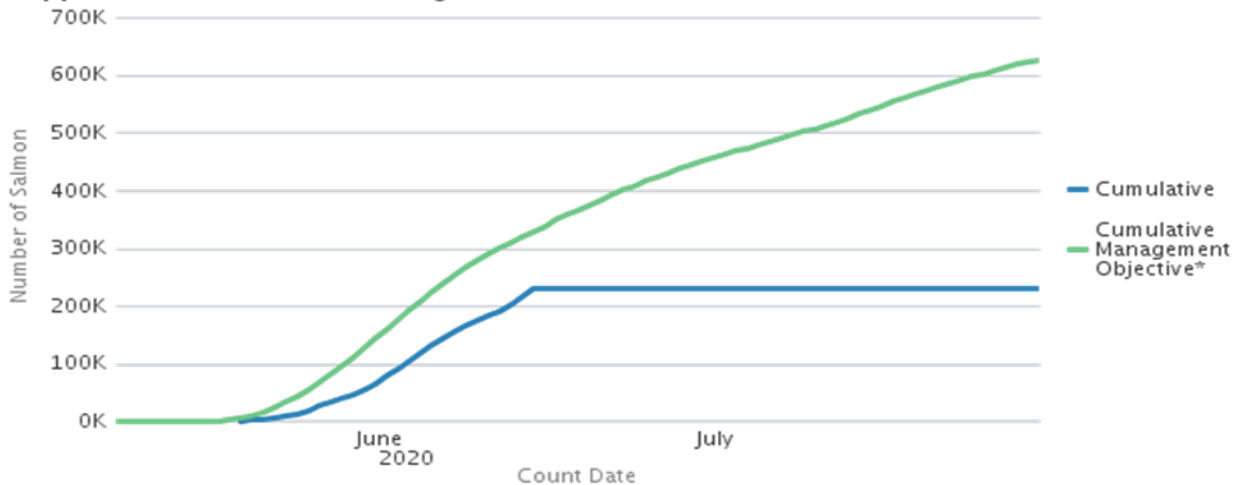
The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was open for 84-hours from June 11 through June 14, and is scheduled to be open for 120-hours from June 15 through June 21.

**2020 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through June 14**

**Copper River Daily Passage**



**Copper River Cumulative Passage**





Source:

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperiver.salmon\\_escapement](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperiver.salmon_escapement)

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas area opened on May 15 and are expected to remain open through September 30. Through the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website, one hundred and fifty-three (153) Chitina Subdistrict permits, two hundred and eighty (280) Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and one (1) Batzulnetas area permits have been issued to date. With the park offices and visitor contact stations closed to the public due to public health advisories and staffing delays related to COVID-19, the permitting process has been adapted to ensure the safety of permit applicants and park staff.

With funding through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), WRST is again planning to operate the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas. Installation of the weir was scheduled to begin in mid-June. However, elevated levels of early season precipitation have created water levels that are presently too high for working in the creek. Efforts will begin once conditions allow.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. The reported cumulative passage estimate through June 14 is 24 Chinook salmon. This is a relatively very low estimate for this date in the season; however, this may be related to poor viewing conditions associated with turbidity.

Links:

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperiver.salmon\\_escapement](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperiver.salmon_escapement)

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com/Summary/DailySummary.aspx>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

ADF&G Emergency Orders and News Releases

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=area.list&Year=2018&AreaID=33>

ADF&G Gulkana River counting tower

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.displayResults&COUNTLOCATIONID=6&SpeciesID=410>

**PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova.  
6 June 2017.**

(907) 424-4759 [mburcham@fs.fed.us](mailto:mburcham@fs.fed.us)

No update submitted for week. A total of 9 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Chugach National Forest portion of the Prince William Sound area of to date. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. One-hundred and twenty permits were issued in 2019 resulting in the reported harvest of 617 Coho and 116 Sockeye Salmon from fresh waters of the Copper River Delta.

**COOK INLET AREA – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 [Jeffry\\_Anderson@fws.gov](mailto:Jeffry_Anderson@fws.gov)**

The 2020 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon will begin on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Seasons 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.

Permits have been issued for community gillnet fisheries on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. Regulatory dates for the Kasilof River community gillnet fishery are from June 16 through August 15. Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30.

USFWS and USFS staff have been issuing permits to residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, and Ninilchik since early May while minimizing interactions between employees and the public.

Emergency Special Action 10-KS-01-20 was issued to close the Federal subsistence rod and reel fishery for early-run Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game previously closed the sport fishery for Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River downstream of Skilak Lake through June 30th and through July 31st for the Kenai River upstream from the Department's Slikok Creek regulatory marker. Collectively, the State and Federal fishery management actions will provide the opportunity for early-run Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River to reach their spawning grounds.

Fish counts at some Alaska Department of Fish and Game-operated assessment projects are available on-line at

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

**Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR**  
(907) 487-0226 or [michael\\_brady@fws.gov](mailto:michael_brady@fws.gov) or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230  
[Kevin\\_VanHatten@fws.gov](mailto:Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov)

Sockeye Salmon returns have picked up over the past week but are below their respective 9 year averages. Very little subsistence fishing has occurred on the southern portion of

Kodiak. It is unknown why fishing is poor. Litnik and Buskin Rivers have shown an increase in the number of subsistence users over the past week. The number of nets seen at the mouth of the Buskin River range from 3 to 6 on any given day. The number of nets at Litnik are a little bit high, ranging from 4 to 8. The catch per unit effort is fairly low with reports of fishermen spending up to 7 hours on the water and only recovering 3-5 fish.

As of Thursday, June 11, 2020 the Kodiak Refuge staff have given out 25 subsistence fishing permits.

The Chinook Salmon escapement counts for Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers continue to be weak but daily numbers improving over the past week. The Karluk River Chinook Salmon count to date, as of June 11, 2020, of 320 is slightly below the 9 year average of 380 fish. The Ayakulik River Chinook Salmon count is 344 fish which is below the 9 year average of 484 fish.

Any additional information pertaining to subsistence harvest will be provided in next week report.

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area***  
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

**BRISTOL BAY, CHIGNIK, ALASKA PENINSULA, and ALEUTIAN ISLANDS –  
Jonathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office**  
(907) 271-2776 [Jonathon\\_Gerken@fws.gov](mailto:Jonathon_Gerken@fws.gov)

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

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game issues information for COVID-19: Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here:  
<https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>

Bristol Bay:

The 2020 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run is forecast to be approximately 48 million fish for the nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak.

Escapement projects are being installed throughout the region. The Sockeye Salmon sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems are:

Escapement Goals:

Kvichak	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000
Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000
Nushagak	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000 Chinook Salmon
Togiak	SEG = 150,000 – 270,000

Chignik:

The 2020 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 1,296,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 586,000 Sockeye Salmon. The CMA is composed of five fishing districts: Eastern, Central, Chignik Bay, Western, and Perryville.

The Chignik River weir was fish tight on May 29. As of June 14, approximately 7,269 Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated. This count is smaller than the interim management objectives of 95,000 – 125,000 fish through June 15.

Escapement Goals:

Early Run Sockeye Salmon/ Black Lake	BEG = 350,000 – 450,000
Late Run Sockeye Salmon/ Chignik Lake	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000
-In-river Goal	-10,000 in August and 10,000 in September in addition to minimum escapement objectives
Chinook Salmon	BEG = 1,300 – 2,700
Pink Salmon – Even year	SEG = 170,000 – 280,000
Chum Salmon	SEG = 45,000 – 110,000

Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Preseason forecasts are made only for the Nelson River and late-run (post July 31) Bear Lake stocks. The 2020 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 362,000 fish for the Nelson River and 408,000 fish for late-run Bear Lake.

Escapement projects are being installed throughout the region.

Escapement Goals:

Nelson River BEG = 97,000 – 219,000

Late-run Bear Lake BEG = 117,000 – 195,000

Aleutian Islands.

All fisheries are forecast to meet escapement goals and provide harvest opportunity.

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf](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](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) 456-0406, [Gerald\\_Maschmann@fws.gov](mailto:Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov)

The Emmonak Field Office will be **closed** for summer management activities due to COVID-19 concerns. Essential services will be provided to fishermen online and over the phone.

**Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies**

The Summer Chum Salmon outlook is for an above average run size large enough to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of up to 1.1 million Summer Chum Salmon is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest. However,

commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run. The 2020 drainage-wide Chinook salmon pre-season outlook is for a run size of 144,000 to 220,000 fish. This would be a slightly smaller run size than 2019. A cautionary approach is being taken early in the season, and management strategies will be adjusted based on run assessment information as fish enter the river. If assessment indicates the Chinook salmon run size is near the upper end of the outlook range and goals are projected to be met, subsistence fishing restrictions would likely be relaxed. If assessment indicates a poorer than anticipated run, subsistence fishing time may be reduced, or gear may be limited to selective gear types with no retention of Chinook salmon allowed.

### **Assessment Information**

With the ADF&G Emmonak management office closed this season, the LYTF is being operated by local fishermen employed by the Yukon Drainage Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA) with coordination by ADF&G through their Anchorage and Fairbanks offices. The Middle Mouth site of the LYTF has been canceled this year due to safety concerns with COVID-19, however the Big Eddy site will continue. The first report of a subsistence caught Chinook Salmon within the Yukon River was on May 27. The first Summer Chum Salmon was caught on May 28. The Lower Yukon test fishing (LYTF) project began on May 29 with drift fishing for Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon. Set netting began on June 3, however the project was hampered by drift and debris the first week of operations. The LYTF Chinook Salmon Drift Net project is slightly below the average at this time. The LYTF Summer Chum Drift Net project is well behind the median; however, it's still early in the season for Summer Chum. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 7. Chinook Salmon counts are increasing, and managers are anticipating the first pulse any day now. The average first quarter point in the LYTF for Chinook Salmon is June 16 for the years 1989-2019. The Summer Chum counts are well below average; however, it's still very early in the run.

### **Management Actions**

Until more assessment data become available, management decisions will be consistent with the preseason projections. At this time, subsistence salmon fishing in the southern Coastal District is open 24/7 but has been restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Districts 1, 2, and 3 have been placed on half their regulatory windows schedule of two 18-hour periods per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. District 4 will be placed on half their regulatory windows schedule of two 24-hour periods per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets beginning June 13 for Subdistrict 4-A and June 16 for Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. The personal use fishery in Subdistrict 6-C is open on its regulatory schedule of two, 42-hour periods per week restricted to 7.5-inch or less mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels. Most of the rest of the Yukon drainage is open 24/7 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, gillnets that have mesh size 4-inches or smaller may be used to target non-salmon species. Sequential activation of subsistence fishing restrictions will continue in all districts as the Chinook Salmon migrate upstream.

## **Consultation**

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 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 Yukon River Panel meeting, and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association (YRDFA) Board meeting. Due to uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, managers began holding weekly management meetings in April. The Executive Director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission participated in some of these meetings and provided vital feedback from local fishermen to the managers. On May 12, a pre-season planning teleconference lead by YRDFA was held that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. The fifth regular weekly YRDFA teleconference was held on June 9. Fishermen reported high water. Early fishermen reported Chinook Salmon catches were increasing. One Chinook Salmon was reported caught as far upriver as Anvik. Assessment project and management updates will continue to be given on the **YRDFA weekly teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#**. Fishermen have been encouraged to participate.

## **KUSKOKWIM RIVER**

**In Season Manager – Vernon “Ray” Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact [Vernon\\_Born@fws.gov](mailto:Vernon_Born@fws.gov) (907) 543-3151 or Aaron Mosses [Aaron\\_Moses@fws.gov](mailto:Aaron_Moses@fws.gov) (907) 545-3252**

### **Summary:**

The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) in season manager, with the authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, announced three subsistence fishing opportunity for Chinook Salmon within YDNWR waters for federally qualified users. This opportunities are 12 hours in duration, starting at 6:00AM to 06:00 PM June 12, 15, and 18.

This action was made after coordination with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), Western Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council (RAC), Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG), and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). All parties agreed to openings starting on June 12, 15, and 18. KRITFC recommended 12-hour openers from 6 AM to 6 PM (36 hours of total opportunity). KRSMWG recommended and ADF&G accepted three 24-hour openers with times to be identified (72 hours of total opportunity). The perspectives of the Chairs of the Western Interior RAC and Yukon Kuskokwim RAC have been considered on these discussions.

On June 3, 6, and 9, 2020 there were three 24 hours set net opportunities. During these opportunities an estimated 1,420 Chinook Salmon were harvested.

**Test Fisheries:**

As of June 14, 2020 the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook Salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 72. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 188 and 91, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for Chum Salmon is at 6. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 9 and 74, respectively. Cumulative CPUE for Sockeye Salmon is at 1. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 4 and 6, respectively.

**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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf)

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf](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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***Other Coastal Waters (Stebbins and St. Michael)*****Subsistence Fishing:**

Subsistence fishing is open 7 days per week in southern Norton Sound from Pt. Romanof to Black Point. Regulation allows for the restriction of gillnet mesh size in the subsistence fisheries throughout Norton Sound if it is necessary to conserve Chinook salmon.



***Subdistricts 6 (Unalakleet)***

The ADF&G Unalakleet office will be not be open this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Subsistence Fishing:**

By Board of Fisheries regulation, the King Salmon Management Plan for Subdistrict 6 and the Unalakleet River will go in effect beginning on June 15. Before June 15 subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

On the evening of June 14 at midnight the Unalakleet River drainage from downstream of the North River and the North River drainage will close to all subsistence fishing, except for dip nets and cast nets. Any king salmon caught in a cast net or dip net must be immediately returned to the water. The subsistence net fishing closure will extend out to the marine waters within 500 yards of the Unalakleet River mouth. Also, gillnets with a mesh size greater than 4 inches will be not be allowed in the Unalakleet River upstream of the North River confluence. Set gillnets with a mesh size of 4 inches or less may continue to be fished daily in the Unalakleet River drainage upstream of the North River confluence.

On the evening of June 14 at midnight the marine waters of Subdistricts 6, from Cape Denbigh to Black Point will close to subsistence salmon fishing.

Beginning on June 15, Subdistrict 6 will be open to subsistence fishing in the marine waters for two 48-hour periods each week. The marine water subsistence fishing schedule will be from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday and from 6:00 p.m. Thursday until 6:00 p.m. Saturday. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions. This schedule is in effect through July 15 unless changed by emergency order.

In the Unalakleet River beginning on June 15 the subsistence gillnet fishing schedule is from 8 a.m. Monday until 8 p.m. Tuesday and from 8 a.m. Friday until 8 p.m. Saturday. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions. This schedule is in effect through July 15 unless changed by emergency order.

Beach seining for salmon in all Subdistrict 6 waters is closed until July 1, and then will be open through August 10 with mesh size restricted to 4 ½ inches or smaller and all king salmon must be released to the water immediately unharmed.

***Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)*****Subsistence Fishing:**

By Board of Fisheries regulation, the King Salmon Management Plan for Subdistrict will go in effect beginning on June 15. Before June 15 subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

On the evening of June 14 at midnight the marine waters of Subdistricts 5 from Cape Denbigh to Black Point will close to subsistence salmon fishing.

Beginning on June 15, Subdistrict 5 will be open to subsistence fishing in the marine waters for two 48-hour periods each week. The marine water subsistence fishing schedule will be from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday and from 6:00 p.m. Thursday until 6:00 p.m. Saturday. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions. This schedule is in effect through July 15 unless changed by emergency order.

Beach seining for salmon in all Subdistrict 5 is closed until July 1, and then will be open through August 10 with mesh size restricted to 4 ½ inches or smaller and all king salmon must be released to the water immediately unharmed.

Shaktoolik Subdistrict directed chum and coho salmon fisheries may be managed somewhat differently. Recurring high surf conditions have sometimes severely limited commercial fishing time in this subdistrict. Whereas Unalakleet Subdistrict permit holders are often able to fish two 48-hour commercial fishing periods a week, the department may have a 72-hour commercial fishing period in Shaktoolik if weather prevents permit holders for setting gear for extended periods of time. This strategy should help maintain interest in the fishery and lead to safer fishing conditions and improved quality of fish delivered to buyers. Additionally, severe weather conditions affecting fishing should also allow enough chum and coho salmon to enter the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet rivers for escapement and subsistence needs. Changes to the fishing schedule from previous years may occur depending on the buyer requesting a change based on capacity limits and quality issues.

#### ***Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)***

##### Subsistence Fishing:

No restrictions on subsistence fishing are expected this year.

#### ***Subdistrict 3 (Elim)***

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Except for 2014, when hook and line subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon was closed, there have been no other subsistence restrictions in over 30 years in Subdistrict 3 (Elim). Subsistence permits are required when subsistence salmon fishing in the Elim Subdistrict and other than the possibility of inseason Chinook salmon restrictions no other restrictions are expected.

#### ***Subdistrict 2 (Golovin)***

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence salmon permits are required when net fishing in northern Norton Sound (from Elim Subdistrict to Port Clarence District). Stream-specific harvest limits are listed on the subsistence salmon fishing permits.

***Subdistrict 1 (Nome)*****Subsistence Fishing:**

By Board of Fisheries regulation on June 15 the summer subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule is in effect in the Nome Subdistrict. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will continue to be open 7 days a week. All Nome Subdistrict freshwater subsistence areas and the marine waters west of Cape Nome will be open to gillnet fishing for five days each week from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday. Effective June 15, beach seining for salmon will be open in all subsistence areas of the Nome Subdistrict whenever subsistence gillnet fishing is open. Unless closed by emergency order beach seining will remain open during gillnet fishing periods through August 15. Dip nets and cast nets can be also be used any time gillnet fishing is open.

The first-time nets must be removed from all fresh-water Nome Subdistrict subsistence areas will be 6 p.m. Monday, June 15. Likewise, all nets must be removed from Nome Subdistrict marine waters west of Cape Nome at 6 p.m. Monday, June 15.

Also, effective June 15 all gillnet and beach seine fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River will be closed. This closure is in effect to protect migrating sockeye salmon that hold in the Sinuk River bridge area before reaching the spawning grounds.

Stream-specific harvest limits are listed on the subsistence salmon fishing permits. There are no catch limits in marine waters.

**Port Clarence District****Subsistence Fishing:**

Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required for the Port Clarence District, Pilgrim River drainage and Salmon Lake. Salmon Lake will only be opened by emergency order and permits are only available at the Fish and Game office in Nome.

Based on the well above average sockeye salmon runs the last five years the department expects 2020 to have a well above average run again. The department will compare the 2020 sockeye salmon run with historical escapement counts at the Pilgrim River weir after the first week of July and decide if a change is warranted in subsistence catch limit or if a closure may be necessary to reach the escapement goal range. The Pilgrim River escapement goal range is 6,800 to 36,000 sockeye salmon through the weir. No other subsistence fishing closures are expected in Port Clarence District.

**Kotzebue District.****Subsistence Fishing:**

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2020.

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area***  
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs11/norton.pdf>