

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 6-12, 2020. Report #7
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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 June 25. 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.

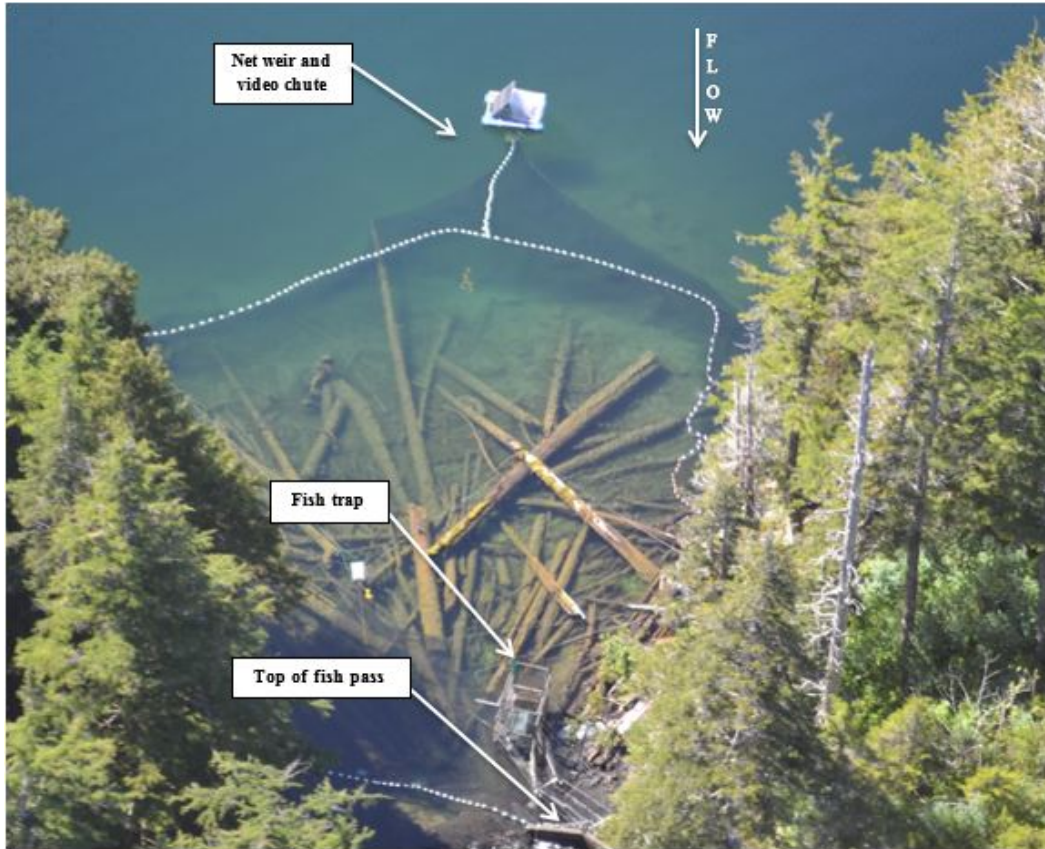


Figure 1. Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

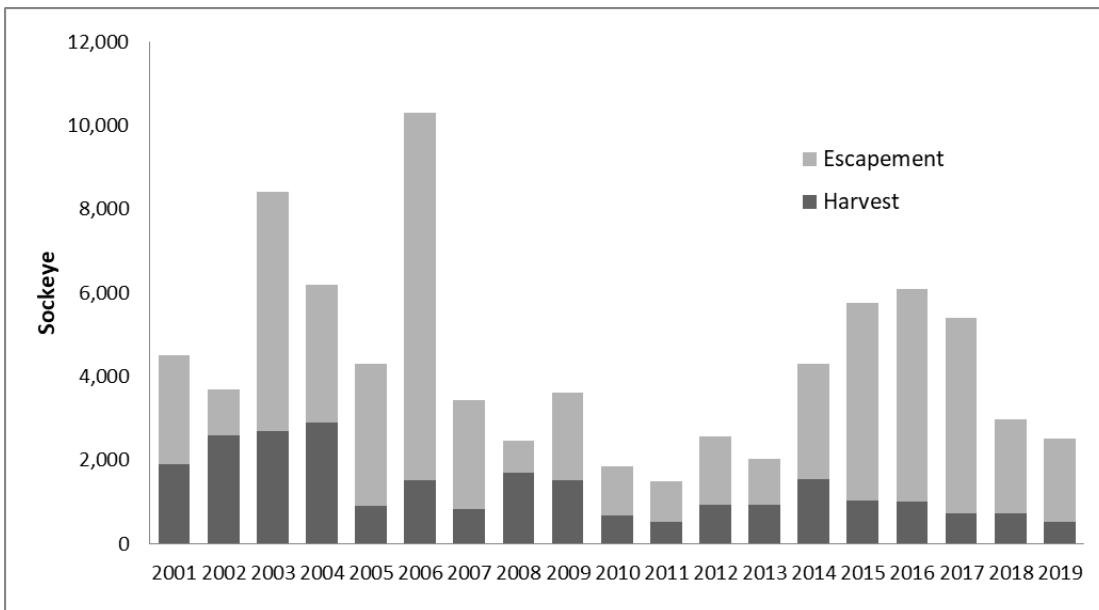


Figure 2. Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2019.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed the week of June 22. As of July 3, five sockeye have been counted. 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.

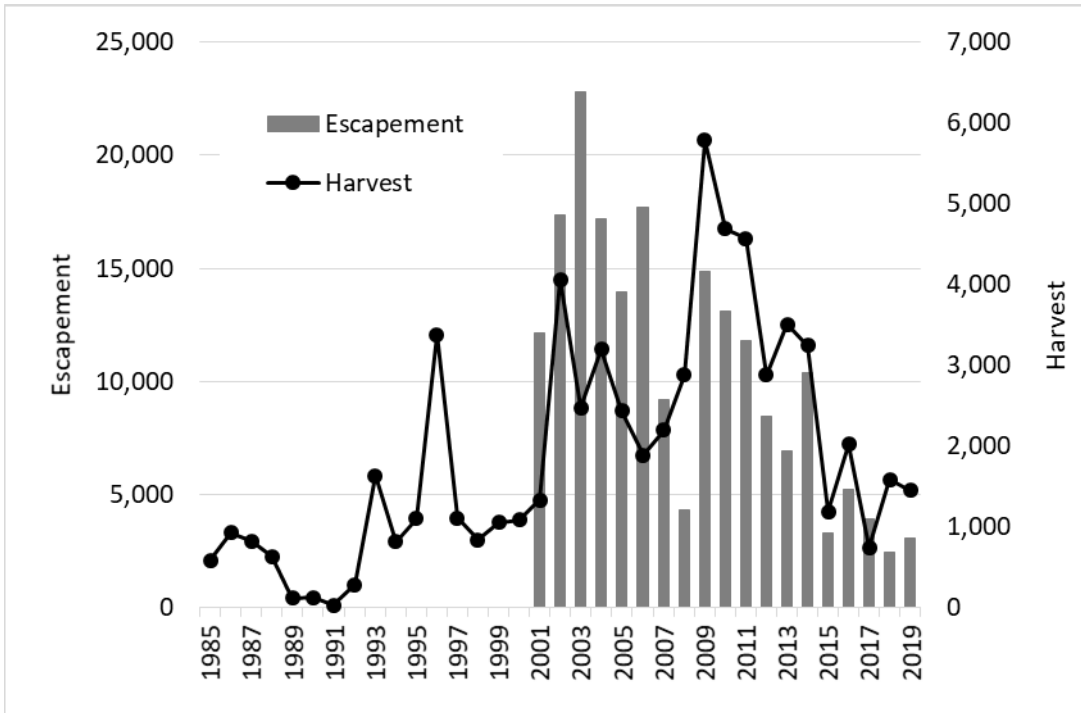


Figure 3. Reported harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2019.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 13. As of July 3, 468 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](#)

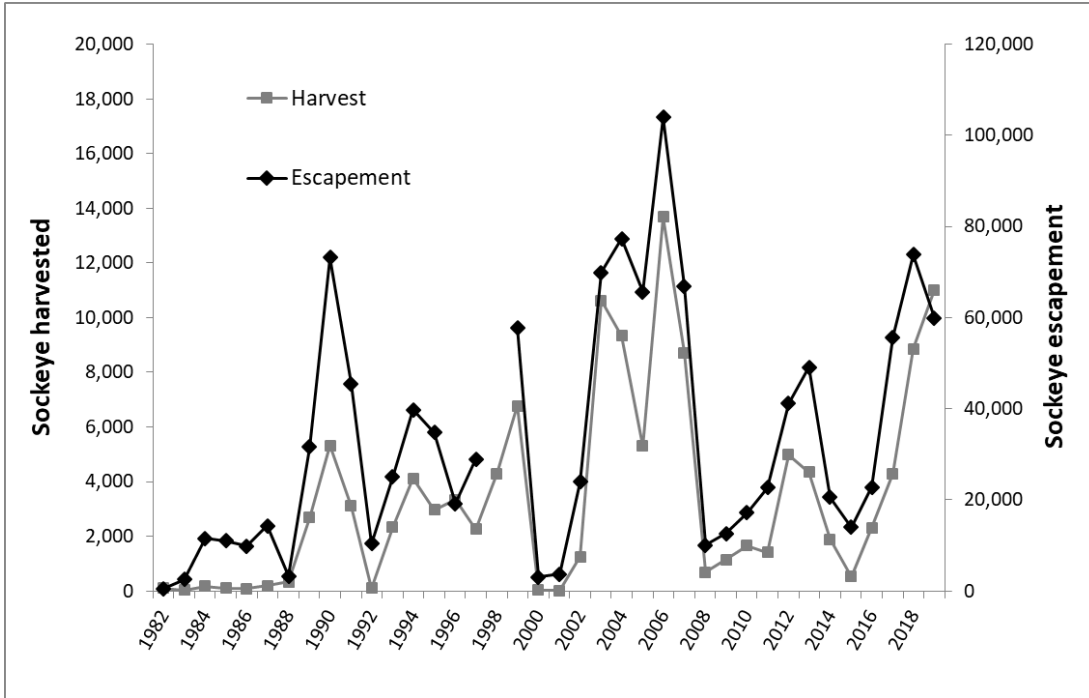


Figure 4. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake and subsistence harvest for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2019. The weir was not operated in 1998.

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 July 1, five sockeye have been counted and no harvest has been documented.

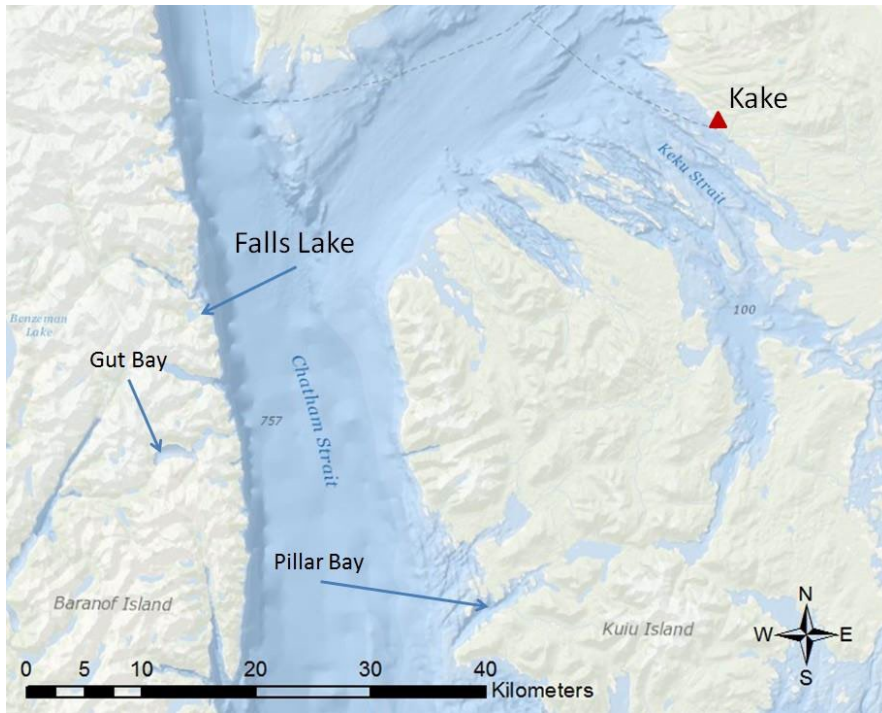


Figure 5. Location of Gut Bay in relation to Falls Lake and the village of Kake

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

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 and District 8 from 12:01 p.m., Sunday, July 12, through 12:00 noon, Tuesday, July 14, 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 has returned to normal levels this week so participation in the fishery is high, but harvest is still low. A total of 111 Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon permits (FFSE07) and 21 General Fish permits (FFSE04) have been issued for residents in the Wrangell and Petersburg Districts.

Southeast Alaska Drift Gillnet Harvest Estimates as of Statistical Week 28 (July 5 through July 11)

District	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
6	150	2,100	1,500	4,100	9,300	17,150
8	1,100	600	20	250	1,900	3,870

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov), Forest Service, Tongass National Forest

July 9, 2020

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. 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. So far, only 20 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the weir as of July 8 (Figure 2). However, the local otters and beavers have been making extensive use of the weir to keep the crew entertained, and occasionally even a larger mammal will wander by (Figure 3).



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



Figure 2. Video capture of a sockeye passing through the Neva Lake weir, July 9, 2020



Figure 3. A moose strolls past the Neva Lake weir, July 8, 2020.

Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon: The Sitkoh Lake video weir was installed on July 6-8 by a Forest Service biologist with the help of Student Conservation Association interns. The project uses a pair of remotely monitored video net weirs to count fish entering Sitkoh Lake, on the southeast corner of Chichagof Island (Figures 4 and 5). Video from the site is streamed to the Angoon Community Association office, where it is recorded on a computer. Personnel from the ACA will monitor the weir and use video to count fish entering the lake. Live video feed and clips from the weir can be accessed over the internet at <http://sitkohlake.ddns.net:81> .



Figure 4. The video weir at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake, July 9, 2020.



Figure 5. SCA interns Rachel Colter (left) and Allison Schumacher (right) install cameras in a video chute at Sitkoh Lake, July 7, 2020.

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 136 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. On June 15, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) increased harvest opportunity in outside waters by increasing the daily harvest limit to three fish. On July 11th, ADF&G further liberalized the resident daily harvest limit by increasing the daily harvest limit to four fish. Many local subsistence users continue to utilize these liberalized harvest regulations.

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. State managed subsistence fisheries are currently open at Klawock Inlet, Sarkar, Red Bay, Salmon Bay Lake, Karta River, Hetta Inlet, Eek Lake, Hunter Bay, Klakas Inlet and Shipley Bay. Personal use opportunity is open at the Thorne River and Kegan Cove. All fisheries, except Hetta (August 31) and Klawock (August 7) will close on July 31. The first summer troll opening (non-hatchery terminal harvest) for Chinook Salmon began July 1 and has now closed. It was anticipated that the 85,600 fish allocation would be reached by 11:50 p.m. on July 6. Other than in designated terminal harvest areas, retention of Chinook Salmon is now prohibited in the troll fishery. All vessels are now actively pursuing the other salmon species.

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: 12,125 Chinook Salmon, 5800 Sockeye Salmon, 4150 Coho Salmon, 83,650 Pink Salmon and 96,300 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 50 Sockeye Salmon to date. The Eek Lake weir became operational on June 15 and has passed 1 Sockeye Salmon to date.

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=RI.home>

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

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER

Copper River, 7/13/2020 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 six (of potentially eighteen) open commercial fishing periods have occurred this season. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 94,631 Sockeye Salmon and 5,842 Chinook Salmon. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reports this to be the fourth lowest commercial harvest to date 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 July 12, 474,422 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 90% of the cumulative management objective of 527,561 salmon for this date. A daily estimate of 7,607 salmon migrated by the sonar on July 11.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 2,466 Chinook Salmon through July 11. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 1,162 Chinook Salmon through July 10, of which, 117 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

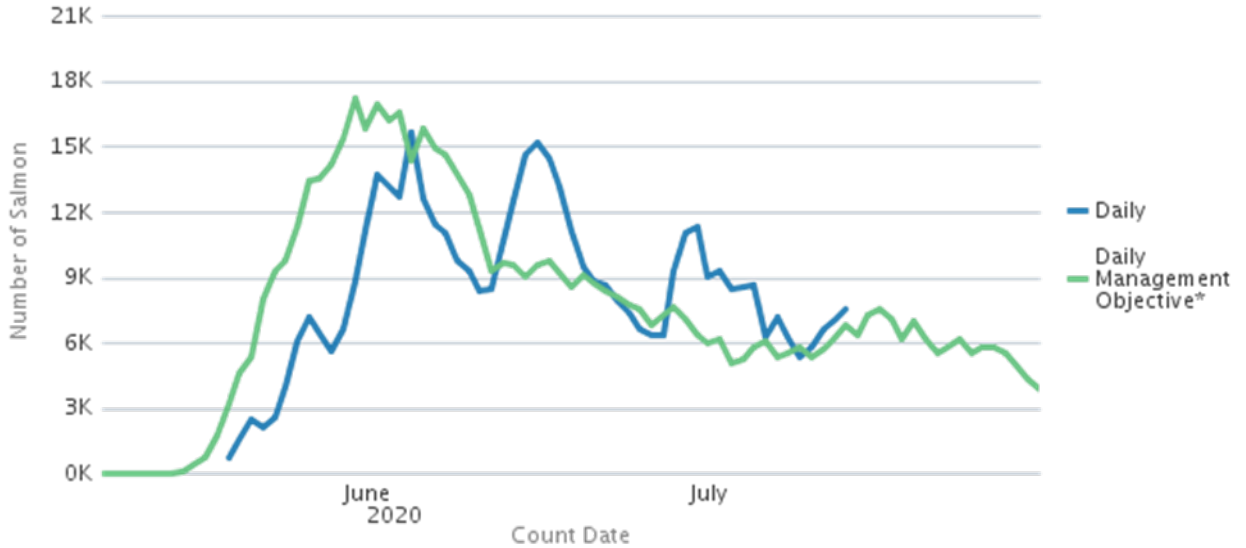
Performance in the commercial fishery and in river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary in-season assessments of the salmon return to the Copper River. Based on long-term average run timing and harvests, both indicators are below the expected levels for this date of the season. The overall returns of both Sockeye and Chinook Salmon appear to be weak; although the Sockeye Salmon return has improved from the start of the season, as indicated by sonar estimates. In-river assessments of the Chinook Salmon return, along with assumptions of up-river harvests, indicate that the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 24,000 fish will likely not be met for this season. 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.

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

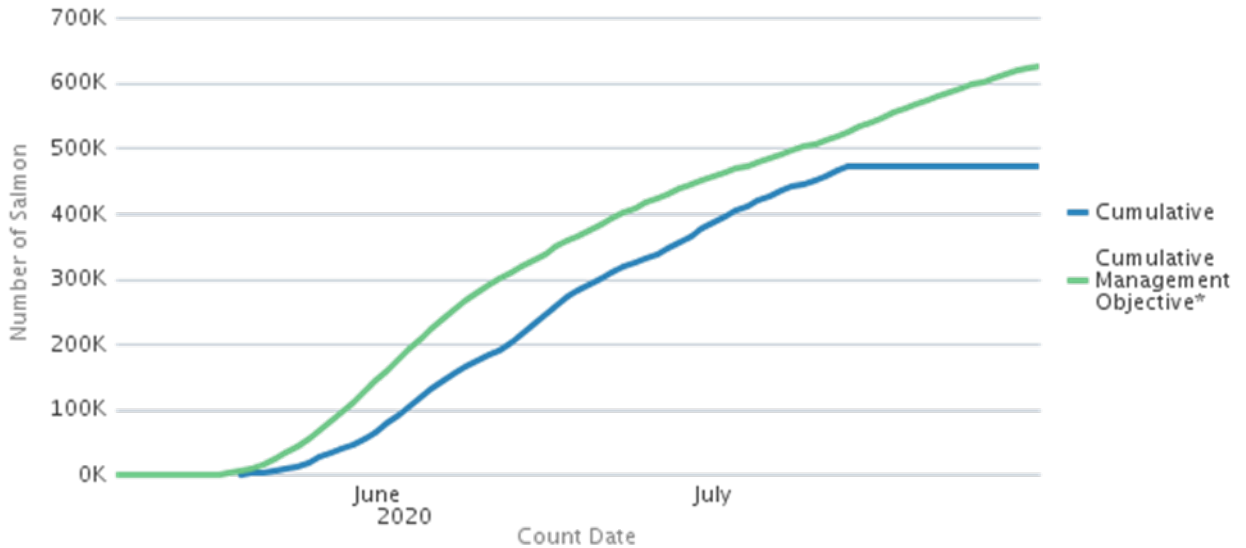
the Chitina Subdistrict was open for 84-hours from July 9 through July 12, and is scheduled to be open for a total of 84-hours from July 16 through July 19. Since June 22, the Chitina personal use fishery has been closed to the retention of Chinook Salmon for the remainder of the season.

2020 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 5

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 ninety-three (193) Chitina Subdistrict permits, three hundred and fifty-three (353) 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 through the end of June due to public health advisories and staffing delays related to COVID-19, and limited visitor service availability starting July 1, 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. Recent site visits revealed evidence of extreme flooding, with debris and silt deposits well above the stream bank. The weir will not be installed this season, as structural components of the weir will need repairs in preparation for next season.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. The reported cumulative passage estimate through July 12 is 1,380 Chinook Salmon. This is a relatively very low estimate for this date in the season and is less than 20% of the 2019 season count of 7,266 through this date of the season; however, periods of high water and associated turbidity limited counts on some days of the 2020 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 40 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 – Kenneth Gates, Acting Delegated Official, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 Kenneth_Gates@FWS.GOV

Ken has been assigned the duties of the In-season Federal Subsistence Fisheries Manager for the Kenai Peninsula following the departure of Jeff Anderson. Jeff has taken a job in the lower 48.

The 2020 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon began on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Harvest reported through July 9 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 556 Sockeye Salmon. Twenty-four Sockeye Salmon have been harvested in the Kasilof River dip net fishery. 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 July 9 includes 576 Sockeye Salmon.

Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30. No effort has been reported for this fishery through July 10.

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 Sockeye Salmon escapements for Buskin and Litnik systems started out slow but have increased the past couple of weeks. The lower escapement goal for the Buskin River was reached on June 29, 2020, with 5,039 fish passing the weir. The lower escapement goal for Litnik was also reached, but a little later than Buskin River, on July 6, 2020. Subsistence users have had fairly high catch per unit effort for these systems the past few weeks.

The Karluk and Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapements have been strong the past few weeks, with both systems meeting their lower escapement goals. As of Friday, July 10, 2020, the Karluk River Sockeye Salmon escapement count was 152,408 fish and 196,766 fish for the Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon. Discussions with villagers from Karluk and Larsen Bay have indicated catch per unit effort for subsistence harvest to be medium to strong.

Any additional information pertaining to subsistence harvest will be amended to this 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

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.

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 was forecast to be approximately 48 million fish for the nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak.

The Sockeye Salmon sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems are:

Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 11):

Kvichak	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000, current escapement = 1,736,760
Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum, current escapement = 1,061,900
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 2,877,612
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 1,706,400
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000, current escapement = 309,852
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000, current escapement = 1,581,030
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000, current escapement = 94,050
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000, current escapement = 1,008,575
Nushagak (Chinook)	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 38,739
Togiak	SEG = 150,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 153,090

All areas will provide subsistence harvest opportunity.

The total commercial harvest for Sockeye Salmon as of July 11 is approximately 23.8 million fish.

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 Sockeye Salmon run is composed of an early run (June 1 – July 31) and late run (July 31 – September). These dates generally describe the run-timing and overlap between runs occurs.

As of July 11, approximately 118,562 early run Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated. This count is significantly smaller than the escapement objective for this time period of 330,000 - 410,000 fish and it is highly unlikely the run will make the minimum escapement goal. Emergency Special Action, 08-SS-01-20, restricting fishing in federal public waters to only federally qualified users is still in place.

Subsistence harvest reports indicate minimal harvests.

The late run Sockeye Salmon count for July 11 is 24,545 fish. The escapement objective for this time period is 20,000 – 50,000 fish. There is concern that the late run will be lower than expected.

The Chinook Salmon count for July 11 is 381 fish. Typically, the largest portion of the Chinook Salmon run occurs during the second week of July; although, the run is thought to be late similar to other Chinook Salmon runs throughout the state. Restrictions to harvest may be implemented if large increases in run abundance do not occur in the next few days.

Escapement Goals:

Early Run Sockeye Salmon/ Black Lake	BEG = 350,000 – 450,000
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Late Run Sockeye Salmon/ Chignik Lake -In-river Goal	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000 -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: There are only two preseason forecasts for this area, 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. Commercial fishing in some fishing districts located on the Northern Peninsula Management Area were announced beginning July 9. The cumulative commercial harvest as of July 11 is approximately 800,000 fish with Sockeye Salmon being the predominant species harvested.

North Peninsula Management Area Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 11):

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000, current escapement = 88,594
Late-run Bear Lake	BEG = 117,000 – 195,000, current escapement = 209,070 (pre July 31 count)

South Peninsula: Commercial fishing has occurred 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 July 11 is approximately 2.5 million with pink salmon being the predominant species harvested.

South Peninsula Management Area Escapement Counts (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 11):

Ilnik River current escapement = 34,992
Orzinski River current escapement = 1,491
Sandy River current escapement = 43,393
McLees River current escapement = 3,269

Aleutian Islands.

All fisheries are forecast to meet escapement goals and provide subsistence 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 to date has been much smaller than average for years since 2001 and is projected to fall below the outlook range. The run has currently just passed the lower end of the drainagewide escapement goal at the Pilot Station sonar and is providing for subsistence harvest, but commercial harvest opportunities were curtailed.

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. The run has now exceeded the lower threshold of the pre-season projection range along with a limited subsistence harvest to date. Chinook Salmon have been passing Eagle sonar in steadily increasing numbers this week.

Assessment Information

At this time, three pulses of Chinook Salmon are in the upper river and making their way toward the border and terminal streams, and late season numbers remain strong. Summer Chum salmon numbers, in contrast, have failed to increase after the first pulse; the second pulse which ended at Pilot Station on June 30, was only a little over half the size of the first pulse. The third pulse, ending July 6, was even smaller, just over half the size of the second.

The cumulative CPUE for Chinook Salmon in the LYTF Big Eddy Drift project was 291 on July 12, below the average of 396 for this date. The cumulative CPUE at LYTF for summer Chum Salmon was 4,508 on July 12, also below the average of 9,936 for this date. At the Pilot Station sonar project, Chinook Salmon passage was estimated at 151,008 on July 12, below the average passage of 176,544 for this date. Summer Chum Salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar was estimated at 596,138 on July 12, well below the median of 1,717,715. Eagle sonar has been counting Chinook Salmon since July 1, and the cumulative count as of July 12 was 2,924 fish.

The Chinook Salmon run has now passed the lower threshold of the forecast range and is adequate to support subsistence harvests at about half the normal size. On the other hand, the Summer Chum Salmon run has come in smaller than in previous years since 2001, and the total run size is on track to be less than 1 million. However, the run past Pilot Station has passed the lower bound of the escapement goal. It is important to note that the total summer Chum Salmon escapement estimate will be greater than the total Pilot Station count, meaning the current run size is now well within the escapement goal range. Tributary escapement goals cannot be evaluated this year since those projects are not operating. The 2020 summer Chum Salmon run can support a normal subsistence harvest, but commercial opportunities were suspended starting on July 6. Harvests to date appear to be smaller than usual due to poor fishing conditions with bad weather and high water with lots of debris.

Management Actions

Because the bulk of the Chinook and summer Chum Salmon runs have passed through the lower river, subsistence fishing gear and time restrictions were gradually relaxed in the lower river districts. Districts 2 and 3 had already been relaxed to the full regulatory schedule and use of 7.5-inch mesh gillnets in the previous week. Subsistence fishing was relaxed in District 1 to the use of 7.5-inch mesh starting July 6 on half the regulatory schedule. Starting on July 9, fishing was opened to the full regulatory schedule in this district.

With the bulk of the Chinook Salmon run passing through the upper river, further restrictions were placed on upper river districts, with the exception of the lower portion of District 4A, where most of the run had already passed. Starting on July 7, fishermen in District 4A were allowed to use 7.5-inch mesh gillnets and fishwheels on half the regulatory schedule. Meanwhile, District 4A Upper and Districts 4 B and C remained restricted to 6-inch mesh until July 11, then relaxed to 7.5-inch mesh. To further protect the large groups of fish in the upper river, a 24-hour fishing period that would have started in Subdistricts 5A, B, and C on July 10 was cancelled, with re-opening set for July 14. In Subdistrict 5D, the expected half-regulatory schedule starting on July 10, for one 84-hour fishing periods per week, was reduced slightly by substituting a 48-hour period in one week (starting July 17 in the lower and middle portions of this subdistrict and July 24 in the upper portion). Fishing remains restricted to 6-inch mesh throughout District 5. All of District 6 in the Tanana River was returned to the full regulatory schedule, with use of 7.5-inch mesh, starting on July 10.

Chinook Salmon have been arriving at the Eagle sonar station in steadily increasing numbers since July 1. Management will remain conservative, according to the actions listed above, until the large pulses begin to show up there.

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 ninth regular weekly YRDFA teleconference was held on July 7. Fishermen still had concerns about their catches, but some were farther along in meeting their subsistence needs and reported some improvement in conditions. The presence of disease caused by *Ichthyophonus* was noted by some fishermen in middle and upper river areas. 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 **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 (907) 543-3151 or Aaron Mosses Aaron_Moses@fws.gov (907) 545-3252

Summary:

As of July 1, 2020 federal management for Chinook salmon has expired. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has resumed management of salmon species on the

Kuskokwim River. Gill net mesh size and net length restrictions are still in place until further notice.

Test Fisheries:

As of July 12, 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 445. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 805 and 627, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 875. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 2,707 and 7,618, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for Sockeye is at 821. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 1,826 and 1,555, 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*****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:**

By Board of Fisheries regulation, the King Salmon Management Plan for Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, and the Unalakleet River is in effect. From July 1 through August 10 beach seining is allowed 7 days a week unless changed by emergency order. In all waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6, salmon other than king salmon may be kept when beach seining. All king salmon caught when beach seining must be returned immediately to water unharmed. Beach seines must have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller.

The subsistence gillnet fishing schedule remains the same through July 15 unless changed by emergency order. The subsistence fishing schedule marine waters for the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts is from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Thursdays until 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions. Subsistence gillnet fishing in the fresh waters of the Unalakleet River is from 8 a.m. Mondays until 8 p.m. Tuesdays and from 8 a.m. Fridays until 8 p.m. Saturdays. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 9 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 10 in the Unalakleet Subdistrict. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Chum catches have been below average in the Unalakleet Subdistrict. If the chum catch is again below average, no more commercial fishing time is expected until chum escapement improves or there is a pink directed or silver salmon fishing period.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir — A cooperative project of Fish and Game, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), Native Village of the Unalakleet and BLM, with major funding provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. Escapement goals for the weir have not yet been established. Not yet operational.

North River Tower — Camp J. B. — A Cooperative Project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. The project has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings, 25,000 pinks, 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey) and no goal yet established for chums. High water had prevented the southern Norton Sound salmon escapement counting projects from operating but the North River tower did become operational on Monday afternoon.

The escapement counts to July 8 were 9 kings, 15 chums, 10,200 pinks,

Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)

Subsistence Fishing:

By Board of Fisheries regulation, the King Salmon Management Plan for Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, and the Unalakleet River is in effect. From July 1 through August 10 beach seining is allowed 7 days a week unless changed by emergency order. In all waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6, salmon other than king salmon may be kept when beach seining. All king salmon caught when beach seining must be returned immediately to water unharmed. Beach seines must have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller.

The subsistence gillnet fishing schedule remains the same through July 15 unless changed by emergency order. The subsistence fishing schedule marine waters for the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts is from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Thursdays until 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 9 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 10 in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Chum catches have been below average in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict. If the chum catch is again below average, no more commercial fishing time is expected until chum escapement improves or there is a pink directed or silver salmon fishing period.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals established. High water has prevented the escapement counting project from operating.

Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)

Subsistence Fishing:

No restrictions on subsistence fishing are expected this year.

Commercial Fishing:

No commercial fishing period announced.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. Not yet operational.

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:

No more commercial fishing time is expected in the Elim Subdistrict unless chum escapement improves or there is a pink directed or silver salmon fishing period.

Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings, 9,100 – 32,600 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative counts through July 8 are 93 kings, 1,515 chums and 87,000 pinks.

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 opened for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 9 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 10 in the Golovin Subdistrict. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Last week's 24-hour fishing period was the third 24-hour opening of the season and the chum catch continued to decline. If this next commercial fishing is below the historical average again no more commercial fishing time will be expected unless there is a pink directed or silver salmon fishing period.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. No counts were made for over a week because of high water. The cumulative counts are 330 chums, 318 pinks, 12 kings, 12 sockeyes.

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 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:

No more commercial fishing time is expected in the Nome Subdistrict until chum escapement improves or there is a pink directed or silver salmon fishing period.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project, has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative counts to July 8 are 5 chums, 18 pinks. The chum salmon run is near the starting point of chum salmon passage.

Bonanza River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have yet been established. The cumulative counts through July 8 are 4 chums, 2 pinks. The chum salmon run is near the starting point of chum salmon passage.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal range at the weir of 4,400 – 14,200 chum salmon. The weir has been operational since June 25 and the cumulative counts to July 8 are 3 kings, 587 chums and 322 pinks. The chum escapement is nearing the historical quarter point of chum passage.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The cumulative counts to July 8 are 18 chums, 27,000 pinks. The chum salmon run is near the starting point of chum salmon passage.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,000 – 4,200 chum salmon. The cumulative counts to July 8 are 8 pink salmon. The chum salmon run is near the starting point of chum salmon passage.

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.

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. It has an escapement goal of 4,000-8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & the Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The cumulative counts to July 8 are 2 kings, 42 chums, 20 pinks and 355 sockeyes.

Kotzebue District.

The ADF&G reminded both subsistence and commercial fishermen that the area offshore of the Kotzebue airport's main runway to one nautical mile out in the ocean is closed to all commercial and subsistence fishing. Fishing boats and other marine vessels may still transit through the closed fishing area, but no fishing gear can be in the water in the closed area.

The reason for the closure is that fishing often attracts birds that can create a hazardous situation for aircraft. This fishing closure is in effect for both commercial and subsistence fishing and will remain in effect until mid-October.

The closed area is a rectangular area defined from the Weather Service Dome, south of the main runway at the Kotzebue airport, to the NANA building north of the same runway and extending westerly one nautical mile out into the ocean approximately perpendicular to the beach.

Subsistence Fishing:

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2020.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 10 hours from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Friday, July 10 in the Kotzebue Sound District.

Three buyers plan to purchase Kotzebue chum salmon this season and two of the three buyers have notified the department they planned to buy on Friday.

The 2020 Kotzebue commercial harvest forecast is 450,000 to 650,000 chum salmon, but throughout western Alaska chum salmon harvests have been much lower than forecast this season.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is not yet operational.

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