

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 13 - 19, 2016. Report #4
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 Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Sitka and Hoonah Area

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2015, approximately 3,304 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,344 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

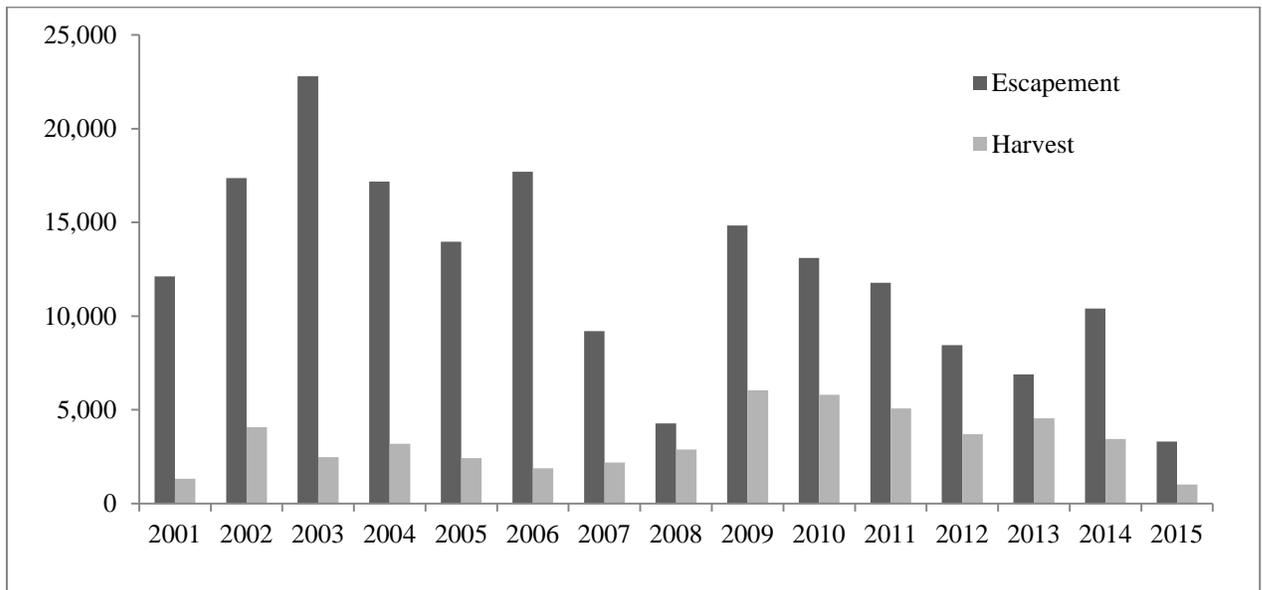


Figure 1. Escapement and harvest of sockeye at Klag Bay, 2001-2015 (Sitka Tribe of Alaska).

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational June 13th. Twelve Sockeye Salmon were counted passing the weir on June 19th bringing the season total to 40. In 2015, an estimated total of 13,379 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. In accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon possession limit remained 10 and the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon annual limit remained 50 throughout the season. These limits were based on an in-season model prediction of about 11,500 Sockeye Salmon returning. The preliminary subsistence Sockeye Salmon harvest was 402.

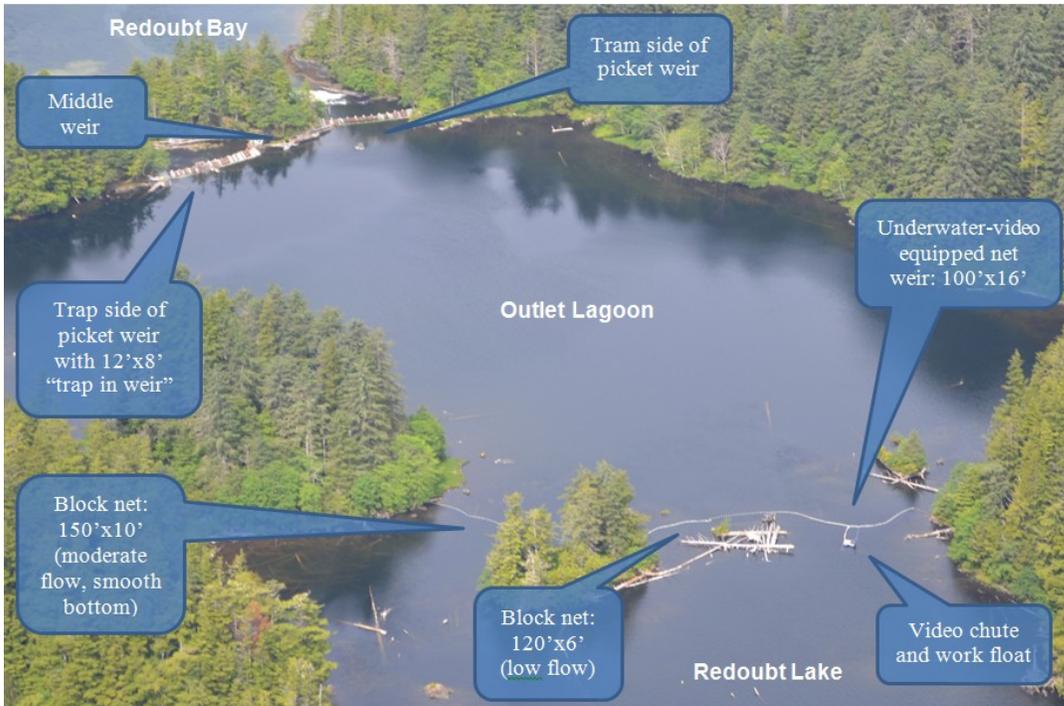


Figure 1. Aerial view (2013) of the outlet lagoon of Redoubt Lake showing the typical locations of the picket weir, net weir and block nets.

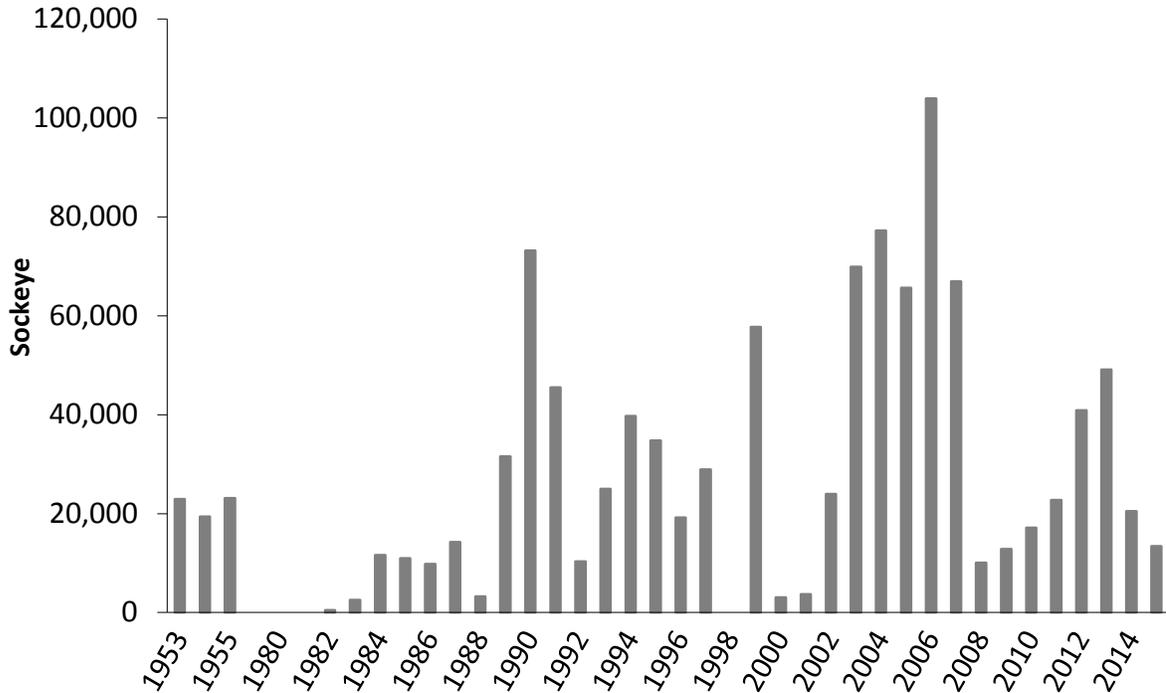


Figure 3. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2015. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which will be operational the first week of July. The final escapement estimate in 2015 was 4,716 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,031. Subsistence harvest accounted for 99% of terminal area harvest.

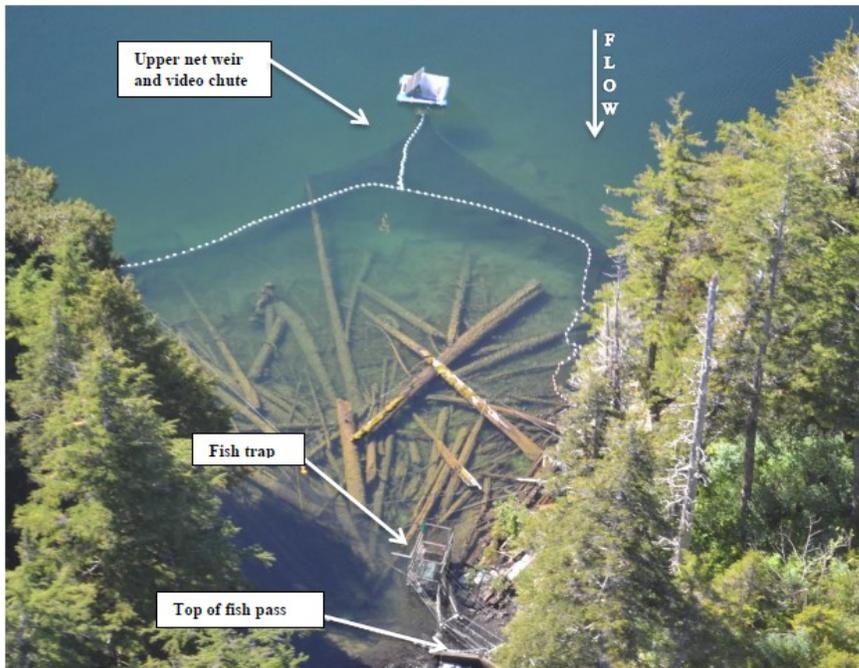


Figure 4. Aerial photo (2013) of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

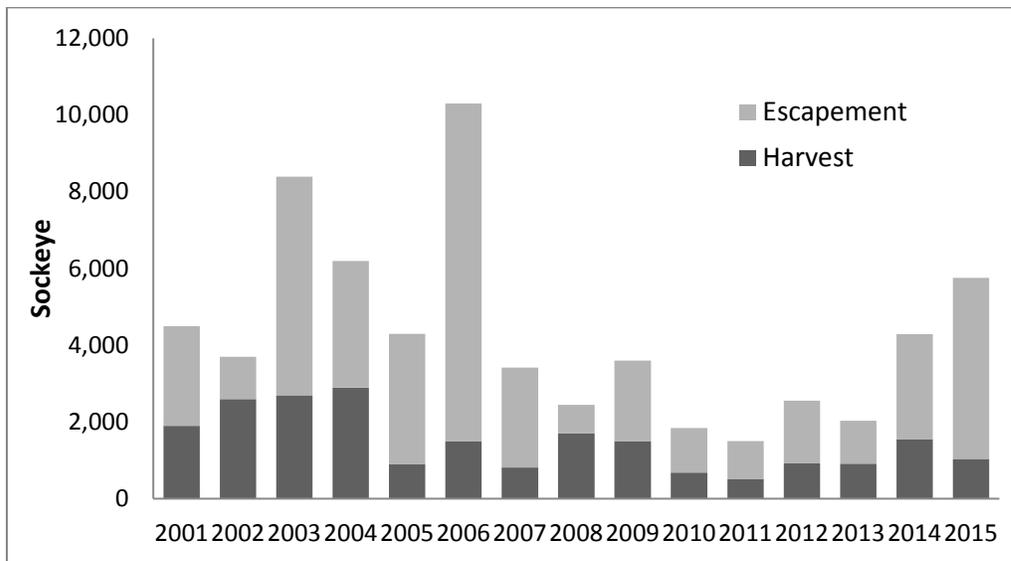


Figure 5. Escapement and harvest (terminal run) of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2015.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area

The 2016 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has started. To date, 133 permits have been issued.

The 2016 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko spring subsistence steelhead fishery ended on May 31st. A total of 63 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. Permits from this fishery were back June 15. One-third of the permits have been returned and reminder letter have been sent to the delinquent permittees. The total reported harvest to date is 11 Steelhead Trout and 5 Dolly Varden.

With a very high abundance of Chinook Salmon in local marine waters, as well as liberal sport limit, 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 Salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at both Hetta Lake and Eek Lake are ongoing. The Hetta weir has been completed, however no Sockeye Salmon have been counted to date. Both the bipod weir and video net weir have been installed at Eek Lake with no fish being counted. The Klawock Lake project will begin July 1.

Commercial seine and drift gillnet fishing in Districts 1-4 will be starting soon. ADF&G has announced the first drift gillnet opening for June 19. Spring season commercial troll opportunity for Chinook Salmon continues to target Alaska hatchery origin salmon prior to the July 1 summer season. Commercial harvest to date is 6,386 Chinook Salmon from the terminal areas in Districts 1-4.

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
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Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
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Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen
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jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), Forest Service, **Tongass National Forest**

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

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

As of June 15, 2016 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 411,641 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 18% more than the projected escapement of 347,994 for this date, or 63,647 more salmon. A daily estimate of 22,113 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on June 15.

MILES LAKE SONAR ESTIMATES (TOTAL SALMON)

Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate
1978	107,011	1988	488,398	1998	866,957	2008	614,999
1979	237,173	1989	607,797	1999	848,921	2009	709,330
1980	276,538	1990	581,895	2000	587,592	2010	924,010
1981	535,263	1991	579,435	2001	833,569	2011	914,285
1982	467,306	1992	601,952	2002	819,000	2012	1,271,354
1983	545,724	1993	797,902	2003	695,233	2013	1,267,060
1984	536,806	1994	715,181	2004	669,646	2014	1,177,005
1985	436,313	1995	599,265	2005	854,268	2015	1,341,545
1986	509,275	1996	906,867	2006	959,731		
1987	483,478	1997	1,148,079	2007	926,438		

The Chitina Subdistrict is open and is scheduled to remain open through June 19. It is then scheduled to reopen immediately on June 20 and remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Sixty-two (62) 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 May 15th and is expected to remain open until September 30th. Two hundred ten (210) 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. No Federal permits have been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek fish weir was installed last week on June 1. The water level in the creek is extremely low for this time of year; no salmon have yet been observed at the site.

As of June 15, 2,124 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 772 Chinook Salmon, of which, 116 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on May 27; thirty-six (36) Chinook Salmon have been counted as of June 15.

One Special Action has been issued by the park this season:

- delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict federal subsistence salmon fishery and setting the tentative pre-season schedule for this fishery.

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.
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17 June 2016

A total of 33 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Prince William Sound of Chugach National Forest to date. One-hundred and two permits were issued in 2015. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. In 2015, 878 coho and 172 sockeye were reported harvested on Copper River Delta fresh waters in this fishery.

The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 16 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. The Chinook salmon inside closure area will be CLOSED during this fishing period. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, June 13 was 270 Chinook and 49,400 sockeye salmon with 439 deliveries reported. For the week ending June 11, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 11,300 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 7,270–17,184.

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

The 2016 subsistence dip net fisheries on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers began on June 15 and June 16, respectively. The rod and reel subsistence and sport fisheries for the Upper Kenai River and Russian River also opened on June 11. Harvest of 35 Sockeye Salmon has been reported from the Russian River Falls dip net fishery through June 17. Totals of 89 Kenai River permits, 17 Kasilof River permits, and 7 Designated Fisher permits have been issued through June 17.

The operational plan for the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery has been finalized. The Ninilchik Traditional Council will operate a net on behalf of Ninilchik residents in the upper Kasilof River to harvest Sockeye Salmon starting on July 1. Last year, the net harvested 223 Sockeye Salmon during the last half of July. The Ninilchik Traditional Council has also submitted an operational plan for consideration for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery. The Kenai Plan is still being reviewed. No operational plan has been submitted for the Kasilof River community fishwheel.

The early-run of Kenai River Chinook Salmon is coming in above projections and the lower bound of the early-run escapement goal has been achieved. A total of 6,866 Chinook Salmon have been counted at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's sonar assessment site at river mile 14 through June 16. The Department opened the early-run Chinook Salmon sport fishery to harvest downstream of Slikok Creek regulatory markers starting on June 18, while the remainder of the river below Skilak Lake is open to fishing under catch and release regulations.

Through June 18, a total of 5,625 early-run Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Russian River weir, which commenced operations on June 4 this year. This total is well below last year's count at this time, which was 14,792 through June 18. A total of 17,058 Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar on the Kasilof River through June 18.

Fish counts at some Department-operated assessment projects are available on-line at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR

(907) 487-2600/0230 AnneMarie.LaRosa@fws.gov or

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

Sockeye Salmon returns continue to be strong along the west and south side of Kodiak Island. As of Thursday, June 16, 2016, the Ayakulik (60,775 Sockeye Salmon; escapement goal range 60,000 to 120,000 Sockeye Salmon) and Litnik (Afognak Lake, 23,152 Sockeye Salmon; escapement goal range 20,000 to 50,000 fish) have met the lower escapement goal. Upper Station (Olga Lakes) and Buskin River are projected to meet their respective escapement goal by the end of next week.

Chinook Salmon returns are low but higher numbers than in the past 3-4 years. Karluk River weir has counted 1,057 Chinook Salmon and Ayakulik River weir has counted 1,740 Chinook Salmon. 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 on the Buskin River, 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 7 – 10 boats fishing at a time. Litnik Sockeye Salmon numbers have slowed this week but additional fishing activity is expected to be occurring over the weekend. At Port Lions, gillnetters are still making steady effort to fish in the lagoon, although reports are that this run is slowing down.

The community of Port Lions completed their local subsistence harvest camp last weekend, with local youth learned to how to harvest and process salmon. Residents of Larsen Bay and the village of Karluk are gillnetting in Karluk Lagoon. 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 State of Alaska, and provide the basis for any inseason assessment. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in waters under Federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction, and these subsistence fisheries commence later in June and July. Preseason forecasts for Sockeye Salmon run returns to Bristol Bay, Chignik, and the Alaska Peninsula predict that there will be harvestable surpluses in all districts, and that escapement goals will be achieved in all systems.

Bristol Bay:

There are a number of regulation changes that were adopted or modified at the December 2015 and March 2016 BOF meetings that can be found here:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dfnewsrelease/650190311.pdf>

For Bristol Bay, the forecast is for 46.6 million Sockeye Salmon, which is lower than the preseason forecast of 54 million for 2015. Most of the sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems were recently revised to increase the upper ranges:

System	SEG
Ugashik	500,000 – 1,400,000
Egegik	800,000 – 2,000,000
Naknek	800,000 – 2,000,000
Wood River	800,000 – 1,800,000
Nushagak	370,000 – 900,000
Igushik	150,000 – 400,000

Harvestable surpluses are projected for all systems. ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division has strategies in place for all mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. The salmon commercial fishing season opened by regulation on June 1 and weekly fishing schedules are in place until June 17. Conservation measures are in place to conserve Chinook Salmon, including maximum mesh size restriction to 5 ½ inches through July 22 in Naknek/Kvichak, and Ugashik districts. In consultation with the USFWS, to protect walrus haul out areas, the north line of the Ugashik District was moved one mile south to provide a larger buffer zone, effective June 13, 2016. Commercial fishing openings in the Igushik Section of the Nushagak District began on June 13 with 8 hour periods schedule daily through June 18.

Subsistence fishing is closed while commercial periods are being implemented. The Chinook Salmon return to Togiak is anticipated to be poor and reduced fishing time from scheduled periods is anticipated. Subsistence fishing in the commercial fishing district is open as of June 1 until further notice.

Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon for both the State and Federal subsistence fisheries.

Chignik:

The 2016 total Sockeye Salmon *Oncorhynchus nerka* forecasted run for the Chignik River watershed is approximately 2,910,000 fish. Approximately 2,190,000 Sockeye Salmon are expected to be harvested in Chignik Management Area. As of June 16, 2016 five commercial periods have been announced in the Chignik Bay, Central, and Eastern districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District of the Chignik Management Area. These commercial periods occurred on June 4, June 7, June 10, June 12, and June 15. Two 24 extensions occurred for the June 12, 2016 period. The commercial catch is estimated at 31,285 Sockeye Salmon, 928 Chinook Salmon, 3,162 Pink Salmon, and 9,152 Chum Salmon through June 16. Commercial fishing periods are up to 48 hours in length, separated by at least 48 hours, with subsistence closures 12 hours before and 12 hours after the commercial fishing period. The Western District of the Chignik Management Area will open to commercial fishing for 48 hours beginning June 16. Additional commercial fishing opportunities may occur during June and early July.

Fishing periods in the outer portions of these districts will depend on the Chignik River Sockeye Salmon interim escapement objectives being met as well as the strength of the local Pink and Chum Salmon runs. Beginning July 6 through August, inner bay fisheries may occur in the Western and Perryville districts to target Pink and Chum salmon. From the end of the transition period (approximately late-June through mid-July) until the end of the fishing season, ADF&G shall manage the CMA based on its evaluation of the local Pink *O. gorbuscha*, Chum *O. keta*, and Coho *O. kisutch* salmon runs, as well as the Chignik watershed late-run Sockeye Salmon escapement. Current counts through the Chignik weir are 130,211 sockeye salmon as of June 16.

Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Several Sockeye Salmon escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, McLees, and Orzinski rivers. Preseason forecasts are made for only the Nelson (692 thousand) and late-run Bear (424 thousand) river Sockeye Stocks. Commercial salmon fishing in Port Moller Bight and Bear River remains closed. The largest fisheries are managed under management plans. Management objectives vary by district and time; and include: local Sockeye Salmon escapements; more distant Sockeye Salmon returns to Bristol Bay or Chignik; and local Pink, Chum, or Coho salmon returns.

A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon with a few exceptions. Please check your regulations book or contact your local area manager.

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.

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 and Management Strategies

The 2016 Chinook Salmon outlook is for a run size range of 130,000 to 175,000. This range is similar in size to the run observed in 2015 and will require subsistence harvest restrictions in order to meet minimum escapement objectives. Early in-season run projections are indicating a run size within this range. As in recent years, initial management has been based on the expectation that the 2016 Chinook Salmon run size would likely be near the lower end of this range. However, management strategies may change based on inseason run assessment information. Early subsistence fishing opportunities have targeted non-Chinook Salmon species, such as whitefish and Summer Chum Salmon. The majority of the Chinook Salmon run is expected to be protected to

some extent with closures and restrictive fishing gear all the way upriver and into the spawning areas.

The Summer Chum Salmon run is projected to be average to above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of 450,000 to 950,000 Summer Chum Salmon is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest, however the commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run. Public meetings were held throughout the winter and spring to inform fishers of the outlook. So far, management actions have been based on the pre-season outlook and is now beginning to switch to in-season assessment as managers are gaining confidence in the assessment information.

Assessment Information

Assessment information showed that the early trickle of Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon have entered the river with the runs appearing to be building in strength. In anticipation of an early salmon run, LYTF operations began early starting with the drift gillnet program. The cumulative CPUE for both sites combined through June 18 is 18.57, which is slightly above the historical average of 15.90. Operations at LYTF have been altered from previous years, so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. The 8.25-inch drift gillnet test fishery for Chinook Salmon has been fully operational at the Big Eddy site since May 23. The cumulative CPUE through June 18 is 332.17, which is well above the historical average of 176.44. Chinook Salmon test fishery catches increased June 18 and 19 indicating that the third pulse of Chinook Salmon may be entering the river. The 5.5-inch drift gill net test fisheries for summer chum salmon at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites have been fully operational since May 19 and June 4, respectively. The combined cumulative CPUE for both sites through June 18 is 1,121.75 which is well above the historical median of 1,460.08 for this date. The sonar project near Pilot Station began partial operations on May 30 and has been fully operational since June 1. Chinook Salmon passage through June 18 is estimated to be 72,969 fish which is above the historical cumulative average of 46,407 Chinook Salmon for this date. Chinook Salmon passage at the Pilot Station sonar decreased on June 17, indicating that the second pulse of fish has passed the sonar. Summer Chum Salmon passage through June 18 is estimated to be 531,897 fish which is well above the historical cumulative median of 170,186 Summer Chum Salmon for this date and the fourth highest passage since 1995. Information from the LYTF and Pilot Station sonar are in alignment and are performing as expected. At this time, it appears the Chinook Salmon run size projections are falling within the pre-season outlook range of 130,000 – 175,000 fish. It is still early in the Summer Chum Salmon run to make a projection. Subsistence harvest and fishing reports have been important information for managers when considering early season management actions.

Management Actions

Until assessment data became available, management decisions were consistent with the preseason projections. Subsistence salmon fishing in the southern portion of the Coastal District has been open 24 hours per day seven days per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The northern portion of the Coastal District has been closed to

subsistence fishing until further notice. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 1, 2, and 3 was opened 24 hours per day, seven days per week restricted to the use of dipnets and beach seines only to target Summer Chum Salmon. Subsistence was closed in Districts 1 and 2 before, during, and after commercial summer chum salmon fishing periods. Subsistence fishing in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was closed to the use of gillnets reopened for 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to dipnets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels to target Summer Chum Salmon. All Chinook Salmon caught in dipnets, beach seines, and live-release fish wheels must be immediately released alive back into the water. The lower portion of Subdistrict 5-D, starting with the lower portion, will be restricted to 6-inch or less mesh gillnet gear and fishwheels on June 19. It was agreed pre-season to give Subdistrict 5-D an opportunity to fish on the early trickle of Chinook Salmon as Summer Chum Salmon is not abundant in this portion of the river. The Innoko and Koyukuk River drainages will be restricted to 6-inch or less mesh gillnet gear on June 20.

As managers have become more confident that this year's Chinook Salmon run should meet escapement goals and provide for some subsistence harvest opportunity, subsistence fishing with dipnets and beach seines is being closed and Districts 1-3 and Subdistrict 4-A and plans are being made to reopen on a reduced regulatory windows schedule restricted to 6-inch or less mesh gillnet gear, as well as fish wheels for Subdistrict 4-A. Incidentally caught Chinook Salmon may be retained for subsistence purposes in these gear types. Similar subsistence actions are anticipated for upriver districts as the run progresses. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, gillnets that have mesh size 4-inches or smaller not exceeding 60 feet in length may be used to target non-Salmon species.

Commercial fishing has been opened in Districts 1 and 2 with dipnets and beach seines targeting Summer Chum Salmon. Through June 18, there have been eight commercial openings targeting Summer Chum Salmon utilizing dipnets and beach seines in District 1, and four in District 2. Preliminary harvests are 90,000 Summer Chum Salmon with 4,500 Chinook Salmon caught and released. Additional periods have been scheduled.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 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 Anchorage that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. Assessment and management actions were discussed on the second YR DFA teleconference on June 14.

**Kuskokwim River – Ray Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife
Refuge Contact Vernon_Born@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov**

Summary:***Opening of Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River to the Harvest of Chinook and Chum Salmon by Federally Qualified Subsistence Users.***

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the State of Alaska, the Federal In-season Manager has opened Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River main-stem within the refuge boundary, to the harvest of Chinook and chum salmon, by Federally qualified subsistence users for 24 hours effective June 16, 2016 from 12:01 p.m. (noon) until 11:59 a.m. (noon) on June 17, 2016.

Approved gear types will include drift and set gillnets with the following restrictions:

- 6-inch or less mesh;
- May not exceed 45 meshes in depth;
- May not exceed 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River to the border of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge at Aniak;
- May not exceed 50 fathoms (300 feet) below the Johnson River to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

This opportunity is based on the need to conserve a lower than average Chinook salmon run. While the Chinook run is expected to be smaller than average, managers feel that it is strong enough to allow a limited opportunity for the first directed harvest for Federally qualified subsistence users. Please report your harvest to your KRITFC commissioner to ensure that salmon harvest needs are met now and in the future.

On June 1, the Federal Subsistence Board closed Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage to the harvest of Chinook and Chum salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users identified in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 804 Subsistence User Prioritization analysis. Federally qualified subsistence users include residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Cheforanak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganek.

This limited opportunity has been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Action (3-KS-04-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

Fishing effort and harvest data associated with this harvest opportunity are currently being tabulated by USFWS and the KRITFC to estimate Chinook harvest during the June 16-17 opportunity.

Closing of Kuskokwim River Tributaries to Gill Nets in Federal public waters

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the State of Alaska, the Federal In-season Manager has closed the salmon spawning tributaries of Federal public waters, within the Refuge boundary to gill net fishing. The salmon spawning tributaries include the Eek, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Aniak rivers and their salmon tributaries. The closure is in effect from June 12, 2016

at 12:01 p.m. (noon) until August 11, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. (noon) unless superseded by another federal special action.

This closure is based on the need to conserve Chinook salmon, which continue to return in low numbers.

On June 1, the Federal Subsistence Board closed Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage to the harvest of Chinook and Chum salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users identified in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 804 Subsistence User Prioritization analysis. Federally qualified subsistence users will include residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Cheforak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganek.

Fisheries management below the Refuge boundary at the Kuskokwim River mouth and above the Refuge boundary on the Kuskokwim River at Aniak is under the authority of the State in-season manager. For more information regarding subsistence fishing in these areas, please contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at 907-543-2433.

This restriction has been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Action (3-KS-03-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by visiting the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Yukon-Delta-National-Wildlife-Refuge-1039425076133926/>).

Test Fisheries:

As of June 19, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 276. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2015 and 2014 were 259 and 421, respectively. The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE at the Aniak Test Fishery on June 19 was 1305 as compared to 1020 on this date in 2015.

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

NEW = 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.

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Norton Sound District

The counting projects in the district are beginning to come online. The Shaktoolik River counting tower became operational late last week and the Unalakleet River weir and North River counting tower were operational by Monday of this week. If Chinook salmon counts are better than expected, there is the possibility for additional subsistence fishing time the following week.

Sport Fishing: The harvest restrictions for Chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage and the Shaktoolik River drainage remain in place.

Subsistence Fishing: The ADF&G will be evaluating early-season run timing and abundance of Chinook salmon using ground-based escapement indices and fisherman reports from Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts. Inseason assessments of Chinook salmon run abundance may indicate the need for additional conservation measures, or that run abundance warrants a relaxation of subsistence fishing restrictions. The Department will also consider setting fishing periods allowing the use of beach seines to target other salmon species in freshwater areas.

Dip nets and cast nets are now designated legal subsistence gear for salmon throughout Norton Sound. However subsistence fishers in freshwater areas of Subdistricts 5 and 6 are prohibited from retaining any Chinook salmon incidentally captured in dipnets or cast nets. Any Chinook salmon incidentally captured in dipnets or cast nets must be immediately released alive and unharmed back into the water.

Other Eastern Norton Sound Coastal Waters

All water from Wood Point west to Point Romanof remain open to subsistence salmon fishing seven days a week. However, 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 Saint Michael remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing through June 30. On July 1, subsistence salmon fishing in these marine waters will revert back to 24 hours a day, seven days a week with no restrictions.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

Effective noon, Sunday, June 12, the ADF&G closed the lower Unalakleet River downstream from the confluence of the North River to fishing with trout gillnets. The Unalakleet River had previously been closed to gillnets with a mesh size of larger than four inches. However, concern was expressed to the Department that trout nets, those with a four inch or less mesh size, have been catching Chinook salmon. To further protect Chinook salmon the Department closed the ocean from 500 yards on each side of the Unalakleet River upstream to the North River confluence to gillnet fishing with gillnets that have a mesh size of four inches or less. However, on June 15, effective 8:00 a.m. the lower Unalakleet River was reopened for 24 hours to set gillnets with a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less. Maximum net length was restricted to 25 fathoms, and no more than one-half of any channel could be blocked. Nets were required to be out of the lower river by 8:00 a.m. Thursday, June 16. The ADF&G plans to reopen the lower Unalakleet River in June to set gillnets as long as Chinook salmon escapement is expected to be met.

There were two 36-hour fishing periods in the subdistrict this week. The first was from 6 PM Tuesday, June 14 until midnight Wednesday evening June 15. The second period was from 6 PM Friday, June 17 until midnight Saturday, June 18. Gillnet mesh size was restricted to 6 inches or less.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

One 36-hour gillnet fishing period was opened in the marine waters of the subdistrict from 6 PM Tuesday, June 14 until midnight Wednesday evening June 15. There was no gillnet mesh size restriction for the fishing period. The Shaktoolik River remains closed to subsistence fishing for salmon.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

The subdistrict remains on a subsistence gillnet fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week. Periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Mondays to 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. During the Monday to Wednesday period, subsistence users will be restricted to set gillnets with a stretched measure size of 6 inches or less. For weekend 48-hour openings from Fridays to Sundays, there will be no

restrictions on mesh size. This schedule will remain in place until midnight Sunday evening, July 3. The Koyuk River drainage is not affected by this action and will remain open to subsistence fishing with no restrictions in place.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

The Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule went into effect June 15, 2016.

A Nome Subdistrict subsistence permit is required to harvest salmon when subsistence fishing in all marine waters and freshwaters flowing into Norton Sound from Cape Rodney to Rocky Point. Freshwater subsistence areas are listed on the back of the permit. Household catch limits for the freshwater subsistence areas are also found on the permit and vary by river.

The weekly gillnet fishing schedule for all marine waters of the Nome Subdistrict west of Cape Nome is from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will remain open seven days a week for subsistence gillnet fishing. Gillnets up to 300 feet in length are allowed in marine waters. No drift setting is allowed.

The weekly gillnet fishing schedule for all freshwaters of the Nome Subdistrict is from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday. The freshwater areas open to gillnet fishing are listed on the permit. Gillnets up to 50 feet in length are allowed. No more than one half of any channel may be blocked by gillnets and no drift setting is allowed. Beach staking is allowed during the subsistence gillnet fishing periods from June 15 through August 15. Dip nets and cast nets can be used during gillnet fishing periods only in the subsistence areas.

Subsistence hook and line fishing is open at all times. Sport fish bag limits apply when subsistence fishing with hook and line outside of Nome subdistrict subsistence areas which are listed on the back of the Nome subdistrict subsistence fishing permit. The Penny and Cripple Rivers are closed to both sport and subsistence chum salmon fishing

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