

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 11-17, 2017. Report #3.

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The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season fisheries managers that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. The goal is to have the weekly report posted on the OSM website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing>, by the close of business the following Monday. Additional information on a fishery of particular interest may be obtained by contacting the in-season manager, visiting the additional web links at the end of each area report, or by contacting George Pappas.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

The 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas is just beginning. To date, 121 permits have been issued.

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
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Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 16th. A few sockeye have started to pass through the weir this weekend. In 2016, an estimated 22,937 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 14th, 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. These limits were based on an in-season model prediction of about 33,000 sockeye returning. Subsistence sockeye harvest reported to ADF&G was 2,304.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, Contact to be announced.

Nothing new to report for this week. This year's run of Chinook Salmon to the Stikine River is forecasted to be 18,300 fish which is too low, at this time, to support directed commercial, sport, or subsistence fisheries on this stock. The ADF&G plans to protect Stikine Chinook Salmon by shifting the first commercial drift gillnet opening in Districts 6 and 8 from Monday, June 12 to Monday June 19, requiring a six-inch maximum mesh size, reducing fishing area, and opening for 48 hours instead of 72 hours. (This is the same report as last week)

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen (907-789-6257; bvanalen@fs.fed.us) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), **Tongass National Forest**

Yakutat Area. Alaska Department of Fish and Game has been counting fish through their weir on the lower Situk River since May 6. Weir counts through June 15 are 30 large Chinook Salmon, 25,684 Sockeye Salmon, and 5,881 steelhead kelts. The count of Sockeye Salmon is high compared counts in other years. This season's first opening for the commercial set gillnet fishing in the Situk-Ahrnklini Inlet will be June 18-20. Commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries for Chinook Salmon in the Situk River and estuary will remain closed unless weir counts climb within escapement goal ranges. The third set gillnet opening for the Alsek River and second for Yakutat Bay and Dangerous River will also be on June 18. Cumulative harvests now total 256 Chinook Salmon and 6,120 Sockeye Salmon in Yakutat-area set gillnet fisheries.

Northern Inside Waters.

The commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries for salmon are just starting in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. Sport fishing for Chinook Salmon in the Juneau area was closed until June 15th to reduce harvests on Taku River stocks. Sport fishing for Chinook Salmon remains closed in the Haines area to protect stocks returning to the Chilkat River.

Taku and Lynn Canal drift gillnet fisheries will open for the first time this season from June 18-20. Likewise, commercial purse seine fishing will be opened for the first time this season at Point Augusta, Tenakee Inlet, and the Hidden Falls Hatchery terminal harvest area for a 15-hour opening on June 18th.

Project personnel installed the remotely monitored 24/7 swim-through video weir at the outlet of Neva Lake on June 13 and 14 (Figures 1 and 2). The pair of picket weirs lead fish through a video chute with four cameras set to record motion (fish) triggered footage on on-site SD memory cards and an off-site computer running the BlueIris video record and review program. We installed an additional underwater camera and three above water cameras, two fixed and one pan-tilt-zoom, to allow 24/7 intra/internet monitoring of the weir site since weir personnel are living and counting fish off-site at Ocean Beauty Seafood's plant in Excursion Inlet.



Figure 1. Hoonah Indian Association employees Gerard White, Sr. Michael Williams, Sr. and Gerard White, Jr. at Neva Lake's remotely monitored video weir, June 14, 2017.



Figure 2. It only takes a dozen 140 watt solar panels to power the remotely monitored video weir at the outlet of Neva Lake, June 14, 2017

We will be working with a four-person crew employed by the Angoon Community Association to install the video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake next week and at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake in early-July.

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

Of the 121 permits issued to date across the region (as noted above), 85 have been issued to Federally-qualified subsistence users residing on Prince of Wales Island.

The 2017 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko spring subsistence steelhead fishery ended on May 31st. A total of 42 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. Permits from this fishery are being returned (approximately one third to date) and were due back by June 15. Reminders are now being sent to recover the remaining permits. The total reported harvest to date is 14 Steelhead Trout and 5 Dolly Varden.

With Chinook Salmon in local marine waters, most subsistence users are still actively fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of sockeye, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at Hetta Lake is on-going. The Hetta weir has been completed and 71 Sockeye have been counted to date. Both the bipod weir and video net weir still need to be installed at Eek Lake. The Klawock Lake project will begin July 1.

Commercial seine and drift gillnet fishing in Districts 1-4 will be starting soon. Limited terminal harvest area commercial troll opportunity for Chinook and Chum Salmon is occurring to target Alaska hatchery origin salmon, however, all spring fisheries have been closed until further notice to protect mainland Chinook returns. The department plans to re-open the Chinook troll fishery on July 1. Both the first seine and drift gillnet openings started late this week.

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 – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

As of June 18, 2017 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 413,375 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 22% more than the projected escapement of 337,916 for this date, or 75,459 more salmon. A daily estimate of 14,958 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on June 18.

The Chitina Subdistrict is currently open and scheduled to remain open through June 25. It is then tentatively scheduled to reopen immediately on June 26 and remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. As of June 19, the state will allow the retention of Chinook Salmon in the personal use fishery. Seventy-one (71) Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on June 1 and is expected to remain open until September 30th. Two hundred twenty-two (222) Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. One (1) Federal permits has been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek fish weir was installed and fish tight on June 7. The first Sockeye Salmon was counted past the weir on June 11. As of June 18, cumulative weir counts are 791 Sockeye Salmon and 0 Chinook Salmon. The water in the creek has risen to a normal level.

As of June 17, 2,893 Chinook Salmon had been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak. The upriver fishwheels at Canyon Creek have captured 712 Chinook Salmon, of which, 42 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. As of June 15, ninety-six (96) Chinook Salmon have been estimated past the site.

Six Special Actions have been issued by the inseason manager this season:

- Delaying Upper Coper River District Federal subsistence fisheries until June 1.
- Reducing the Chinook Salmon harvest limit to 2 for the combined gear types of dip net or rod and reel in Upper Copper River District Federal subsistence fisheries.

- Delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict Federal subsistence salmon fishery to June 8 and setting the tentative pre-season schedule for this fishery.
- Allowing the use of bait and multiple hooks by Federal subsistence users while fishing with rod and reel in the mainstem Copper River.
- Revising the starting date for the Chitina Subdistrict Federal subsistence salmon fishery to June 7.
- Rescinding the Chinook Salmon harvest limit reduction for dip net or rod and reel and returning the limit to 5 taken by dip net and 5 taken by rod and reel, in the Upper Copper River District Federal subsistence fisheries.

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>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

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

PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova.
(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

Deployed in field. No report this week.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 jeffry_anderson@fws.gov

The 2017 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon opened on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. 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. Most of the initial rod and reel subsistence effort is focused at Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers.

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

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>

Alaska Department of Fish and Game emergency orders and news releases affecting upper Kenai Peninsula sport fisheries can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=area.list&Year=2017&AreaID=>

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SOUTHWEST ALASKA

Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR

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Sockeye salmon returns continue to be strong along the west and south side of Kodiak Island. As of Wednesday, June 14, 2017, the Ayakulik (72,640 sockeye salmon; escapement goal range 60,000 to 120,000 sockeye) and Karluk (183,307 sockeye salmon; escapement goal range 110,000 to 250,000 sockeye) have exceeded the lower bound of their respective escapement goal ranges. The Buskin River sockeye salmon escapement has reached its lower bound of the escapement goal range (5,000 to 8,000 escapement goal range), even with subsistence fishing restrictions being reduced. The escapement at Upper Station (Olga Lakes) is 48,821 Sockeye Salmon, and is projected to meet its escapement goal by the end of next week.

Chinook Salmon returns continue to be low, with 530 fish at the Karluk River weir and the 1,021 fish at the Ayakulik River weir to date. Even with the restrictions established for both systems, it is unknown if they will meet their respective escapement goals. Chinook Salmon escapement will continue to be monitored daily. Subsistence salmon fishing opportunities may be adjusted based on changes in the run strengths. If these runs sufficiently improve, the fishing restriction could be lifted to provide additional opportunity.

Subsistence salmon fishing around Kodiak is in full swing with efforts being made to harvest Sockeye Salmon in the Buskin River and at Litnik, Port Lions and smaller areas in between, as well as around individual villages. Gillnetters at the mouth of the Buskin River are reporting good catches, with up to 18 boats (average 13-15) fishing at a time. Very little, if any, activity has been occurring at Litnik due to the lower than average Sockeye Salmon run. At Port Lions, gillnetters are still making steady effort to fish in the lagoon, although few reports have been received from this area.

The community of Port Lions completed their local subsistence harvest camp last weekend, during which local youth learned to how to harvest and process salmon. Due to the larger than normal Sockeye Salmon run to the Karluk River, there have been commercial openings, which is restricting subsistence fishing around Larsen Bay and the village of Karluk. Akhiok residents have been getting their subsistence salmon around

Trappers Point or Kempf Bay. Commercial salmon fishing is delayed in the Alitak Bay District, giving subsistence harvesters who normally commercial fish, more free time to engage in subsistence harvests.

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

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Johnathon 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, 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.

Bristol Bay:

The 2017 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run is forecast to be approximately 41.47 million fish for nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak. Based on the forecast 31.2 to 51.7 million fish are available for commercial inshore harvest. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has strategies in place for all mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opened on June 1 by regulation. Commercial fishing openings in the eastside districts are occurring in the Ugashik District through June 16, Egegik District through June 16, and Naknek-Kvichak District through June 23. Additional commercial fishing opportunity in these areas will be based on escapement and inseason abundance. Subsistence fishing is currently open in the westside districts as of June 1. Commercial fishing with set gillnets only in the Igushik Section opened on June 12 and ended June 15 for three eight hour periods. An additional three eight hour periods were announced for this section occurring June 15 through June 17. As each run develops and Sockeye Salmon run characteristics become defined within individual districts, fishing time will be adjusted accordingly. In the Nushagak District, management of the Chinook Salmon fishery will govern fishing time in the early part of the season. No Chinook Salmon have been counted at the Nushagak River sonar as of June 15.

The Port Moller test fishery will began on June 10 and as of June 14 the mean daily catch index was 20 which is greater than 2016 for this date; however, salmon runs are still developing. Escapement projects are currently being installed.

Chignik:

The 2017 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 2,204,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 1,466,000 Sockeye Salmon. The CMA is composed of five fishing districts: Eastern, Central, Chignik Bay, Western, and Perryville. The escapement counts at the Chignik weir are 109,305 as of June 14 with a total harvest of 204,774 Sockeye Salmon and 49 Chinook Salmon.

Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. The largest fisheries are managed under management plans. Management objectives vary by district and time. As of June 10, the cumulative commercial harvest is 90,862 Sockeye Salmon.

Aleutian Islands.

All fisheries are forecast to meet escapement goals and provide harvest opportunity. No commercial harvest has been reported as of June 10.

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

YUKON REGION

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

gerald_maschmann@fws.gov or Fred Bue fredrick_bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is open for summer management activities. The office can be contacted by calling (907) 949-1798.

Summer Season Outlook

The Summer Chum Salmon run is projected to be above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of up to 1.5 million Summer Chum Salmon is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest. However, commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run. Although it's still early in the season, the Summer Chum Salmon run is coming in at a record high through June 17.

The preseason Chinook Salmon outlook is projecting a below average run size of 140,000 to 195,000 with managers optimistic the total run abundance could be near the upper end based upon recent performances of the 2015 and 2016 runs which came in unexpectedly near the upper end their projections and thus, possibly indicating an improvement in productivity. Although still early in the season, the Chinook Salmon run appears to be entering near the upper end of the pre-season projection. Subsistence conservation measures have been and will be required, particularly on the first pulse, to spread out the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. At this time, subsistence salmon fishing opportunities are being relaxed to allow for some Chinook Salmon harvests. No directed Chinook Salmon commercial fishery is anticipated.

Assessment Information

Ice out on the lower Yukon River occurred on May 14, approximately seven days earlier than the historical average. Additionally, Bering Sea ice retreated off the coast early, leaving the Yukon River mouth ice free with no spring flooding. With ice out earlier than average and climate modeling provided by NOAA, ADF&G, and AOOS, managers are anticipating earlier entry timing for Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon. Subsistence fishermen in the lower Yukon have been reporting good catches in recent days, and manager observations of fish racks along the lower river are indicating that some fishermen are beginning to fill their racks with nice looking Chum Salmon. The first subsistence caught Chinook Salmon was reported on May 26 in Alakanuk, and four more reported caught on May 28. A fisherman reported on the YRDFA teleconference on June 13 catching a Chinook Salmon near Galena. This matches with the run timing of the early Chinook detected in the Lower Yukon Test Fishing (LYTF) project. The combined Big Eddy/Middle Mouth Chinook Salmon set gillnet test fishery CPUE of 10.95 through June 17 is above the average of 8.15, but behind the "early years" average of 14.90. The Big Eddy Chinook Salmon drift gillnet test fishery CPUE of 243.61 through June 17 is ahead of the average of 153.82. The Big Eddy/Middle Mouth combined Chum Salmon drift gillnet test fishery has a cumulative CPUE of 2,074.02

through June 17, well ahead of the average of 1,164.87. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fisheries in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. The Pilot Station sonar Chinook Salmon passage estimate through June 17 is 68,690 fish, ahead of the average of 45,962, but behind the early year average of 95,836. Pilot Station detected what appears to be the first pulse of Chinook Salmon passing on June 9 when 6,677 Chinook were estimated to have passed. The second pulse started passing the Pilot Station sonar on June 14 when 17,000 Chinook Salmon were estimated to have passed. Estimated passage continues to be elevated with 7,400 and 9,200 passing on June 15 and 16, respectively. The Pilot Station sonar Summer Chum Salmon passage estimate through June 17 is a record high of 519,265, well ahead of the median on this date of 171,578. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fisheries in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. At this time, managers are beginning to switch from managing based on the pre-season projection to in-season assessment. The average first quarter point at the Pilot Station sonar for Chinook Salmon is June 14 for early run years and June 19 for normal run years. The first quarter point at the Pilot Station sonar for the 2017 Chinook Salmon run is anticipated to be between June 14 and June 19. The average first quarter point for Summer Chum Salmon at the Pilot Station sonar is June 21. The FWS escapement monitoring project at the Andrafsky River weir began operations on June 14 and passed their first Summer Chum Salmon on June 15 and their first Chinook Salmon on June 17. The Gisasa River weir project initiated project setup this week and is expected to be operational the week of June 18.

Management Actions

Management decisions have been consistent with the preseason projections and strategies discussed during the pre-season management meetings. The pre-season management strategy was for subsistence fishing to be open 24/7 restricted to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets from ice out till the arrival of early Chinook Salmon, when subsistence fishing would be placed on their regulatory windows schedule restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. Subsistence salmon fishing would then be placed on selective gear types to protect the first pulse of Chinook Salmon and allow for opportunity to harvest Summer Chum Salmon. This plan was followed in the north Coastal District, Districts 1, 2, and 3, and Subdistrict 4-A. The south Coastal District was restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. Due to the timing of the arrival of the first pulse of Chinook Salmon in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C, subsistence salmon fishing went from being open 24/7 with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet, straight to being open 24/7 and restricted to selective gear with only a 24 hour closure between the changes, skipping the 6-inch or less mesh gillnet opportunity. Inseason assessment of the Chinook Salmon run appears to be showing better than anticipated entry based on the Pilot Station estimates; therefore, subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was restricted straight to selective gear types as the first pulse of Chinook Salmon arrived in the subdistricts, skipping the 6-inch or less mesh gillnet gear periods. Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B were placed on their regulatory schedule of two, 42 hours periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels, and the Old Minto area was placed on its regulatory schedule of 5 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, gillnets with mesh size 4-inches or less of 60 feet or shorter length are allowed to target non-salmon species. Any salmon incidentally caught

with small mesh gill net gear may be retained. However, fishermen are encouraged to avoid Chinook Salmon. The first pulse of the Chinook Salmon run is expected to be protected all the way upriver and into the spawning areas. Since Chinook appear to be demonstrating a run strength above escapement needs, subsistence fishing has been relaxed in the Coastal Districts and Districts 1, 2, and 3 on June 18 to allow the harvest of some Chinook salmon as per the management strategies outlined pre-season. The south Coastal District has returned to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear 24/7. Districts 1-3 have gone to a regular schedule restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear with one, 12-hour period restricted to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear to target Chinook Salmon. District 4 will be given similar opportunities as the early and first pulse of Chinook Salmon move out of the area. Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 5-D is still open 24/7 with gillnets with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels. Restrictions in Subdistrict 5-D to protect the first pulse and Canadian origin Chinook Salmon are anticipated. No directed sport harvest of Chinook Salmon or commercial sales are anticipated at this time.

The first 12-hour commercial Summer Chum Salmon fishing period in District 1 opened 3 p.m. Saturday, June 10. The District 1 commercial salmon fishery has been on a regular schedule of 12 hours per day, six days per week restricted to dip nets and beach seine gear, with all Chinook Salmon caught in this openings being required to be released alive. At this time, effort has been low, which is expected for this early in the season. Through June 18, the preliminary harvest estimates are 51,000 Summer Chum Salmon with 2,324 Chinook Salmon caught and released from seven openings.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the Yukon River Panel meeting and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Fairbanks that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. The second Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association teleconference was held on June 13. Participation was light, but fishermen in the lower Yukon reported getting some good chums, and fishermen in the middle Yukon reported catching a few early fish.

KUSKOKWIM REGION

Kuskokwim River – Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Contact kenneth_stahlnecker@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or lewis_coggins@fws.gov

Summary:

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager announces that, due to unusually low numbers of Chinook Salmon in the Bethel Test Fishery, no additional subsistence fishing opportunities have been declared at this time. The Refuge Manager, in consultation with the KRITFC and ADF&G will continue to assess in- season information on a regular basis and will provide a subsistence fishing opportunity as soon as conditions warrant.

Harvest estimates from this year's June 12, 12-hour subsistence fishing opportunity indicate that 2,360 Chinook Salmon were harvested out of approximately 5,500 total salmon. This is in contrast to the subsistence harvest estimate from this same date last year, when 4,500 Chinook Salmon were harvested out of approximately 5,300 total salmon.

We appreciate everyone's sacrifice during this time of uncertainty regarding the strength of our Chinook Salmon run. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is dedicated to conserving subsistence species and providing opportunities for the rural subsistence users on the Yukon Delta. This appears to be a time when we need to take a very conservative approach to fisheries management so we can continue to sustain healthy Chinook Salmon runs and provide subsistence opportunities into the future.

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by visiting the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Facebook page or www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon_delta/. Questions? call the Refuge at (907) 543-3151 or at (800) 621-5804.

Test Fisheries:

As of June 16, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 28. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 196 and 144, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 92. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 42 and 35, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for sockeye salmon is at 23. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 5 and 27, 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

Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

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

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

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

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

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

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

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

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

Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.
(907) 443-2522 ken_adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound District

Sport Fishing:

All freshwaters from Bald Head to Point Romanof were closed to sport fishing for king salmon effective Monday, May 1, 2017 by Emergency Order issued by the ADF&G Division of Sport Fish. The closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Inglutalik and Golsovia River drainages. The EO will remain in effect through August 15, 2017 or until inseason stock assessment indicates that the escapement goal for king salmon will be met on the Unalakleet River.

Subsistence Fishing:

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

The Nome Subdistrict was placed on a subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule effective June 15. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will continue to be open seven 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 PM Wednesday until 6 PM Monday. This schedule is set by regulation. Beach seining for salmon will be open in all subsistence areas of the Nome subdistrict effective June 15 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 anytime gillnet fishing is open.

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

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

As discussed in village meetings earlier this season with ADF&G, the Shaktoolik Subdistrict had one 36-hour subsistence fishing period in the marine waters. The period ran from noon Tuesday, June 13 to midnight Wednesday evening, June 14. This fishing period applied only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Black Point and set gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

As discussed in village meetings earlier this season with ADF&G, the Unalakleet Subdistrict had one 36-hour subsistence fishing period in the marine waters. The period ran from noon Tuesday, June 13 to midnight Wednesday evening, June 14. This fishing

period applied only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Black Point and set gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir – a cooperative project of Fish and Game, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), Native Village of Unalakleet and BLM, with major funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Office of Subsistence Management. The weir was fish tight the evening of June 8. The first salmon counted through the weir were five chum salmon on June 10. On June 11, there were five chum and one king salmon counted. This was the earliest the project has been operational in the eight year history of the project.

For Other Eastern Norton Sound and Coastal Waters

All marine waters from the western tip of Cape Denbigh east to Point Dexter, and all marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point, east of St. Michael were closed to subsistence salmon fishing effective June 8 at midnight. However, subsistence salmon fishing is open seven days a week in all waters from Wood Point west to Point Romanof.

Kotzebue District

The ice is largely gone from around Kotzebue, although southern Kotzebue Sound remains fairly ice choked, and there are traces of deteriorating marginal ice stretching northward along the coast toward Point Hope and eastward along the northern shore of the Seward Peninsula towards Wales. Folk have been hunting seals and fishing for herring and whitefish.

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