

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 20-26, 2022. Report #5
Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 317-2165, 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 – Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
Jake Musslewhite, 907-789-6256 jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov

June 27, 2022

Falls Lake – The Falls Lake weir project was operated for the 21st consecutive year in 2021. The project monitors escapement and terminal harvest of Sockeye Salmon returning to Falls Lake each year. In 2021, an estimated 1,189 Sockeye escaped to the lake, while 315 were harvested in terminal subsistence and sport fisheries (Figure 1). The escapement and harvest were lower than in recent years. However, spawn-recruit analyses indicate that maximum recruitment of Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon occurs at lower escapements – around 2,000 fish. So, the low escapements seen in 2020 and 2021 may still provide for an adequate number of returning adults in several years.

The Falls Lake project was not funded for operation in 2022.

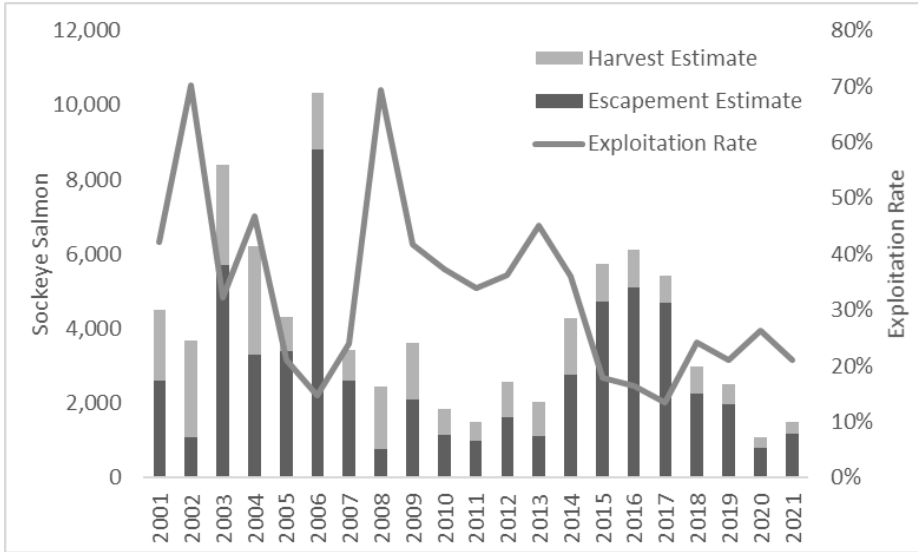


Figure 1. Escapement estimate and onsite harvest estimate for Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2021.

Petersburg and Wrangell Area –Andrew Sanders, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest Andrew Sanders, (907)772-3871 andrew.sanders@usda.gov

Andrew Sanders, (907)772-3871 andrew.sanders@usda.gov

The pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River is 7,400 fish. This forecast is below the goal range of 14,000 to 28,000 fish. Directed commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in the area have been closed to protect this return. Currently, all drift gillnet, purse seine and non-terminal harvest area troll fisheries are closed in district 8.

The 2022 Stikine River pre-season Sockeye Salmon forecast is 63,000 fish, with 42,00 Tahltan and 21,000 Mainstem fish. The 2020 Sockeye Salmon forecast was 103,400 fish, which included 64,500 Tahltan Lake and 38,900 Mainstem Sockeye. The escapement objective for Tahltan bound Sockeye Salmon is 18,000 to 30,000, and 20,000 to 40,000 for Mainstem fish.

The 2022 forecast for Tahltan is expected to meet the escapement objective with a sufficient surplus for allowable harvest. The forecast for the mainstem is not expected to exceed the escapement goal and may result in a season closure. The 2022 Federal Stikine River Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery began June 21. A total of 40 permits have been issued for the Stikine fishery and no harvest estimate is available at this time.

Juneau and Yakutat – Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
Jake Musslewhite, 907-789-6256 jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov

June 27, 2022

Sockeye Salmon - Sockeye Salmon fisheries in the area are just getting going, as returning fish start to show up at the mouths of streams. Reports from the field are encouraged and appreciated.

Commercial salmon net fisheries in the area have begun, with the first gillnet and seine openings held the weekend of June 19. Most of the early openings target hatchery produced chum salmon, which are expected to have weak returns this year. Due to low participation, results from the first Pt. Augusta purse seine opening are confidential. Gillnet openings in northern southeast are in Districts 11 and 15. The first Hawk Inlet purse seine test fishery was conducted on June 24, with discouraging results. Catches of Chum and Pink Salmon were well below average, with the only bright spot being the above average Sockeye Salmon catch.

Sitkoh Lake – The Sitkoh Lake weir is a cooperative project between the Forest Service and the Angoon Community Association, and monitors Sockeye Salmon escapement to the lake using a remotely monitored video weir. In 2021, we counted a total of 5,303 Sockeye Salmon through the weir. This was an improvement from the poor escapements of 2017-2019, but less than the 8,000-12,000 fish seen in previous years (Figure 1). The Sitkoh Lake project will continue to operate in 2022, with the weir to be installed in early July. Returns are likely to be on the low side, based on the poor escapements in parent years.

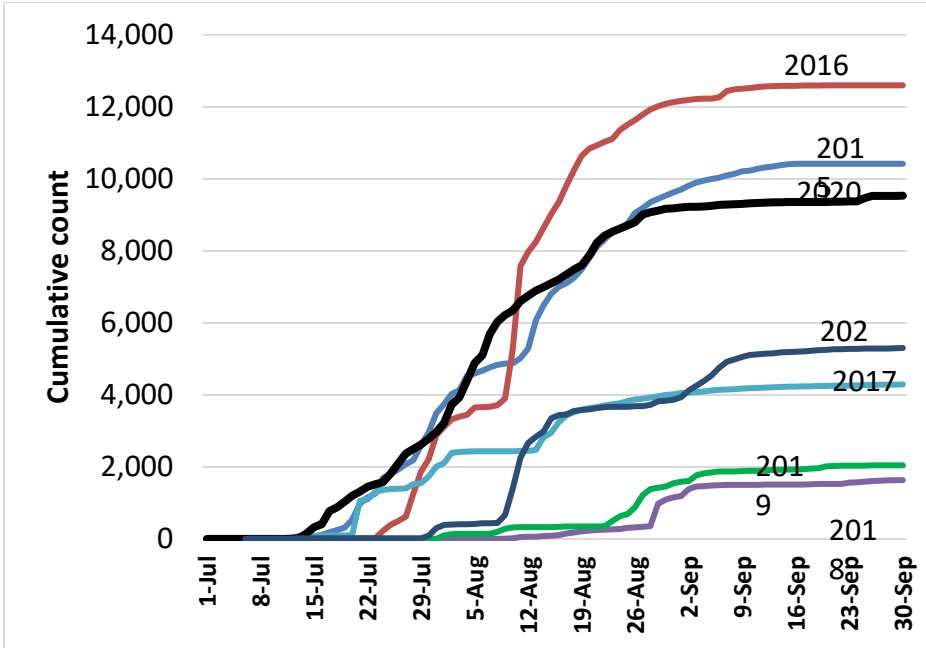


Figure 2. Estimated cumulative escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Sitkoh Lake through video weirs, 2015 to 2021.

Neva Lake – The Neva Lake weir was installed on June 17, 2022, and we have seen a handful of sockeye pass through the weir so far. The Neva Lake weir is a cooperative project operated by the Forest Service and the Hoonah Indian Association, and uses a video weir to count Sockeye Salmon entering Neva Lake, near the community of Excursion Inlet. Live video feed and clips from the Neva Lake weir can be found on the web at <http://nevalake.ddns.net:81>.



Figure 3. Taylor Cunningham (left) and Elijah Blumenkranz in front of the newly installed Neva Lake weir, June 18, 2022.



Figure 4. Video capture of a Cutthroat Trout passing through the Neva Lake weir.

Yakutat- Sockeye Salmon have begun showing up at the Situk River weir in decent numbers, with a total of over 10,000 fish having passed through as of June 23. The first Chinook salmon passed through the weir on June 16, and nearly 50 have been counted through June 23. This is better than have been seen for the past few years on the same dates, though the run is just getting going.

The preseason forecast for Situk River Chinook Salmon is 1,600 large fish, and the escapement goal range is 450 – 1,050 fish. In order to ensure that the escapement goal is met, subsistence and commercial fisheries on the mouth of the Situk have been closed until further notice (Figure 3). Escapement of Chinook Salmon will be monitored at the Situk weir, and fisheries may reopen if adequate escapement is seen through the weir.

Commercial fisheries in the Yakutat area have begun, with openings on the Alsek River, Yakutat Bay, and the Dangerous River beginning on June 12. Release of Chinook is requested on the Alsek River.



Figure 5. Situk-Ahrnklin Inlet waters closed to commercial and subsistence fishing in 2022.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – TBA, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649

USFS Weekly Summary Author position vacant - TBA. No reports expected this season or until alternate staffing arrangements are made.

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, 6/25/2022 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov**

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District was limited in response to low early season numbers of salmon but the State has increased the duration of recent open fishing periods due to improvement in sonar passage relative to management objectives for the season. Ten commercial fishing periods have occurred through June 24. ADFG reports preliminary cumulative commercial harvest to be 418,056 Sockeye Salmon and 11,128 Chinook Salmon. The Copper River District will open June 27 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period; the expanded Chinook Salmon inside closure area will be open during this period.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began limited operation of the sonar on May 17 and became fully operational on May 25. As of June 25, there have been 571,239 salmon estimated migrating upstream for the season. A daily estimate of 15,485 salmon migrated by the sonar on June 25.

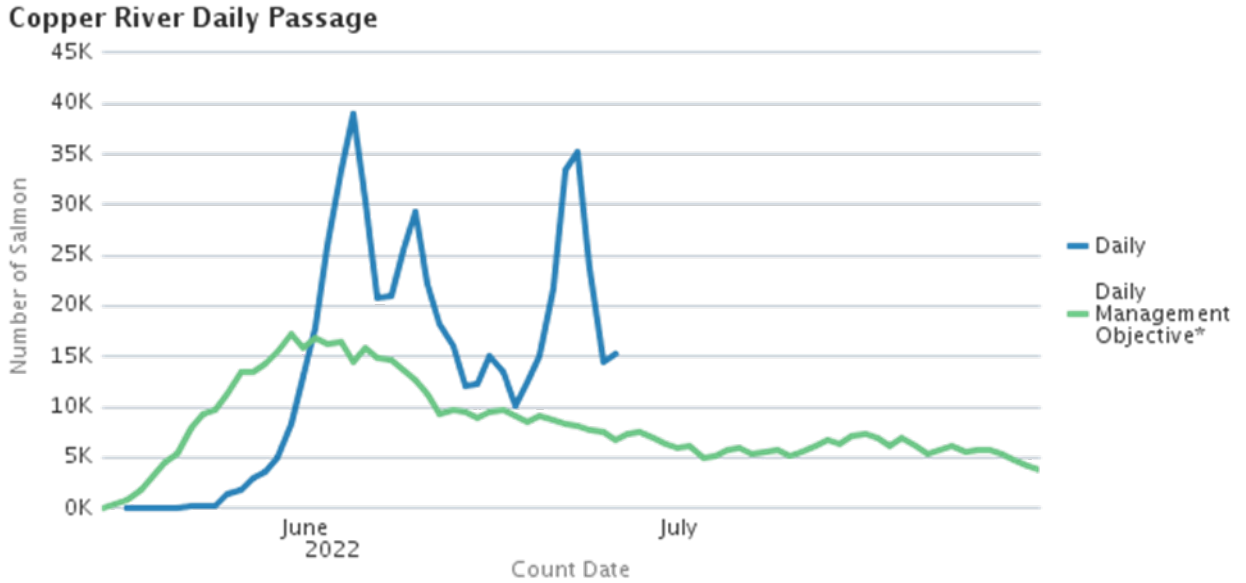
Performance in the commercial fishery and in river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary early season assessments of the Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River. Although the initial two commercial fishing periods resulted in relatively low harvest, subsequent periods resulted in significant increases in Sockeye Salmon harvest. Daily sonar estimates have exceeded projected numbers since June 1, and as of June 25, the cumulative estimate for the season is now 35% above the management objective of 421,639 for this date of the season.

As with Sockeye Salmon, fisheries managers are also monitoring Chinook Salmon run strength; primary indicators are commercial harvest rates and data from the Chinook Salmon in river abundance project operated by the Native Village of Eyak (NVE). Additional insight is gained from the recent application of updated technology at the Miles Lake sonar site to provide species apportionment data. As early season assessments indicated a potentially weak run, the State restricted Chinook Salmon retention in the sport and personal use fisheries beginning June 20. Aligning with the State's management actions, and as a proactive measure to assist with conservation, on June 21 the Federal in-season manager issued a Copper River Fisheries Advisory Notice of the potential concern of the escapement level, in which Federal subsistence users were asked to consider voluntarily releasing healthy Chinook Salmon that may be beyond their subsistence needs.

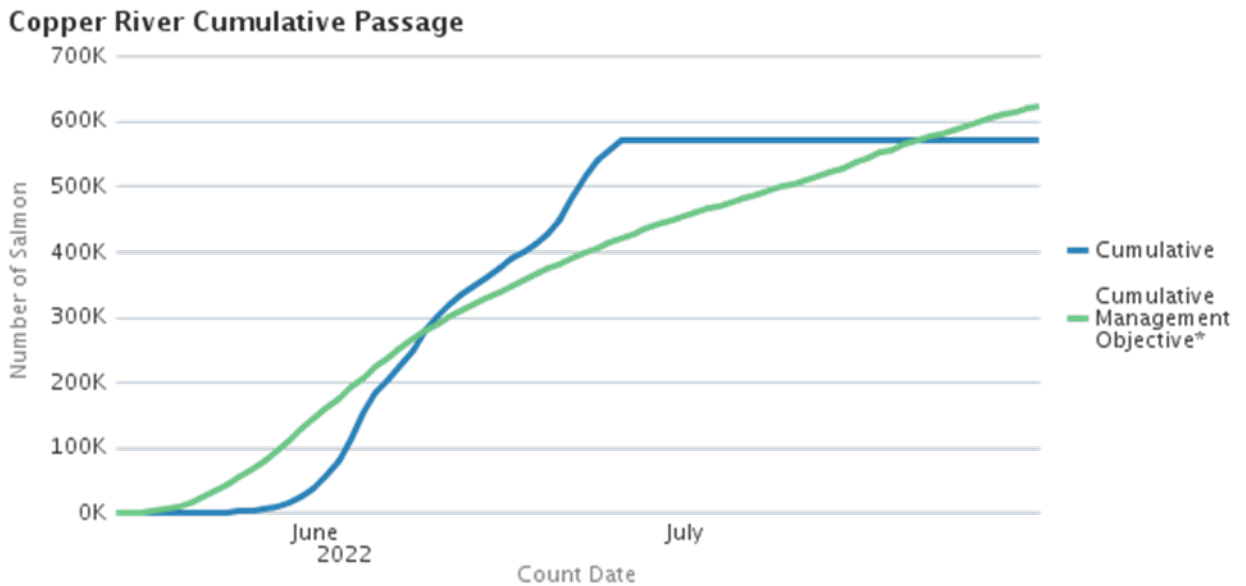
Although early season assessments indicated a potentially weak run of Chinook Salmon, recent assessments by the State indicate that the inriver return now appears significantly stronger. State restrictions that were enacted on June 20 on Chinook Salmon retention in the sport and personal use fishing will no longer in effect beginning June 27.

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 State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict is currently open and will remain open through July 3.



Graph of Copper River Salmon Daily Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through June 25, 2022



Graph of Copper River Salmon Cumulative Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through June 25, 2022

Source:

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

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. Through the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website, 146 Chitina Subdistrict permits, 219 Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and 1 Batzulnetas permits have been issued to date.

In April 2022, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted a proposal to allow subsistence salmon harvest opportunities in the Lower Copper River near Cordova. The season was adopted to be open from June 1 through September 30. As regulations of this new fishery would not be in effect until later in the year when the Federal Register was published, a Fisheries Special Action Request, was considered and adopted by the Board on May 19 which put these regulations in place temporarily for the 2022 season. This fishery opened on June 1. Permits are available at the Cordova Ranger Station (Chugach National Forest). 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. Harvest reports are being directed to a drop box at the Cordova Ranger Station. As of June 24, there have been 64 permits issued with 98 Sockeye Salmon and 3 Chinook Salmon reported in harvest.

With funding through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), WRST is now operating the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas. Weir installation was completed on June 24; no salmon were observed in the creek while onsite.

Links:

ADFG 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>

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>

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PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova. (907) 424-4759 milo.burcham@usda.gov

27 June 2022

***This will be Milo's Last Report as he retires at the end of the week!!!
Please call him and wish him well.***

Thirty-five Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Chugach National Forest portion of the Prince William Sound area (FFPW01) to date. Harvest statistics of this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. Most harvest under these permits takes place during the coho fishery in fresh waters of the Copper River Delta in August and September. Seventy-four permits were issued in 2021 and 28 were fished. Reported harvest was 459 Coho Salmon, 19 Sockeye Salmon and 4 Cutthroat Trout.

The new dip net fishery in the Lower Copper River Area (FFPW05) began on June 1, 2022. Sixty-six permits have been issued so far and given the 48-hour reporting requirement, in-season harvest updates will be presented throughout the season. Most effort and harvest has taken place at 36-Mile of the Copper River Highway. Thirty-eight Sockeye Salmon were reported harvested this week, bringing the season total harvest to 104 Sockeye and 3 King Salmon.

COOK INLET AREA – Kenneth Gates, Senior Fish Biologist, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (907) 260-0132 Kenneth_Gates@FWS.GOV

The 2022 Cook Inlet Federal subsistence fishing is underway. Federal fisheries on Kenai and Kasilof rivers began June 15 and June 16, respectively. Regulatory dates for the Kasilof River community gillnet fishery are from June 16 through August 15. Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30.

Seasons for subsistence fishing with rod and reel are the same as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations. Most of the initial rod and reel subsistence effort

will be focused at Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opened June 11.

A total of 369 permits have been issued to date to residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, and Ninilchik. Permit types include a general fishing, household, designated fisher, and community gillnet permits. To date, 72 Sockeye Sealmon have been reported as being harvested in the Kasilof River in the gillnet fishery.

No special actions have been issued for Cook Inlet Federal fisheries. However, escapement is extremely poor for Chinook Salmon returning to upper Cook Inlet requiring State fisheries managers to close all saltwater fisheries north of Bluff Point targeting Chinook Salmon including Kenai and Kasilof in-river fisheries. Current in-season passage of large early-run Chinook Salmon in the lower Kenai River is 1,400 fish well below the minimum OEG of 3,900 fish. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates a Chinook Salmon escapement project in the Funny River, a tributary supporting ~ 20% of the early-run Chinook Salmon returning to the Kenai River. This is the only weir escapement project operated between the Kenai and Kasilof rivers that monitors wild Chinook Salmon. Through June 16, passage is five Chinook Salmon in the Funny River.

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) 487-2600/0230 michael_brady@fws.gov or

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

The Sockeye Salmon escapement for the Buskin River drainage continues to be low, with a cumulative to date count of 2,771 fish. The Emergency Special Action remains in effect, for the harvesting of Sockeye Salmon in the subsistence fishery. The Litnik (Afognak) drainage sockeye salmon run started slow with the weir recording more fish passing upstream. Aerial survey flights conducted by ADF&G reported a large number of fish in the lagoon and anticipate that these fish will move into the system in the next week. The cumulative count to date for Litnik is 8,461 fish.

The Karluk and Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapements have been strong the past few weeks, with Karluk meeting its' lower escapement goal of 150,000 fish. The cumulative sockeye salmon count to date is 155,497 fish. The Ayakulik River sockeye salmon escapement has not reached its' lower escapement goal of 140,000 fish but is anticipated to surpass that goal in the next week. The cumulative sockeye salmon count to date is 108,803 fish. Aerial observations as well as discussion with our Ursa Major II captain, shows very little set net sites are active this year. Commercial openings have been extended throughout the lower Kodiak Island areas.

The Alitak bay district has seen the return of sockeye salmon in strong numbers, with Upper Station easily exceeding its lower escapement goal of 43,000 fish, with 64,215 fish counted to date. Akalura video monitoring project has been setup and recording since June 14. Any data collected from this project will be added to the weekly report as needed.

Any additional information pertaining to subsistence harvest will be amended to this report.

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF June 27, 2022.

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:

The 2022 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run is forecast to be approximately 73 million fish for the nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak.

Escapement projects are currently being installed throughout the area. Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for June 26:

Egegik = 445,656
 Igushik = 2,580
 Kvichak = 69,042
 Naknek = 149,100
 Nushagak = 1,194,614; Chinook = 35,818
 Wood River = 935,022

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 26 is 156,973 Sockeye Salmon. The interim escapement objective for June 26 is around 215,000 fish. The 2022 Sockeye Salmon forecasted total-run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 1,272,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 562,000 Sockeye Salmon. No Chinook Salmon have been counted at the ADFG weir as of June 26.

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. The 2022 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 285,000 fish for the Nelson River and 394,000 fish for late-run Bear Lake.

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for June 26:

Nelson = 3,517; Chinook = 343
 Bear = 53,671
 Ilnik = 52,006; Chinook = 5
 Orzinski = 900
 Sandy = 5,567
 McLees = 209

Escapement Goals:

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000
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 20-26, 2022

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

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The drainagewide Chinook salmon outlook is for a run size of 99,000 to 150,000 fish, and the Canadian-origin Chinook salmon run size outlook is for a run of 41,000 to 62,000 fish. Therefore the 2022 run is likely to be similar to 2021. Because of the poor projected run size, salmon fishing closures are required until inseason run strength estimates indicate a harvestable surplus above escapement needs. This will likely require closures at least through the midpoint of the run.

The drainagewide summer Chum salmon outlook is for a run size of 333,000 fish, with a range of 162,000 to 542,000 fish. This outlook is poor, and unless the run comes in at the upper end, the fishery will likely require closures for most of the run.

The drainagewide fall Chum salmon outlook is for a run size of 110,000 fish, with a range of 78,100 to 148,000 fish. The fall Chum salmon projection will be revised in mid-July based on the 2022 summer Chum salmon run size.

Assessment Information

As of June 13 at Pilot station sonar, approximately 10,000 Chinook Salmon have passed the sonar compared to a historical average for this time of about 49,000 fish.

Approximately 12,000 summer Chum Salmon have passed the sonar compared to a historical median for this time of about 34,000 fish. The first quarter points for both Chinook and Summer chum are usually after June 19 for both species, therefore we are still pretty early in the run. While an incoming pulse was detected at Lower Yukon test fishery for Chinook and summer Chum salmon on June 22 and June 23, it'll be another three days before we see the strength of those pulses at Pilot Station sonar. It is unclear if this is a very late first pulse of Chinook, or whether the first pulse already occurred and was unusually weak. But both runs appear to be poor at this time, and closures to salmon fishing continue to be warranted.

The ADF&G Advisory Announcement Yukon Summer Season Update #4 can be found here: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1384747662.pdf>

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

Management Actions

Under the Delegated letter of Authority, and in consultation with Regional Advisory Council chairs and Office of Subsistence management staff, the Federal In-season Manager began issuing emergency special actions to close salmon fishing in each district, starting on June 2, and moving the closures upriver based on salmon migration timing.

Fishing for non-salmon species with 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets will be allowed under State and Federal regulations during salmon fishing closures; however, net length is restricted to a maximum of 60 feet. If a Chinook or Chum salmon is caught in 4-inch

mesh gillnets, it should be released alive if possible, or if dead, may be kept. If fishermen are encountering salmon in a particular area, they should move their net and avoid areas where salmon are running. Other non-salmon gear types, including dip net, hook and line, longline, jigging gear, hand line, beach seine, fyke net, spear, or lead may be used to fish for non-salmon species all year, even during salmon fishing closures, but all Chinook and summer Chum salmon caught must be released alive from these gears. Pink Salmon or Sockeye Salmon may be retained in these gears if caught. Fish wheels may not be operated during salmon fishing closures.

Subsistence salmon fishing has been or will be closed in Federal public waters by Emergency Special Action in the following Districts and Subdistricts:

- Coastal District and District 1, June 2 ([2-KS-01-22](#))
- District 2, June 4 ([2-KS-01-22](#))
- District 3, June 7 ([2-KS-02-22](#))
- Subdistrict 4-A Lower, June 12 ([2-KS-03-22](#))
- Subdistrict 4-A Upper, June 15 ([2-KS-03-22](#))
- Subdistricts 4-B/C, June 17 ([2-KS-04-22](#))
- Innoko River, June 17 ([2-KS-05-22](#))
- Subdistricts 5-A/B/C, June 21 ([2-KS-06-22](#))
- Koyukuk River, June 25 ([2-KS-07-22](#))
- Subdistrict 5-D Lower, June 25 ([2-KS-08-22](#))
- Subdistrict 5-D Middle, June 28 ([2-KS-08-22](#))
- Subdistrict 5-D Upper, June 30 ([2-KS-08-22](#))
- Subdistrict 6A, June 23 ([2-KS-09-22](#))
- Upper Tanana River June 28 ([2-KS-09-22](#))

Until closed, subsistence salmon fishing in the remainder of Yukon River drainage is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets.

These management actions were taken in consultation with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). State-managed waters in these areas have been closed concurrently by ADF&G.

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/

Recent Fishery special actions are posted here:

[Fisheries Special Actions | U.S. Department of the Interior \(doi.gov\)](#)

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

For Federal News Releases and Emergency Special actions, like: www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

KUSKOKWIM RIVER

In Season Manager – Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact Boyd_Blihovde@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or aaron_moses@fws.gov

Summary:

Pursuant to authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager, as In-Season Manager, hereby announces several additional gillnet fishing opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users. These additional openings reflect revisions to Emergency Special Action (ESA) 3-KS-01-22, issued May 2, 2022, which closed certain waters within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Yukon Delta NWR) to the harvest of salmon and certain fishing methods in order to ensure the continued viability of, and subsistence use of Chinook and Chum Salmon. ESA 3-KSA-02-22 further provided several Chinook and harvest opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users, the latest of which occurred on June 22, 2022. Since that time, the In-Season manager has continued to review data and information reported by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and other parties and has engaged in numerous discussions with stakeholders concerning the prospect of providing additional harvest opportunities.

Like what occurred in 2021, the data indicates that this season's Chinook Salmon run is late or weak, that a conservation concern continues to exist, and that the run is not strong enough to support a complete rescission of the existing closure. However, ADF&G and the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission agree, that limited opportunities to harvest Sockeye Salmon can be provided in specific areas along the shoreline that should limit the capture of both Chum and Chinook Salmon. Due to the expected strong Sockeye run and the subsistence user's needs for fish, the following opportunity is being announced. Pursuant to Section 804 of ANILCA, these limited re-openings will be afforded only to Federally qualified subsistence users.

The subsections below describe these additional openings and reiterate certain key closures and restrictions instituted by 3-KS-01-22 that remain in effect.

Federally Qualified Subsistence Fishing Opportunities:

(1) Set Gillnet Opportunity:

- **June 29 start at 6:00 am through June 30 at 6:00 pm (36 hours)**
- **July 3 start at 6:00 am through July 4 at 6:00 pm (36 hours)**

Set gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or less mesh, may not exceed 75 feet in length and 45 meshes in depth. Set gillnets may not be operated more than 100 feet from the ordinary

high-water mark (the bank/shoreline where vegetation is growing), must be attached to the bank, and substantially fished perpendicular to shore.

Alternative Methods- Nothing in ESA 3-KS-01-22 or the present action prohibits the use of alternative methods of fishing (including use of hook and line, dip net, beach seine, and fish wheels) except for the tributary details mentioned below.

Tributary Details- The following Federal public waters within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge remain closed to the harvest of Chinook and Chum Salmon and by all means and methods and by all users:

- **The Eek River;**
- **The Kwethluk River drainage beginning at its confluence with Kuskokuak Slough**
- **The Kasigluk and Kisaralik river drainages including Old Kuskokuak Slough to ADF&G regulatory markers at the confluence of Old Kuskokuak Slough and Kuskokuak Slough;**
- **The Tuluksak River drainage including its confluence with the Kuskokwim River and downstream approximately 1-mile to ADF&G regulatory markers;**
- **The Aniak River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers at its confluence with the Kuskokwim River; and**
- **The Aniak box defined as: The waters of the Kuskokwim River main stem from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at Aniak downstream to a line formed from the northwest corner of the runway (latitude 61° 35' 16" N, longitude 159° 33' 28" W), due north to a point on the southeast corner of the sandbar (latitude 61° 35' 37" N, longitude 159° 33' 16" W).**

Fishing from tributaries not listed above is restricted to fishing 100 yards upriver from the mouth of the river (confluence with the main stem Kuskokwim River).

Test Fisheries and Harvest Estimate:

As of June 26, 2022 the CPUE for Chinook at the Bethel test fish is at 295. The 2021 and 2020 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 273 and 262, respectively.

Cumulative harvest of Chinook salmon on the Kuskokwim as of 6/26 is currently at 26,610.

As of June 26, 2022 the CPUE for Chum at the Bethel test fish is at 75. The 2021 and 2020 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 19 and 148, respectively.

As of June 26, 2022 the CPUE for Sockeye at the Bethel test fish is at 277. The 2021 and 2020 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 200 and 136, 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

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) 443-6104 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 20-26, 2022. **REPORT #5**

The sea ice is largely gone, and remaining ice is rapidly breaking up and melting.

Norton Sound District

Sport Fishing:

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game closed fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof to sport fishing for king salmon effective 12:01 a.m. June 23, 2022. This closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in these drainages. These temporary regulations will remain in effect through August 15, 2022, or until there are indications of a harvestable surplus above escapement objectives. Escapements are

indexed by a counting tower on the North River, a tributary of the Unalakeet River, and a floating weir which is located on the mainstem Unalakeet River.

St. Michael and Stebbins

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is open 7 days per week in southern Norton Sound from Pt. Romanof to Black Point. Regulation does allow for the restriction of gillnet mesh size in the subsistence fisheries throughout Norton Sound if it is necessary to conserve Chinook salmon.

Southern Norton Sound: Subdistrict (6) Unalakeet and Subdistrict (5) Shaktoolik

Subsistence Fishing:

The ADF&G suspended the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in Subdistricts 5 and 6 on Saturday evening, June 25.

Effective 6 p.m. Saturday, June 25, the subsistence salmon fishing period in marine waters Subdistricts 5 and 6, Shaktoolik and Unalakeet Subdistricts, closed as scheduled and will not reopen until further notice. The marine water fishing closure is from Cape Denbigh south to Black Point.

Effective at 8 p.m. Saturday, June 25, in Subdistricts 5 and 6, subsistence salmon fishing in fresh waters closed and not reopen until further notice.

The past two years the king salmon escapement goal range of 1,200 to 2,600 fish has not been reached at the North River counting tower. And last year the Unalakeet River weir had the lowest king salmon passage since counting began in 2010. This year's king salmon run is not expected to reach the escapement goal range unless subsistence salmon fishing time is reduced. The last time the escapement goal range was met was in 2018 and 2019 and limited subsistence fishing time occurred in both years.

Although the subsistence salmon fishing schedule is being suspended the department does plan to have one marine fishing period and one freshwater fishing period in Shaktoolik and Unalakeet Subdistricts next week. The department will try to schedule the next fishing period during favorable weather conditions.

Both the NESDC North River counting tower and the cooperative Unalakeet River weir are operational. Although early in the season no king salmon have been counted past the projects. The department thanks Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation for over two decades of supporting adult salmon counting operations. Specific strategies vary for each subdistrict depending on expected fishing effort and recent harvest patterns based on the expected run size of king salmon.

Restrictions for each subdistrict are as follows: Shaktoolik Subdistrict Effective June 25 at 6 p.m. all marine waters of Norton Sound Subdistrict 5, the Shaktoolik Subdistrict, will close to subsistence salmon fishing. All fresh waters of Norton Sound Subdistrict 5 will close to subsistence salmon fishing effective June 25 at 8 p.m. Next week the department plans to have one subsistence fishing period in the marine waters with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or smaller during favorable weather conditions. Fresh waters including the Shaktoolik River drainage will remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing until next week's announced fishing period. Gillnets used to target trout and whitefish in the Shaktoolik River, and all other freshwater areas of Subdistrict 5 must have a mesh size no greater than 4 inches. Dip nets and cast nets may also be used, but any king salmon captured must be immediately released unharmed in the water.

Unalakleet Subdistrict Effective June 25 at 6 p.m. all marine waters of Norton Sound Subdistrict 6, the Unalakleet Subdistrict, were closed to subsistence salmon fishing. All fresh waters of Norton Sound Subdistrict 6 were closed to subsistence salmon fishing effective June 25 at 8 p.m. The North River and the Unalakleet River drainage downstream of the North River including the marine waters within 500 yards is closed to all net fishing. However, dip nets and cast nets may be used, but any king salmon captured must be immediately released. Next week the department plans to have a subsistence fishing period in the marine waters during favorable weather conditions with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or smaller and one fishing period in the freshwater areas of Subdistrict 6. Beach seining for salmon in all Subdistricts 5 and 6 waters is closed until July 1, and then will be open through August 10 with mesh size restricted to 4 ½ inches, or smaller, and all king salmon must be released to the water immediately unharmed.

Northern Norton Sound: Subdistricts (4) Norton Bay (3) Elim, (2) Golovin. (1) Nome

A subsistence salmon permit is required when subsistence salmon fishing in northern Norton Sound. Permits are required for all marine and fresh waters of Subdistricts 1 through 3 (Nome, Golovin, and Elim), Cape Woolley Subdistrict of the Norton Sound District, and the Port Clarence District. A separate permit for Pilgrim River and Salmon Lake is required when fishing there. Catch limits in effect are listed on the permit for the rivers that have subsistence catch limits.

Rod and reel are legal subsistence fishing gear in northern Norton Sound and a subsistence salmon permit or sport fish license is required when fishing with rod and reel for salmon. Rod and reel are not legal subsistence fishing gear in southern Norton Sound and a sport fish license is required when fishing with a rod and reel in State of Alaska open waters. However, no subsistence salmon permits are required in Southern Norton Sound waters when fishing with a net including the Norton Bay Subdistrict beginning at Bald Head, between Elim and Koyuk, to the southern Norton Sound District boundary at Point Romanof.

All marine waters and fresh waters are open to subsistence salmon fishing in Norton Sound until mid-June. On June 15, the subsistence fishing schedule went into effect for the Nome Subdistrict and marine and fresh waters will be open to subsistence salmon fishing from 6

p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday, except for the marine waters east of Cape Nome which will remain open 7 days a week.

Subdistrict (1) Nome

By Alaska Board of Fisheries regulation, on June 15 the summer subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule went into effect in the Nome Subdistrict. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will be open 7 days per week. All Nome Subdistrict freshwater subsistence areas and the marine waters west of Cape Nome will be open to gillnet fishing for five days each week from 6 p.m. Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Mondays. Effective June 15, beach seining for salmon opened in all subsistence areas of the Nome Subdistrict whenever subsistence gillnet fishing is open. Unless closed by emergency order, beach seining will remain open during gillnet fishing periods through August 15. Dip nets and cast nets can also be used at any time gillnet fishing is open.

The first-time nets were required to be removed from all fresh-water Nome Subdistrict subsistence areas at midnight on Monday evening, June 14. Likewise, all nets were required to be removed from Nome Subdistrict marine waters west of Cape Nome on Monday evening, June 14, at midnight. Also, effective June 15, all gillnet and beach seine fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River was closed. This closure is in effect to protect migrating sockeye salmon that hold in the Sinuk River bridge area before reaching the spawning grounds.

Kotzebue District

There are no updates to this section this week. If you read it then, you can skip it. If not, you can catch up.

The Kotzebue District salmon fisheries management outlook is to inform fishermen, processors, and other interested people of the management strategies for the commercial salmon fishery. The Kotzebue District includes all waters from Cape Prince of Wales to Point Hope. The Kotzebue District is divided into three subdistricts. Subdistrict 2, near the mouth of the Noatak River is closed to commercial fishing by regulation. Most fishing occurs in Subdistrict 1, which is subdivided into six statistical areas to help managers determine catch location.

Within the Kotzebue District, chum salmon *Oncorhynchus keta* are the most abundant anadromous fish. Other salmon species (Chinook *O. tshawytscha*, pink *O. gorbuscha*, coho *O. kisutch*, and sockeye salmon *O. nerka*) occur in lesser numbers, as do Dolly Varden *Salvelinus malma*, and sheefish (inconnu) *Stenodus leucichthys*.

Historical Fishing Effort

Subsistence Fishery

Subsistence fishing has long been an important food gathering activity for people of the Kotzebue Sound drainages. The most recent subsistence survey of salmon harvest is from

2014 that estimated a total of 30,640 chum salmon that were harvested from the Kobuk River, and 6,577 chum salmon that were harvested from the Noatak River and Kotzebue residents reported a harvest of 21,144 chum salmon with the majority harvested in marine waters. Over 90% of the subsistence salmon harvests are chum salmon.

Commercial Fishery

There have been two major buyers in the commercial fishery in recent years. In 2018, there was a record harvest of 695,153 chum salmon caught by 95 permit holders that sold chum salmon for an average price of \$0.40 per pound. The 2019 harvest was 494,593 chum salmon caught by 92 permit holders that sold chum salmon for an average price of \$0.39 per pound and in 2020 only 149,808 chum salmon were harvested by 68 permit holders for an average price of \$0.45 per pound. During the 2021 season, 96,492 chum salmon were harvested by 52 permit holders for an average price of \$0.46 per pound.

2022 Run Outlook

The outlook for the 2022 season is based on the parent-year escapements and returning age classes observed in the commercial fishery. The 5-year-old component of the run is expected to be well below average based on the 4-year-old return in 2021. The 4-year-old component of the run is expected to be below average based on the 3-year-old return last year. The 3-year-old and 6-year-old age classes are much smaller components of the run and are expected to be below average. The commercial harvest is expected to fall within the range of 100,000 to 200,000 chum salmon. Two major buyers are expected in July and a lower volume, value-added buyer has expressed interest in buying fish.

Management Strategies

The fishery is scheduled to open on July 10 with two buyers expected on the Kotzebue north shore. The fishery closes on August 31 unless extended by emergency order because of a strong unexpected late run.

Primary commercial fishery management objectives are to provide adequate chum salmon passage through the commercial fishery: (1) to ensure sustained runs by allowing adequate escapement, and (2) to meet subsistence harvest uses. Fishery management will be dependent on comparing period and cumulative season catch rates to prior years and test fishing results on the Kobuk River.

Age composition of commercial salmon catches will be monitored to determine the strength of age classes in the run. If there is a low abundance of older salmon, which tend to migrate into freshwater first, catch rates will likely be weak early in the season. A stronger than expected 4-year-old return may cause midseason catches to rise. During the first week of the fishery, there are expected to be daily 8-hour fishing periods, except Saturday. Because of the poor expected return of fish, the department may limit fishing time in the following weeks depending on commercial catches, upriver subsistence catch reports, and test fish catches at the Kobuk River test fish project. If commercial catches

indicate adequate run strength and test fish catches are sufficient, the department will allow commercial fishing to continue based on market conditions and escapement indicators. Likewise, in August as the Noatak River chum salmon run passes through the district, the department will consider fishing restrictions if commercial catches indicate a weak run.

Like last year, if poor run strength necessitates fishing restrictions, the department will establish periodic closures of the fishery and fishing time may be reduced to every other day or less. If concern arises about salmon runs, the department will notify the fishermen and the buyers about the need to reduce commercial fishing time.

Last year during the second week of the fishing season, the department reduced fishing to 5 days a week and then further reduced fishing to 3 days a week for the remainder of the season, except in the late August when the buyers notified the department that they would cease operations before the last week of the season and 5 days a week fishing was allowed for the final week the buyers were present.

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2022.

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