

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 22-28 , 2020. Report #5
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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

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 were installed last week. No sockeye have been counted yet but the run usually does not commence until the second week in July. No harvest has been observed yet. 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.

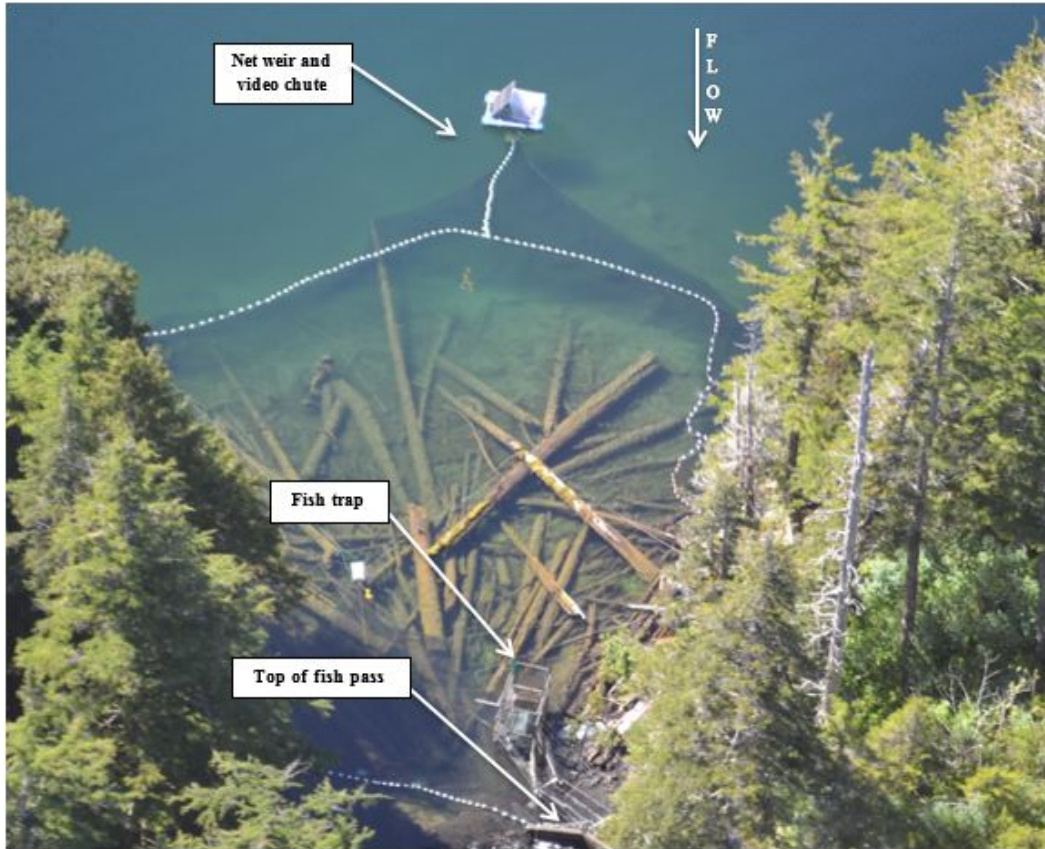


Figure 1. Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

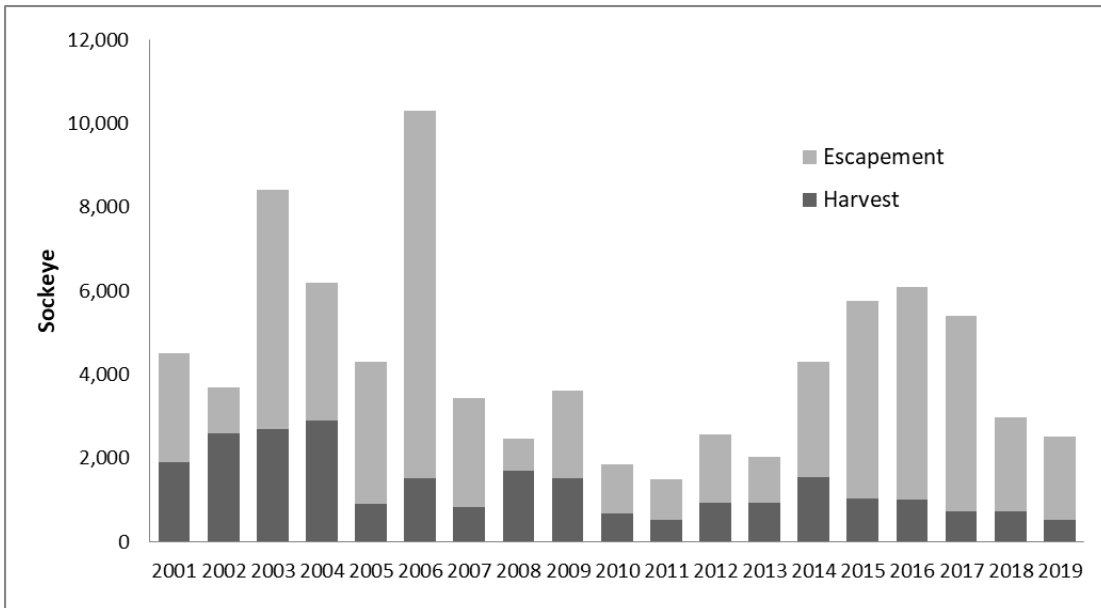


Figure 2. Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2019.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed last week. 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.

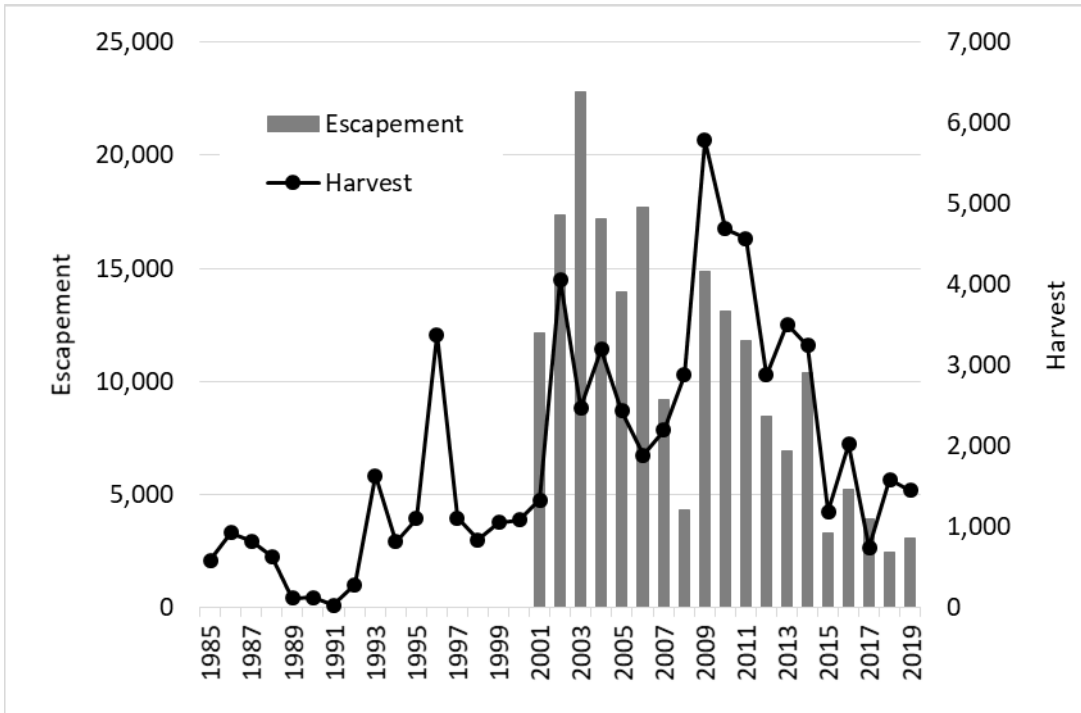


Figure 3. Reported harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2019.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 13. As of June 27, 30 sockeye have been counted. In 2019, an estimated 59,917 sockeye 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](#)

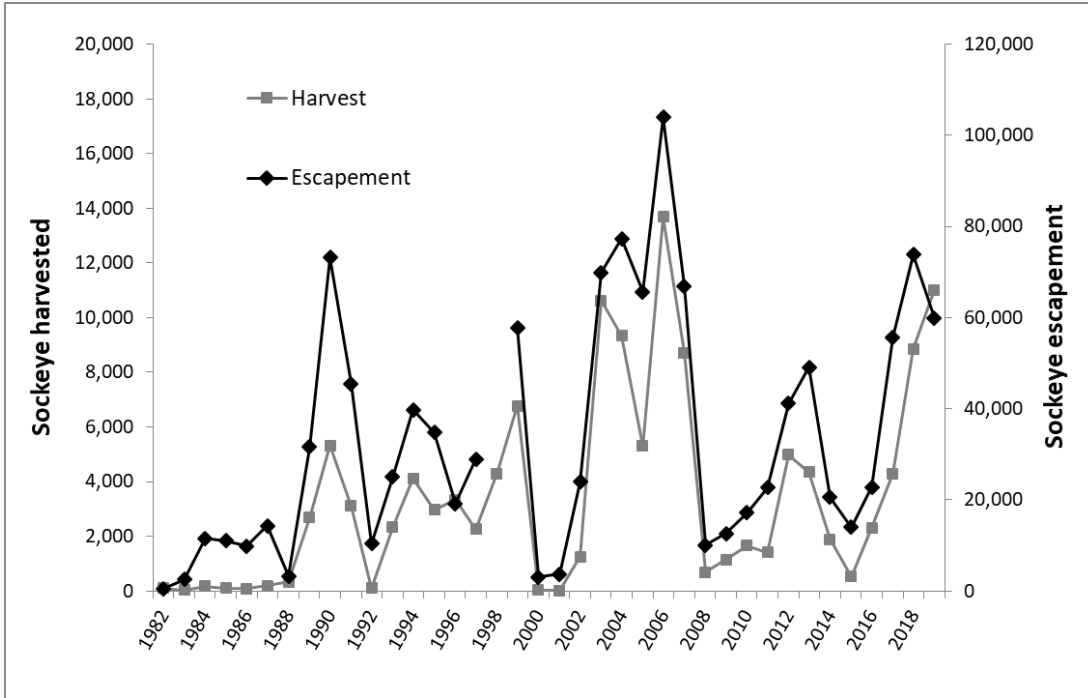


Figure 4. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake and subsistence harvest for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2019. The weir was not operated in 1998.

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 installation was completed on June 18. As of June 28, four sockeye have been counted and no harvest has been documented.

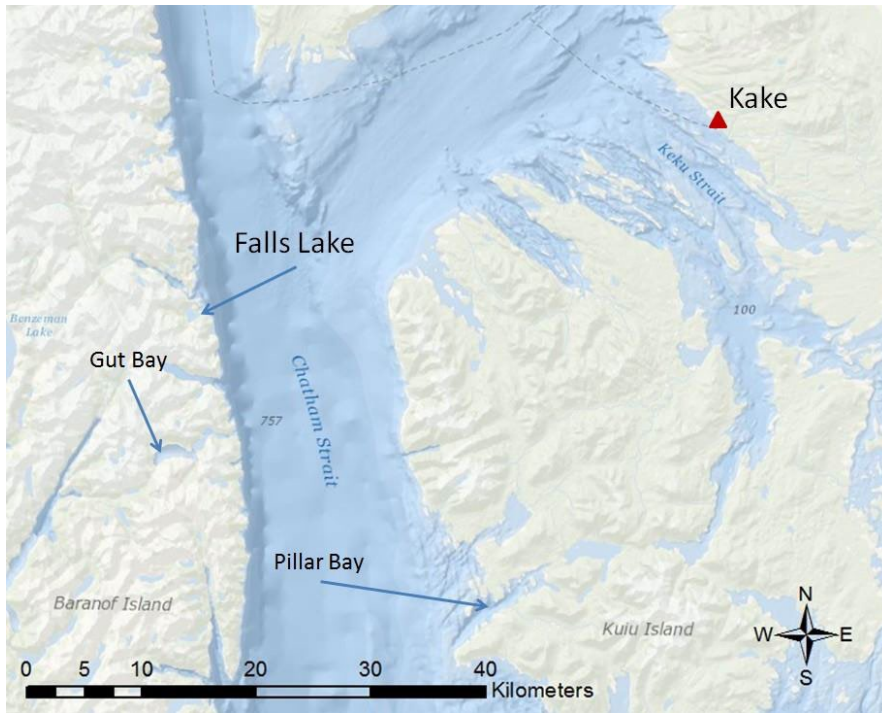


Figure 5. Location of Gut Bay in relation to Falls Lake and the village of Kake

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

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The pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River is 13,350 fish. This forecast is below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. Directed commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in the area have been closed to protect this return. There is a restricted commercial drift gillnet opportunity in District 6 from 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 28, through 12:00 noon, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. The 2020 pre-season Sockeye Salmon forecast is 103,400 fish, with 64,500 Tahltan and 38,900 Mainstem fish. The 2019 Sockeye Salmon forecast was 90,000 fish, which included 66,000 Tahltan Lake and 24,000 Mainstem Sockeye. The escapement objective for Tahltan bound Sockeye Salmon is 18,000 and 30,000 for Mainstem fish. The low Mainstem return resulted in an in-season closure of the 2019 Federal subsistence Sockeye Salmon fishery on July 22, 2019. The 2020 forecast is above the escapement objectives and a season closure is not anticipated.

The 2020 Federal Stikine River Chinook subsistence fishery was closed by the in-season manager. The Federal Stikine River Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery began Sunday, June 21. The river is returning to normal levels this week so participation in the fishery has increased but harvest is still low. A total of 95 Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon permits (FFSE07) and 18 General Fish permits (FFSE04) have already been issued for residents in the Wrangell and Petersburg Districts.

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

Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon: A Crew from the Forest Service installed the Neva Lake weir near Excursion Inlet on June 23 (Figure 1). This swim-through video weir is remotely monitored and maintained by a Hoonah Indian Association crew living in Excursion Inlet. Only one Sockeye Salmon has been counted swimming through the weir to date. Live video from the weir is available on the internet at

<http://nevalake.ddns.net:81>



Viewers can see underwater views of the video chute, site views from the surveillance cameras, and view recent motion-triggered clips. The first sockeye salmon through the weir passed through the weir the evening after installation (Figure 2).



Figure 1. The video weir at Neva Lake, June 24, 2020.



Figure 2. The first sockeye through the Neva Lake weir, June 23, 2020

Northern Southeast inside waters: Commercial salmon fisheries are off to a slow start. Very few boats fished the initial purse seine openings, and landings in most areas were nonexistent or confidential due to low effort. A few more boats showed up for the gillnet openings in Lynn Canal and Stephens Passage. In District 15 (Lynn Canal), about 75 boats harvested a total of 27,000 chum salmon, kicking off the start of fisheries targeting hatchery chum salmon returning to release sites at Amalga and Boat Harbors.

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

The 2020 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has had 105 permits issued to date for the fishery.

Chinook Salmon are still present in good numbers 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 opened on June 1. These openings will probably wind down by the end of the month. The first summer troll opening (non-hatchery terminal

harvest) for Chinook Salmon begins on July 1. It is anticipated that the 85,600 fish allocation would be harvested within 7-8 days.

The Kendrick Bay (District 2) terminal seine fishery for Chum Salmon and the Tree Point (District 1) drift-gillnet fishery both began on June 21. Total commercial harvests for Districts 1-4 are: 4370 Chinook Salmon, 1870 Sockeye Salmon, 450 Coho Salmon, 4450 Pink Salmon and 16,000 Chum Salmon.

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 and has passed 4 Sockeye Salmon through to date. The Eek Lake weir became operational on June 15, but has not had any Sockeye Salmon pass through yet.

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

Copper River, 6/29/2020 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 205-0544, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has been limited in response to a weak salmon return. Only five (of potentially fourteen) open commercial fishing periods have occurred this season. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 81,228 sockeye salmon and 5,815 Chinook salmon. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reported this to be the fourth 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 28, 366,730 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 82% of the cumulative management objective of 445,904 salmon for this date. A daily estimate of 11,043 salmon migrated by the sonar on June 28.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 2,405 Chinook salmon through June 28. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 1,035 Chinook salmon through June 28, of which, 98 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

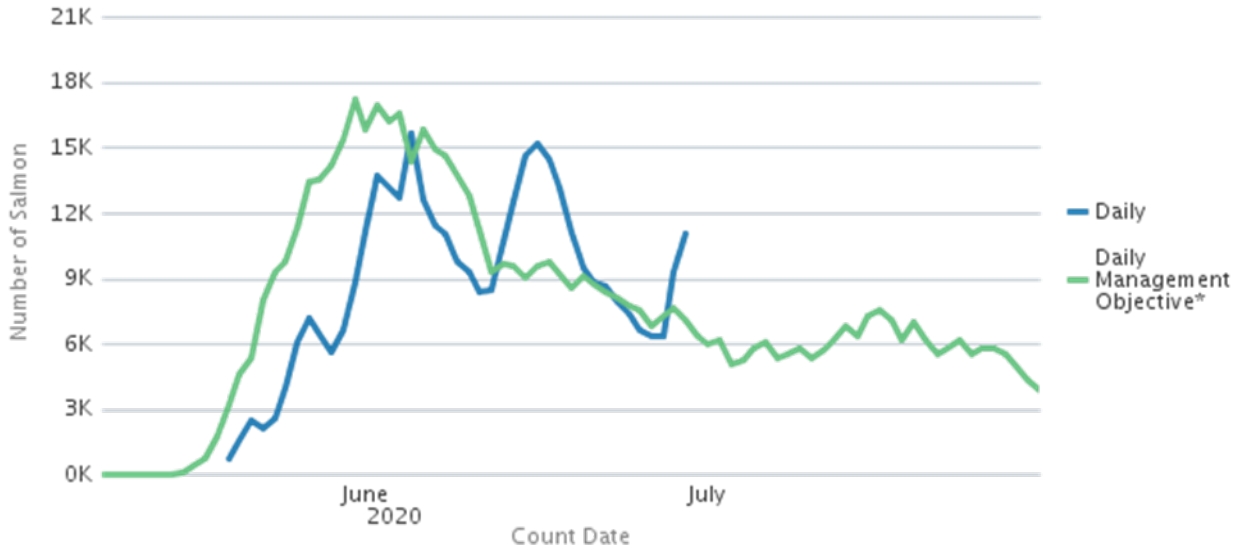
Performance in the commercial fishery and in river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary early season assessments of the salmon return to the Copper River. Based on long-term average run timing and harvests, both indicators are well below the expected levels for this date of the season. The overall returns of both sockeye and Chinook salmon appear to be weak. 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.

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 was addressed by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) at a meeting by teleconference on June 22. The Board rejected this request citing opposition from two Federally recognized Tribes and the Cordova City Council. It was noted that a similar Fisheries regulatory proposal (FP21-10) has been submitted that will provide additional public process for consideration.

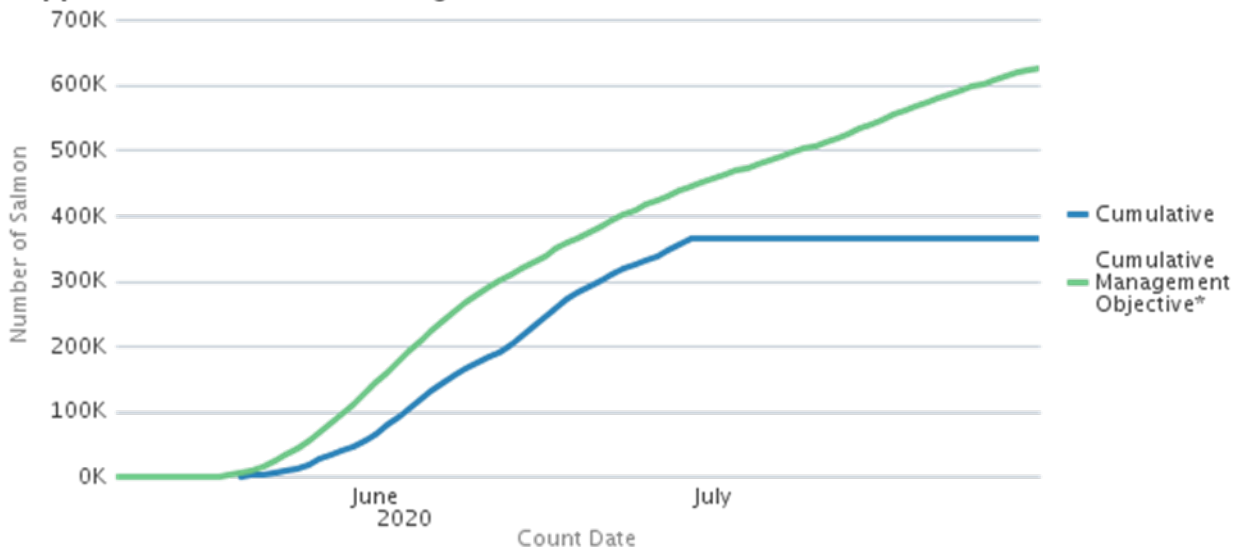
The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. Effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday June 20, the State sport fishery annual limit was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook salmon for the Upper Copper River drainage. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was open for 138-hours from June 22 through June 28, and is scheduled to be open for a total of 168-hours during the week of June 29 through July 5. Since June 22, the Chitina personal use fishery has been closed to the retention of Chinook salmon for the remainder of the season.

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=commercialbyareacopperriver.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 seventy-one (171) Chitina Subdistrict permits, three hundred and eighteen (318) 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 was again planning to operate the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas. Installation of the weir was scheduled to begin in mid-June. However, a combination of a delayed spring time melt off of an above average snowload and elevated levels of early season precipitation created water levels that were too high for working in the creek. Site visits were performed on June 17 and 18 revealed evidence of recent, extreme flooding, with debris and silt deposits well above the stream bank. Structural components of the weir appear to be damaged. Routine monitoring of the water level of Tanada Creek will continue. Efforts to assess the need for repairs 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 22 is 264 Chinook salmon. Counts were discontinued on June 22 at 7:00 p.m. due to high water. This is a relatively very low estimate for this date in the season and is less than 10% of the 2019 season count of 2,988 through this date of the season.

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/Summary/DailySummary.aspx>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

A total of 31 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 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

This will be Jeff's last weekly summary and his last week of working for the USFWS. For those who have worked with Jeff over the years, please drop him a line this week and share a kind word.

The 2020 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon began on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Harvest reported through June 23 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 286 Sockeye Salmon. The rod and reel fishery on the Kenai River also opened on June 11 with the same seasons and areas as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations.

The Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery began on June 16 and continues through August 15. Harvest reported through June 25 includes 376 Sockeye Salmon. Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30.

Emergency Special Action 10-KS-01-20 remains in effect through July 15. This action closed the Federal subsistence rod and reel fishery for early-run Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake.

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

The Buskin River Sockeye Salmon counts have been slow but picked up over the last week. It is anticipated that the lower escapement goal will be reached. To date, the 2020 escapement is 4,810 fish.

The 2020 Afognak Lake (Litnik) Sockeye Salmon escapement is doing considerably better than the 2018 escapement but lower than the 2019 counts, with 14,190 fish passing as of June 25. The escapement is on track to meet the lower escapement goal (20,000 fish).

The Karluk and Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapements are medium in strength with both systems passing over 20,000 fish in the past week. To date, one commercial fishing opening has occurred for these areas, which is allowing subsistence users to attempt to meet their needs. The catch per unit effort is medium to strong for Karluk, with an abundant number of Sockeye Salmon being within the Karluk Lagoon.

The Chinook Salmon counts on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers have been well below adequate levels. Although the Chinook Salmon numbers on the Karluk River has steadily been increasing, the Federal (SA 09-KS-01-20) and State (#4-FS-K-Sub-02-20) Area biologists have decided to implement subsistence restrictions on the Karluk River drainage to the taking of Chinook Salmon in the subsistence fishery. As of June 26, the Chinook Salmon counts for both the Ayakulik and Karluk Rivers are not anticipated to meet their respective lower escapement goals. If the low Chinook Salmon numbers continue on the Ayakulik River, it is a possibility that restrictions may be imposed there as well.

Any additional information that is received by our office will be amended to this report or be incorporated into next weeks' 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**

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 (ADFG), 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 ADFG 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.

As of June 28, commercial fishing has occurred in the Ugashik, Nushagak, Naknek-Kvichak, Egegik, and Togiak Districts with a cumulative harvest of approximately 1.5 million Sockeye Salmon.

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

Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for June 28):

Kvichak	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000, current escapement = 1,680
Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum, current escapement = N/A
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 110,790
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 174,492
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000, current escapement = 2,670
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000, current escapement = 296,808
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000, current escapement = 1,302
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000, current escapement = 284,451
Nushagak (Chinook)	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000, current escapement 29,847
Togiak	SEG = 150,000 – 270,000, current escapement = N/A

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 28, approximately 64,358 Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated. This count is significantly smaller than the escapement objective for this time period of 270,000 - 360,000 fish. As a result, the Federal Inseason Manager issued an Emergency Special Action, 08-SS-01-20, restricting fishing in federal public waters to only federally qualified users on June 18. This action unless rescinded or replaced by additional actions is in place until July 31. The tribal councils of Ivanoff Bay, Perryville, Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, and Chignik Lake submitted a joint letter requesting this action due to low Sockeye Salmon returns on June 16.

On June 25, the Federal Inseason Manager hosted a teleconference with Chignik area fishermen from Ivanoff Bay, Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, and Perryville. Approximately 10 fishermen called into the teleconference, in addition to ADFG management and subsistence staff, OSM staff, and BBNA. The meeting was facilitated by the Chignik Intertribal Coalition. Topics were specific to impacts of the federal emergency special action implemented on June 18 that restricted Sockeye Salmon fishing to federally qualified users on federal public waters in response to low returns of early run Sockeye Salmon. Additional topics included subsistence harvest reports and impacts of additional restrictions. Fishermen were well aware of the low returns and reported that subsistence harvests were low and smoke houses were empty. In general, they thought additional restrictions were needed, but that those restrictions needed to be implemented in both federal and state waters simultaneously or they would not be effective. Fishermen noted that they viewed individual jurisdictional restrictions as targeting a specific harvest group only and less effective. The Federal Inseason Manager has had numerous calls with ADFG since the June 25 meeting in an effort to formulate a

collaborative response to the low early-run Sockeye Salmon returns in the Chignik River. A decision on additional restrictions from both USFWS and ADF&G will occur early this week.

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. Federal waters are primarily located on upper headwater portions of the streams flowing on the North Peninsula, whereas Federal waters on those streams flowing on the South Peninsula are more encompassing within each watershed. Subsistence fisheries in both North and South Peninsula areas take place in marine environments under State of Alaska subsistence fishing permits. Annual subsistence harvest for all species in all areas is typically around 10,000 fish.

North Peninsula: 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. Current Sockeye Salmon escapement as of June 28 for peninsula projects is below. No commercial fishing in fishing districts located in the Northern Peninsula Management Area as occurred to date and closures remain in place due to low escapement counts.

North Peninsula Management Area Escapement Goals:

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000, current escapement = 5,532
Late-run Bear Lake	BEG = 117,000 – 195,000, current escapement = 24,045

South Peninsula: Commercial fishing has been occurring on the South Peninsula in the Shumagin Islands and South Umiak Districts. Fishing in the Dolgoi District has not occurred due to low escapement number enumerated in Chignik River weir. The cumulative commercial harvest as of June 28 is approximately 2.4 million with pink salmon being the predominant species harvested.

South Peninsula Management Area Escapement Counts

- Inlik River current escapement = 10,136
- Orzinski River current escapement = 203
- Sandy River current escapement = 6,018
- McLees River current escapement = 1,419

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

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) 456-0406, 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 was for an above average run size large enough to provide for escapement and subsistence uses, with a surplus of up to 1.1 million Summer Chum Salmon to be available for commercial harvest. The run appears to be late, similar to 2019, however, managers are confident that the run will meet escapement goals, provide for a normal subsistence harvest, and allow for a commercial harvest opportunity.

The 2020 drainage-wide Chinook salmon pre-season outlook was for a run size of 144,000 to 220,000 fish, a slightly smaller run size than 2019. Inseason projections are

indicating that the run is late and weak, below the lower end of the preseason projection. Unfortunately, a run of this size may not have a harvestable surplus available for subsistence harvests. Therefore, severe subsistence salmon fishing restrictions are being implemented to protect Chinook Salmon while also trying to allow for some harvest of Summer Chum Salmon.

Assessment Information

The first pulse of Chinook Salmon entered the river on June 20, and the first pulse of Summer Chum Salmon entered a day earlier, on June 19. The second pulse of Chinook Salmon began entering the river 3 days after the first pulse, on June 23, and it appears that the second pulse of Summer Chum Salmon may have started hitting the Lower Yukon Test Fishery on June 26. Through June 27, the LYTF Chinook Salmon drift net project had a cumulative CPUE of 251, below the average CPUE of 335. For Summer Chum Salmon, the LYTF drift net project had a cumulative CPUE of 2,832 through June 27, well below the median of 7,760 at this date. The Pilot Station sonar has a cumulative Chinook Salmon passage estimate of 82,465 through June 27, below the average of 121,116. The first pulse of Chinook Salmon passed the sonar June 23-25 and contained approximately 28,000 fish. The second pulse began passing on June 26. The cumulative Summer Chum Salmon estimate at the Pilot Station sonar was 202,213 through June 27, well below the median cumulative passage of 820,001 on this date. Both the Chinook and Summer Chum runs appear to be late this year. The average of late years' mid-point for Chinook Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar is June 26. The average late years' quarter-point for Summer Chum Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar is June 25; however, this run is tracking similar to 2019 which had a first quarter point on June 29.

Management Actions

Subsistence salmon fishing was restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear in the South Coastal District on June 5 but remained open 24/7. Subsistence salmon fishing was put on a reduced schedule of half of each regulatory period, starting on June 5 in District 1, June 6 in District 2, and June 10 in District 3 equaling two 18-hour periods per week. A similar reduction to half of each regulatory period, equaling two 24-hour periods per week, followed in Subdistricts 4-A and 4-B and 4-C on June 13 and 16, respectively. It was anticipated at the time that reductions would be implemented in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C starting June 23. All districts were concurrently restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Due to lower than expected assessment numbers at LYTF and Pilot Station sonar to date, for both Chinook and summer Chum Salmon, the half regulatory schedule was being further restricted to just one half period per week. Cancelled periods began in District 1 on June 19 and District 2 on June 20.

Unfortunately, with the late and weak inseason Chinook Salmon run projection, managers made the difficult decision on June 21 to begin restricting subsistence salmon fishing in the Yukon River to selective gear types to target Summer Chum Salmon while releasing Chinook Salmon alive back into the river. Additionally, the use of 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear to target non-salmon species during closed subsistence salmon fishing periods was initially disallowed to protect Chinook Salmon from incidental harvest. Districts 1, 2 and 3 were restricted to selective gear types immediately during

half their normal windows schedule. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 4 and 5 was closed until further notice to protect the early “tricklers” of Chinook Salmon passing through these districts. It’s anticipated that subsistence salmon openings restricted to selective gear types will be opened as the Summer Chum Salmon runs enter these areas. The Innoko and Koyukuk Rivers was restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on June 23 as these are not big Chinook Salmon drainages. District 6 in the Tanana drainage is seeing similar restrictions with the Subdistrict 6-C personal use fishery also being closed until further notice. The South Coastal District schedule remained unchanged, but was later reduced from 24/7 restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets to 3½ days per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets on June 25. Subsistence fishing periods were extended in District 1 to 36 hours, starting at 8 pm on Monday, June 29, and 8 pm on Thursday July 2. In District 2, a 36-hour subsistence fishing period will begin at 8 pm on Wednesday, July 1.

Following the announcement of the restriction on 4” mesh, several dog mushers in the drainage complained that the severe restrictions prevented them from being able to get dog food for their teams and requested that 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnet restriction be allowed for harvest of non-salmon species. Beginning June 27, the use of 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnet to target non-salmon species was re-instated during subsistence salmon fishing closures in Districts 1-6. In Districts 1-4, nets could only be set in sloughs and tributaries, set from shore, and be 60 feet or shorter in length. In District 5 and 6, nets must be set from shore and be 60 feet or shorter in length.

Although the Summer Chum Salmon run is weak and late at this time, managers are confident there will be enough fish available to meet escape goals, provide for a normal subsistence harvest, and provide for other uses, such as commercial fishing opportunities. To take advantage of the projected surplus of Summer Chum Salmon, commercial fishing opportunities are being provided in Districts 1 and 2 between subsistence salmon fishing periods. These periods are restricted to dip nets and beach seines and all Chinook Salmon must be released alive and not sold nor taken home for subsistence purposes.

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 through the various State, Federal, and stakeholder organizations. 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 seventh regular weekly YRDFA teleconference was held on June 23. Chinook Salmon catches were reported as far upriver as Rampart. Fishermen throughout the drainage expressed concern about the recent subsistence salmon fishing closures. Traditional indicators in the lower Yukon were signifying that salmon were milling at the mouth and would be entering soon, which they did. Some fishermen did indicate support for the closures during the teleconference, due to the need for conservation, and in post teleconference discussions with fishermen, an understanding of the need for closures was acknowledged to protect the run. Managers will continue to seek input from fishermen during the weekly YRDFA teleconferences and other

discussions that will be held throughout the summer season. Assessment project and management updates will continue to be given on the **YR DFA 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 (907) 543-3151 or Aaron Mosses Aaron_Moses@fws.gov (907) 545-3252

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.

On June 3rd, 6th and 9th 2020, the Federal in-season manager provided three 24-hour set gillnet (6” or less mesh) opportunities for Chinook Salmon, of which around 1,430 Chinook Salmon were harvested. On June 12,-15, and 18 the Federal inseason manager provided three 12-hour fishing opportunity with 6-inch mesh drift gillnets where an estimated 11,250 Chinook Salmon were harvested. Total harvest across all these provided opportunities is approximately 17,590 Chinook Salmon.

Given these fishing opportunities, people are still highly anticipating more fishing opportunities for Chinook Salmon to continue their traditional way of life and provide for their families. Many of the KRITFC members and the public have continued to express subsistence shortfalls for their families and way of life, as well. The harvest to date has not met the unrestricted historical subsistence harvest levels of 67,000-109,000 Chinook Salmon.

For the 2020 season, the Federal in-season manager wants to limit the possibility of going below the lower bound of the drainage wide sustainable escapement goal of 65,000 Chinook Salmon to a 20% chance. Based on the updated results generated from the Pstar portion of the Bayes Decision Tool and centered on the lower limit (65,000) and risk tolerance (20%), this implies that 45,000 more Chinook Salmon could be harvested by the subsistence fishery without the Federal in season manager’s risk tolerance being exceeded (Staton and Catalano 2018; Bayesian information updating procedures for Pacific salmon run-size indicators: Evaluation in the presence and absence of auxiliary migration timing information, Canadian Journal of Fish and Aquaculture Sciences). Expected escapement under this scenario is 94,000 Chinook Salmon.

Based on the current assessment of the Chinook Salmon run and the performance of the subsistence fishery in first six opportunities, the Federal in season manager believes it is highly unlikely that 45,000 Chinook Salmon harvest is possible given the likelihood of increasing Chum/Sockeye to Chinook Salmon ratios, the increased likelihood of late run-timing, and the previously announced conservatively structured harvest opportunities recommended by the KRITFC and enacted by the Federal in season manager.

Additionally, in terms of escapement, if 45,000 Chinook Salmon harvest is not obtained, the expected escapement will be more than 94,000 Chinook Salmon.

Test Fisheries:

As of June 28, 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 282. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 674 and 434, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 79. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 304 and 1,242, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for Sockeye is at 93. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 257 and 216, 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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

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

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

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Northwest Alaska**Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.**(907) 443-6104 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov**Norton Sound District**

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours in Norton Sound Subdistricts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (the Nome, Golovin, Elim, Norton Bay, Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts) beginning on the evening of June 24.

Commercial permit holders fishing in Subdistricts 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were reminded that once they start fishing, they can no longer subsistence fish for salmon but can retain some of their commercial catch for personal use. The exception is that from July 15 through August 1 they can subsistence fish in the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik River drainages with gillnets that have a mesh size that does not exceed four and one-half inches and with beach seines.

The ADF&G will use harvest-based management until the escapement counting projects become operational. Harvest-based management compares the catch from a fishing period with catches from previous years during the similar dates and takes into consideration fishing effort and weather conditions. This short duration commercial fishing opening will allow utilization of the expected harvestable surplus of salmon and is not expected to jeopardize subsistence or escapement needs.

Anticipated ADF&G management projects in 2020 include: Kwiniuk River counting tower; Bonanza weir; Nome River weir; Solomon River weir; periodic aerial surveys of index spawning streams; and catch sampling and monitoring efforts at Nome and Unalakleet. A cooperative project with other agencies may occur at the Unalakleet River weir (BLM, NSEDC and Unalakleet IRA). Department staff will also track the salmon escapement counts reported on other cooperative projects administered by NSEDC on the following rivers: North, Snake, Shaktoolik, Ungalik, Inglutalik, Eldorado, and Pilgrim. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic some projects may not operate this year because of quarantine and staffing issues.

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)**Subsistence Fishing:**

On the evening of June 14 at midnight, the Unalakleet River drainage from downstream of the North River and the North River drainage closed 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 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 Subdistrict 6, from Cape Denbigh to Black Point closed to subsistence salmon fishing.

Beginning on June 15, Subdistrict 6 reopened to subsistence fishing in the marine waters for two 48-hour periods each week. The marine water subsistence fishing schedule is 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 reopened on a 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.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened from 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 6 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)

Subsistence Fishing:

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

Beginning on June 15, Subdistrict 5 reopened 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.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened from 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 6 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)

Subsistence Fishing:

No restrictions on subsistence fishing are expected this year.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing was opened from 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 6 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

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.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing was opened from 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 6 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 2 (Golovin)

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence salmon permits are required when net fishing in northern Norton Sound (from Elim Subdistrict to Port Clarence District).

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing was opened from 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 6 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

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

The summer subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule for the Nome Subdistrict went into effect. 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 opened 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.

Effective June 15 all gillnet and beach seine fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River 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.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing in the Nome Subdistrict was opened from 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 8 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

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.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing remains closed in the Port Clarence Subdistrict due to lack of buyer interest.

Kotzebue District.

Subsistence Fishing:

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2020.

Commercial Fishing:

The ADF&G intends to open the commercial fishery any time after July 9 when the buyers are ready or permit holders indicate they are ready to fish, and a market is available.

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