

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20-26, 2015.

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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 – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

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

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest

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

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

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

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:

- 22,772 Chinook
- 1,559,721 sockeye
- 124,969 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 9,267 sockeye salmon and no Chinook migrating through the weir as of September 25. The second of two annual otolith sampling trips to Tanada Lake took place last week when samples were taken from 26 sockeye carcasses. Otoliths are small, free-floating bones found in the fish’s head and used to determine the age of the fish. The Tanada weir will shut down on September 28.

The Long Lake weir started operating on July 28. The crew has counted 9,488 sockeye and three coho migrating through the weir as of September 25. This weir will run until October 12.



Long Lake weir recording, 9/13/15 at 8 PM, 5 minute long video clip

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.

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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

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

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

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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

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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.
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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 ended. Managers are continuing to monitor upriver escapement projects as well as the border passage at the Eagle sonar. 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 were looking for fall Chum Salmon to supplement their unfulfilled subsistence salmon needs. Subsistence salmon fishing during the fall season was relaxed in Districts 1, 2, and 3 to their normal 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, with gillnet gear relaxed to the standard 7.5-inch maximum mesh size, except that fishing was 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 was liberalized to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, with fish wheels and gillnet gear mesh relaxed to the standard 7.5-inch maximum mesh size. District 6 remains on their normal regulatory subsistence fishing schedule. Unfortunately, wet weather has been reported hindering some fishermen's ability to dry fish for both people and dogs.

Fourteen commercial fishing periods have been opened in each of Districts 1 and 2. Commercial fishing in the lower Yukon closed by regulation on September 10. The preliminary fall chum salmon commercial harvest in Districts 1 and 2 is 176,076 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 119,256 fish. This is the highest Coho Salmon commercial harvest on record, beating last year's record of 103,352 Coho Salmon 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. Ten commercial fishing periods were opened in Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C with 7,106 fall Chum Salmon and 4,128 Coho Salmon harvested. Additional commercial fishing periods in District 6 will depend on buyer demand.

Fall Season Assessment Information

Assessment projects in the lower Yukon have ended for the season. The cumulative CPUE through September 20 (last day of operations) at the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) was slightly above the historical median. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) cumulative CPUE ended below the historical median. The Pilot Station sonar ended operations on August 31. The sonar has a preliminary final cumulative estimated passage of 547,257 fall Chum Salmon, 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 Salmon, slightly below the median of 772,042. Six pulses of fall Chum Salmon have passed through the lower Yukon. The first four pulses of fish are in their spawning streams throughout the drainage. The fifth and sixth pulses are in Subdistrict 5-D and will be passing the Eagle sonar on September 22 and 28, respectively. 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.

Up river assessment projects are continuing to monitor the fall Chum Salmon run. The Rapids Test Fish Wheel ended operations on or near September 20. The project has a "water adjusted" cumulative CPUE through September 17 of 267,927, slightly below the average of 285,795. The project operated long enough to detect the last five of the six pulses of fall Chum Salmon detected in the lower Yukon with the first pulse being

dominated by summer chum, which migrate mostly in the lower and middle rivers and do not pass through the Rapids. The Chandalar River sonar passed the $\frac{3}{4}$ point on September 20. Through September 24, the project as a cumulative estimated passage of 151,942, below the average of 197,096 fall chum, but at the upper end of its escapement goal of 152,000 fall Chum Salmon. The Eagle sonar passed its mid-point on September 22. The sonar has a cumulative passage of 61,562 fall Chum Salmon through September 24, which is well below the average of 108,503 fall Chum Salmon at this time. The current Border passage projection based on the estimated passage to date is 90,000-110,000, which falls within the Interim Management Escapement Goal range of 70,000-104,000 but could fall short of the harvest sharing agreement with Canada. The Porcupine River sonar project is just past the $\frac{3}{4}$ point of the run and has an estimated passage of 16,570 fall chum, below the average of 18,666. This project operated as a pilot project in 2011-2012, was operational in 2013-2014, and is expected to replace the Fishing Branch River weir project for Porcupine River fall chum assessment. The Fishing Branch River weir project has passed 2,356 fall Chum Salmon, well below the average of 15,935 salmon. At this time, the Porcupine River sonar project is considered too new to fully understand the management implications of the estimated passage. The Fishing Branch River weir project has passed 2,356 fall chum salmon, well below the average of 15,935 salmon. Managers expect passage estimates to increase over the next couple of weeks as the final two pulses reach these projects.

Coho Salmon typically enter the Yukon River during the second half of the fall Chum Salmon run. Through the end of the project on September 20, the cumulative CPUE at the LYTF was 529.66, above the median of 388.31. The MVTF had a cumulative CPUE through September 11 of 1,621.95, above the median of 1,073.49. 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 196,364 Coho Salmon, above the median of 139,993. The in-season run outlook is for an above average Coho Salmon run.

The only up river assessment project for Coho Salmon is the Delta Clearwater River boat survey, which will not begin until mid-October. The BEG for this project is 5,200-17,000 Coho Salmon.

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
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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.

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area

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