

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 30 - September 5, 2015.

Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, George_Pappas@fws.gov
Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

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

SOUTHEAST ALASKA**Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 jpkoller@fs.fed.us

This will be the final summary for the 2015 season. Please contact author with questions or if you require additional information.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was operational July 1st. As of August 31st, 2,428 sockeye have passed the weir while appx. 1,000 have been harvested in the subsistence fishery. In 2014, approximately 10,400 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 4,729 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

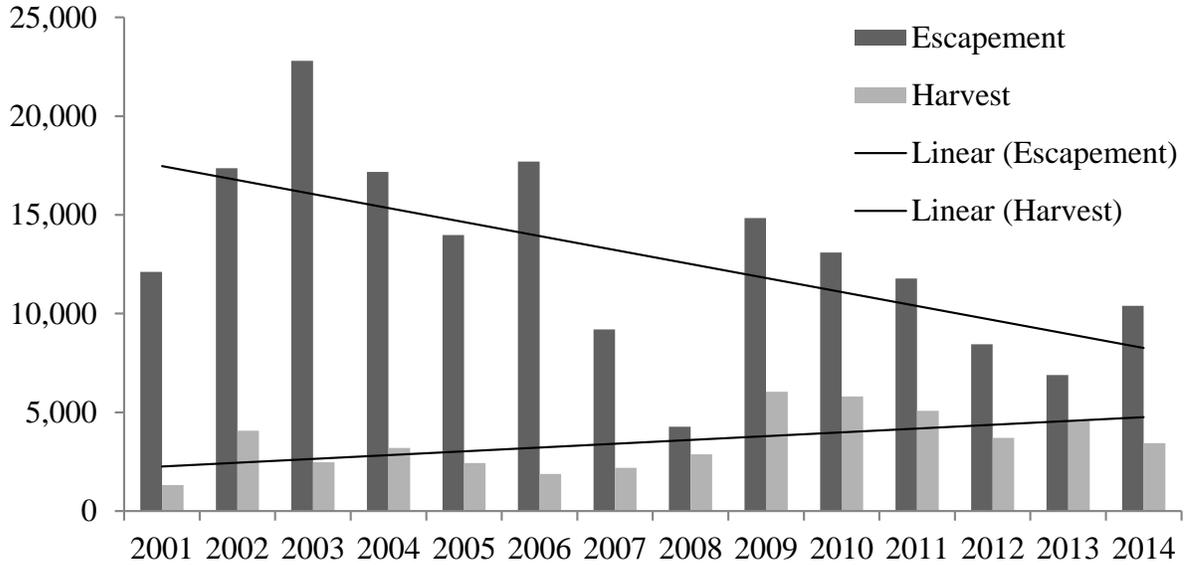


Figure 1. Escapement and harvest of sockeye at Klag Bay, 2001-2014 (Sitka Tribe of Alaska).

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir and video-equipped net weir which were operational June 16th. The weir was removed on August 29th and 12,540 sockeye and 8,946 coho were passed through weir. High water at the weir on July 28th-29th and August 23rd-24th resulted in no fish being passed. The weir was not totally inundated and there is no reason to suspect that fish entered the system uncounted. Coho numbers are seven times higher than the long term average for August 29th. Subsistence harvest is unknown until it is reported to ADF&G. In 2014, an estimated total of 20,549 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. The preliminary subsistence sockeye harvest was 1,313.

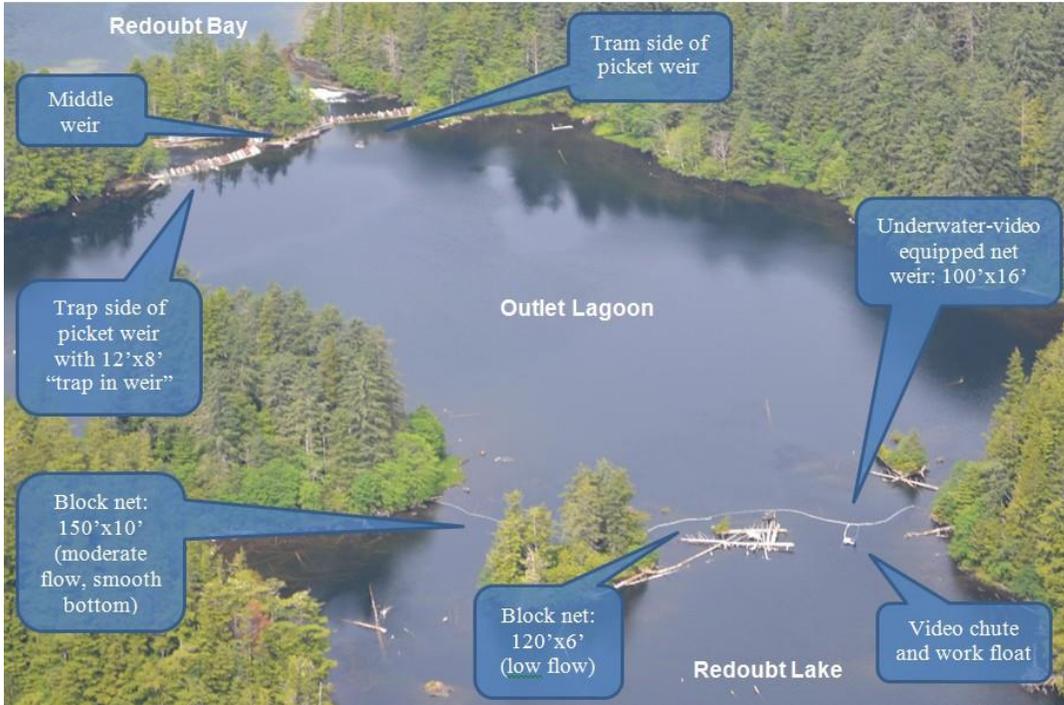


Figure 2. Aerial view (2013) of the outlet lagoon of Redoubt Lake showing the typical locations of the picket weir, net weir and block nets.

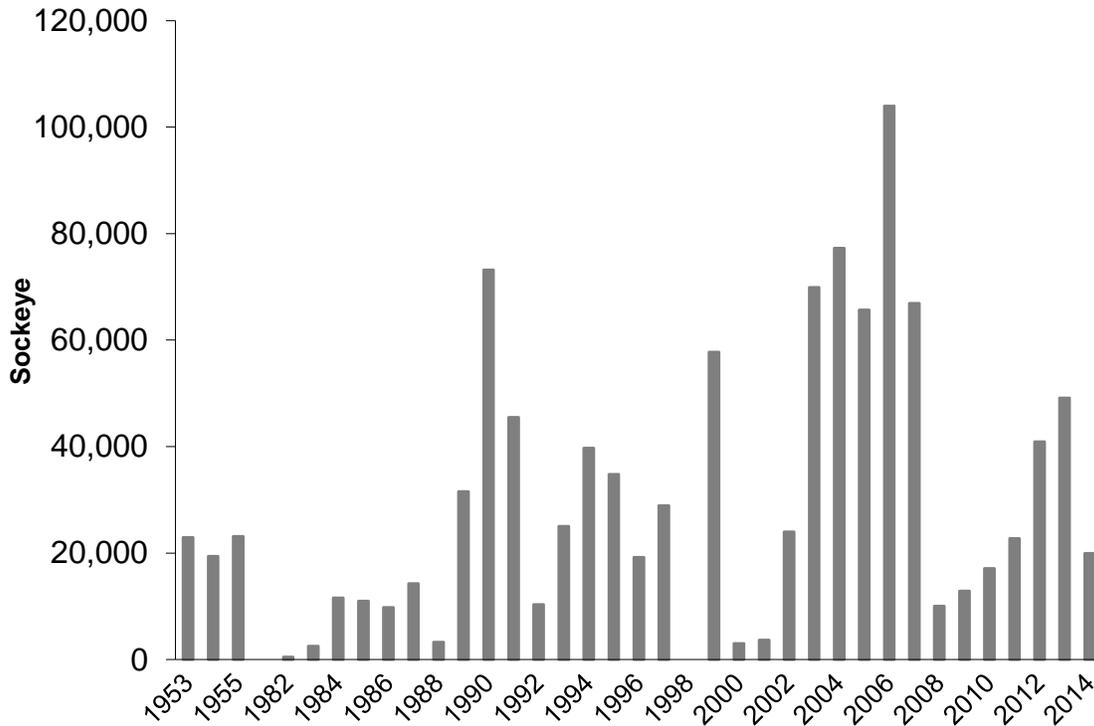


Figure 3. Annual sockeye expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2014. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were operational June 30th. The equipment was removed on August 28th and 1,893 sockeye were trapped above the fish pass while about 1,100 were harvested in the subsistence fishery. Based on the annual average percentage of fish using the fish pass and fish video, we estimate the total escapement is around 4,200. The final escapement estimate in 2014 was 2,748 sockeye while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,542. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 95% of terminal area harvest.

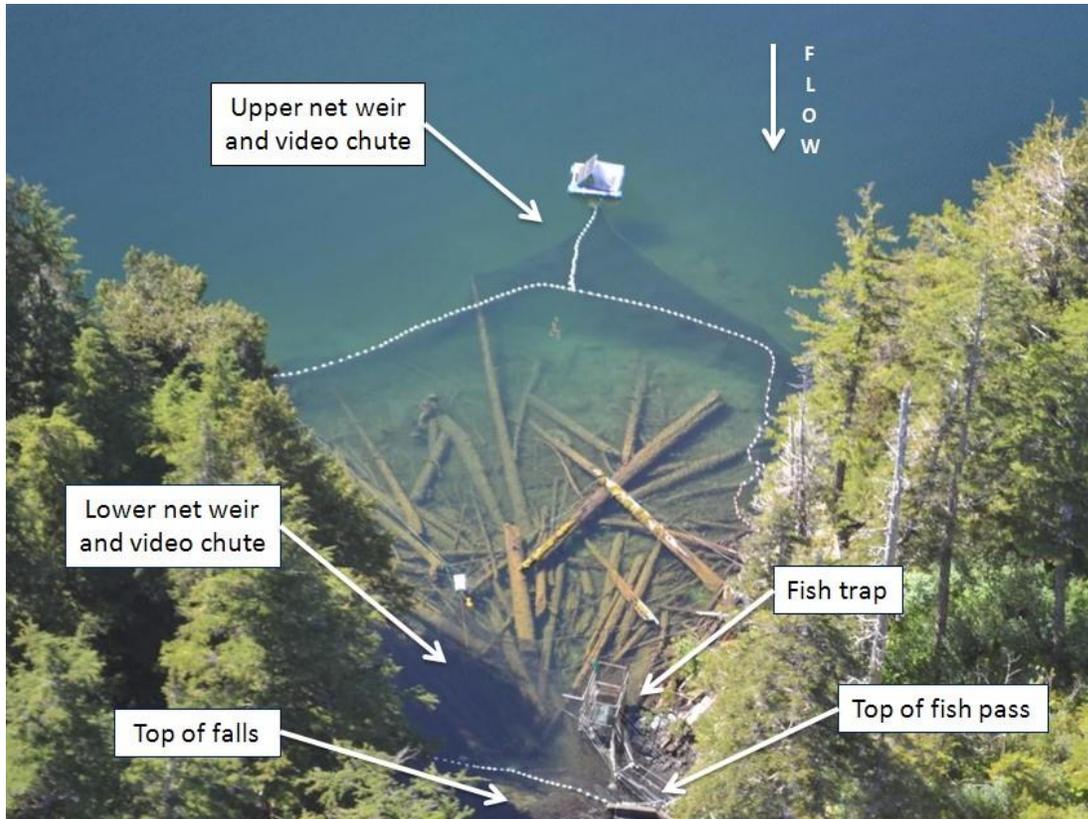


Figure 4. Aerial photo (2013) of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

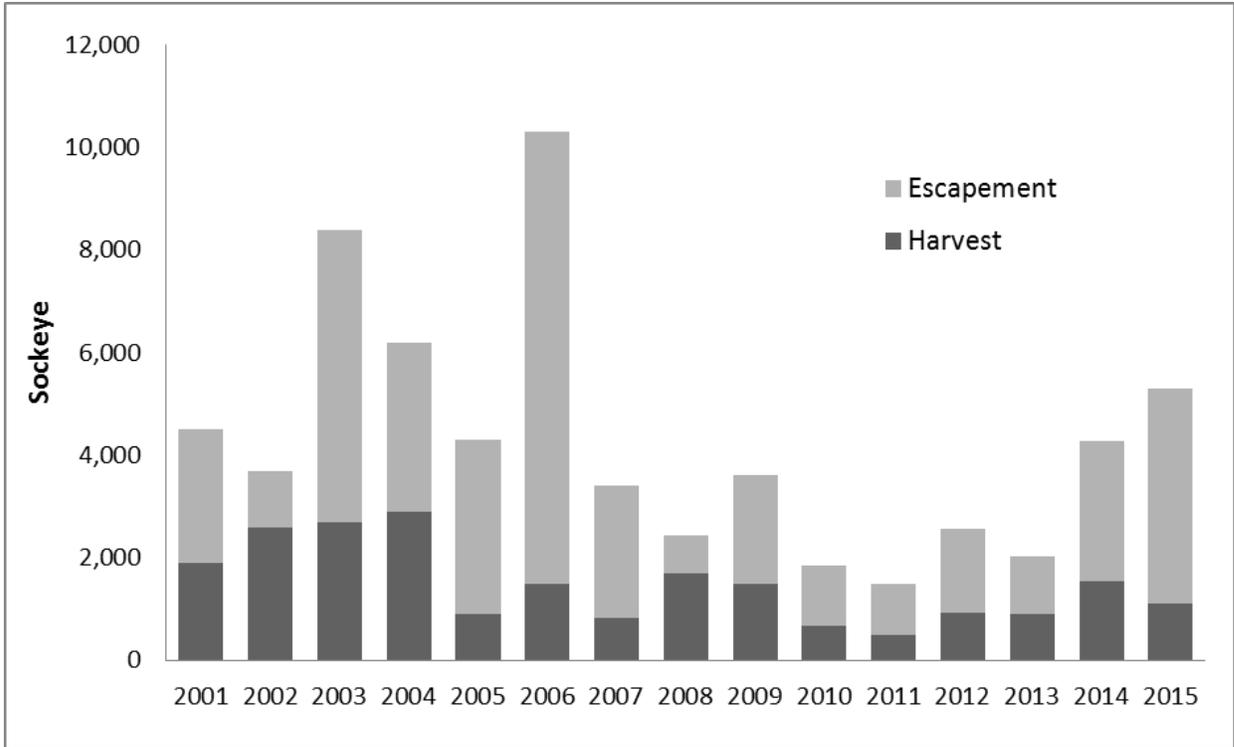


Figure 5. Escapement and harvest of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2015.

*2015 data is preliminary

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

Reporting concluded for 2015 season. Please contact author directly with questions.

The following link is the ADF&G weekly salmon commercial fishery update for Yakutat and Southeast Alaska.

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.salmonfishery_updates

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

Weekly summary expected next week.

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

Reporting concluded for the 2015 season. Please contact author with questions or if you require additional information.

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 – Molly McCormick, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve. (907) 822-7280 Molly_McCormick@nps.gov

The ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the lower Copper River) was pulled on July 27 with a final estimate of 1,341,545 salmon. This estimate is 192% of the projected escapement objective of 700,490 for this date, or 641,055 more salmon. It is the highest escapement counted at the Miles Lake sonar since it started in 1978. An estimate of 4,386 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on the final day of counting.

MILES LAKE SONAR ESTIMATES (TOTAL SALMON)

Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate
1978	107,011	1988	488,398	1998	866,957	2008	614,999
1979	237,173	1989	607,797	1999	848,921	2009	709,330
1980	276,538	1990	581,895	2000	587,592	2010	924,010
1981	535,263	1991	579,435	2001	833,569	2011	914,285
1982	467,306	1992	601,952	2002	819,000	2012	1,271,354
1983	545,724	1993	797,902	2003	695,233	2013	1,267,060

1984	536,806	1994	715,181	2004	669,646	2014	1,218,418
1985	436,313	1995	599,265	2005	854,268	2015	1,341,545
1986	509,275	1996	906,867	2006	959,731		
1987	483,478	1997	1,148,079	2007	926,438		

Commercial harvests in the Copper River District of Prince William Sound so far are:

- 22,771 Chinook
- 1,559,386 sockeye
- 73,290 coho
- 80,408 pink
- 15,065 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict is open and scheduled to remain open throughout the rest of the season – through September 30, 2015. The state and federal fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Eighty-three Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on FWS's online data base plus additional permits that have been issued in NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15th and is expected to remain open until September 30th. 297 Federal Glennallen Subdistrict permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1st.

The Batzulnetas Area fishery opened on May 15 and is expected to remain open until September 30, 2015. Four permits have been issued.

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 27. The crew has counted 8,916 sockeye salmon and no Chinook migrating through the weir as of September 7. The Tanada weir will shut down on September 28.

The Long Lake weir started operating on July 28. The crew has counted 3,632 sockeye and no coho migrating through the weir as of September 4. This weir will run until October 12.

The two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak tagged 2,626 Chinook; 128 were recaptured at the Canyon Creek wheels. The Baird Canyon wheels stopped operating for the season on July 10. The Canyon Creek wheels stopped operating for the season on July 26.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River was installed on June 2. The tower stopped operations for the season on August 6, with a final count of 3,648 Chinook and 23,292 sockeye. The below photos are courtesy of ADF&G.

Effective June 20, 2015, by emergency order of ADF&G, the bag and possession limit for sport-caught sockeye salmon 16 inches or longer in the Copper River drainage increased from 3 to 6.

Five Special Actions have been issued by the park this season:

- delaying the starting date of the Chitina River federal salmon fishery and setting the pre-season schedule for the fishery
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 6 – July 12, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing, and providing the tentative schedule for future fishing periods
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 13-19, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 20-26, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 27- August 2, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing

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>

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Subsistence User's Guide

<http://www.nps.gov/wrst/historyculture/upload/Subsistence%20brochure.pdf>

Prince William Sound Federal Subsistence Regulations including Copper River.

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

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

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

Link to article in the Peninsula Clarion about the smaller-than-average trend for sockeye salmon this season

<http://peninsulaclarion.com/news/2015-06-25/across-state-early-salmon-catches-underweight>

PWS and Copper River Flats – Milo Burcham, Forest Service, Cordova.

(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

Reporting concluded for the 2015 season. Please contact author with questions or if you require additional information.

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

Reporting completed for 2015 season. Contact author with questions or requests.

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
(907) 487-2600/0230 AnneMarie_LaRosa@fws.gov or
Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

Reporting concluded for 2015 season. Please contact author with questions or to request additional information.

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

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Jon Gerken – Acting Inseason Manager Fisheries Branch Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office
Jon_Gerken@fws.gov 907-271-2776

Reporting concluded for 2015 season. Please contact author with questions or to request additional information.

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 closed for the season. Please call the Fairbanks office at (907) 455-1849.

Fall Season Outlook and Management Actions

The fall chum salmon run in the lower Yukon has essentially ended. Based on the in-season run assessment at the Pilot Station sonar the projected fall chum salmon run size is falling between 700,000 to 800,000 fish. This level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and subsistence priorities and provide for commercial harvests.

Subsistence fishermen had been heavily restricted during the summer season and are looking for fall chum to supplement their unfulfilled subsistence salmon needs. Also, wet weather has hindered fishermen's ability to dry fish for both people and dogs. Subsistence salmon fishing has been relaxed in Districts 1, 2, and 3 to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, restricted to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear, except that fishing is closed 12-hours before, during, and 12-hours after each commercial fishing period in Districts 1 and 2. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 4 and 5 has been liberalized to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, with fish wheels and gillnet gear mesh size 7.5-inch or smaller mesh. District 6 remains on their normal regulatory subsistence fishing schedule.

Unfortunately, Porcupine River fall chum salmon stock abundance has been low in recent years when compared to other stocks in the Yukon River drainage. Fall chum salmon escapements into the Canadian Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River, have fallen short of meeting the escapement objective agreed upon by U.S. and Canadian representatives in 3 of the last 5 years despite other Yukon River stocks meeting or exceeding their escapement goals or objectives. In an attempt to improve fall chum escapement into the Canadian portion of the drainage, the department is closing subsistence salmon fishing in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River for the 2015 fall season. At this time, Pilot Station sonar and genetic stock identification are not indicating an abundance of Porcupine River stocks that would warrant maintaining an open subsistence fishery on the Porcupine River.

Fourteen commercial fishing periods have been opened in each of Districts 1 and 2. Commercial fishing in the lower Yukon closes by regulation on September 10; however no additional periods are expected this season. The preliminary fall chum salmon commercial harvest in Districts 1 and 2 is 175,066 fish. This harvest amount is within the

manager's expectations for the projected amount of available surplus. The preliminary coho salmon commercial harvest in Districts 1 and 2 is 117,281 fish. This is the highest coho salmon commercial harvest on record, beating last year's record of 103,352 coho and higher than expected based upon in-season assessment information. Two commercial fishing periods were opened in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C with 1,048 fall chum salmon harvested. Four commercial fishing periods were opened in Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C with 606 fall chum and 28 coho salmon harvested.

Fall Season Assessment Information

Assessment through September 3 shows the cumulative CPUE at the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) is 1,258.26, slightly below the median of 1283.64. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) has a cumulative CPUE of 1,785.55, below the median at this date of 1,883.31. The Pilot Station sonar ended operations on August 31. The sonar has a preliminary final cumulative estimated passage of 547,257 fall chum, below the median estimated passage of 622,049. Taking into account the harvests below the sonar, the Pilot Station sonar reconstructed passage is 748,193 fall chum, slightly below the median of 772,042. Six pulses of fall chum salmon have passed through the lower Yukon. The first pulse fish are entering their spawning streams. The second and third pulses are crossing the Canadian border this week. The fourth and largest is in middle Subdistrict 5-D, the fifth pulse is passing by the village of Ruby at this time, and the sixth and final pulse is in lower Subdistrict 4-A. The Pilot Station genetic stock identification project is showing fairly typical stock proportions across the entire run with the Canadian stock contribution somewhat higher than usual in the late portion of the season.

Coho typically enter the Yukon River during the second half of the fall chum run. Through September 3, the cumulative CPUE at the LYTF is 493.04, above the median of 363.90. The MVTF has a cumulative CPUE of 1,577.62 is above the median of 887.74. The Pilot Station sonar has a preliminary final cumulative estimated passage of 97,582 coho salmon, below the median estimated passage of 121,023. Taking into account the harvests below the sonar, the Pilot Station sonar reconstructed passage is 189,612 coho salmon, above the median of 139,993. The in-season run outlook is for an above average coho salmon run. Managers have been somewhat confounded by the proportion of coho salmon caught in some commercial openings that has been significantly greater than the estimated passage proportions by the Pilot Station sonar project.

Consultation

Weekly YRDFA teleconferences began on June 2 and the final teleconference of the season occurred on August 25. A review of the fall season management was provided during a Yukon Advisory Group (YAG) meeting Monday, July 13. The ADF&G fall season manager attended a fishery meeting in person, in Fort Yukon, on August 12, to closing subsistence salmon fishing on the Porcupine River. Furthermore, the ADF&G manager arranged and participated via teleconference in a discussion as an agenda item during a Tribal meeting in Fort Yukon on August 17 which gained local support for this action.

Kuskokwim River – Neil Lalonde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Neil_Lalonde@fws.gov or
Robert Sundown (907) 543-1007 Robert_Sundown@fws.gov

Reporting concluded for the 2015 season. Please contact author with questions or if you require additional information.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

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

NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

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

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

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

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

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

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

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

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

Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.

(907) 443-2522 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

This will be the final summary submitted for the 2015 season. Please contact author if you have questions or require additional information.

Commercial salmon fishing season is coming to a close this season, so this will be the last report from Northwest Alaska for this year.

Norton Sound District

There was a record breaking harvest of 151,000 silver salmon in the commercial fishery this year. This catch surpassed the previous record of 131,000 silvers in 2006. Over 100,000 silver salmon have been harvested in the Unalakleet Subdistrict alone.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6) and Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: Effective 6:00 p.m. Sunday, August 23, The Unalakleet and Shaktoolik subdistricts reopened on a schedule of two 48-hour periods per week until the conclusion of the fishing season on Sunday, September 6. However, the ADF&G, at the request of the salmon buyer and fishermen, extended the current period in the **Unalakleet Subdistrict** by an additional 48 hours so that it will now close by emergency order at 6:00 p.m., Sunday, September 6. The additional fishing time in the Unalakleet Subdistrict was based on above average abundance of silver salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage and continued buyer interest. Subsistence needs will not be negatively impacted by this extension. This action did not apply to the **Shaktoolik Subdistrict** which closed for the season at 6:00 p.m., Friday, September 4.

The commercial catch this season for the **Unalakleet Subdistrict** should be record setting after this period.

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 count through September 4 was 7,500 silvers.

The commercial catch this season in the **Shaktoolik Subdistrict** will end up the fourth best ever.

Shaktoolik Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative count through September 4 was 11,000 silvers.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4), Elim (Subdistrict 3), and Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: Effective 6:00 p.m. Saturday, August 22, The Norton Bay, Elim and Golovin subdistricts reopened on a schedule of two 48-hour periods per week for the remainder of the season. The Norton Bay season ends September 6. The Elim and Golovin subdistricts close on August 31 by regulation. Silver salmon harvests should approximate or exceed 150,000 silvers for the season.

The commercial catch this season in the **Norton Bay Subdistrict** is the second best on record for silver salmon and a record harvest could have easily happened except that that a storm system kept fishermen on the beach for much of last week.

The commercial catch this season in the **Elim Subdistrict** is the second best on record for silver salmon and a record harvest could have easily happened except that a storm system kept fishermen on the beach for much of last week.

Kwiniuk River Tower – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 300-550 kings; 11,500 – 23,000 chums; 8,400 pinks; and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative count through September 4 was 7,100 silvers. The project is done for the season.

The commercial silver salmon catch this season in the **Golovin subdistrict** was the sixth best.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Subsistence Fishing: Beach seining is no longer allowed. Subsistence set gillnet fishing in the marine waters of the subdistrict is open seven days a week. There are no catch limits when fishing in marine waters. The fresh water subsistence area set gillnet schedule is from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday and from 6:00 p.m. Thursday until 6:00 p.m. Saturday. Catch limits vary by river, and fishermen should check the backs of their permits. The chum salmon limit has been waived in the Nome and Snake rivers.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 3,200 pink salmon. The cumulative count through September 4 was 920 silvers.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The cumulative count through September 4 was 640 silvers.

Kotzebue District

The Kotzebue commercial salmon fishery closed on Sunday, August 23 with 306,000 chum salmon harvested for the season. A second buyer bought for one period on Sunday, August 23. This year's harvest finished at the low end of the department's forecast range of 300,000 to 500,000 chum salmon. However, this was the third highest catch in over 25 years, and it ranked twelfth highest in the 54-year history of the fishery. There were 103 permit holders who fished – the most since 1994. The ex-vessel value was approximately \$825,000 which was a big drop from last year's 2.9 million. However, it was still the fourth highest in 27 years without adjusting for inflation.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project completed operations and the chum catch index was the fourth highest in the 23-year project history.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs11/norton.pdf>