

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 11 – July 17, 2016. Report #8
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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 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

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is operating as of June 28th. As of July 14th, 22 sockeye have been counted and about 900 have been harvested in the bay. The run timing is largely driven by stream flow and sockeye will probably move in after the next rain event. There is currently no rain in the forecast for the next week or so. 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.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational June 13th. As of July 14th, 8,223 sockeye were counted passing the weir with 422 passing on July 14th. Based on historic run timing and magnitude, the projected escapement is about 35,000. In accordance with the Redoubt Lake management plan, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has increased the individual/household sockeye limit from 10/50 to 25/100 and increased the sport fish bag and possession limit to 6. In 2015, an estimated total of 13,379 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake.

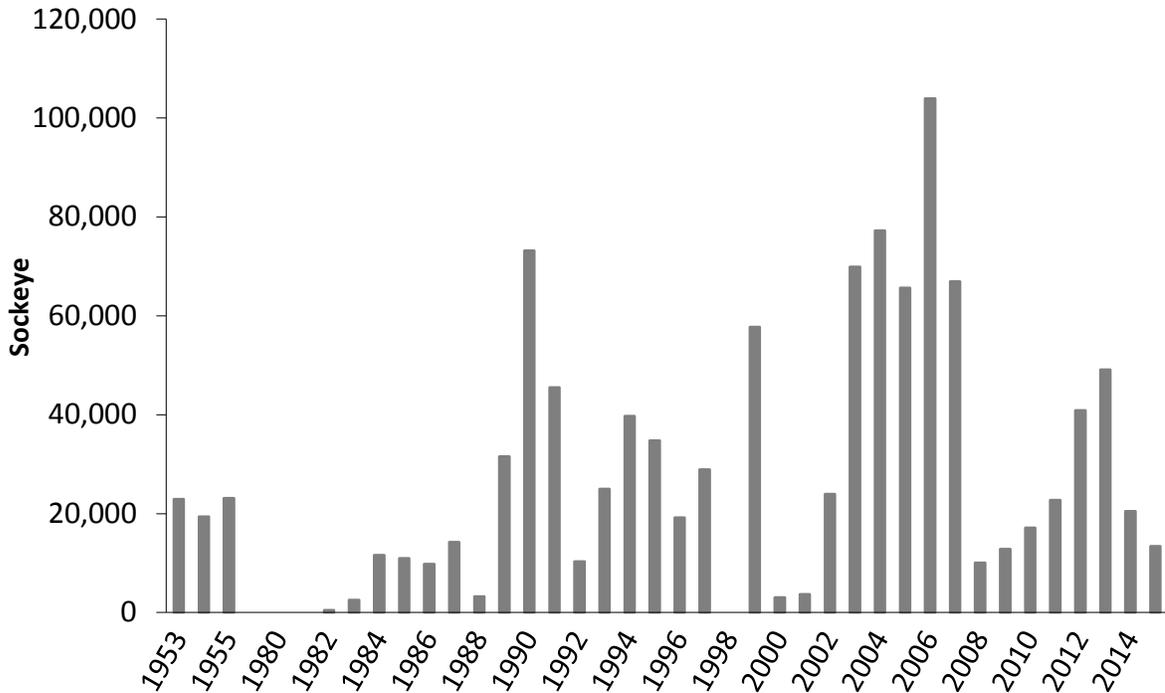


Figure 1. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2015. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were operating as of July 1st. On July 14th, 17 sockeye were counted at the trap bringing the season total to 98. Around 500 sockeye have been harvested in the State subsistence fishery in the bay. The annual subsistence fishery closure is currently in effect (July 14-22) to protect the early portion of the run. The final escapement estimate in 2015 was 4,716 sockeye 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 2. Employees from the Organized Village of Kake and the Forest Service assemble the fish trap above the fish pass at Falls Lake.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area

Fisheries update from the Wrangell/Petersburg Area for Stat Week 29, ending July 16

There have been 104 fishing permits issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery. Weather, river conditions and catch per unit of effort have been good. The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest for the Stikine River subsistence fishery is 40 Chinook, no Coho and 1,480 Sockeye Salmon. While catches of Pink Salmon in coastal waters appear good, test fisheries indicate returns of Pink and Chum Salmon to Frederick Sound are below average. Sockeye returns to the Stikine River appear to be on track to exceed the pre-season forecast.

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska

Neva Lake. Personnel from the Hoonah Indian Association have been operating a pair of video weirs at the outlet of Neva Lake since June 14. Less than 100 Sockeye Salmon have escaped into the lake to date but counts will climb the next time it rains.



Kook Lake. Personnel from the Angoon Community Association have been operating a pair of video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake since June 26. As of July 7, 386 Sockeye Salmon have escaped into the lake.



Sitkoh Lake. A pair of remotely monitored video net weirs were installed at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake on June 30th. No Sockeye Salmon had entered the lake as of July 4.



Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area

The 2016 Federal subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas is on-going. To date, 197 permits have been issued.

Most subsistence Sockeye Salmon fisheries have started with subsistence users fishing marine waters, under State issued permits at Karta, Klawock, and Hetta. Effort at Klawock and Hetta is low, as most subsistence fishers are choosing to fish Karta. Some fishing effort has been noted at Hatchery Creek.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at both Hetta Lake and Eek Lake are on-going. No Sockeye Salmon have been counted yet at Eek. There have been 21 Sockeye counted at Hetta to date. The Klawock Lake project has had 105 Sockeye Salmon counted to date.

Commercial seining is ongoing for Chum Salmon in hatchery terminal areas in District 2 and directed effort for Pink and Sockeye Salmon occurring in Districts 1 and 4. Drift gillnet openings are occurring weekly in District 1. The summer season commercial troll for Chinook began July 1 summer. The commercial troll fishery for Chinook has been closed since July 6 and is now primarily targeting Coho Salmon in non-terminal harvest areas. Commercial harvest to date is 16,105 Chinook Salmon, 73,825 Sockeye Salmon, 73,800 Coho Salmon, 1,435,700 Pink Salmon and 779,000 Chum Salmon from 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 (907-789-6257; bvanalen@fs.fed.us) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; 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

Out of office for week, report expected next week.

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

A total of 56 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 opened at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 14 for a 48-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative Miles Lake sonar count through 7/12 was 727,855 fish whereas the anticipated range for this date is 535,835–829,341. The 0600 count for 7/13 was 1,174 fish. For the week ending July 2, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 31,600 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 28,229–66,722 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 36-hour period that started on Monday, July 11 was 32,300 sockeye salmon with 294 deliveries reported.

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

Harvest of 801 Sockeye Salmon from the Russian River Falls dip net fishery and 6 Sockeye Salmon in the Kasilof River dip net fishery have been reported through July 14. Harvest of 66 Sockeye Salmon has been reported for the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery through July 14. Totals of 144 Kenai River permits, 40 Kasilof River permits, and 13 Designated Fisher permits have been issued through July 7.

A total of 8,679 late-run Chinook Salmon have been counted at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's sonar assessment site at river mile 14 through July 13. Approximately 15% of the run is estimated to have passed the sonar through July 11.

Through July 13, a total of 37,863 early-run Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Russian River weir. Assessment for the late-run Russian River escapement begins on July 15. Through July 14, a total of 416,005 late-run Kenai River Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar at river mile 19 and a total of 140,356 Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar on the Kasilof River.

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 La Rosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
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Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

The Chinook Salmon runs throughout the Kodiak Area have pretty much ended, with very few salmon still trickling in. Good numbers of Sockeye Salmon are still showing up in the Olga Bay streams and Saltery Creek. Pink Salmon are starting to show up in most of the area streams and in good numbers in a couple of the monitored streams.

Subsistence users from Old Harbor are focusing on silvers (Coho Salmon) returning to Big Creek. Fishing for Sockeye Salmon at Pasagshak and Saltery Rivers and other road system rivers has started to pick up with high fishing opportunities occurring at Saltery.

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

Out of office, update expected next week.

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/dcfnewsrelease/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. The following cumulative escapement and harvest numbers are current as of July 6. The Egegik District commercial fishery has a cumulative escapement of 786,000 and a commercial harvest of 3.0 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing openings

are scheduled. The Ugashik District cumulative escapement is 233,000 with a cumulative harvest is 1.6 million Sockeye Salmon.

As of July 6, the Naknek River escapement is 641,000 and the Kvichak River escapement is 727,000 Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing openings are currently scheduled. As of July 7, the Nushagak River escapement is 480,453 Sockeye Salmon and 114,458 Chinook Salmon. Commercial harvest for the Nushagak District is 3.8 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing with drift gillnets will close July 7 in the Nushagak Section. There are 396 drift gillnet permits for the Nushagak Section. Commercial fishing with set gillnets will open on July 8 in the Nushagak and Igushik Sections. The Wood River escapement is 712,485 and the Igushik River escapement is 70,854 Sockeye Salmon. Stock composition estimates for Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon populations are based on 170 fish sampled at Port Moller. Prevalent stocks are Egegik (32.3%), Naknek (20.5%), and Ugashik (11.8%). Results for all stocks can be found here: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.bbaysockeye_results.

Conservation measures are in place to conserve Chinook Salmon, including maximum mesh size restriction to 5 ½ inches in Naknek/Kvichak, and Ugashik districts. 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:

Sockeye Salmon	Escapement Goal
Early Run – Black Lake	BEG = 350,000 – 450,000
Late Run – Chignik Lake	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000
Inriver Subsistence Goal	25,000 in August and 50,000 in September in addition to late run escapement goals
Chinook Salmon	BEG = 1,300 – 2,700
Pink Salmon – Even year	SEG = 170,000 – 280,000
Chum Salmon	SEG = 45,000 – 110,000

The 2016 total Sockeye Salmon forecast run for the Chignik River watershed is approximately 2,910,000 fish. Current escapement estimates through the Chignik weir are 356,896 Sockeye Salmon and 750 Chinook Salmon as of July 6. Approximately 2,190,000 Sockeye Salmon are expected to be harvested in Chignik Management Area. As of July 1, 2016 the commercial catch is estimated at 687,060 Sockeye Salmon, 3,693 Chinook Salmon, 30,916 Pink Salmon, and 41,230 Chum Salmon. Stock composition on the Sockeye Salmon escapement is 79.9% early run and 20.1% late run based on 156 fish. Commercial fishing periods started in the Chignik Bay, Central, and Eastern districts and the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District beginning June 4. Subsistence

fishing is closed for salmon 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours following a commercial fishing period. The Western District of the Chignik Management Area opened to commercial fishing on 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.

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 (692,000) and late-run Bear (424,000) river Sockeye Stocks. Commercial fishing opportunities have been announced for Nelson Lagoon, a portion of the Ilnik Section, a portion of the Three Hills Section, Port Moller Bight, Bear River Sections, and the outer Port Heiden Section.

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 closed for summer management activities and will reopen for fall season management on July 27. For management questions call (907) 455-1849.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The Yukon River summer season is ending in the lower Yukon. Management will switch to fall season in District 1 on July 16. At this time, both the Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon runs appear to be winding down as expected. However, Chinook Salmon are just passing into Canada and entering their terminal streams, so there is still a lot of season left in the upper Yukon. The 2016 Chinook Salmon current in-season run projection is for a run of approximately 175,000 Chinook Salmon. This is at the upper end of the pre-season outlook range of 130,000 to 175,000. This range is similar in size to the run observed in 2015 and has required subsistence harvest restrictions in order to meet minimum escapement objectives. As in recent years, initial management was based on the expectation that the 2016 Chinook Salmon run size would likely be near the lower end of this range. Management strategies have followed those agreed to during pre-season management meetings. Early subsistence fishing opportunities have targeted non-Chinook Salmon species, such as whitefish and Summer Chum Salmon. As the season progressed, fishing restrictions were relaxed. The majority of the Chinook Salmon run has been protected to some extent with closures and restrictive fishing gear all the way upriver and into the spawning areas.

The Summer Chum Salmon run was projected to be average to above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses with a surplus of 450,000 to 950,000 anticipated to be available for commercial harvest. The Summer Chum Salmon run appears to have entered early and has exceeded the upper end of the pre-season outlook.

Public meetings were held throughout the winter and spring to inform fishers of the outlook. Management actions were initially based on the pre-season outlook and are now based on in-season assessment as managers have gained confidence in the assessment information.

Assessment Information

Assessment projects began in the lower Yukon in late May. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) has detected the early arriving, as well as the four pulses of Chinook and four pulses of Summer Chum Salmon. Operations at the Big Eddy 8.5-inch set net site were ended on June 30 to conserve Chinook Salmon. The cumulative CPUE for both Big

Eddy and Middle Mouth 8.5 inch set net sites combined through June 30 is 33.94, which is above the historical average of 25.92. 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 as of July 4 is 546.61, which is above the historical average of 393.90. 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 as of July 14 is 10,434.20 which is well above the historical median of 7,387.03 for this date. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 1 and has detected the early arriving as well as the four pulses of Chinook and five pulses of Summer Chum Salmon. Cumulative passage estimates of Chinook Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar through July 14 is 173,464 fish, near the average of 180,802 fish, but below the early year average of 213,107 for this date. The passage estimates of Summer Chum Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar through July 14 is 1,876,314, above the average for this date of 1,616,334 fish. Information from the LYTF and Pilot Station sonar were in alignment and performed as expected. Pulse one and two are into Canada, pulse three is passing through upper Subdistrict 5-D, and pulse four is in lower Subdistrict 5-C. The Eagle sonar project started on July 1 and has an estimated passage of 21,596 Chinook Salmon through July 14, well above the average of 8,265. Subsistence harvest and fishing reports has been important information for managers when considering early season management actions.

The East Fork Andreafsky River weir has passed a below average 2,244 Chinook Salmon and an above median 45,185 Summer Chum Salmon. Escapement goals for both salmon species have been met in the Andreafsky River. The Anvik River sonar has estimated a below median Summer Chum Salmon passage with 285,637 fish. The Gisasa River weir has passed a near average 1,036 Chinook Salmon and a well above average 43,477 Summer Chum Salmon. The Henshaw Creek weir has passed a near average 962 Chinook Salmon and a well above average 171,765 Summer Chum Salmon. Assessment at the Chena and Salcha Rivers has been hindered by high water.

Management Actions

Management of the 2016 season was initiated very conservatively once again in an effort to assure adequate Chinook Salmon escapements are achieved due to uncertainty in assessment early in the season. Subsistence fishing for Chinook Salmon in Districts 1 through Subdistrict 5-C was closed when abundance just began to increase and fishing opportunity was provided with gear restrictions that required the immediate live release of all incidental Chinook Salmon. With public support, Subdistrict 5-D was allowed to fish on the early trickle of Chinook Salmon before the first pulse with 6-inch gillnets and fish wheels because it is widely known that the area has few alternative fish species available. However, like the other districts, 5-D was closed to protect both the first and second pulses of Chinook Salmon. The Innoko and Koyukuk rivers were not closed, but did have gillnet fishing gear restricted to no larger than 6-inch mesh because Chinook Salmon are not commonly harvested in those tributaries. Furthermore, District 6 remained on their standard schedule with gillnets restricted to 6-inch mesh because

assessment indicated the Chinook Salmon escapement goals would be met in the Chena and Salcha rivers. Additionally, during subsistence Chinook Salmon fishing closures, gill nets with a mesh size 4-inches or smaller with a length of no more than 60 feet have been allowed to target non-salmon species.

When it was assessed that Chinook Salmon were demonstrating a run strength above escapement needs, actions were initiated to relax subsistence fishing in sections of the river and allow some incidental Chinook Salmon harvest while targeting Chum Salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing with selective gear in Districts 1-4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was closed and subsistence fishing with 6-inch or less mesh gillnet gear was opened on half each area's regulatory schedule. The southern portion of the Coastal District and both the Innoko River and Koyukuk River drainages were relaxed back to their regulatory schedules of 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller gillnet gear. Opportunities to harvest Chinook Salmon with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear have been provided in Districts 2 through Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C. Subsistence fishing with gillnets with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh is being evaluated for Subdistrict 5-D. As the majority of the Chinook Salmon run passed in the lower Yukon and assessment was near the upper end of the pre-season outlook, subsistence salmon fishing was further relaxed to their normal fishing schedule with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets starting in the lower Yukon and progressing chronologically through Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. A short 12 hour subsistence salmon fishing period and then an additional 24 hour period was scheduled for Subdistrict 5-D with gillnets with 6-inch or smaller mesh gear. Managers are considering additional subsistence fishing opportunities in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, 5-C and 5-D depending on Eagle sonar assessment.

Commercial fishing has been opened in Districts 1 and 2 with dipnets and beach seines then followed with gillnet periods all targeting Summer Chum Salmon. Through July 8, there have been thirteen commercial openings targeting Summer Chum Salmon utilizing dipnets and beach seines in District 1, and eight in District 2. Preliminary harvests using these gear are 173,000 Summer Chum Salmon with 7,137 Chinook Salmon caught and released. Eight 4-6 hour, 5.5-inch or less mesh gillnet gear openings and eight 6-inch or less mesh gillnet openings occurred in District 1 with a preliminary harvest of 234,000 Summer Chum and 2,726 Chinook Salmon incidentally harvested and retained for subsistence purposes. Eleven 4-6 hour, 6-inch or less mesh gillnet openings occurred in District 2, with a preliminary harvest of 98,614 Summer Chum Salmon and 2,379 Chinook Salmon incidentally harvested and retained for subsistence purposes. District 6 had one commercial period that started July with one fisherman harvesting 609 Summer Chum Salmon and 46 Chinook Salmon were incidentally but not sold. The overall preliminary commercial harvest through July 14 is 486,198 Summer Chum Salmon, 5,151 Chinook Salmon caught but not sold, and 8,243 Chinook Salmon caught and released. Managers anticipate additional gillnet gear openings for the rest of the season, depending on the incidental Chinook Salmon harvest.

Fall Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The 2016 Fall Chum Salmon preseason run projection, based on the Summer Chum to Fall Chum Salmon relationship, is for a run size between 800,000 and 900,000 fish. This

level of abundance should be sufficient to provide for escapement, an above average subsistence harvest, and a surplus available for commercial and personal use purposes. Subsistence salmon fishing is being relaxed to the normal regulatory salmon fishing schedule with gillnet gear with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh starting in the northern portion of the Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, and 3.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation occurred 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 sixth YRDFA teleconference on July 12. Alaska members of the Yukon River Panel, their alternates, and advisors (YAG) teleconferenced with State and Federal managers on June 22 and July 12. Participants were brought up to date on current run assessment, mid-season run expectations, and summarized management actions to date. Management options and strategies were discussed with concerns and suggestions identified for management consideration.

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 reverted subsistence management in the Kuskokwim River to the State of Alaska. This decision was implemented by Federal Emergency Special Actions (3 KS-08-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board. As of July 7, 2016 at 6:00, the Federal in-season manager has rescinded all previous special actions. Upon this action, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game released Emergency Order 3-S-WR-5-16, which allows subsistence fishing by qualified Alaska residents in the Kuskokwim River drainage from the mouth of the River at the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge boundary to the Kuskokwim River headwaters until further notice. Gillnets must be 6-inch or less mesh.

Subsistence fishing with gillnets is closed in the following areas:

- The Kwethluk River drainage including its confluence with Kuskokuak Slough and downstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream mouth of the slough.

- The Kasigluk and Kisaralik river drainages including Old Kuskokuak Slough to ADF&G regulatory markers at the confluence of Old Kuskokuak Slough with Kuskokuak Slough.
- The Tuluksak River drainage including its confluence with the Kuskokwim River and downstream approximately 1-mile to ADF&G regulatory markers.
- The Aniak River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers at its confluence with the Kuskokwim River.
- The Eek River.
- The waters of the Kuskokwim River from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at Aniak downstream to a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.076' N, long 159° 32.527' W and lat 61° 35.263' N, long 159° 32.088' W.

Test Fisheries:

As of July 16, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook Salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) is 646. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2015 and 2014 were 562 and 643, respectively. The cumulative CPUE for Chum Salmon at the BTF as of July 16 was 2860, compared to 1811 and 5644 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. The cumulative sockeye CPUE at the BTF as of July 16 is 1729, and was 1941 and 1308 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. On July 13, the Bethel Test Fishery caught the first Coho Salmon of the 2016 season. The Aniak Test Fishery concluded on July 15 and catch rates from the Aniak Test Fishery will no longer be included in this report.

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/>

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Norton Sound District

Pink salmon have taken over Norton Sound this month with a one day record passage on July 13 at both the Shaktoolik River counting tower and the Unalakleet River weir. The Shaktoolik River crew counted 245,000 pink salmon passing on Wednesday; the Unalakleet River weir crew counted 744,000 pinks passing the same day. In addition, the North River counting tower also counted 245,000 passing on the same day which was the second highest daily count on record.

Sport Fishing: The harvest restrictions for Chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage and the Shaktoolik River drainage will remain in place through August 15, 2016 unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

The Federal public waters of the Unalakleet River upstream from the Chirosky River remain closed until July 31 to the taking of Chinook salmon by Federal subsistence regulation. This closure affects all users.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing periods are being set in consultation with the buyer in regards to plant capacity for handling of the pink salmon. The pink catch versus the chum catch was 8 to 1 in the most recent opening. The commercial catch this season to July 14 is 55 sockeyes, 5,000 chums and 42,000 pinks by 30 permit holders. Chinook salmon cannot be sold and 31 were retained for personal use.

Subsistence Fishing: Effective Thursday, July 14 the subdistrict opened to subsistence salmon gillnet fishing 7 days a week. Beach seining is open 7 days a week in the Unalakleet River drainage with a mesh size of 4 1/2 inches or less. Any Chinook salmon captured must be returned immediately to the water.

North River Tower – Camp J.B. - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game 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 July 15 were 425 kings, 12,000 chums and 500,000 pinks. The cumulative king count

through July 10 (255) was half the 5 and 10-year averages for the same date. The chum count through July 10 (5,500) was the second highest in the 21 years of the project. The pink count through July 10 (170,000) was the best since 2006. The historical average midpoint for king passage is July 15, and the first quarter point for chum passage is July 12.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir – A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, United States BLM and NSEDC with major funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. There are no weir escapement goals yet. The cumulative counts to July 15 were 440 kings, 26,000 chums and 3.5 million pinks. The cumulative king count through July 10 (300) ranks third highest for the same date in the seven-year history of the project. Chum counts through July 10 (18,000) are the second lowest. Pink counts were running over 100,000 a day early in the week and is expected to easily surpass the record 1.6 million counted last year. The historical average midpoint for kings and chums at the weir is July 15.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing periods are being set in consultation with the buyer in regards to plant capacity for handling of the pink salmon. The pink catch versus the chum catch was 5 to 1 in the most recent opening. The commercial catch this season to July 14 is 60 sockeyes, 5,000 chums and 9,000 pinks by 14 permit holders. Chinook salmon cannot be sold and 10 were retained for personal use.

Subsistence Fishing: Effective Thursday, July 14 the subdistrict opened to subsistence salmon gillnet fishing 7 days a week. Beach seining is open 7 days a week in the Shaktoolik River drainage with a mesh size of 4 1/2 inches or less. Any Chinook salmon captured must be returned immediately to the water.

Shaktoolik Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals yet established. Cumulative counts to July 15 were 350 kings, 14,000 chums and 1 million pinks. The tower has only been in operation for three years. The cumulative king count through July 10 (330) is the lowest and trails last year's count by 150 kings. The chum count through July 10 (12,000) is average and double last year. The pink count through July 10 (435,000) is the highest compared to the other years.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Commercial Fishing: The current commercial fishing schedule consists of daily 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. to midnight except for Wednesday which is closed to commercial fishing. Gillnets are restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less and 100 fathoms in length. The commercial catch to July 14 is 75 kings, 50 sockeyes, 7,000 chums, 9,000 pinks and 3 silvers by 12 permit holders. Kings cannot be sold but can be retained for personal use.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC and ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts to July 15 were 3,300 kings, 37,000 chums and 60,000 pinks. The cumulative king count through July 10 (3,100) is the second highest in the 6-year project history. Through July 10, the chum (25,000) and pink salmon (7,500) counts are in the middle.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

Commercial Fishing: The current commercial fishing schedule consists of daily 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. to midnight except for Thursday which is closed to commercial fishing. Gillnets are restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less and 100 fathoms in length. The commercial catch to July 14 is 30 kings, 149 sockeyes, 3,700 chums and 10,500 pinks by 29 permit holders. Kings cannot be sold but can be retained for personal use.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Kwiniuk River Tower – 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). Cumulative counts to July 15 were 130 kings, 7,400 chums and 1.1 million pinks. The average historical midpoint for kings and pinks is July 9. The third quarter point for chums is July 12.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: The current commercial fishing schedule consists of daily 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. to midnight except for Tuesday which is closed to commercial fishing. Gillnets are restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less and 100 fathoms in length. The commercial catch to July 14 is 10 kings, 100 sockeyes, 4,600 chums and 7,500 pinks by 8 permit holders. Kings cannot be sold but can be retained for personal use.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts to July 15 were 800 kings, 60,000 chums and 400,000 pinks. This is the third year of the project. The king count through July 10 (730) is half of last year's count. The chum count through July 10 (50,000) is in the middle. The pink count through July 10 (140,000) is slightly above the even-year run in 2014.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Aerial Surveys have shown hundreds of thousands of pink salmon in several Nome area rivers. On Wednesday, July 13, nearly 50,000 pink salmon passed through the Nome River weir, and another 100,000 pinks were estimated in the lower river. The historical midpoint for pink salmon passage at many of the weirs is the third week of July.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened in the Nome subdistrict for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Saturday, July 9 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 10. Only two permit holders fished this first period so catches are kept confidential until more permit holders participate.

Subsistence Fishing: Effective 10 a.m. Thursday, July 14 the Nome Subdistrict was opened to subsistence salmon net fishing seven days a week for the remainder of July. Beach seines, cast nets, dip nets and set gillnets can be used in State managed waters for subsistence fishing. Nets can only be used in subsistence areas. Those fresh water subsistence salmon areas are shown on the backs of the subsistence salmon permits.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project, has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative counts to July 15 were 800 chums and 18,000 pinks. The counts through July 10 of 300 chums and 400 pinks were the highest passage of chums and pinks for the same date in the four year project history. The historical first quarter point for chums is July 15.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. Cumulative counts to July 15 were 13,000 chums and 3,000 pinks. The chum count for through July 10 (9,000) is the second highest in the 20-year project history. The historical average midpoint of the chum passage is July 14. The pink count through July 10 (900) was the second lowest all time for an even-numbered year. In the past, the Eldorado River could have a poor pink run while the adjacent Flambeau River could have a huge run. The ADF&G is planning on beginning aerial surveys soon depending on the weather.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The cumulative counts to July 15 were 2,700 chums, 200,000 pinks and 35 sockeyes. The chum count through July 10 (1,600) was the highest in the 24-year history of the project. The historical average first quarter point past the weir is July 12 for pinks and July 15 for chums.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The cumulative counts to July 15 were 1,300 chums, and 12,000 pinks. The chum count through July 10 (380) was the third highest in 20 years. The historical average first quarter point past the weir for chums and pinks is July 15.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence gillnet and beach seining are open 7 days a week in the district.

The Pilgrim River has been experiencing heavy fishing pressure beginning with the 4th of July weekend. 357 Pilgrim River permits had been issued by Sunday, July 10. Last year's records of 377 permits is expected to fall if the sockeye run continues to improve. Prior to July 14, subsistence catch limits of sockeye salmon had been set at 25 sockeyes per household. Historically one-third of the sockeye salmon run has passed the Pilgrim River weir by mid-July. Over 7,000 sockeyes have now passed the weir. Run timing projections indicate a final count of over 20,000 sockeye salmon for the season. The escapement goal range at Salmon Lake is 4,000 to 8,000 sockeyes observed by aerial survey. A survey Wednesday, July 13 estimated over 3,000 sockeyes in Salmon lake and Grand Central River Therefore, ADF&G has waived sockeye catch limits on the Pilgrim River effective Thursday, July 14, 2016.

Pilgrim River Weir –A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 4,000 – 8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The cumulative counts to July 15 were 20 kings, 5,000 chums, 600 pinks, and 7,000 sockeyes. The sockeye count through July 10 (4,500) was in the middle with six years higher and seven years lower in 14 years of weir counts. The historical average first quarter point of the sockeye run is July 13 and the midpoint is July 18. Last year's midpoint was July 22.

Kotzebue District

Commercial salmon fishing opened in the Kotzebue District Sunday, July 10 for one 8 hour period from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. The buyer is planning on having daily eight hour openings depending on airplane capacity to move the fish out of Kotzebue. Consequently, commercial salmon fishing reopened for 8 hour periods Monday, July 11 through Friday, July 15 with no fishing on Saturday, July 16. At the request of the buyer, Friday's 8 hour opening was later extended for an additional 2 hours from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Catches for the first opening (Sunday, July 10) were slow due largely to weather – 1,354 chum salmon caught by 11 permit holders. Rough sea conditions may have reduced fishing effort. Thursday's catch was 5,300 chums by 30 permit holders. Overall, the catch for the first week of 18,700 chums has been less than two-thirds of last year's catch for the same time period. The average number of permit holders was also down by one-third from last year. Commercial fishing is expected to resume Sunday, July 17.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is scheduled to start the third week of July.

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

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