

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 12-19, 2023. Report #4
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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

Yakutat Susan Oehlers, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)784-3359; susan.oehlers@usda.gov

- **Situk River** – Remains closed to harvest of Chinook Salmon under both State and Federal regulations due to conservation concerns.

Juneau

- No Report

Sheet'ká and Xunaa (Sitka and Hoonah) Area Ashley Bolwerk, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)747-4299; ashley.bolwerk@usda.gov

- **Herring** – A commercial herring fishery occurred in Sheet'ká X'áat'i (Sitka Sound) in 2023. Please see this summary of Sitka Sound herring 2023. More information can be found on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's "Commercial Herring Fishery" homepage.

- **Falls Lake** – The Falls Lake weir project was not funded in the latest FRMP cycle.

- **Chaas' Geeyí (Klag Bay)** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2022, approximately 2,029 Sockeye Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,960 were harvested in the marine terminal area

subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for approximately 99% of terminal area harvest.

· **Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 12. As of June 16, 112 Sockeye Salmon have entered the lake. In 2022, an estimated 90,005 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 9, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon annual limit was set at 100. Preliminary personal use/subsistence harvest records indicate that 5,850 sockeye salmon were harvested from the Redoubt system under 246 subsistence/personal use permits. Approximately 5,549 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in Sitka Sound commercial fishery openings throughout the season. Most of these Sockeye Salmon are probably of Redoubt origin.

Admiralty

· No Report

Kaachxana.áak'w and Séet Ká Kwáan (Wrangell and Petersburg) Area
Kevin Kocarek, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907) 874-2323
kevin.kocarek@usda.gov

· **Stikine River**- The 2023 pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River is 11,700 fish. This forecast is below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. The area's commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries have been closed to protect this return. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Chinook Salmon Assessment Program for the Stikine River is underway and nearing the halfway point in run timing. So far, 67 large Chinook Salmon have been sampled, which is slightly better than last year during the same time frame, but still below average.

The 2023 Stikine River pre-season Sockeye Salmon forecast is 86,000 fish, with 57,000 Tahltan and 29,000 Mainstem fish. The 2022 Sockeye Salmon estimate was 56,000 fish, which included 28,000 Tahltan Lake and 28,000 Mainstem Sockeye Salmon. The escapement objective for Tahltan-bound Sockeye Salmon is 18,000 fish and 30,000 for Mainstem fish. Sockeye Salmon have not been caught with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game sampling efforts as of June 15th. The 2023 Federal Stikine River Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Subsistence Fishery will begin June 21.

High water temperature for the 7-day average on the Stikine is 8.6 C which is slightly low compared to the 5-year average of 8.8 C for this week. Gauge height on the Stikine River downstream of Shakes Slough ranged from 16.6 m to 19.1 for the week of June 11 which is slightly above average. It remains to be seen if cool and wet late spring conditions are delaying the run.

Prince of Wales

- **Hetta Lake** – The Hetta Lake weir is fish tight, and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff have passed 10 Sockeye Salmon.
- **Eek Lake** – The Hydaburg Cooperative Association and Forest Service staff have installed the weir and are working on installing a camera weir system this week.

Southeast Alaska Web Links

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area
http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER

Copper River, 6/19/2023 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) has limited the commercial fishery in the Copper River District in response to low numbers of salmon observed in run strength indices. There were eight 12-hour fishing periods, through June 12, with a cumulative

harvest reported as 445,000 Sockeye Salmon and 8,600 Chinook Salmon. The Copper River District has remained closed since June 12.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began limited operation of only the North Bank sonar on May 22. Salmon passage was first recorded on May 25. Early season ice flow delayed the operation of the South Bank sonar, which began operation on May 25. As of June 19, 284,106 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season; this is 77% of the management objective of 371,258 for this date. A daily estimate of 15,059 salmon migrated by the sonar on June 19.

Sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary mid-season assessment tool for the Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River. The sonar season total estimate is still below the management objective; however, a recent trend of increase in salmon passage has been observed, with daily passage estimates exceeding daily management objectives since June 13. This trend may be typical of a delayed return which is building in strength for the season; an assessment of expected numbers of salmon for the overall season cannot be made at this time. Federal managers will continue to monitor run strength indices to evaluate the need for appropriate fisheries management actions in the Copper River Drainage. No Federal Special Actions have been issued by the in-season manager this season.

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened June 1. The initial opening of the State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was delayed until June 15 due to poor early season run assessments. The personal use fishery will be open for a 144-hour period from June 20 through June 25.

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas vicinity opened on May 15 and are expected to remain open through September 30. Data from the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website indicate that 149 Chitina Subdistrict permits, 194 Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and 1 Batzulnetas permits have been issued to date.

The Federal subsistence salmon fishery in the Lower Copper River near Cordova is open from June 1 through September 30. Salmon harvest is only allowed in the Copper River within ½ mile of the Copper River Highway, only by dip net or rod and reel, dip netting from boats is prohibited, and all salmon harvest must be reported within 48 hours. Permits are available at the Cordova Ranger Station (Chugach National Forest). To date, there have been 32 permits issued through the OSM database, with a total of 4 Sockeye Salmon reported for the season.

With funding through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), WRST is planning to operate the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas; the weir is scheduled to be installed beginning June 21.

Links:

ADFG Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

ADFG Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

ADFG Sport Fish Emergency Orders and News Releases

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>

PWS, Copper River Delta, Chugach – Dr. Andrew Sanders, Chugach National Forest, Cordova. May 29, 2023 Contact – (907) 250-0439 or Andrew.sanders@usda.gov

OSM fisheries update June 20, 2023
Chugach NF PWZ

Prince William Sound / Copper River Delta: The lower Copper River dipnet fishery opened on June 1st. As of Tuesday morning 20JUN, 32 permits had been issued, and users reported a cumulative harvest of 3 Sockeye Salmon and 0 Chinook Salmon. Snow drifts along the Copper River Highway are still affecting access to the dipnet harvest area beyond the 27 mile bridge.

For more information about conditions in the Copper River and the commercial drift gillnet fishery, please see the *Prince William Sound – Copper River* weekly update which can also be found in this report. For further information about the federal subsistence fishery in the Lower Copper River, users can contact the US Forest Service Cordova District office by calling 907-424-7661 or Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve staff -- Dave Sarafin at 907-822-7281 or Barbara Cellarius at 907-822-7236. Updates regarding changes affecting the Federal subsistence fisheries in the Copper River are available by calling the Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center at 907-822-7250.

COOK INLET AREA – Kenneth Gates, Senior Fish Biologist, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Contact:(907)260-0126 or kenneth_gates@fws.gov

Report to be updated tomorrow.

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

Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
(907) 487-2600/0230 michael_brady@fws.gov or
Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

The Buskin River Sockeye Salmon counts have been slow but picked up over the last week. It is not anticipated that the lower escapement goal will be reached. In an effort to conserve the sockeye salmon stock, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have put subsistence restriction on this system, E.O. #4-FS-K-Sub-02-23 and ESA #9-RS-01-23, respectively.

The 2023 Afognak Lake (Litnik) Sockeye Salmon escapement started slow and has increased over the past few weeks. To date the 2023 sockeye salmon escapement is 7,307 fish.

The Karluk sockeye salmon escapement is strong with over 150,000 fish passing the weir, as of June 15, 2023. The Ayakulik river sockeye salmon started very slow but has picked up over the past few days, with a total escapement to date of 30,771 fish.

The Chinook Salmon counts on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers have been well below adequate levels. As of June 15, the Chinook Salmon counts for both the Ayakulik (32 fish) and Karluk Rivers (135 fish) are not anticipated to meet their respective lower escapement goals.

Any additional information that is received by our office will be amended to this report or be incorporated into next weeks' report.

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF June 19, 2023.

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

These areas support abundant returns of salmon, particularly Sockeye Salmon; as well as some of the largest commercial fisheries for salmon in Alaska. 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. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in waters under Federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction.

Bristol Bay:

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for June 18:

Alagnak = No counts reported
 Egegik = 30
 Igushik = No counts reported
 Kvichak = No counts reported
 Naknek = No counts reported
 Nushagak = 14,823; Chinook = 10,142
 Togiak = No counts reported
 Ugashik = No counts reported
 Wood River = 3,414

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

Escapement Goals:
 Kvichak SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000

Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000
Nushagak	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000; Chinook Salmon = 55,000 – 120,000
Togiak	SEG = 120,000 – 270,000

Chignik:

The Chignik River cumulative weir count as of June 18 is 58,800 Sockeye Salmon. Early run Sockeye Salmon account for 57,980 fish and late run Sockeye Salmon account for 820 fish. The interim escapement objective for June 20 is around 89,000 – 196,000 early run fish and 200-1,500 late run fish.

There have been no Chinook Salmon counted at the ADFG weir as of June 18. Managers will be watching as these runs progress and take appropriate action if passage does not improve.

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:

Preseason forecasts are made only for the Nelson River and late-run (post July 31) Bear Lake stocks.

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for June 18:

Nelson = 2,007; Chinook = 7
 Bear = 1,745; Chinook = 1
 Inik = 23,130; Chinook = 1; Pink = 1
 Orzinski = 85
 Sandy = 88
 McLees = 1,136

Escapement Goals:

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000
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Late-run Bear Lake BEG = 117,000 – 195,000

Aleutian Islands.

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

Yukon River –USFWS Fairbanks Office. June 12-June 18, 2023

Federal Manager, Holly Carroll (907) 351-3029, holly_carroll@fws.gov

Assessment Information

This week large numbers of summer chum arrived over two tides at Lower Yukon Test Fish (LYTF), but no large groups of Chinook have yet been seen at LYTF or Pilot Station sonar. Water levels are still record high in some places. Andreafsky river weir crew are delayed on the installation of the weir by high water, and the Gisasa River weir crew delayed travel to the weir site until Monday, June 19th, due to cresting water on the Koyukuk River.

Assessment project and management updates will be given on the **YR DFA weekly teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#**. Fishermen on the most recent call reported very little fishing in most communities for non-salmon because most areas are experiencing high water, or are still dealing with the effects of the break-up flooding.

Management Strategies based on the preseason outlooks and inseason assessment:

The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) received special action request FSA23-02 asking the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to close Federal public waters of the Yukon River drainage to the harvest of Chinook, Chum and Coho salmon except by federally qualified subsistence users from June 1 through September 30, 2023, and to require that Federal subsistence fishing schedules, openings, closures and methods be determined by the Federal Fisheries Manager. This request falls within the scope of authority of the Federal manager, Holly Carroll and has been transferred to her by the Board. Subsistence salmon fishery closures began in the lower river June 2, and will be announced moving upriver based on run timing. See detailed management strategy here:

[2023 FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE YUKON AREA \(doi.gov\)](https://www.doi.gov/2023-federal-subsistence-fishery-management-strategy-for-the-yukon-area)

This week's Advisory Announcements co-authored by ADF&G and USFWS and distributed by ADF&G were:

- Yukon River Summer Update #2:
- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1481183664.pdf>

- Closure of Innoko River:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1482917314.pdf>
- Closures in District 4BC:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1482917314.pdf>

Where to Find Yukon Fishery Information:

To hear the fishing schedule and fish counts please call the toll-free Fishing Schedule and Fish Counts hotline: 866-479-7387.

Recent Fishery special actions are posted here:

<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions>

For Federal News Releases and Special actions, like

www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

For detailed information on management actions and weekly assessment updates, subscribe to ADF&G advisory announcements at

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

For daily counts and State Advisory announcements like the ADF&G Yukon River Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov

In Season Manager – Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Boyd_Blihovde@fws.gov; Contact Spencer Reardon (907)543-1023 or spencer_reardon@fws.gov

Report for June 16.

The Kuskokwim River salmon numbers are coming in but it is too early to determine Chinook Salmon run strength.

Preliminary estimates from the June 3, 6, and 9 set gillnet fishing opportunities are that 1,660 Chinook, 15 Chum, 122 Sockeye salmon were harvested. For the June 12 drift net opportunity, there was an estimated 202 drift boat trips and 31 set nets. An estimated total of 1,524 (1,280 – 1,787) salmon were harvested: Of which, 1,003 (826 – 1,219) were Chinook Salmon, 107 (76 – 146) were Chum Salmon, and 414 (300 – 562) were Sockeye Salmon. Although it is early in the season, the Chinook Salmon harvest estimates are lower for a June 12 opener than years since 2016, the year harvest monitoring started.

Bethel Test Fish and Kuskokwim River Sonar numbers for Chinook Salmon (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fishcounts>) are tracking similarly to recent years and have not indicated a high number of Chinook Salmon.

The next drift net opener was on June 17th. Harvest information from this opener along with Bethel Test Fish and Kuskokwim River Sonar data will be discussed in management meetings to assess run strength.

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

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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No summary submitted this week.