

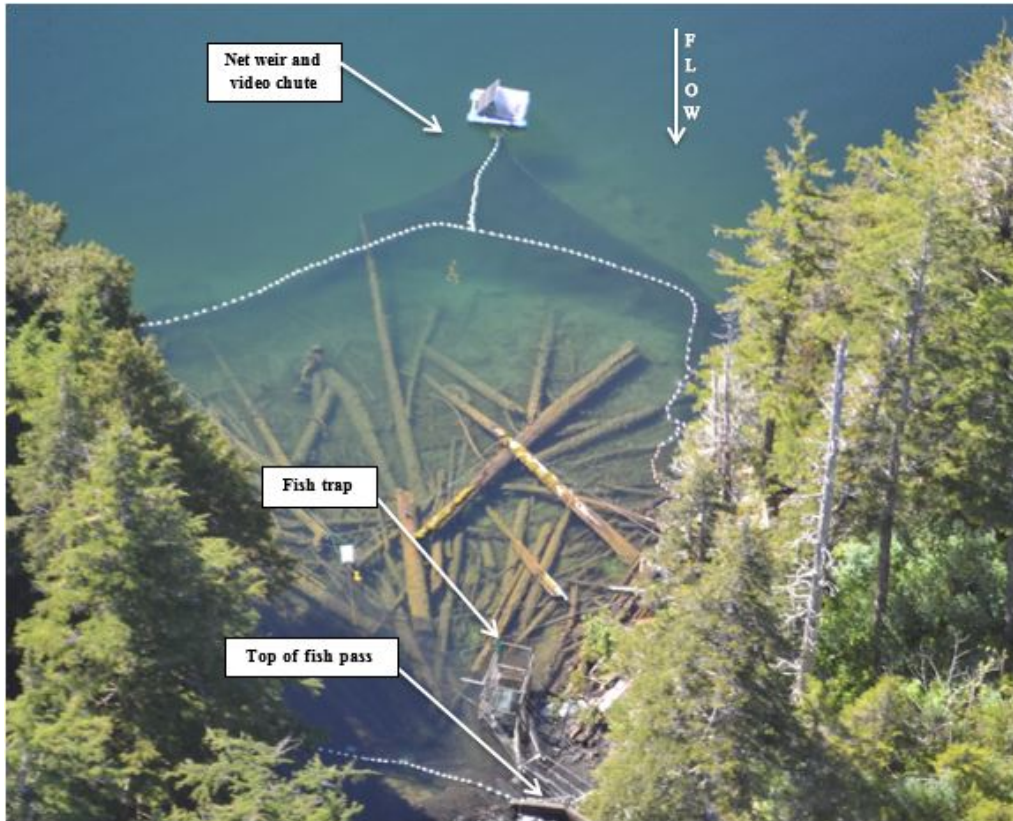
**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 24-30, 2019.** Report #5  
Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [George\\_Pappas@fws.gov](mailto:George_Pappas@fws.gov) Office of  
Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Please keep in mind, many of the authors do not have alternates or are deployed in the field on occasion and do not have access to communications to submit a weekly report. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

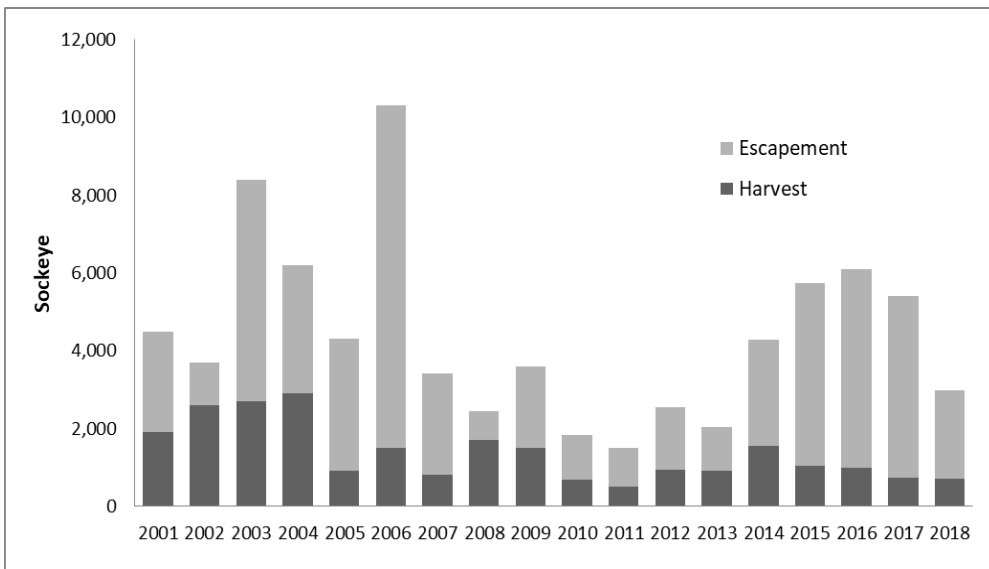
### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA**

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

**Falls Lake** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which was operating as of June 26. No Sockeye Salmon have been counted at the trap but that is not unusual because they typically begin entering the lake around July 10. There are Sockeye Salmon being caught in the State subsistence fishery at the outlet of Falls Creek. The final escapement estimate in 2018 was 2,261 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 720. Subsistence harvest accounted for 90% of terminal area harvest.



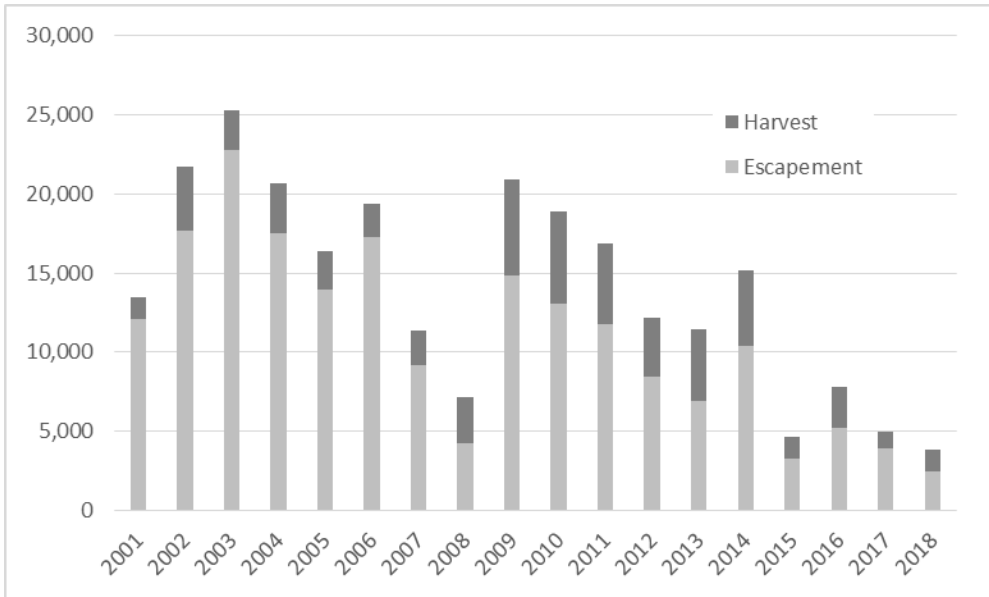
**Figure 1.** Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.



**Figure 2.** Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2018.

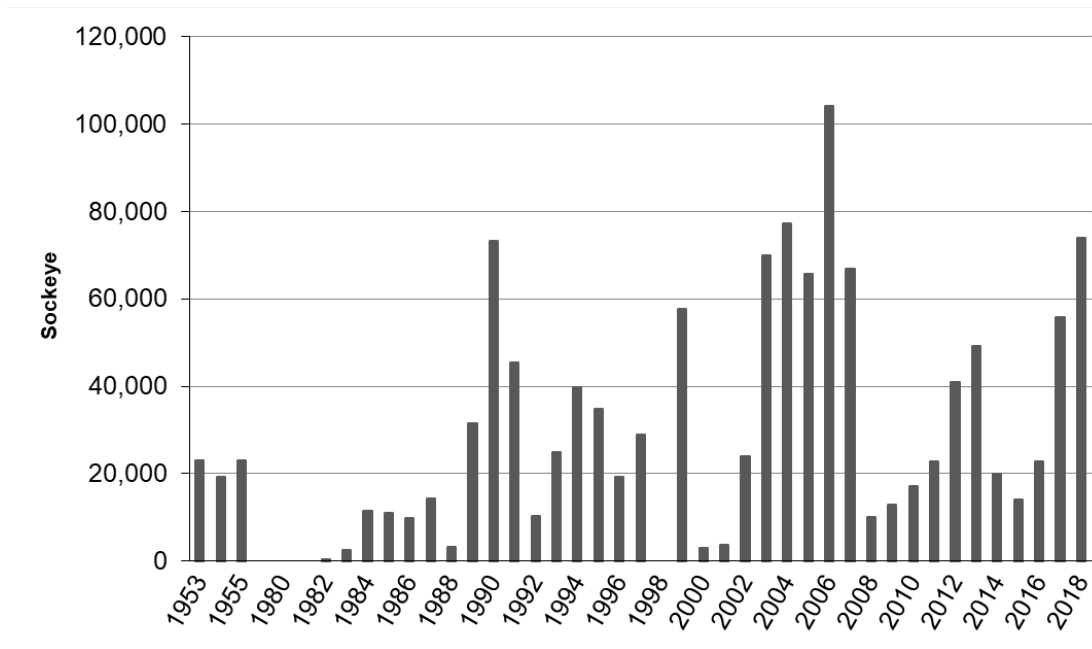
**Klag Bay** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was operational the last week in June. No Sockeye Salmon have been counted yet. In 2018, approximately 2,444 sockeye migrated past the weir while an

estimated 1,387 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.



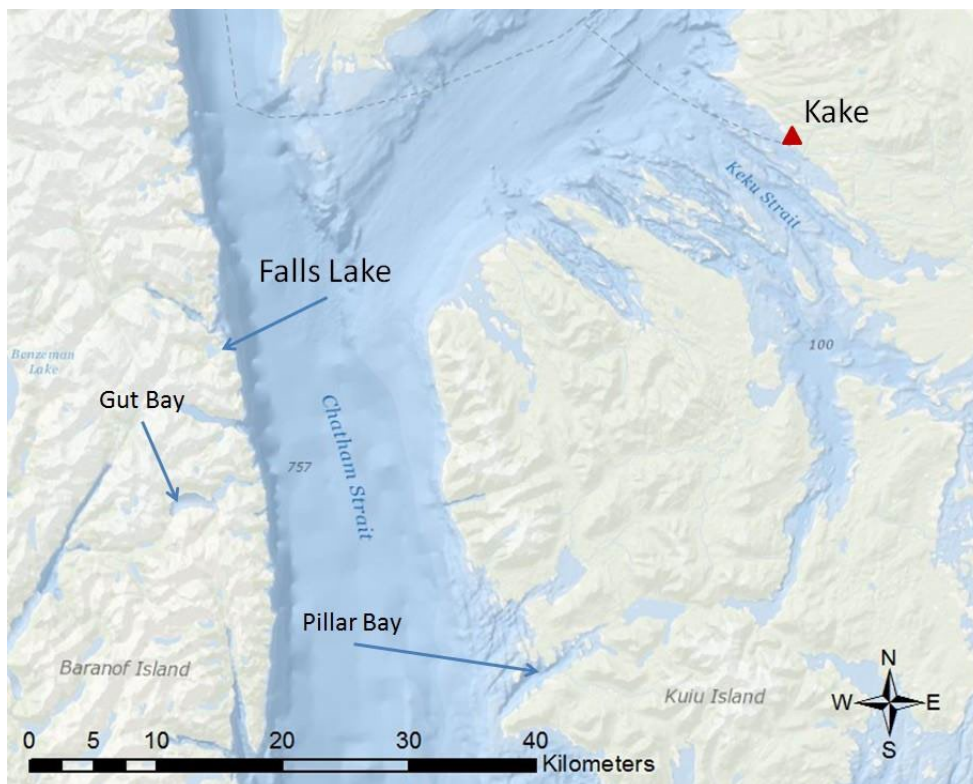
**Figure 3.** Reported harvest, escapement, and exploitation rate for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2018.

**Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational June 15. As of June 30, 5,230 Sockeye Salmon have been counted which is above average. In 2018, an estimated 73,810 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 9, 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 95,000 sockeye returning.



**Figure 4.** Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2018. The weir was not operated in 1998.

**Gut Bay** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake began monitoring escapement and harvest of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon this year. Gut Bay is located south of Falls Lake on Baranof Island and is an important source of Sockeye Salmon for the village of Kake. Very little is known about the magnitude of this run. The weirs were installed on June 20 and as of June 29, 128 Sockeye Salmon have been counted.



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

**Sitka Sound Pacific Herring** – The commercial, subsistence, and spawning season for Pacific Herring in Sitka Sound occurs about mid-March through mid-April. The commercial sac roe herring fishery did not occur in 2018. The guideline harvest level (GHL) was 12,869, however, marketable size fish could not be located in high enough quantity to warrant a fishery. Accounts from the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and other harvesters indicate good quantity and quality of subsistence roe harvest. Miles of shoreline receiving herring spawn indicates the spawning season was about average. However, preliminary estimates of spawn-extent from shore, and deposition are encouraging and may bolster the post spawn biomass population estimate. This estimate will be available this Fall.

[Alaska Department of Fish and Game news release with a synopsis of the commercial season](#)

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

This year's run of Chinook Salmon to the Stikine River is weak, forecasted at 8,250 fish. This forecast is well 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.

Currently, all purse seine and non-terminal harvest area troll fisheries are closed in the area. There is a restricted drift gillnet opportunity in District 6 open from 30 June through 3 July. District 8 drift gillnet fishery was opened on 30 June and will be open through 3 July.

The Federal Stikine River Chinook subsistence fishery was closed by the in-season manager. The Sockeye fishery opened on 21 June 2019. A total of 55 fishing permits have been issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery through this week. River conditions were good, weather was variable. Fishing participation this weekend was higher than seen in many years but the catch per unit effort was reported to be very low. The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest is 0 large Chinook and 35 Sockeye Salmon.

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

Yakutat area: Returns of Sockeye and Chinook Salmon to the Situk remain below the ten-year average. The Situk River weir has counted 8,421 Sockeye Salmon and 85 Chinook Salmon as of June 27. The forecast is for a total return of just 300 Chinook Salmon to the Situk, well below the escapement goal of 450-1,050 large fish. Chinook retention is prohibited in both subsistence and commercial fisheries, and all Chinook should be released. Subsistence fishermen are required to monitor their gillnets at all times when fishing for salmon.

Northern Southeast inside waters: Still not much in action in both purse seine and drift gillnet fisheries. The chum salmon return to both Hidden Falls and DIPAC projects appears to be well below expectations. Catches in the initial test fisheries at Point Gardner and Hawk Inlet were also below the ten-year average.

Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon: Crew from the Forest Service and the Hoonah Indian Association (HIA) installed the Neva Lake weir near Excursion Inlet on June 19. This swim-through video weir is remotely monitored and maintained by a HIA crew living in Excursion Inlet. The installation of the weir also kicked off the annual battle between the resident beavers and the crew, with one of the four underwater cameras falling prey to beaver teeth almost immediately. Only one Sockeye Salmon has been counted swimming through the weir to date. Live video from the weir is available on the internet at <http://216.252.161.242:81/>

Viewers can see underwater views of the video chute, site views from the surveillance cameras, and view recent motion-triggered clips.

### **Southeast Alaska Web Links**

*Tongass National Forest News Room* <http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

*Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area*  
[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf)

*ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link*  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

*ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link*  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

*Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska*  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

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

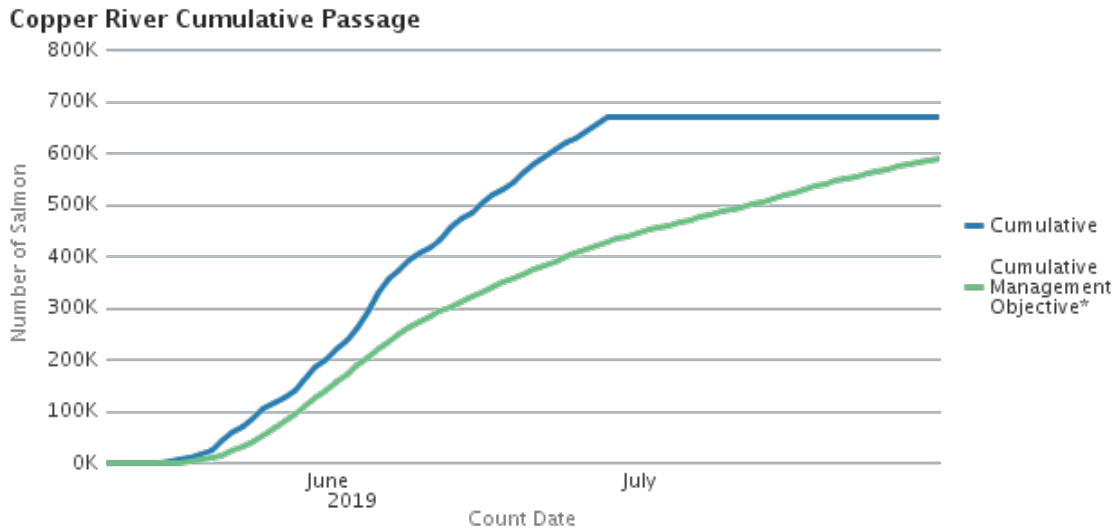
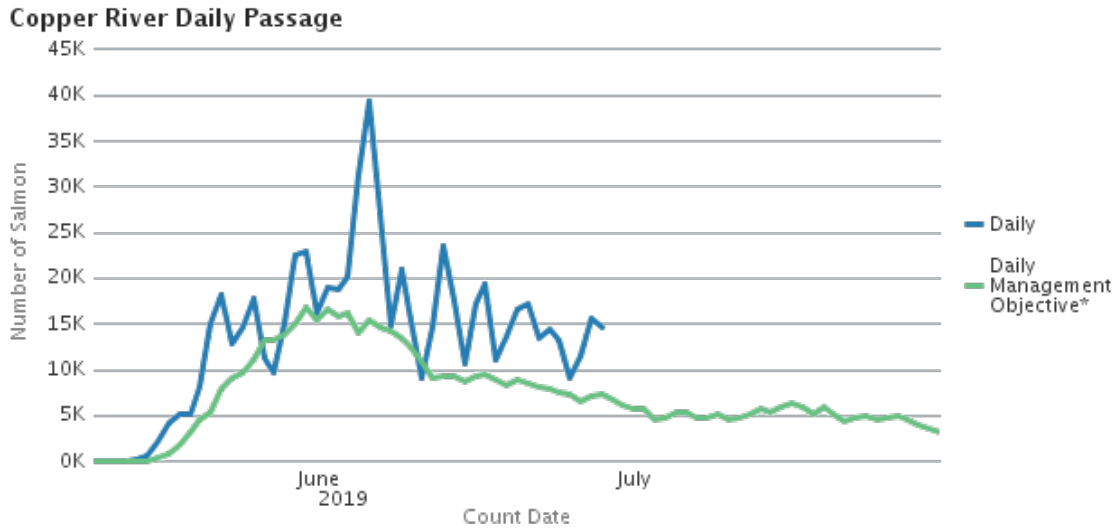
## **SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA**

### **PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER**

**Copper River, 6/28/2019 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, [dave\\_sarafin@nps.gov](mailto:dave_sarafin@nps.gov)**

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began recording salmon passage on May 10. As of June 27, 672,097 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate exceeds the lower bound of the in-river goal for the season (618,000 to 1.01 million salmon) and is 57% above the projected passage of 428,143 for this date, or 243,954 more salmon. A daily estimate of 14,732 salmon were estimated to pass the sonar on June 27.

**2019 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through June 27.**



Source:

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

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has opened for 12 fishing periods between May 16 and June 25. Total commercial harvest reported for the season is 890,889 Sockeye Salmon and 17,440 Chinook Salmon.

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict opened on June 7 and is currently scheduled to be open through July 7.

The Federal subsistence fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict opened on May 15 and is expected to remain open through September 30. One hundred and fifty-seven (157) 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 15 and is expected to remain open until September 30. Two hundred eighty-eight (288) 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 Batzulnetas fishery is open. One (1) Federal permit has been issued.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 4,903 Chinook Salmon through June 26. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 2,372 Chinook Salmon through June 23, of which, 276 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

Due to a lack of funding, the fish weirs at Tanada Creek and Long Lake will not be operated this year.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River was set up for operation on May 31. The reported cumulative passage estimate through June 27 is 4,596 Chinook Salmon.

No Federal Special Actions have been issued by the in-season manager this season.

Links:

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon\\_escapement](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 In-season Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

ADF&G Gulkana River counting tower

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

ADF&G Emergency Orders and News Releases

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

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

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

A total of 36 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. Ninety-seven permits were issued in 2018 resulting in the reported harvest of 255 coho and 96 sockeye from fresh waters of the Copper River Delta.

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

The 2019 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon began on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Harvest reported through June 28 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 857 Sockeye Salmon. The rod and reel fishery on the Kenai River also opened on June 11 with the same seasons and areas as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations.

The Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery began on June 16 and continues through August 15. Harvest reported through June 28 includes 267 Sockeye Salmon.

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>

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

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

No report this week.

***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**

All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and provide the basis for any inseason assessment and management.

**Bristol Bay:**

All rivers are projected to meet escapement goals and provide for subsistence fisheries.

Sockeye Salmon escapement counts for the date of June 26 are:

- 274,898 fish on the Egegik River
- 6,936 fish on the Kvichak River
- 158,244 fish on the Naknek River
- 185,198 fish on the Nushagak River, 31,021 Chinook Salmon.
- 430,758 fish on the Wood River

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opens June 1 by regulation and commercial fishing openings have been announced. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate for June 26 is 4.2 million. As each run develops and Sockeye Salmon run characteristics become defined within individual districts, fishing time will be adjusted accordingly.

**Chignik:**

The cumulative weir count as of June 27 is 148,737 Sockeye Salmon. The interim escapement goal based on historical run timing for this date is 215,000 to 320,000 fish. Current information indicates that the early run Sockeye Salmon is weak and similar to the 2018 run. The 2018 early run Sockeye Salmon run did not meet escapement goals. The average midpoint for early run Sockeye Salmon in the Chignik River is June 21. The ADF&G conducts weekly genetic sampling to distinguish early and late run fish, on average July 10 is the 50/50 date. On June 25, approximately 99% of the Sockeye Salmon identify as early run. Observations from local fisherman note seeing some fish jumping in Chignik Bay and Chignik Lagoon, which is consistent with the ADFG aerial surveys used to visually identified schools of incoming Sockeye Salmon. However, no schools of fish were observed in recent aerial surveys.

The USFWS does not conduct inseason salmon assessments in the Chignik River management area and inseason management decisions are based on the information collected by the ADF&G. The biological escapement goal is the primary management objective and current information suggests it is unlikely that the lower end of the early-run Sockeye Salmon escapement goals (BEG = 350,000 – 450,000) will be met. Current projections indicate a run between 250,000 to 300,000 fish. Counts at the ADF&G weir over the next few days will be important in providing clarity on whether the projection will be closer to the higher or lower part of the range. In comparison, the 2018 run total

for early run Sockeye Salmon was 263,979 fish. Federal subsistence users in the Chignik area have commented that the low abundance of fish has affected their ability to harvest subsistence fish. In response, the Federal In-season Manager issued an emergency special action (8-SS-01-19) on June 25 restricting fishing on Federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction to federally qualified users. This action was consistent with strategies discussed with local users at in-person meetings in Chignik Bay and Chignik Lagoon conducted on June 7-10. If abundance continues at current rates then additional restrictions will need to be implemented to ensure additional fish escape to spawning areas. The Federal In-season manager will be communicating with tribal councils and local subsistence users to identify upcoming strategies.

Chinook Salmon counts enumerated at the ADF&G weir as of June 27 are 54 fish. It is too early in the run to reliably assess the Chinook Salmon run.

#### Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands:

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 these 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. On the Alaska Peninsula, the largest fisheries are managed under management plans by the ADF&G. Management objectives vary by district and time. Commercial periods have been scheduled and implemented with the total commercial harvest as of June 26 at 8.9 million fish, with Pink Salmon accounting for 86% of the harvest. The cumulative weir count as of June 26 for the Nelson River is 3,668 Sockeye Salmon and 362 Chinook Salmon, Bear River is 26,844 Sockeye Salmon, Ilnik is 47,746 Sockeye Salmon, Sandy River is 4,183 Sockeye Salmon, and Orzinski River (south peninsula) is 7 Sockeye Salmon. Aleutian Island fisheries are projected to provide for escapement and subsistence harvests.

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

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf)

#### ***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/chignik.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf)

### **Southcentral Alaska Web Links**

#### ***Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases***

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

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

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

***ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

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

## **YUKON RIVER**

**Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.**

[Gerald\\_Maschmann@fws.gov](mailto:Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov) or

Fred Bue [Fredrick\\_Bue@fws.gov](mailto:Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov)

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is open for summer management activities until June 28. The field office can be contacted by calling (907) 949-1798.

### **Summer Season Outlook**

Managers have shifted the basis for management decisions from the pre-season outlook to the in-season run projections because of increasing confidence in run assessment data. The Summer Chum Salmon preseason outlook was for an above average run size, large enough to provide for escapement and subsistence uses, with a surplus of up to 1.2 million Summer Chum Salmon for commercial harvest. However, at this time, the Summer Chum Salmon run is coming in well below expectations and has the potential to be similar to the 2000 and 2001 runs, which were the worst runs on record. The typical mid-point at Pilot Station for a late run is June 29. Managers expect sonar counts of Chum Salmon to pick up over the next couple of days based on a group detected by the Lower Yukon Test Fishery.

The Chinook Salmon outlook was for a below average run size ranging from 168,000 to 241,000 fish. At this time, assessment information indicates that the Chinook Salmon run may be coming in somewhere in between the lower end and midpoint of the pre-season projection, somewhat similar to the 2018 run in both timing and magnitude. A run of this size requires restrictions to harvest to meet escapement goals and harvest sharing goals with Canada. Should Chinook Salmon continue to show a run strength closer to the 200,000 + fish, restrictions are likely to be eased.

### **Assessment Information**

Subsistence fishermen in the lower Yukon River area have been fishing since ice out. The debris loads that hindered fishing early in the season has passed. Reports from many lower Yukon fishermen indicate that most have met their Chinook Salmon needs. Some

have met their Summer Chum Salmon needs, but others are still fishing for Summer Chum Salmon.

The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) began between May 23 and June 6. The LYTF Chinook Salmon test set net has a cumulative CPUE of 29.87 through June 29, above the average of 20.22 and remains steady. The LYTF Chinook Salmon test drift net has a cumulative CPUE of 330.78 through June 29, slightly below the average of 355.09. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 2. The cumulative passage of Chinook Salmon past the sonar through June 29 is 134,669 fish, near the average of 131,172 fish. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fishery in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. The Chinook Salmon run appears to be coming in at average run timing, possibly a bit late. The run was tracking very similar to the 2018 run in timing and magnitude through the first half of the season, but is now tracking a little better than 2018. At this time, the Chinook Salmon run should be between the mid-point and  $\frac{3}{4}$  point of the run, based on average run timing at Pilot Station.

The LYTF Summer Chum Salmon drift net has a cumulative CPUE of 4,931 through June 29, below the median of 6,027. The cumulative passage past the Pilot Station sonar is 411,860 Summer Chum salmon, well below the median of 1,023,019 fish. At this time, the Summer Chum Salmon run is near the worst on record, and exhibiting very late run timing. The average mid-point for summer chum runs is June 29, so potentially, if this is a late run, there is time for the run to catch up. However, a significant pulse have just entered the river as indicated by increased CPUE's at LYTF which may increase projections based on assessment by the main river sonar near Pilot Station. Mid-day estimates from the Pilot Station sonar on June 30, indicate that a pulse of over 200,000 summer chum may be passing at this time. Unless there is a considerable increase in chum numbers, it is unlikely that this year's summer chum run will produce a harvestable surplus for commercial fishing and may require additional subsistence fishing restrictions to meet the minimum drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 fish.

### **Management Actions**

With the Chinook Salmon run coming in at the low end of the pre-season forecast and the Summer Chum Salmon running in low numbers, management actions are consistent with the preseason outlook and management strategies discussed with fishermen at the preseason fishermen's meeting and regulatory management plans. The northern portion of the Coastal District and District 1 has been managed as one district for 2019.

Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 1-3 was placed on half their regulatory schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear then further restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. Due to the low Chinook Salmon numbers, a period was cancelled in Districts 1-3 and an additional period may be canceled in Districts 1 and 2. Due to the low numbers of Summer Chum Salmon, the South Coastal District has been restricted to 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  days per week; half their normal 7 days per week schedule. Subsistence salmon fishing in District 4, and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C have been placed on half their regulatory schedule for two, 24-hour open periods per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear consistent with Chinook Salmon migratory timing upriver. One period has been canceled in Subdistrict 4-A and one period is scheduled to be canceled in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. Subsistence fishing in the Innoko and Koyukuk rivers have

been open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or less mesh gillnet and fish wheel gear. The Innoko is scheduled to be restricted to 3 ½ days per week; half their normal 7 days per week schedule with 7.5-inch gillnets which will allow some harvest of Chinook Salmon, thereby easing pressure on Summer Chum Salmon. Fishing time in the Koyuku River is expected to be reduced similarly when Summer Chum Salmon begin to reach that portion of the drainage. Subsistence fishing in Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B has been placed on a schedule of two, 24-hour periods per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels. The Old Minto area has been placed on their normal schedule of 5 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels. The personal use fishery in Subdistrict 6-C is open on its regulatory schedule of two, 42-hour periods per week restricted to 7.5-inch or less mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels, but is scheduled to be placed on a schedule of two, 24-hour periods per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, gillnets that have mesh size 4-inches or smaller may be used to target non-salmon species. The sequential activation of the reduced and restricted subsistence fishing schedule will continue in all districts as the Chinook Salmon migrate upstream. Fishermen should also expect a period cancellation in their district similar to actions in the lower river.

The Alaska Board of Fish (BOF), in their January 2019 meeting, passed new regulations making dip nets a legal subsistence salmon fishing gear in the Yukon. Subsistence fishermen may use dip nets for salmon during the open subsistence salmon fishing periods. Additionally, the BOF legalized the use of drift gill nets in District 4. Subsistence fishermen in District 4 may use drift gill nets during the open subsistence salmon fishing periods. Directed Summer Chum Salmon commercial fishing in District 1 is not anticipated to begin until Summer Chum numbers increase, if at all.

### **Consultation**

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2018 and spring of 2019 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, at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting, and at the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission annual meeting. On April 24, 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 fourth YR DFA weekly teleconference occurred on June 25. Districts 1 and 2 fishermen reported being done with their Chinook Salmon fishing needs. Some were finished with their chum needs, but others were still fishing for chum. Fishermen in District 3 appear to be close to finishing up their Chinook Salmon needs, but some still need more. District 4 fishermen have reported catching some Chinook salmon but have not yet met their needs. Fishermen in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C and District 6 have reported catching Chinook salmon in low numbers. Some fishermen reported seeing "puss pockets" in their chum salmon. It's unclear if fishermen are seeing an increase in diseased fish, or if they are just reporting it more this year.

The OSM held a teleconference on June 26 with the three chairs of the YKRAC, WIRAC, and the EIRAC along with several other council members, and staff at the request of the WIRAC Chair. The main concern was the unexpectedly low Summer Chum Salmon run and whether a federal special action was needed to limit fishing on the Yukon to federally qualified users only. Participants were given a brief run assessment update, summary of the management actions taken so far, and potential upcoming actions focused on Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon conservation. A discussion was had on the merits of limiting the Yukon to federally qualified users only. All agreed that the cooperative management scheme was working well and that a special action was not warranted at this time.

### **KUSKOKWIM RIVER**

**In Season Manager – Vernon “Ray” Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact [Vernon\\_Born@fws.gov](mailto:Vernon_Born@fws.gov) (907) 543-3151 or [Lewis\\_Coggins@fws.gov](mailto:Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov)**

#### **Federal Closure to the Harvest of Chinook Salmon in Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Waters Will Expire at 11:59 pm July 1, 2019**

Effective 11:59 pm on July 1, 2019, all Federal restrictions on the Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River will expire. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will manage fishing openings, closings, and fishing methods.

The Federal In-Season Manager’s escapement objective of 100,000 Chinook has been met and the implied harvest objective of 32,000 Chinook Salmon has been surpassed with an estimated harvest of 40,000 Chinook Salmon. The opportunities provided have provided more harvest than any of the previous years since Federal restrictions began. Subsequent subsistence fishing opportunity will not greatly diminish the final number of Chinook Salmon escaping to spawning grounds. Therefore, the Federal in-season manager has determined that there are no additional reasonable measures to conserve Chinook Salmon within Refuge waters.

#### **Test Fisheries:**

As of June 30, 2019 the CPUE for Chinook at the Bethel test fish is at 730. The 2018 and 2017 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 482 and 242, respectively.

As of June 30, 2019 the CPUE for Chum at the Bethel test fish is at 567. The 2018 and 2017 Chum CPUE for this day were at 1,772 and 2,221, respectively.



As of June 30, 2019 the CPUE for Sockeye at the Bethel test fish is at 381. The 2018 and 2017 Sockeye CPUE for this day were at 411 and 692, respectively.

### **Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links**

***Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:***

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf)

***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](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.**

Counting Projects: High water continues to slow progress on getting Northern Norton Sound escapement counting projects operational. Last year most northern Norton Sound escapement counting projects were also delayed by high water and did not become operational until July 4 or later. However, this year some projects, while still delayed, have become operational days or over a week ahead of time compared to last year. ADF&G thanked Norton Sound Economic Corporation (NSEDC) for their support of fish counting projects for two decades.

Sport Fishing: The Division of Sport Fish closed all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof to sport fishing for king salmon effective 12:01 a.m., June 15, 2019. This

closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia Rivers' drainages. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in these drainages. These temporary regulations will remain in effect through August 15, 2019, or until there are indications of a harvestable surplus above escapement objectives, which are indexed by a counting tower on the North River, a tributary of the Unalakleet River.

### ***Other Coastal Waters (Stebbins and St. Michael)***

Subsistence Fishing: All waters from Wood point west to Point Romanof, subsistence salmon fishing will remain open seven days a week.

### ***Subdistricts 6 (Unalakleet)***

Subsistence Fishing: ADF&G announced a 36-hour subsistence fishing period in the Subdistrict from Noon Wednesday, June 26 until midnight Thursday evening, June 27. This period applied only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Black Point. Gillnets were restricted to 50 fathoms in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Fishermen were reminded that two subsistence fishers cannot connect nets together to exceed the 50 fathoms length in regulation.

**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. The cumulative counts to June 25 are 6 kings, 5 chums and 3 pinks.

**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. The cumulative counts to June 25 are 6 kings and 9 chum.

### ***Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)***

Subsistence Fishing: ADF&G announced a 36-hour subsistence fishing period in the Subdistrict from Noon Wednesday, June 26 until midnight Thursday evening, June 27. This period applied only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Black Point. Gillnets were restricted to 50 fathoms in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Fishermen were reminded that two subsistence fishers cannot connect nets together to exceed the 50 fathoms length in regulation.

**Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals established. The sonar crew has begun operations. . The cumulative counts to June 25 are 648 kings, 90 chums and 129 pinks.

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

Subsistence Fishing: Effective the evening of June 14 at midnight, all marine waters and freshwater of the Subdistrict except for the Koyuk River drainage were placed on a subsistence gillnet fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week. The schedule will be from 6 AM Saturdays to 6 PM Sundays and from 6 AM Mondays to 6 PM Tuesdays. During the openings from Mondays to Tuesdays, subsistence users will be restricted to set gill nets with a stretch mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. For the weekend openings from Saturdays to Sundays, there will be no restrictions on mesh size. The Koyuk River is not affected by this action and will remain open seven days a week.

Commercial Fishing: During the commercial fishing period ending Saturday night (June 22, 2019), only 2 permit holders fished in the Subdistrict, so catch information is confidential. Another commercial salmon fishing period for 24 hours in the Subdistrict was announced from 6 PM Thursday, June 27 until 6 PM Friday, June 28. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

**Inglutalik River Tower** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. The cumulative counts to June 25 are 63 chums.

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

Subsistence Fishing: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required for fishing in State managed waters. Catch limits are listed on the back of the permit for the rivers that have catch limits. Other than the possibility of inseason king salmon restrictions, no other restrictions are expected,

Commercial Fishing: During the commercial fishing period ending Saturday night (June 22, 2019), 206 chums were caught by 7 permit holders. Another commercial salmon fishing period for 24 hours in the Subdistrict was announced from 6 PM Thursday, June 27 until 6 PM Friday, June 28. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

**Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel** – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings, 11,500 – 23,000 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). The tower is hoped to be operational this coming weekend.

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

Subsistence Fishing: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required in State managed waters. Catch limits are listed on the back of the permit for the rivers that have catch limits. No other restrictions in subsistence fishing are expected.

Commercial Fishing: During the commercial fishing period ending Saturday night (June 22, 2019), the chum catch improved greatly in Golovin compared to the other subdistricts. In Golovin, 1,061 chums were caught by 4 permit holders.

A commercial salmon fishing period in the Subdistrict opened for 48 hours from 6 PM Monday, June 24 to 6 PM Wednesday, June 26. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. The catch was 3,298 chums caught by 11 permit holders. Fishing effort was above average and catch and CPUE were near average for late June.

The next commercial opening was announced for 24 hours from 6 PM Friday, June 28 until 6 PM Saturday, June 29. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

### ***Subdistrict 1 (Nome)***

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required, and stream specific harvest limits are listed on the permit. These include: Cripple River - no chum catch allowed; Penny River - no chum catch allowed; Nome River - 100 coho per household; Salmon River - 40 chum per household and 20 coho per household. There are no catch limits in the marine waters.

Effective June 15, the Nome Subdistrict was placed on a subsistence salmon fishing schedule of from 6 PM Wednesday until 6 PM Monday for the marine and fresh waters, except that the marine waters east off Cape Nome will remain open 7 days a week.

Commercial Fishing: During the commercial fishing period ending Saturday night (June 22, 2019), the chum catch in the Nome Subdistrict was 369 chums caught by 4 permit holders. Another commercial salmon fishing period for 24 hours in the Subdistrict was announced from 9 PM Thursday, June 27 until 9 PM Friday, June 28. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

**Bonanza River Weir** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have yet been established. The weir is hoped to be operational this coming weekend.

**Eldorado River Weir** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. The weir became fish tight Wednesday morning, June 26.

### **Port Clarence District**

Subsistence Fishing: Gillnet and beach seining are open seven days a week. Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required for the Port Clarence District, Pilgrim River drainage

and Salmon Lake. Catch limits are listed on the subsistence permits. These are: Pilgrim River - 3 king salmon per household and 25 sockeye salmon per household; Salmon Lake: open by emergency order only: 200 sockeye salmon per household

Commercial Fishing: The department expects the commercial fishery to remain closed because of a lack of buyer interest despite the in-river goal of 30,000 sockeye salmon in the Pilgrim River being expected to be reached..

### **Kotzebue District**

ADF&G issued a reminder to all subsistence and commercial fishers that the area offshore or the Kotzebue airport's main runway to one 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 within the closed area. The reason for the closure is that fishing often attracts birds that can create a hazardous situation for aircraft arriving at or departing from Kotzebue. The closure will remain in effect until mid-October.

Subsistence Fishing: No other subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2019.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing is scheduled to begin July 10 and both major buyers from last year have notified the department that they will return this season.