

**FINAL FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF September 1-7, 2020.****Final report for the 2020 season - Report #15**

Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [George\\_Pappas@fws.gov](mailto:George_Pappas@fws.gov) Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. 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.

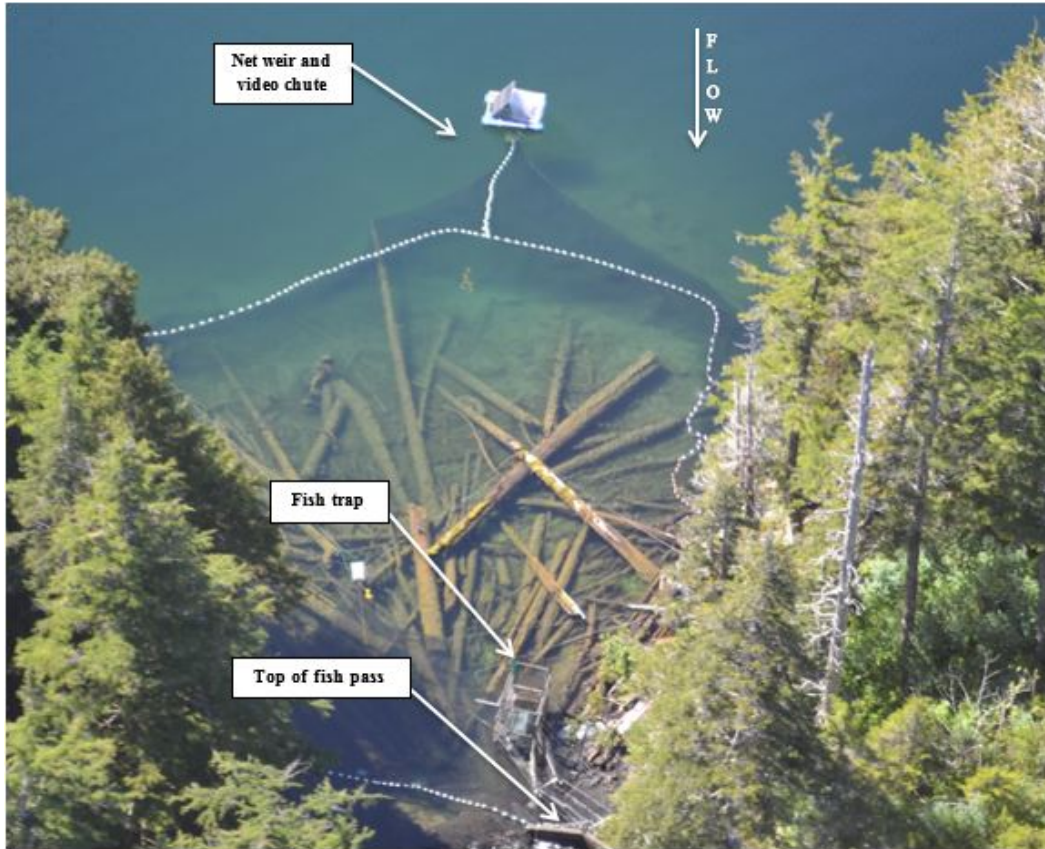
**SOUTHEAST ALASKA****Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

Justin Koller, (907) 747-4297 [justin.koller@usda.gov](mailto:justin.koller@usda.gov)

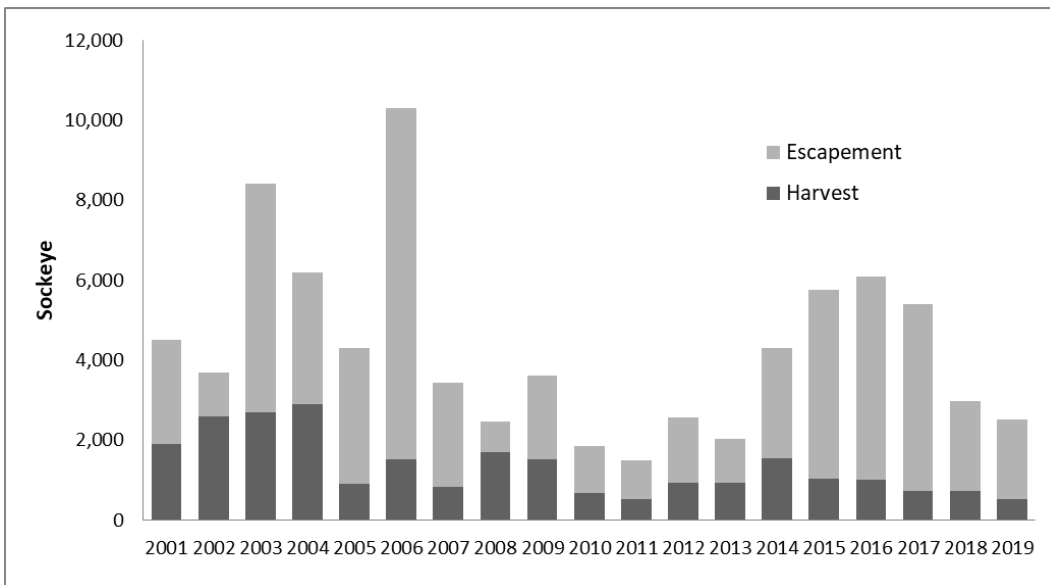
*This is my final report for this season.* Sockeye Salmon returns and subsistence harvest at Klag Bay, Gut Bay and Falls Lake were very low. Escapement at Redoubt Lake was above average, probably due in part to the lake productivity enhancement project there. We will have a clearer picture once data has been analyzed.

**Herring** – There was no commercial herring fishery in Sitka Sound in 2020. Please see this [summary of Sitka Sound herring 2020](#). Also, [summary of southeast Alaska herring 2020](#).

**Falls Lake** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were installed June 25. The first Sockeye Salmon was counted on July 3, which is about a week earlier than average. As of August 30, 308 Sockeye Salmon have been counted and about 250 have been harvested. The run this year appears to be the worst since 2001 when monitoring began. Only eight Sockeye Salmon have been counted in the last week and the project will end this week. The final escapement estimate in 2019 was 1,983 while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 528. Subsistence harvest accounted for 92% of terminal area harvest.



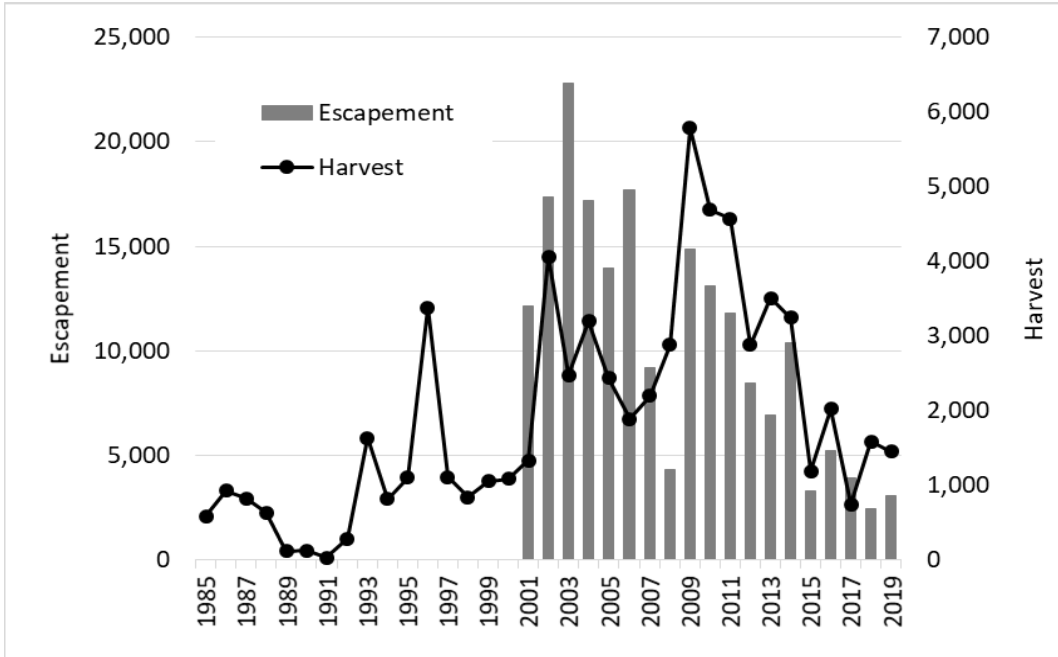
**Figure 1.** Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.



**Figure 2.** Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2019.

**Klag Bay** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed the week of June 22. As of August 30, 4,077 Sockeye

Salmon have been counted and at least 1,457 have been harvested. The run is below average this year. In 2019, approximately 3,036 Sockeye Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,450 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

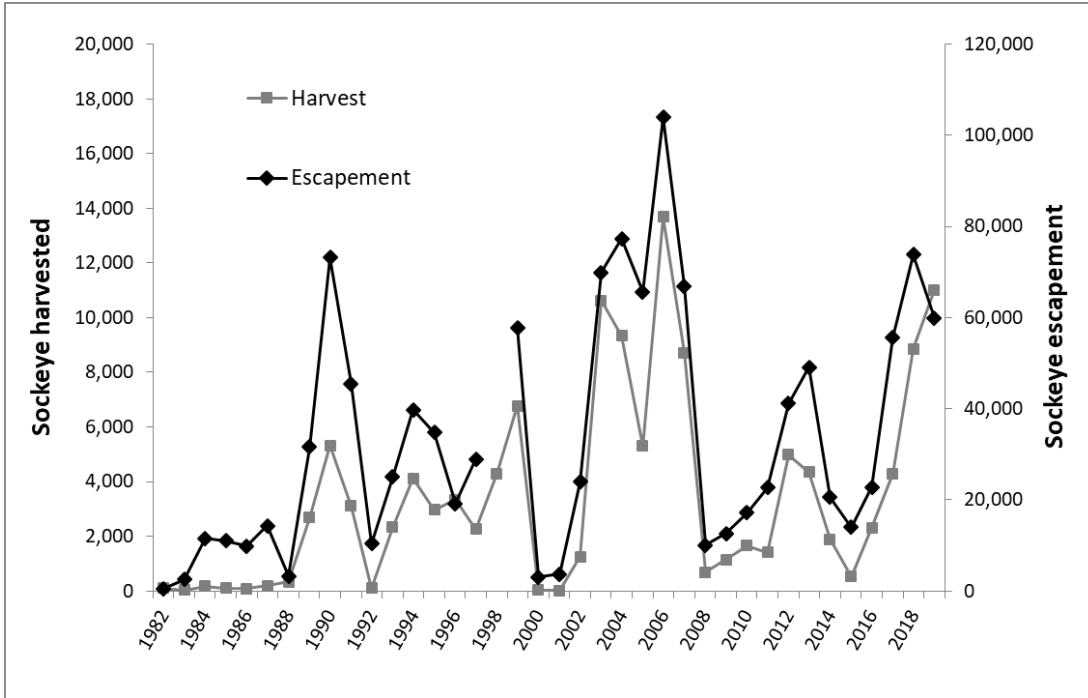


**Figure 3.** Reported harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2019.

**Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 13. As of August 30, 40,008 Sockeye Salmon have been counted. The project will end the week of September 8. On July 22, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence annual limit was set at 100.

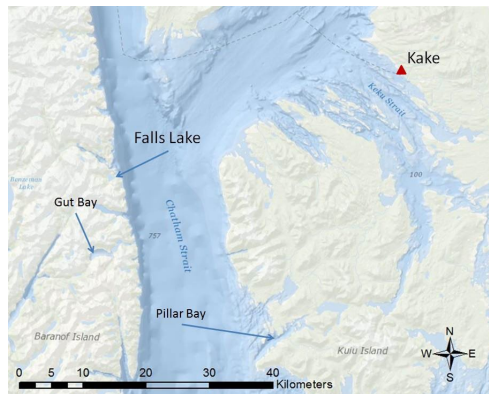
In 2019, an estimated 59,917 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake and about 11,000 were harvested. On July 3, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence annual limit was set at 100. Almost 30,000 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in commercial fishery openings throughout the season.

[News release, Sockeye Salmon limits 2020](#)



**Figure 4.** Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake and subsistence harvest for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2019. The weir was not operated in 1998.

**Gut Bay** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake monitor escapement and harvest of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon. Gut Bay is located south of Falls Lake on Baranof Island and an important source of Sockeye Salmon for the village of Kake. Very little is known about the magnitude of this run. In 2019, 881 Sockeye Salmon were counted at the weir and about 200 were harvested in the state subsistence fishery which was open until July 20. The camp and equipment installation was completed on June 18. As of August 30, about 100 sockeye have been counted and at least 150 have been harvested. Recent high flows damaged the weir and we are not sure how many Sockeye Salmon passed undetected. Underwater video footage should reveal if a sizable number passed undetected. The project will end the week of September 7.



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

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

*Reporting concluded for the 2020 season.* Please feel free to contact author for more information or details about the subsistence fisheries in Robert's area.

The 2020 Federal Stikine River Chinook subsistence fishery was closed by the in-season manager. The Chinook run was stronger than predicted, indicating the potential for a future Chinook Salmon season on the Stikine River. The Federal Stikine River Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery began Sunday, June 21 and ended July 31. Despite the river being high, the participation in the fishery was high but harvest remained low throughout the season. The Tahltan Lake portion of the Stikine River Sockeye Salmon run was strong, however, the Mainstem component of the run was weak which resulted in a poor overall Sockeye harvest. Harvesters are beginning to return Sockeye harvest reports, so a final harvest number will be available soon.

The Stikine River Coho Salmon season is underway with harvesters reporting high numbers of Pink Salmon in their nets. Coho are returning in decent numbers to local streams all around the Petersburg and Wrangell Ranger Districts. A total of 129 Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon permits (FFSE07) and 38 General Fish permits (FFSE04) have been issued for residents in the Wrangell and Petersburg Districts.

**Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; [jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov](mailto:jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov)), Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

**August 31, 2020**

*This will be authors final summary for season. Feel free to contact Jake at the contact information above if you have any questions or feedback.*

Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon: A crew from the Forest Service installed the Neva Lake weir near Excursion Inlet on June 23 (Figure 1). This swim-through video weir is remotely monitored and maintained by a Hoonah Indian Association crew living in Excursion Inlet. With the shutdown of the Ocean Beauty plant, the crew has moved back to Hoonah, and will complete the season counting from there. With the computer now installed at the Hoonah Indian Association office, the live feed will no longer be publically available.

As of August 27, a total of 3,180 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the Neva weir. With almost 85% of the historical run timing completed, we are expecting the final escapement to be in the neighborhood of 3,800 Sockeye. Surprisingly, there seems to be a decent run of Pink Salmon this year, as we have counted about 1,500 into the lake so far.



*Figure 1. The video weir at Neva Lake, June 24, 2020.*

Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon: The Sitkoh Lake video weir was installed on July 6-8 by a Forest Service biologist with the help of Student Conservation Association interns. The project uses a pair of remotely monitored video net weirs to count fish entering Sitkoh Lake, on the southeast corner of Chichagof Island (Figures 3 and 4). Video from the site is streamed to the Angoon Community Association office, where it is recorded on a computer. Personnel from the ACA will monitor the weir and use video to count fish entering the lake. Live video feed and clips from the weir can be accessed over the internet at <http://sitkohlake.ddns.net:81> . However, recent issues with the mountaintop repeater have temporarily cut the live video feed until it can be repaired.



*Figure 3. The video weir at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake, July 9, 2020.*



*Figure 4. Video capture of a Cutthroat Trout passing through the Sitkoh Lake weir, August 28, 2020.*

**Northern Southeast Inside Waters:** There are a lot of superlatives that could be used to describe the 2020 salmon season, and none of them are good. The season began with a dismal hatchery chum return, continued with the worst pink salmon season since 1976, maintained its streak with a mediocre sockeye season, and now seems to be crossing the finish line with a coho run that can most charitably be described as “weak.” This year will definitely be one for the books.

The effect of the poor returns on subsistence harvests won’t be known for some time. Based on anecdotal reports from the field, things were hit and miss for local harvesters, as they always are. The best solid data we have are from permit harvest reports, so please fill out your report and turn it in, as we are depending on that information.

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

*This will be the author’s final summary season.* Author indicated he enjoyed sending in reports for the season and is looking forward to answering any questions that surface. Please contact Jeff at the number above if you have any question or suggestions.

The 2020 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has had 170 permits issued to date for the fishery.

All State managed Sockeye Salmon fisheries in the area are closed now. Additional opportunity for directed Coho Salmon fishing at Klawock will begin in the next several weeks.

The troll fishery closed for a week on August 7 as mandated in the yearly troll management plan to allow for Coho Salmon escapement into area streams. The second directed Chinook Salmon fishery began on August 15, however low numbers of Chinook Salmon are being harvested in Districts 1-4. Coho Salmon numbers are also very low in these districts as catch per boat/day (<30 fish) is well below the 20-year average (~90 fish).

Directed seine fisheries for Pink Salmon are now closed in all districts in Southeast Alaska due to weak returns. Limited opportunity is being allowed for surplus hatchery production Chum Salmon at some terminal release sites.

Estimated commercial harvests for Districts 1-4 are: 17,435 Chinook Salmon, 219,800 Sockeye Salmon, 67,800 Coho Salmon, 4,450,650 Pink Salmon and 561,200 Chum Salmon.

There are two Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funded projects funded on Prince of Wales Island this season. The Hetta Lake weir became operational on June 8 and has passed 2734 Sockeye Salmon, 7934 Pink Salmon and 208 Coho Salmon to date. The Eek Lake weir became operational on June 15 and has passed 7 Sockeye Salmon and 2 Coho Salmon to date. Recent highwater events may have allowed for uncounted Sockeye Salmon to pass into Eek Lake so weir personnel will be partnering with ADF&G for foot surveys in the inlet stream in the next few weeks.

Although there is not a project funded under the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, the Klawock River fish hatchery installed weir pickets on July 1. The first Sockeye Salmon counted through the weir was on July 18. Total counts into Klawock Lake are: 5827 Sockeye Salmon, 8392 Pink Salmon, 2 Chum Salmon and 475 Coho Salmon. An additional 1877 Coho Salmon have been harvested for cost recovery.

### **Southeast Alaska Web Links**

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

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

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

*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, 8/10/2020 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 205-0544, [dave\\_sarafin@nps.gov](mailto:dave_sarafin@nps.gov)**

*Reporting concluded 8/20/20 for the 2020 season.* Please feel free to contact author for more information or details about the subsistence fisheries in Dave's area.

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District was limited in response to a weak salmon return. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 97,360 Sockeye Salmon and 5,845 Chinook Salmon. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reports this to be the 4th lowest commercial harvest to date in the last 50 years for the district.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) recorded salmon passage from May 19 through July 28; providing a season total estimate of 530,313 salmon migrating upstream. This estimate is 85% of the cumulative management objective of 624,709 salmon for this date. The ADFG reports this to be the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest season estimate to date on record (1978-2020).

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged a total of 2,466 Chinook Salmon for the season. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek captured and examined 1,203 Chinook Salmon for the season, of which, 119 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

Performance in the commercial fishery and in-river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary in-season assessments of the salmon return to the Copper River. The overall returns of both Sockeye and Chinook Salmon have been weak. In-river assessments of the Chinook Salmon return, along with assumptions of up-river harvests, indicate that the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 24,000 fish will likely not be met for this season. As well, the minimum threshold 360,000 fish of the wild stock Sockeye Salmon SEG range of 360,000 to 750,000 may not be achieved this season. This includes assumptions of the additional factors of up-river harvests, hatchery stock contribution, and the non-Sockeye Salmon component of the sonar passage estimates. No Federal Special Actions have been issued by the in-season manager this season.

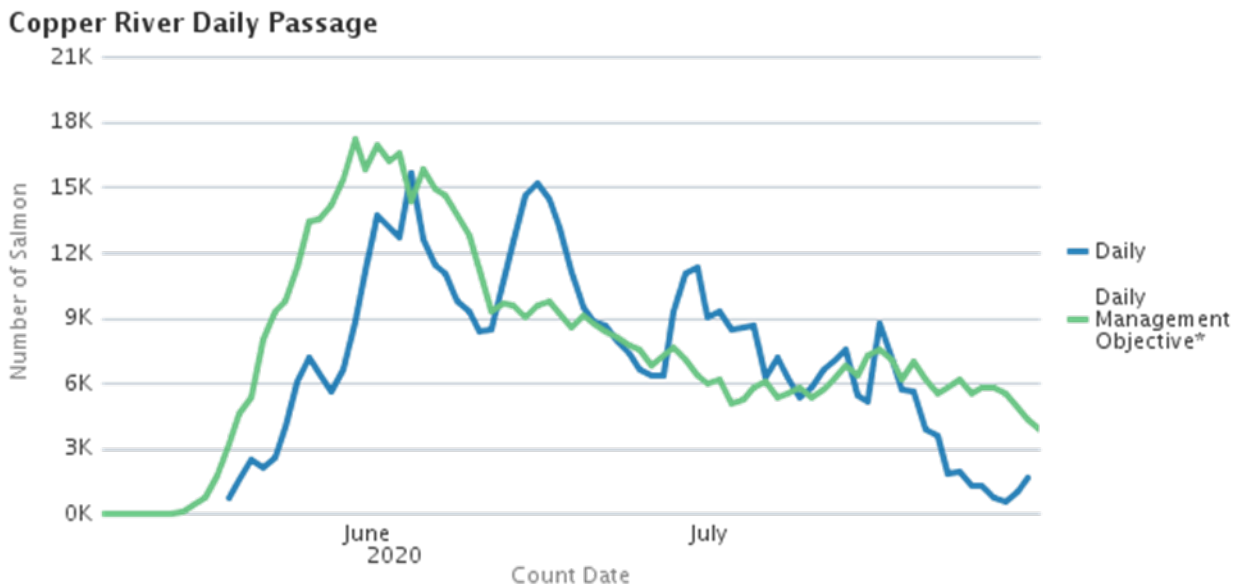
The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict has been open since June 1. Effective June 20, the State sport fishery annual limit was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook Salmon for the Upper Copper River drainage. Effective August 3, the Sockeye Salmon sport fisheries of the Upper Copper River drainage closed for the remainder of the

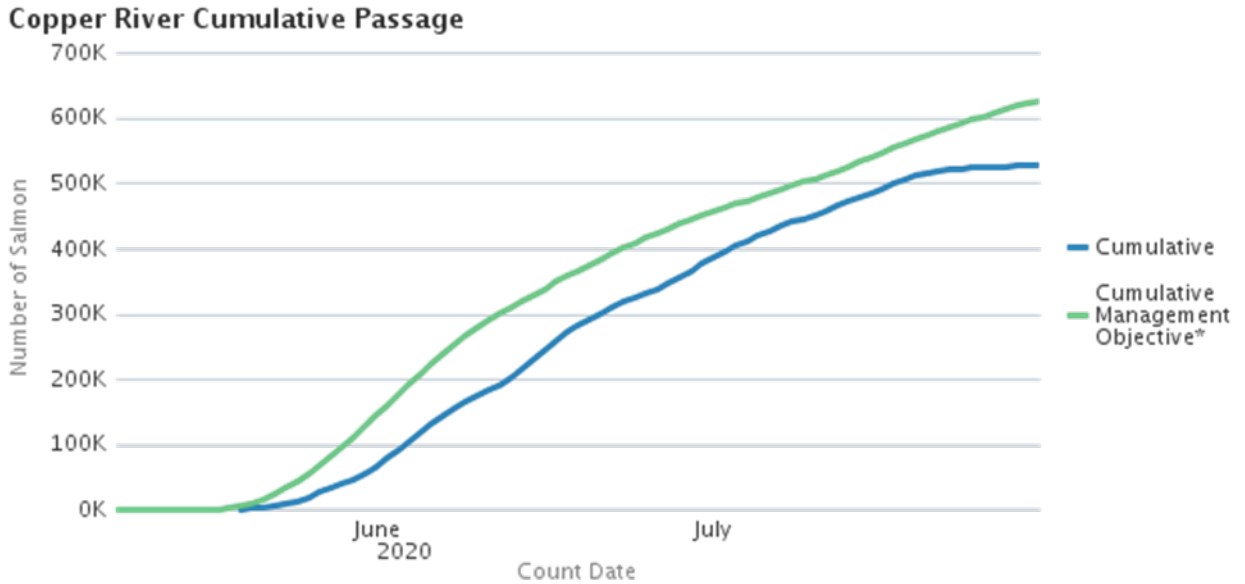
season. Effective June 22, the Chitina personal use fishery was closed to the retention of Chinook Salmon. The personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict is currently closed and will remain closed for the remainder of August to conserve Sockeye Salmon for escapement.

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas area opened on May 15 and are expected to remain open through September 30. Through the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website, two hundred and twelve (212) Chitina Subdistrict permits, three hundred and seventy-one (371) Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and one (1) Batzulnetas area permits have been issued to date.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. The reported cumulative passage estimate through August 9 is 2,406 Chinook Salmon. This is approximately 29% of the 2019 season count of 8,310 fish through this date of the season; however, periods of high water and associated turbidity limited counts on some days of the 2020 season.

**2020 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 28 (end of season)**





Source:

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

Links:

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

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

NVE’s Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com/Summary/DailySummary.aspx>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

ADF&G Emergency Orders and News Releases

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

ADF&G Gulkana River counting tower

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

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

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

*Reporting concluded 8/21/20 for the 2020 season.* Please feel free to contact author for more information or details about the subsistence fisheries in Mio’s area.

**21 August 2020**

A total of 63 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Chugach National Forest portion of the Prince William Sound area of to date. Silvers are showing up in good numbers in Copper River Delta streams, and successful harvest by permit holders is being reported. Harvest statistics of this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. One-hundred and twenty permits were issued in 2019 resulting in the reported harvest of 617 coho and 116 sockeye from fresh waters of the Copper River Delta.

**COOK INLET AREA – Kenneth Gates, Acting Delegated Official, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 [Kenneth\\_Gates@FWS.GOV](mailto:Kenneth_Gates@FWS.GOV)**

*This will be the last summary submitted for the 2020 season. Feel free to contact Ken if you have any questions.*

The 2020 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon began on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Harvest reported through August 29 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 1,134 Sockeye Salmon. Forty-one Sockeye Salmon have been harvested in the Kasilof River dip net fishery. The rod and reel fishery on the Kenai River also opened on June 11 with the same seasons and areas as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations. To date, 30 sockeye salmon have been taken by rod and reel from the Russian River.

The Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery began on June 16 and closed on August 15. Harvest reported through July 25 includes 621 Sockeye Salmon.

Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30. Harvest of sockeye salmon in this fishery began on July 19. This fishery is currently closed and reported harvest to date in this fishery totals 3,163 Sockeye Salmon and 18 Coho Salmon. Three Pink Salmon and 1 Dolly Varden were caught and released in this fishery.

This will be the last report of the season for the Cook Inlet Area.

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

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

*Reporting concluded 8/23/20 for the 2020 season.* Please feel free to contact author for more information or details about the subsistence fisheries in Kevin's area.

Subsistence fishing has pretty much been completed for the 2020 season and this will be the final report from the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. The Olga Bay area continues to be utilized by subsistence users during non-commercial fishing openings. It has been reported that villagers from Ahkiok have been traveling to the mouth of Olga Creek to harvest salmon.

Any additional information that will be received will be forwarded to the Office of Subsistence Management office.

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

***BRISTOL BAY, CHIGNIK, ALASKA PENINSULA, and ALEUTIAN ISLANDS –  
 Jonathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office***

(907) 271-2776 Jonathon\_Gerken@fws.gov

Reporting completed for season on August 3, 2020. Please feel free to contact author for more information or details about Jon's fisheries.

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

The ADFG issues information for COVID-19: Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>

Bristol Bay:

The 2020 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run was forecast to be approximately 48 million fish for the nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak.

The Sockeye Salmon sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems are:

Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for August 2): All Sockeye Salmon escapement goals were met. The Nushagak Chinook Salmon escapement goal did not meet the lower end of the goal.

Kvichak	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000, current escapement = 4,030,968
Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum, current escapement = 2,383,062

Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 4,112,160
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 2,389,728
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000, current escapement = 1,745,940
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000, current escapement = 2,243,886
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000, current escapement = 317,844
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000, current escapement = 1,228,504
Nushagak (Chinook)	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 42,721
Togiak	SEG = 150,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 207,870

All areas will provide subsistence harvest opportunity.

The total commercial harvest for Sockeye Salmon as of August 2 is approximately 39.2 million fish.

Chignik:

The 2020 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA). The CMA is composed of five fishing districts: Eastern, Central, Chignik Bay, Western, and Perryville. The Sockeye Salmon run is composed of an early run (June 1 – July 31) and late run (July 31 – September). These dates generally describe the run-timing and overlap between runs occurs.

As of August 2, approximately 138,448 early run Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated. The early run will not make the lower end of the escapement.

Subsistence harvest reports indicate minimal harvests.

The late run Sockeye Salmon count for August 2 is 112,052 fish. The escapement objective for this time period is 160,000 – 290,000 fish. It is unlikely that the late run will make the lower end of the escapement goal.

The Chinook Salmon count for August 2 is 1,099 fish. Restrictions to Chinook Salmon fishing in the sportfish (Emergency Order # 2-KS-4-38-20), State subsistence Emergency Order #4-FS-L-SUB-02-20, and Federal subsistence (Emergency Special Action #08-KS-01-20) fisheries was restricted on July 18 due to the low numbers of fish enumerated at the weir and are in place until August 9. These actions were taken collaboratively with the ADFG commercial and sportfish division. Subsistence users throughout the Chignik area also voiced concerns about the low Chinook Salmon return and requested additional restrictions. It is unlikely that the Chinook Salmon return will make the lower end of the escapement goal.

Escapement Goals:

Early Run Sockeye Salmon/ Black Lake	BEG = 350,000 – 450,000
Late Run Sockeye Salmon/ Chignik Lake	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000
-In-river Goal	-10,000 in August and 10,000 in September in addition to minimum escapement objectives

Chinook Salmon	BEG = 1,300 – 2,700
Pink Salmon – Even year	SEG = 170,000 – 280,000
Chum Salmon	SEG = 45,000 – 110,000

#### Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula. Federal waters are primarily located on upper headwater portions of the streams flowing on the North Peninsula, whereas Federal waters on those streams flowing on the South Peninsula are more encompassing within each watershed. Subsistence fisheries in both North and South Peninsula areas take place in marine environments under State of Alaska subsistence fishing permits. Annual subsistence harvest for all species in all areas is typically around 10,000 fish.

North Peninsula: The 2020 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 362,000 fish for the Nelson River and 408,000 fish for late-run Bear Lake. The cumulative commercial harvest as of August 2 is approximately 1.5 million fish with Sockeye Salmon being the predominant species harvested.

North Peninsula Management Area Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for August 2):

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000, current escapement = 162,164
Late-run Bear Lake	BEG = 117,000 – 195,000, current escapement = 317,095

South Peninsula: Commercial fishing has occurred on the South Peninsula in the Shumagin Islands and South Umiak Districts. Fishing in the Dolgoi District has not occurred due to low escapement number enumerated in Chignik River weir. The cumulative commercial harvest as of August 2 is approximately 4.0 million with pink salmon being the predominant species harvested.

South Peninsula Management Area Escapement Counts (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for August 2):

Ilnik River current escapement = 40,019
Orzinski River current escapement = 6,174
Sandy River current escapement = 55,898
McLees River current escapement = 5,037 – McLees River counts are lower than the 2017 to 2011 average of 21,882 fish.

#### Aleutian Islands.

All fisheries are forecast to meet escapement goals and provide subsistence harvest opportunity.

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

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

### **Southcentral Alaska Web Links**

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

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

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

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

#### ***ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link***

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

#### ***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

#### ***Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:***

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

### **YUKON RIVER**

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

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The Emmonak Field Office is **closed** due to COVID-19 concerns. Essential services will be provided to fishermen online and over the phone.

*This is the final report to be submitted this season.* Please do not hesitate to contact Gerald with questions or to seek clarification on his summaries at the contact information above.

#### **Summer Season Summary**

The summer season Yukon River fisheries have ended throughout the Alaskan portion of the drainage and all districts are under fall season management. The Eagle sonar assessed Chinook Salmon passage through August 24 before switching over to Fall Chum Salmon assessment. Managers are disappointed in the estimated passage of Chinook Salmon past the Eagle sonar. Through August 24, the last day of counting, only 33,005 Chinook Salmon have been estimated passing the sonar. This is the second lowest passage since 2005, and our border obligations into Canada were not met this year. The Chinook Salmon passage at Eagle was far less than projected based on the Pilot Station sonar estimate of approximately 160,000 Chinook Salmon, and the reasons are unclear. Unfortunately, the Chena River sonar and counting tower was ended early due to flooding hindering the operation of the project, so we have essentially no estimates of escapement in U.S. tributaries this year.

#### **Fall Season Outlook**



The Fall Chum Salmon run is nearing its end in the lower Yukon. At this time, in-season projections are putting the run under 300,000. A run of this size does not meet the threshold of fish needed to allow for any fishing and requires full closures in attempt to meet escapement and treaty objectives. However, even with full closures, this run may still not be adequate to meet these objectives.

### **Fall Season Assessment Information**

Through September 4, the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) has a cumulative CPUE of 1,159, slightly below the average of 1,581. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) has a cumulative CPUE of 701, below the average of 1,999. The cumulative count of fall season Chum Salmon at the Pilot Station sonar was 262,255 through September 7; far below the median on this date of 740,195 fish. The Fall Chum Salmon run is down to its last trickle in the lower Yukon.

Coho Salmon typically overlap the second half of the Fall Chum Salmon run. The Coho Salmon run is past its typical third quarter point in the lower Yukon. Through September 4, the Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) had a cumulative CPUE of 152, below the average of 404. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) had a cumulative CPUE of 297, below the average of 964. The cumulative count of Coho Salmon at the Pilot Station sonar was 108,079 through September 7, below the median on this date of 149,533 fish.

### **Fall Season Management Actions**

Subsistence fishing for fall Chum Salmon in most Yukon River drainage districts, including the Koyukuk River, is **closed**. Fishermen may use 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear to target non-salmon species throughout the Alaskan portion of the drainage. Since fall Chum Salmon do not use the Innoko River drainage, subsistence salmon fishing in the Innoko River is open 24-hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. Subsistence fishing with selective gear was opened on Saturday August 29 to target non-salmon species and salmon other than fall chum in Districts 1-4, 5A, and 6.

### **Consultation**

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders through the various State, Federal, and stakeholder organizations. On May 12, a pre-season planning teleconference lead by YR DFA was held that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. The seventeenth weekly YR DFA teleconference was held on September 1. Reports were similar to the previous week in that fishermen throughout the Yukon River indicated they had mostly stopped fishing. Many had shifted to hunting and other subsistence activities. Fishermen were disappointed in the performance of the run, but most seemed understanding of the need for the closures. Managers will continue to seek input from fishermen through the fall season during the weekly YR DFA teleconferences and other discussions. The final scheduled weekly teleconference will be held on **Tuesday, September 7, at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#**. The most recent assessment project and management updates will be

given. Fishermen are encouraged to participate and the managers thank them for their informative reports throughout the season.

### **KUSKOKWIM RIVER**

**In Season Manager – Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact [Boyd bilhovde@FWS.GOV](mailto:Boyd_bilhovde@FWS.GOV); (907) 543-3151 or [Aaron\\_moses@fws.gov](mailto:Aaron_moses@fws.gov)**

*This is the final weekly summary for the season. Please contact YDNWR for further information.*

#### **Summary:**

The Kuskokwim River main stem currently has no restrictions. All previous restrictions were lifted 11:59 p.m. August 1<sup>st</sup>. Gillnets in tributaries of the Kuskokwim River are still prohibited.

#### **Escapement:**

As of August 30, 2020. The escapement for Chinook Salmon in the following tributaries:

Salmon River (ANIAK): 1,107 (Average count: 2,547, 5 year average: 1,942)

George River: 2,417 (Average count: 3,360, 5 year average: 3,068)

Krogrukluk River: 5,278 (Average count: 8,505, 5 year average: 7,728)

Takotna River: 216 (Average count: 362)

Salmon River (Pitka Fork): 4,809 (Average count: 6,235)

#### **Test Fisheries:**

End of season CPUE for Chinook at the Bethel test fish is at 488. The 2019 and 2018 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 848 and 667, respectively.

End of season CPUE for Chum at the Bethel test fish is at 1,444. The 2019 and 2018 Chum CPUE for this day were at 6,369 and 8,212, respectively.

End of season CPUE for Sockeye at the Bethel test fish is at 1,056. The 2019 and 2018 Sockeye CPUE for this day were at 2,685 and 2,275, respectively.

End of season CPUE for Coho at the Bethel test fish is at 1,820. The 2019 and 2018 Sockeye CPUE for this day were at 1,801 and 901, respectively.

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

*Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:*

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

*Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area*

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

*NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website*

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

*Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area*

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

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

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

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

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

*Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:*

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

*Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:*

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

### **NORTHWEST ALASKA**

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*This will be the final report for the 2020 season* from Northwest Alaska as commercial salmon fishing is coming to a close.

The Kotzebue District season closed Friday, August 28. The Norton Sound season ends by regulation after September 7. The final results for the 2020 season will be summarized in the first report for the 2021 season for comparison with the 2021 season projections.

### **Norton Sound District**

Assessment:

The silver run was well below forecast but oddly has been much better in northern Norton Sound than in southern Norton Sound.

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

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

***Subdistricts 6 (Unalakleet)***

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 475 kings, 300 sockeyes, 2,600 chums and 2,100 silvers by 50 permit holders. The silver catch continues to be well below average.

Silver salmon escapement although below average in Unalakleet has picked up the past week and farther to the north silver salmon escapement has been near the historical average for the last week of August.

Commercial salmon fishing will close by regulation after September 7.

**North River Tower — Camp J. B.** — A NSEDC project. The project has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings, 25,000 pinks, 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey) and no goal yet established for chums. All counts except silvers should be considered minimal because of the late project start due to high water. The cumulative counts through August 31 were 1,071 kings, 120 sockeyes, 1,160 chums, 660,000 pinks and 1,600 silvers. The silver count is the lowest for that date in project history.

***Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)***

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 240 kings, 400 sockeyes, 1,300 pinks, 4,000 chums and 1,860 silvers by 24 permit holders. The silver catch continues to be well below average.

Silver salmon escapement although below average in Shaktoolik has picked up the past week and farther to the north silver salmon escapement has been near the historical average for the last week of August.

Commercial salmon fishing will close by regulation after September 7.

**Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower** – An NSEDC project with no escapement goals yet established. All counts except silvers should be considered minimal because of the late project start date due to high water. The cumulative counts through August 31 were 933 kings, 192 sockeyes, 9,800 chums, 1.98 million pinks and 3,200 silvers. The silver count is the lowest for this date in project history.

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

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

##### Commercial Fishing:

The catch is confidential because of only two permit holders fishing for most periods this year.

Silver counts in the Norton Bay Subdistrict continue to be poor for late August and no commercial fishing is expected unless an improvement is seen in silver passage at the southern Norton Sound counting towers.

Commercial salmon fishing will close by regulation after September 7.

**Ungalik River Tower** – A NSEDC project. No escapement goals yet established.

The project is complete. The cumulative counts through August 27 were 135 Kings, 220 sockeyes, 7,900 chums, 973,000 pinks and 1,600 silvers. This was the 2nd year of project operations.

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

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

##### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 128 kings, 180 sockeyes, 330 pinks, 840 chums and 1,700 silvers by 15 permit holders. At the last opening the silver catch was below average.

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours in the Elim Subdistrict beginning Friday evening, September 4 at 6 p.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday, September 5. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

After this commercial fishing period no more commercial salmon fishing is expected and the season will close by regulation after September 7.

**Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel** – A Fish & Game project. Escapement goals were 250 kings, 9,100 – 32,600 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal).

The cumulative counts through August 31 were 408 kings, 87 sockeyes, 5,000 chums, 1.7 million pinks and 5,000 silvers. The silver count is slightly below average. The average historical third-quarter point of silver passage is August 31.

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

#### Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing remains open 7 days a week.

#### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 43 kings, 180 sockeyes, 1,600 pinks, 10,500 chums and 1,800 silvers by 16 permit holders. At the last opening the silver catch was average.

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours in the Golovin Subdistrict beginning Friday evening, September 4 at 6 p.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday, September 5. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

After this commercial fishing period no more commercial salmon fishing is expected and the season will close by regulation after September 7.

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

#### Subsistence Fishing:

By Board of Fisheries regulation subsistence salmon fishing in the Nome Subdistrict fresh-water subsistence areas beginning September 1 is open 7 days a week. There is no longer a subsistence net fishing schedule in Nome Subdistrict and marine and fresh-water subsistence fishing are opening continuously unless changed by emergency order. However, no drift gillnetting or beach seining is allowed in Nome Subdistrict.

#### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 43 kings, 700 sockeyes, 7,300 chums, 780 pinks and 5,700 silvers by 8 permit holders. At the last opening the silver catch was above average.

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours in the Nome Subdistrict beginning Friday evening, September 4 at 9 p.m. until 9 p.m. Saturday, September 5. Permit holders were

limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

After this commercial fishing period no more commercial salmon fishing is expected and the season will close by regulation after September 7.

**Nome River Weir** – A Fish & Game project with escapement goals of 1,600 – 5,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The cumulative counts through August 31 were 8 kings, 320 sockeyes, 2,500 chums, 2.1 million pinks and 1,200 silvers. The silver count is one third below average and the historical midpoint of passage is September 1.

**Snake River Weir** – A NSEDC project has an escapement goal of 2,000 – 4,200 chum salmon. The cumulative counts through August 31 were 8 kings, 560 sockeyes, 750 chums, 370,000 pinks and 770 silvers. The silver count is one third below average and the historical midpoint of passage is September 1.

### **Port Clarence District**

#### Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence gillnet fishing and beach seining are open 7 days a week. Salmon Lake remains closed. The Pilgrim River subsistence seasonal catch limits are 3 kings and 50 sockeyes.

Commercial salmon fishing remains closed in the Port Clarence Subdistrict due to lack of buyer interest.

### **Kotzebue District**

#### Subsistence Fishing:

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2020.

#### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative commercial catch was 150,000 chums by 70 permit holders. The catch was the lowest since 2007. The daily catch had been declining since the usual peak catches the second week of August. Commercial fishing time was reduced to less than one third the normal time this year, and this year's catch finished below 200,000 chums for the 1st time since 2009. Age analysis of commercial catch samples has shown that the 4-year-old chum salmon return was very poor this year.

The weather forecast was favorable last week, so for the remainder of last week, instead of commercial fishing every other day, there was consecutive daily periods last week. The final commercial fishing period of the season was Friday, August 28.

**Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project.** The chum index was 3rd lowest in the

28 year project history but did reach the minimum catch index.

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