

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 18 – July 24, 2016. Report #9
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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

Sitka and Hoonah Area

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 21st, 22 Sockeye Salmon have been counted and about 1,410 have been harvested in the bay. The run timing is largely driven by stream flow and Sockeye Salmon 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 Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,344 Sockeye Salmon 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 21st, 10,608 Sockeye Salmon were counted passing the weir with 77 passing on July 21st. Based on historic run timing and magnitude, the projected escapement is about 28,000. In accordance with the Redoubt Lake management plan, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has increased the individual/household Sockeye Salmon 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 Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake.

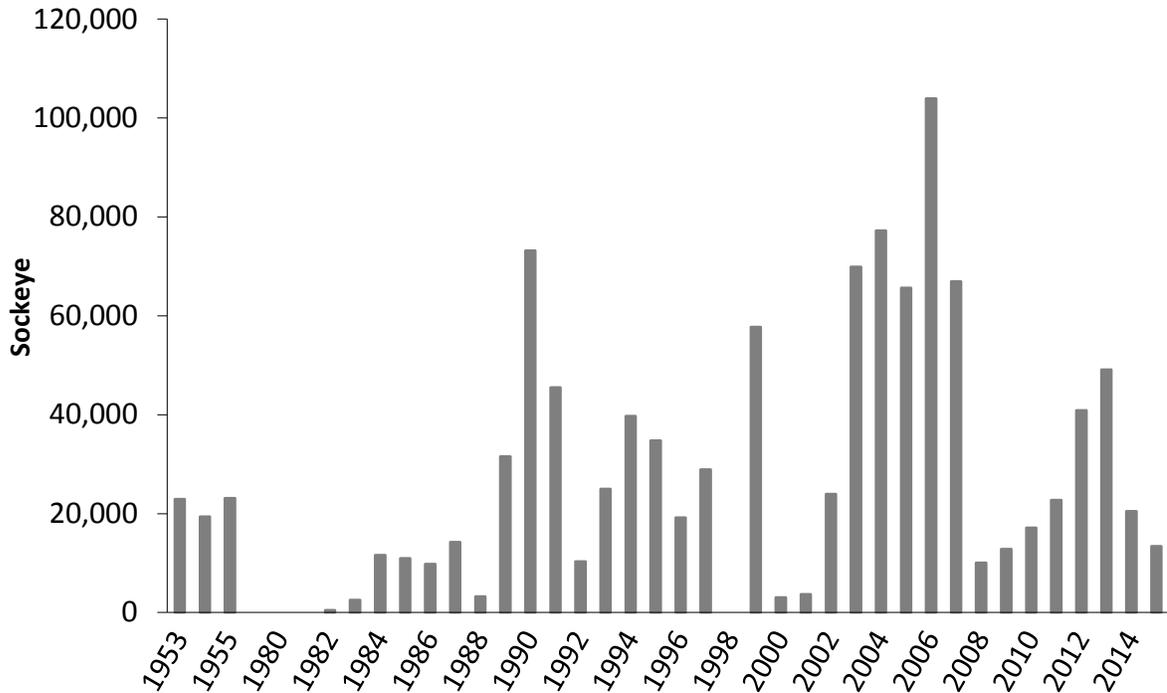


Figure 1. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2015. The weir was not operated in 1998.

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 21st, 161 Sockeye Salmon were counted at the trap bringing the season total to 1,349. Around 500 Sockeye Salmon have been harvested in the State subsistence fishery in the bay. The annual subsistence fishery closure (July 14-22) to protect the early portion of the run is ending and harvest will resume. 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 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

Stat Week 30, ending July 23

There have been 123 fishing permits issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery. Weather, river conditions and catch per unit of effort for Sockeye Salmon continue to be good. The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest is 45 large Chinook, no Coho and 1,840 Sockeye Salmon. Chinook and Sockeye Salmon appear to be passing the slide area on the Tahltan River and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is conducting an evaluation to assist in planning the appropriate way to alter this area prior to next season. The preseason forecast for Stikine River Sockeye Salmon was 223,000 fish, well above the recent ten years average of 172,000 fish and current projections indicate the forecast will be close to the actual return. Pink salmon runs passing through the test fishery at the entrance to Frederick Sound are weaker than normal as indicated by continued lower than average test fish performance. Early indications of Pink Salmon escapement to the Region are normal for Southern Southeast and below normal for Northern Southeast. The current regional power troll Coho Salmon catch rates for this

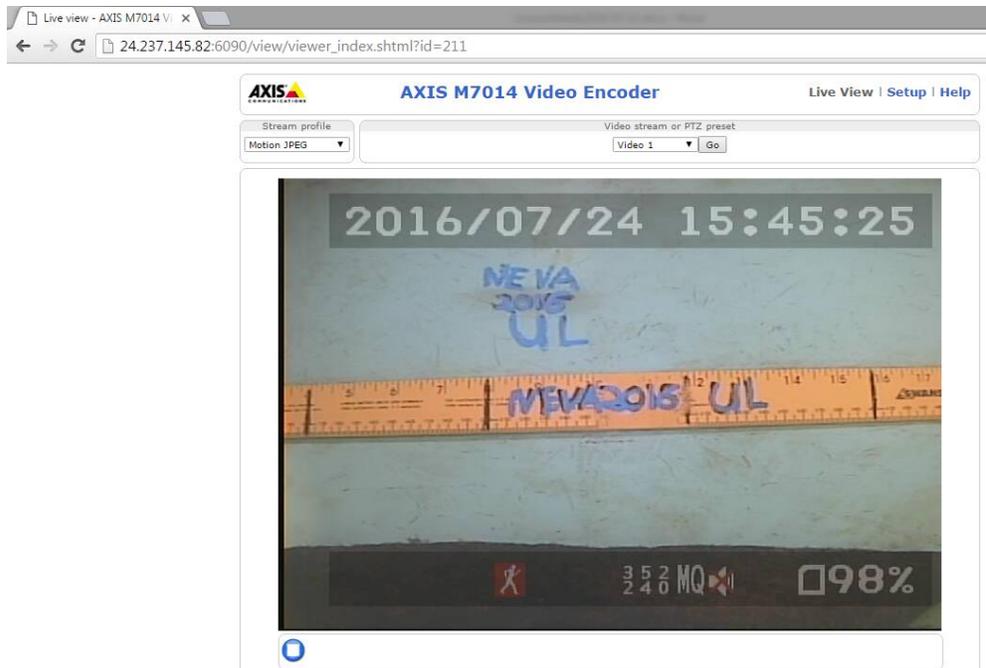
week (Stat Wk. 29), at 144/boat/day, are above the 2015, the 5-year, and 10-year averages

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska

Yakutat. As of July 21, ADF&G personnel have counted 281 large Chinook salmon through their picket weir on the lower Situk River. Past weir counts suggest that about 85% of the Chinook salmon have escaped for the season and the end-of-season count will be around 325 fish which will be below the lower end of ADF&G's 450 to 1,050 escapement goal range. Almost 44,000 sockeye salmon have been counted through the Situk River weir through July 21. Past weir counts suggest that about 75% of the sockeye salmon have now passed through the weir and the end-of-season count will be near the middle of the 30,000 to 70,000 escapement goal range.

Northern Inside areas of Southeast Alaska. The wild Pink Salmon and hatchery Chum Salmon runs have been weak this season. Commercial purse seine openings have been limited to 15-hour openings at Point Augusta each Sunday. The Amalga Harbor special hatchery harvest area was opened to seining on July 17 and 21.

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 260 Sockeye Salmon have escaped into the lake to date. Water levels have been too low for Sockeye Salmon to easily swim up the stream and into the lake. We have installed a wireless network that allows off-site monitoring of the weirs and video chutes to anyone with internet or cellular coverage. **Live video from cameras in the video chutes can be accessed using Google Chrome (and some other browsers) by entering "24.137.145.82:6090" in the address bar and "guest" in both the User Name and Password fields.** The Axis GUI allows you to view the four cameras, or "video streams", independently or in a quad view. All four cameras will not always be streaming live.



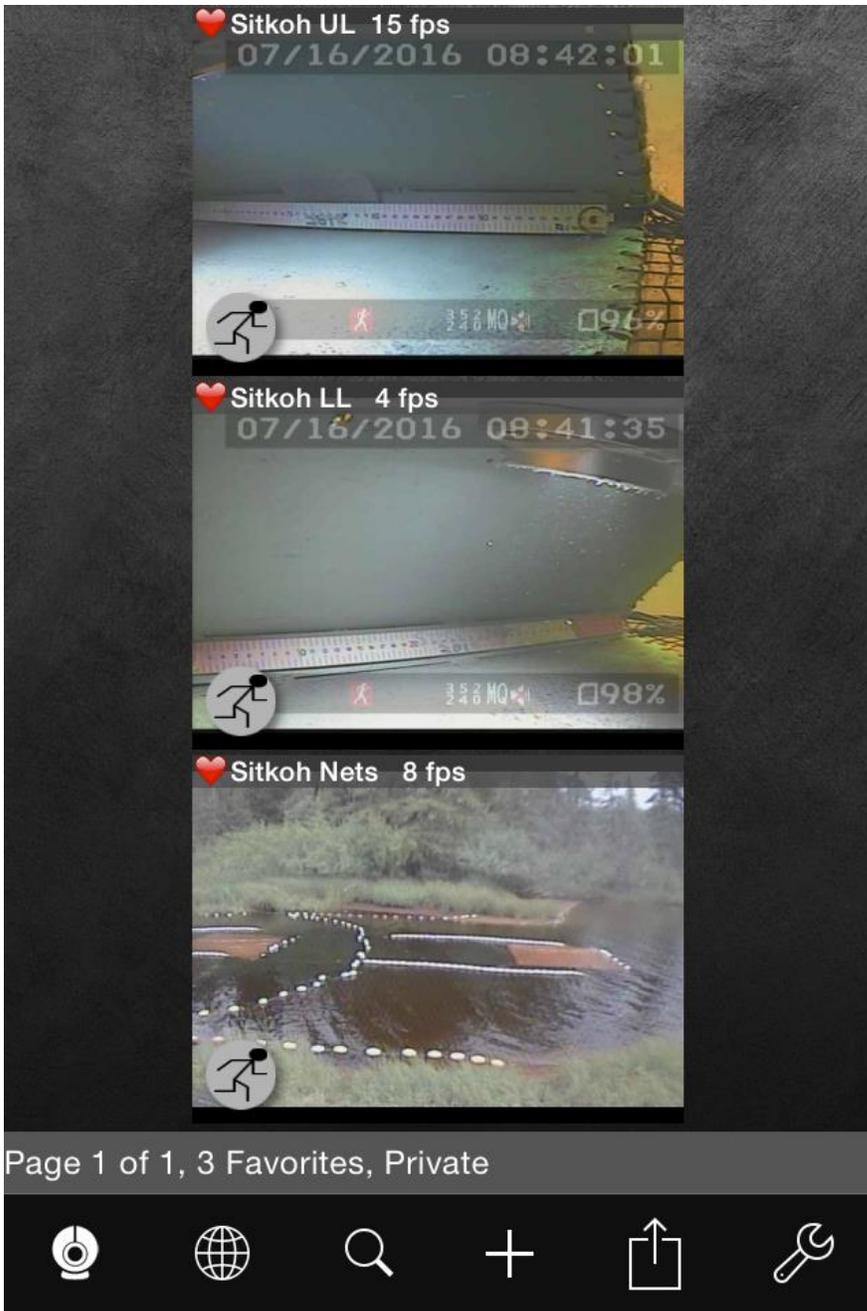
Screen shot of the video stream from Neva Lake’s video weirs. Project personnel will now be counting fish through the video chutes by reviewing motion triggered video footage streamed over our intranet to their cabin in Excursion Inlet. A bridge closure now makes it harder for personnel to routinely get to the project site.

Kook Lake. Personnel from the Angoon Community Association (ACA) have been operating a pair of video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake since June 26. As of July 22, 1,366 sockeye salmon have escaped into the lake.



Aerial view of the pair of block nets and video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake, 2016.

Sitkoh Lake. A pair of remotely monitored video net weirs were installed at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake on June 30th. The ACA project personnel who work at Kook Lake do the video review and fish counting from both the Kook and Sitkoh video weirs. No Sockeye Salmon had entered Sitkoh Lake as of July 22. **Live video of the project site can be accessed using Google Chrome (and some other browsers) by entering “24.237.128.227:8081” in the address bar and “guest” in both the User Name and Password fields. The Samsung encoder GUI will likely ask you to run a “Network Camera Webviewer” plug-in. Live video from the lower net/chutes left camera can be viewed at “24.237.128.227:8084” and live video from the upper net/chutes right camera can be viewed at “24.237.128.227:8082”.** All four cameras will not always be streaming live. We also use IP camera viewer apps for Apple and Android mobile devices to monitor cameras at both Neva and Sitkoh video weirs anywhere we have cellular or wireless communications.



Screen grab of iPhone running an IP camera view app of cameras from Sitkoh Lake

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area

The 2016 Federal subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas is on-going. To date, 213 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 ongoing. 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 146 Sockeye Salmon counted to date.

Commercial seining is ongoing for Chum Salmon in a 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 Salmon began July 1 summer. The commercial troll fishery for Chinook Salmon has been closed since July 6 and is now primarily targeting Coho Salmon in non-terminal harvest areas. Commercial harvest to date is 18,310 Chinook Salmon, 150,125 Sockeye Salmon, 120,700 Coho Salmon, 3,190,700 Pink Salmon and 947,600 Chum Salmon from Districts 1-4.

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

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907) 772-5930, robertlarson@fs.fed.us

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

Out of office, will submit summary next week.

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

Harvest of 871 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 23. Harvest of 78 Sockeye Salmon has been reported for the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery through July 23. Totals of 148 Kenai River permits, 42 Kasilof River permits, and 13 Designated Fisher permits have been issued through July 23.

Through July 23, a total of 9,778 late-run Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Russian River weir. Through July 23, a total of 728,080 late-run Kenai River Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar at river mile 19 and a total of

175,768 Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar on the Kasilof River.

A total of 13,233 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 21.

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

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

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

The Sockeye Salmon runs around Kodiak Island have continued to be relatively strong over the past few weeks. Management practices for the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers switched from the early to late run Sockeye Salmon on July 16. The Karluk River late run is very slow at this time, with only 8,534 Sockeye Salmon being recorded as of July 20. The Ayakulik River late run Sockeye Salmon started slow but has continued to build with 13,952 fish being recorded as of July 20.

The Chinook Salmon runs on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers met their respective escapement goals for the first time since 2012, with 3,316 Chinook Salmon being recorded on the Karluk River and 4,517 Chinook Salmon being recorded on the Ayakulik River.

Subsistence needs of many villagers around Kodiak have either met or exceeded their goals for harvesting Sockeye Salmon. Residents of Kodiak had a much harder time due to the Sockeye Salmon run being sporadic. Catch per unit effort was very low for those individuals stationed at the mouth of the Buskin River. In the past many Kodiak residents tried to subsistence fish within the Pasagshak Bay but this run has failed to materialize. In an effort to protect this fishery, ADF&G has widened the restrictions to the outer marker at the mouth of the bay. Due to these poor returns, subsistence users along the road system who normally rely on this fishery will have to wait for Coho Salmon for their needs.

The strong run of Sockeye Salmon at Litnik has faded and residents are now shifting their focus to Coho and Pink Salmon. Most residents of Port Lions have harvested the Sockeye Salmon they need.

Any reports of subsistence activities will be reported during the upcoming week.

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

Bristol Bay:

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
Kvichak	2,000,000 – 10,000,000
Wood River	800,000 – 1,800,000
Nushagak	370,000 – 900,000
Igushik	150,000 – 400,000

As of July 14, The Egegik District has a cumulative escapement of 1.5 million and a commercial harvest of 6.2 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing openings are scheduled and extended for drift and set gillnets. The fall fishing schedule will commence on July 25. The fall fishing schedule is 9:00 am Monday to 9:00 am Friday. The Ugashik District cumulative escapement is 913,000 with a cumulative harvest is 4.2 million Sockeye Salmon on July 14. As of July 14, the Naknek River escapement is 1.2 million and the Kvichak River escapement is 3.2 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing openings are currently scheduled and continuous fishing with drift and set gillnet gear will occur until August 1 when the fall fishing schedule will commence. The fall fishing schedule is 9:00 am Monday to 9:00 am Friday. As of July 22, the Nushagak River escapement is above 3.2 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial harvest for the Nushagak District is 7.9 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing with set and drift gillnets remains open until further notice in the Nushagak Section. Escapement monitoring for the Nushagak and Wood Rivers has ceased. Announcement switching management from Sockeye Salmon to Pink and Coho Salmon will occur in the following week. The Wood River escapement was 975,585 and the Igushik River escapement is 167,286 Sockeye Salmon as of July 12. Stock composition estimates for Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon populations are based on 190 fish sampled at Port Moller on July 9-10. Prevalent stocks are Ugashik (29.5%), Egegik (20.5%), and Kvichak (16.9%). Results for all stocks can be found here:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.bbaysockeye_results.

The Togiak run is considered to have late run timing. As of July 21, the commercial harvest is 417,000 Sockeye Salmon with an escapement count at the Togiak Tower of

62,550. The Togiak District Salmon Management Plan calls for a Sockeye Salmon escapement of 150,000 counted past the Togiak Tower.

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 414,288 early run and 142,961 late run Sockeye Salmon and 1,536 Chinook Salmon as of July 21. As of July 21, 2016 the commercial catch is estimated at 1 million Sockeye Salmon, 8,635 Chinook Salmon, 54,260 Pink Salmon, and 68,521 Chum Salmon. Stock composition on the Sockeye Salmon escapement is 19.9% early run and 80.1% late run based on 190 fish on July 17. Commercial fishing periods of 48 hours in duration are scheduled. Subsistence fishing is closed for salmon 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours following a commercial fishing period.

Alaska Peninsula:

The commercial salmon fishing season in the western portion of the Ilnik Section and an eastern portion of the Three Hills Section will remain closed. The remaining portions of the Three Hills and Ilnik Sections, as well as Port Moller Bight and Bear River sections remain open to commercial salmon fishing. Specific fishing locations and timing, open to commercial fishing, should be verified by the ADFG Port Moller Office.

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 has ended in the lower Yukon. Management has switched 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 past the midpoint of passage 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 180,000 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 conservative management was based on the expectation that the 2016 Chinook Salmon run size would likely be near the lower end of this range. Chinook Salmon fishing was closed during passage of the first two pulses while early subsistence fishing opportunities 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 had 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 were later based on in-season assessment as managers gained confidence in the assessment information. An early Fall Chum Salmon pulse entered the river this week and was mixed with late Summer Chum Salmon. Genetic samples will need to be processed before an estimate of Fall Chum Salmon abundance can be made based on the genetic proportion in group of fish passing the sonar counter near Pilot Station.

Assessment Information

The Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon runs are over in the lower Yukon. The final day of summer season passage estimates at the Pilot Station sonar was July 18. The cumulative Pilot Station sonar Chinook salmon passage of 175,500 through July 18 is near the average passage of 178,300. The estimated passage of summer chum past the sonar through July 18 is 1,919,500, above the median of 1,667,000. The Eagle sonar began early on July 1 and has an estimated Chinook salmon passage of 51,400 fish through July 23. This is well above the average of 21,900 for this date even taking into account the early start date of the project. This passage is above the minimum Canadian escapement goal of 42,500 and is expected to support the Canadian TAC harvest share. Chinook Salmon pulses one, two, and three are into Canada with pulse four is currently near the Border.

Most escapement projects are past their peak passage dates. Information presented is through July 23. The E.F. Andreafsky weir has an estimated passage of 2,639 Chinook Salmon, below the average of 3,933 and within the escapement goal range of 2,100 to 4,900. The observed total passage of Summer Chum Salmon through July 23 is 50,268, above the median of 46,893 fish, and above the minimum escapement goal of 40,000 Summer Chum. The Anvik sonar has an estimated passage of 329,800 Summer Chum, below the median of 449,700 and below its escapement goal of 350,000-700,000. The Gisasa River weir has an observed total passage of 1,317 Chinook Salmon, below the median of 1,878, and 59,025 Summer Chum, above the median of 34,705. The Henshaw Creek weir has an observed total passage of 1,244 Chinook, above the median of 983, and 248,518 Summer Chum, above the median of 79,720. The Chena and Salcha River tower operations were suspended early due to high water and later pulled due to persistent near bank-full water levels. Secondary sonar operations on both rivers may be able to provide estimates post-season with expectations that both goals were attained.

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 5. 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 District 5. Districts 4 and Subdistricts 5A, 5B, and 5C were then further relaxed to open 5-days per week because no commercial fishing has occurred in those areas for over 5 days as specified in regulations. Subdistrict 5D was opened to 7 days per week after the third pulse had passed.

Forty-nine commercial salmon fishing periods had been opened in Districts 1 and 2 restricted to dip nets and beach seines, early in the season, and restricted to 5.5-inch and 6-inch gillnet gear later in the season when the majority of Chinook Salmon had passed through the lower Yukon. The preliminary commercial harvests for the summer season are 521,843 Summer Chum, 5,350 Chinook Salmon caught but not sold, and 8,255 Chinook Salmon caught and released.

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.

The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) shifted to fall season assessment on July 16. Through July 23, the cumulative CPUE is 273.25 is above the average of 132.19. The

Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) began operations on July 18 and has a cumulative CPUE of 755.57, above the average at this time of 315.57. The Pilot Station sonar shifted to fall season assessment on July 19 and has a cumulative estimated passage of 275,766 Fall Chum Salmon, well above the median estimated passage of 63,100. The first pulse of approximately 200,000 Fall Chum passed the sonar on July 20 through 22.

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 seventh YR DFA teleconference on July 19. 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:

Management of Subsistence Fishing in the Kuskokwim River Reverted to the State of Alaska on July 7th.

Currently, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Emergency Order 3-S-WR-5-16 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 23, 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 660. Cumulative Chinook Salmon CPUE on this date during 2015 and 2014 were 600 and 648, respectively. The cumulative CPUE for Chum Salmon at the BTF as of July 23 was 3,570, compared to 2,443 and 5,937 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. The cumulative sockeye CPUE at the BTF as of July 23 is 2018, and was 2098 and 1334 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon at the BTF as of July 23 was 82, compared to 94 and 154 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. 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

The Chinook Salmon run this season, while projected to be weak, has proven even weaker than expected. Escapement goals are very unlikely to be met.

The Chum Salmon run so far has been average, starting out strong, but becoming much weaker later, indicating a good run of 5-year old Chum Salmon and a poorer than expected run of 4-year old fish.

The Norton Sound Pink Salmon run so far this season has been at a near record level. Based on the historical numbers from the long term counting projects, it may be the second or third highest on record.

The ADF&G forecast for silver salmon is for an above average run.

High water has prevented the crews at the Inglutalik (Subdistrict 4) and Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5) towers from being able to count fish passage beginning on July 18, and at the North River (Subdistrict 6) tower beginning July 19.

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 salmon fishing opened for 10 hours from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Wednesday July 20 in the subdistrict following the last previous opening on Saturday, July 16. Commercial fishing then reopened in the subdistrict for two 16-hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight Thursday and Friday, July 21 and 22. However, effort was initially hampered by weather. Consequently, commercial fishing was extended by two 48-hour periods from 6 p.m. Friday, July 22 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 24 and from 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 26 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 28. Permit holders were restricted to 100 fathoms of gillnet and 6 inches or less stretch mesh size. The commercial catch to July 17 was 105 sockeyes, 6,600 chums, 63,000 pinks and 20 silvers by 35 permit holders.

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 12 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 Chinook; 25,000 Pink; 550-1,100 Coho (aerial survey); and no goal yet established for Chum Salmon. The cumulative counts to July 21 were 510 kings, 16,000 Chum and 1 million Pink Salmon. The cumulative Chinook Salmon count through July 16 (500) was three-quarters the 5 and 10-year averages. The Chum Salmon count through July 16 (15,000) was the highest in the 21 years of the project. The Pink Salmon count through July 16 (1 million) was the third highest. The historical average third-quarter point for Chinook and Chum Salmon passage is July 21.

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 21 were 500 Chinook, 31,000 Chum, 4.9 million Pink, 530 Sockeye and 130 Coho Salmon. The cumulative Chinook Salmon count through July 16 (500) ranked third highest in the seven year history of the project, but the run has also slowed recently. Chum Salmon counts through July 16 (29,000) are the second lowest. The Pink Salmon count through July 16 (4.7 million) destroyed last year's record of 1.6 million. The historical average third-quarter point for Chinook Salmon is July 18, and for Chum Salmon is July 26.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened for 10 hours from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Wednesday July 20 in the subdistrict following the last previous opening on Saturday, July 16. Commercial fishing reopened in the subdistrict for two 16-hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight Thursday and Friday, July 21 and 22. However, effort was initially hampered by weather. Consequently, commercial fishing was extended by two 48-hour periods from 6 p.m. Friday, July 22 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 24 and from 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 26 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 28. Permit holders were restricted to 100 fathoms of gillnet and 6 inches or less stretch mesh size. The commercial catch to July 17 was 115 Sockeye, 7,100 Chum, 15,000 Pink and 1 Coho Salmon by 17 permit holders.

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 12 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 21 were 350

Chinook, 15,000 Chum, 1.2 million Pink and 500 Coho Salmon. The tower has only been in operation for three years. The cumulative Chinook Salmon count through July 16 (350) is the lowest and is two-thirds of last year's passage. The Chum Salmon count through July 16 (14,700) is the lowest. The Pink Salmon count through July 16 (1.2 million) is the highest compared to the other years.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing in the subdistrict was placed on two 48-hour fishing periods from 6 p.m. Friday, July 22 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 24 and from 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 26 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 28. Permit holders were restricted to 100 fathoms of gillnet and 6 inches or less stretch mesh size. The commercial catch to July 17 was 75 Chinook, 55 Sockeye, 7,000 Chum, 10,000 Pink and 5 Coho Salmon by 12 permit holders

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 21 were 3,200 Chinook, 42,000 Chum, 77,000 Pink and 700 Coho Salmon. The cumulative counts through July 16 of Chinook(3,200), Chum (42,000), Pink (76,000) and Coho (639) Salmon are all the second highest in the six year history of the project.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing in the subdistrict was placed on two 48-hour fishing periods from 6 p.m. Friday, July 22 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 24 and from 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 26 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 28. Permit holders were restricted to 100 fathoms of gillnet and 6 inches or less stretch mesh size. The commercial catch to July 17 was 40 Chinook, 200 Sockeye, 4,500 Chum and 16,500 Pink Salmon by 20 permit holders.

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 Chinook; 11,500 – 23,000 Chum; 8,400 Pink; and 650-1,300 Coho Salmon (aerial survey goal). Cumulative counts to July 21 were 130 Chinook, 8,000 Chum, 1.4 million Pink and 18 Coho Salmon. The average historical 90% point for Coho and Pink is July 23, and July 20 for Chum Salmon.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing in the subdistrict was placed on two 48-hour fishing periods from 6 p.m. Friday, July 22 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 24 and from 6

p.m. Tuesday, July 26 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 28. Permit holders were restricted to 100 fathoms of gillnet and 6 inches or less stretch mesh size. The commercial catch to July 17 was 10 Chinook, 115 Sockeye, 4,900 Chum and 10,500 Pink Salmon by 8 permit holders.

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 21 were 820 Chinook, 64,000 Chum, 530,000 Pink and 300 Coho Salmon. This is the third year of the project. The king count through July 16 (800) is half of last year's count and 15% below 2014. The Chum Salmon count through July 16 (61,000) is a little over half of last year and fading fast. The Pink Salmon count through July 16 (460,000) is over double the even-year count in 2014.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened in the Nome subdistrict for one 48-hour period in the subdistrict from 6 p.m. Friday, July 22 until 6 p.m. Sunday July 24. Permit holders were restricted to 100 fathoms of gillnet and 6 inches or less stretch mesh size.

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 21 were 1,200 Chum, 48,000 Pink and 4 Coho Salmon. The counts through July 16 of 950 Chum Salmon is the highest Chum passage for the same date in the four year project history, and 32,000 Pink Salmon was a record. The historical average midpoint for Chum Salmon passage is July 22.

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 21 were 15,000 Chum and 7,500 Pink Salmon. The Chum Salmon count for through July 16 (13,500) was the fourth highest in the 20-year project history, but fading fast. The historical average midpoint of the Chum Salmon passage is July 14. The Pink Salmon count through July 16 (4,500) was the lowest all time for an even-numbered year, and an aerial survey of the adjacent Flambeau River showed a similar poor run of pink Salmon.

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 21 were 3,600 Chum, 300,000 Pink, 50 Sockeye and 6 Coho

Salmon. The Chum Salmon count through July 16 (2,850) was the second highest in the 24-year history of the project, but daily counts have been slowing. The Pink Salmon passage (240,000) is picking up and ranks fourth highest. The historical average midpoint past the weir is July 20 for Pink Salmon and July 22 for Chum Salmon.

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 21 were 1,900 Chum, 32,000 Pink and 10 Sockeye Salmon. The Chum Salmon count through July 16 (1,440) is slowing and ranks fifth highest in the 20 years. The Pink Salmon count through July 16 (15,000) ranks second highest in 20 years. The historical average midpoint past the weir for Chum and Pink Salmon is July 21.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence gillnet and beach seining are open 7 days a week in the district and Sockeye Salmon limits have been waived. A record of 447 Pilgrim River permits have been issued surpassing last year's record of 377 permits issued.

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 4,000 – 8,000 Sockeye Salmon based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The cumulative counts to July 21 were 26 Chinook, 8,000 Chum, 1,300 Pink, and 8,600 Sockeye Salmon. The Sockeye Salmon count through July 16 (8,300) was eighth highest in 14 years of weir counts. The historical average midpoint of the sockeye run is July 18. Last year's midpoint was July 22.

Kotzebue District

Commercial salmon fishing opened Sunday, July 17 on a Sunday through Friday schedule of one 8-hour period per day, 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. However, the Tuesday period was closed when the buyer announced it would not be buying that day. Many fishermen had quit fishing early on Monday because of the weather. Fishing resumed on Wednesday. At the request of the buyer, the Friday schedule was extended by 2 hours to close at 8 p.m., with fishing to be closed on Saturday. The July 24 harvest was 15,118 chum salmon by 48 permit holders. The catch and number of permit holders fishing was the highest of the season. The total so far this season is just over 61,000 Chum Salmon. That catch is one-third below last year, and the number of permit holders fishing has averaged one-third less than last year.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The crew started fishing earlier in the week and catches have fallen below average compared to the last several years. However, the three previous years had the three highest catches in the 24-year project history. The crew reports that the Chum Salmon in the net are bright and very big in size. The catch index from the first few days of fishing indicates that the chum salmon run will be adequate to provide for subsistence needs and escapement.

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