

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 10-16, 2023. Report #8
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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

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- **Situk River** – Situk River – Remains closed to harvest of Chinook Salmon under both State and Federal regulations due to conservation concerns. As of July 13, a total of 106 Chinook Salmon and 4,078 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the Situk Weir.

Juneau

Jake Musslewhite, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)789-6256,
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- **Neva Lake** – The Neva Lake weir is a cooperative project between the Hoonah Indian Association and the Forest Service, and monitors Sockeye returns to the Neva system. The weir was installed on June 21. Neva Lake Sockeye are used by residents of Icy Strait communities, including Hoonah and Gustavus, as well as Juneau residents. The harvest limit at Neva was increased to 20 fish this year, which should provide additional opportunity for subsistence users. Harvest of Sockeye in the fresh waters of the Neva system (including Neva Lake, Neva Creek, and Soth Creek) is limited to rural residents of southeast Alaska. Users from Juneau and other non-rural areas may harvest Sockeye only in the marine waters at the mouth of South Creek.



Figure 1. Juliet Harrison, USFS; Gerard White Sr. (HIA) and Gerard White Jr. (HIA) in front of the Neva Lake weir

Sheet'ká and Xunaa (Sitka and Hoonah) Area

Ashley Bolwerk, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)747-4299;
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- **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. Here is the [2023 summary of southeast Alaska herring](#).
- **Falls Lake** – The Falls Lake weir project was not funded in the latest FRMP cycle.
- **Chaa's' Geeyí (Klag Bay)** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which counts Sockeye entering Klag Lake and conducts on-site creel surveys of fishermen. The weir was operational as of June 25. As of July 17, twenty-one Sockeye have entered the lake, and 739 have been harvested. In 2022, approximately 2,029 Sockeye 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 July 15, 39,899 Sockeye have entered the lake. On June 28, the Alaska Department of Fish and game [announced a liberalization](#) of the state personal use and subsistence fishery at Redoubt would take affect on July 1. This emergency order changes the Sockeye Salmon limit, in the state subsistence fisheries, to 25 Sockeye Salmon per household with an annual limit of 100 Sockeye Salmon per household. On July 7, an [Emergency Special Action](#) was

authorized through the Federal Subsistence Program, which increases the daily limit for qualified federal subsistence users to 50 Sockeye per household with no annual limit. A separate Federal Subsistence fishing permit, which can be acquired at the Forest Service office in Sitka, is required to participate in this opportunity.

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 possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence Sockeye 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 are probably of Redoubt origin.



Figure 2. SCA technician sampling fish (photo credit: Elizabeth Klein)

Admiralty

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- **Sitkoh Lake** – The Sitkoh Lake weir is a cooperative project between the USFS and the Angoon Community Association (ACA). The weir was installed on July 12. The swim-through video weir records Sockeye and other fish as they enter the lake. Stream flows are very low given the dry weather, but fish are expected to start showing up once some rain increases stream levels.



Figure 3. Chaney Haavik, left (SCA) and Ashley Bolwerk (USFS) in front of the Sitkoh Lake weir.

Kaachxana.áak'w and Séet Ká Kwáan (Wrangell and Petersburg) Area

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- **Stikine River** – The 2023 pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River was 11,700 fish. This forecast was below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. Directed commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in the area have been restricted to protect this return. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Chinook Assessment Survey concluded on July 10 and the cumulative catch per unit effort ended up at 19.39, just under the recent five-year average of 19.67. The Stikine River Chinook Fishery continues to be a concern on a Federal, State and local level as the estimate continues to be well below average.

The 2023 Federal Stikine River Subsistence Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery began June 21. A total of 85 permits have been issued for the Stikine Subsistence fishery with an estimated harvest of 612 Sockeye Salmon. Water temperature for the 7-day average on the Stikine is 8.8 C which is around normal compared to the 5-year average for this week. Gauge height on the Stikine River downstream of Shakes Slough ranged from 19.5 ft to 16.5 ft for the week of July 9. Currently, water levels are dropping (16.7 ft) and the water temperature is on a rising trend (10.3 C) for the Stikine River.



Figure 4. Sockeye harvested in the Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon fishery. (photo credit: Jennifer Cross)

Prince of Wales

- **Hetta Lake** – The Hetta Lake weir is fish tight, and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff have passed 229 Sockeye Salmon so far. An estimated 621 Hetta Lake Sockeye have been harvested to date.
- **Eek Lake** – The Eek Lake weir is fish tight, and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff have passed 35 Sockeye Salmon so far.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

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

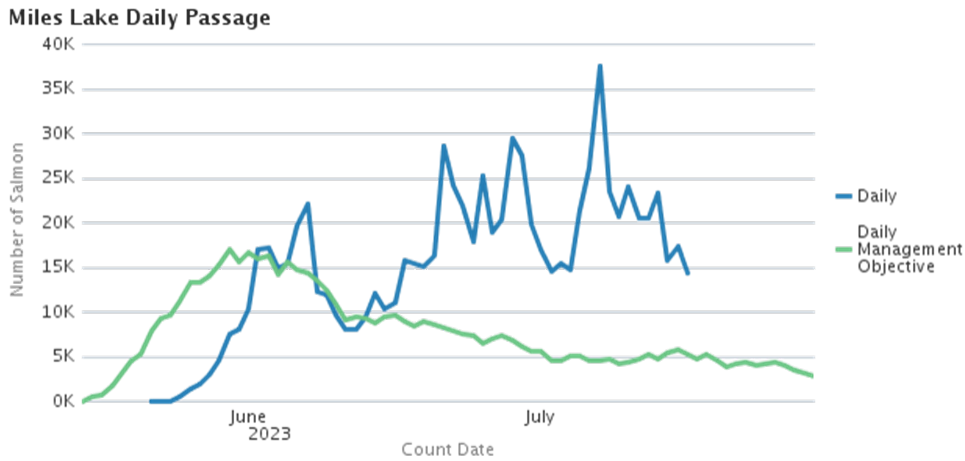
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

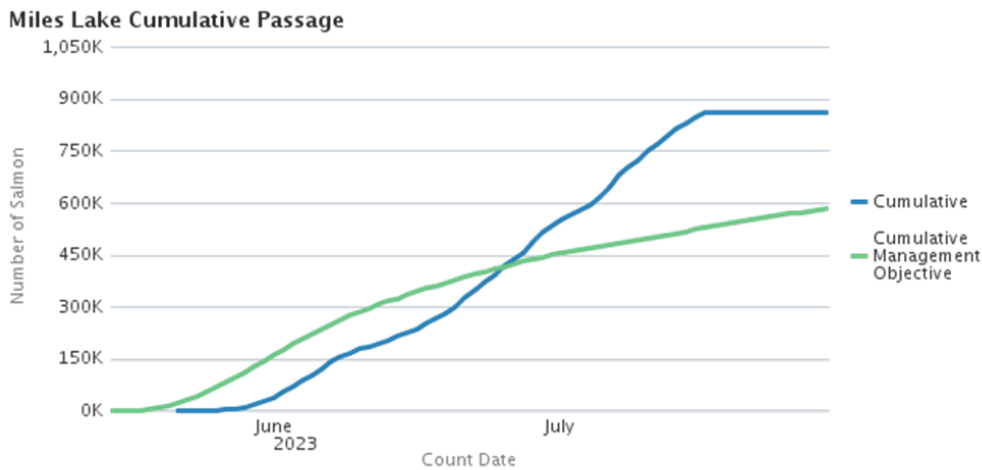
Copper River, 7/17/2023 Update – Dave Sarafin, Copper River Federal Fisheries Management Biologist, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reports the commercial fishing harvest in the Copper River District through July 12 to be 707,000 Sockeye Salmon and 10,300 Chinook Salmon.

As of July 16, the ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) has estimated the passage of 863,003 salmon migrating upstream for the season. The cumulative passage is now 64% above the management objective of 524,680 salmon for this date of the season. A daily estimate of 14,510 salmon migrated by the sonar on July 16.



Graph of Copper River Salmon Daily Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 16, 2023



Graph of Copper River Salmon Cumulative Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 16, 2023

Sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary assessment tool for the Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River. The sonar season total estimate is now well above the management objective. Salmon passage rates have exceeded daily management objectives since June 13 and the escapement goal for the season has already been achieved. Salmon harvest is being reported throughout the river.

As with Sockeye Salmon, fisheries managers are also monitoring Chinook Salmon run strength; a primary assessment tool of in-river abundance is the Chinook Salmon mark-recapture project operated by the Native Village of Eyak (NVE). Recent data assessment by the State project an in-river abundance of 55,000 or more Chinook Salmon; at a level that should provide sustainable escapement and continue to provide harvest opportunities throughout the drainage.

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 has been opened periodically in association with the numbers of salmon estimated passing the Miles Lake sonar.

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas vicinity are open May 15 through September 30. Records of the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website indicate that 186 Chitina Subdistrict, 259 Glennallen Subdistrict, and 2 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. To date, there have been 46 permits issued through the OSM database. Through July 10, a total of 88 Sockeye Salmon and 4 Chinook Salmon have been reported for the season.

With funding through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), WRST is again operating the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas. Installation of the weir was completed on June 22. Staff are in the process of reviewing video data since the weir was completed. The first Sockeye Salmon was documented passing the weir on June 23. As of July 15, preliminary count estimates are of 1,130 Sockeye Salmon and 3 Chinook Salmon passing the weir.



Tanada Creek Salmon Weir, 2023

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. July 7, 2023 Contact – (907) 250-0439 or Andrew.sanders@usda.gov

Prince William Sound / Copper River Delta: The lower Copper River dipnet fishery opened on June 1st. As of Friday morning July 7, 46 permits had been issued, and users reported a cumulative harvest of 88 Sockeye Salmon and 4 Chinook Salmon. The Copper River Highway is accessible to 36 Mile. 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.

Water levels in area streams are receding. Pink Salmon are in, and anglers are reporting high success in the lower stream reaches. In 2022, the 2nd week of July was the peak period for reported harvest for Sockeye Salmon outside the Copper River under subsistence regulations.

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. More information regarding the federal subsistence fisheries in the remainder of the Copper River Delta area and Prince William Sound can be obtained by contacting the Chugach National Forest Subsistence Staff – Andrew Sanders at 907-424-4759

COOK INLET AREA – Kenneth Gates, Senior Fish Biologist, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

The 2023 Cook Inlet Federal subsistence fishing is underway beginning on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers 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 on Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opened June 11.

Federal subsistence fishing permits have been issued to 463 residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, Ninilchik, and Moose Pass. Permit types include a general fishing, household, designated fisher, and community gillnet permits. To date, 3,085 Sockeye Salmon have been reported as being harvested in all fisheries between the Kasilof and Kenai rivers: 1,978 by gillnet in the Kasilof River and 1,107 by dipnet at the Russian River falls through 7/9/2023.

No special actions have been issued for Cook Inlet Federal fisheries. However, escapement remains very poor for Chinook Salmon returning to upper Cook Inlet. The early-run Chinook Salmon escapement was not met in the Kenai River with only 1,961 large fish passing the Alaska Department of Fish and Game sonar by June 30, 2023. We will be closely monitoring the late-run Chinook Salmon escapement and Federal harvest of Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River and will take necessary action if warranted. The late-run of Chinook Salmon returning to the Kenai River is currently not predicted to meet the established in-river escapement goal.

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 runs within the Kodiak Management Area is considered to medium in strength. The southern end of Kodiak Island has recorded strong sockeye salmon escapements. The Karluk River early sockeye salmon escapement has exceeded its lower escapement goal with a cumulative count to date (July 13, 2023) of 181,591 fish. The Ayakulik River sockeye salmon escapement is about the same with a cumulative count to date of 181,387 fish. Upper Station sockeye salmon escapement is strong also, with a cumulative count to date of 61,749 fish. The end of the early run occurs on July 15 and management practices will switch to late run on July 16, 2023.

Litnik continues to be strong with a cumulative sockeye salmon count to date of 32,524 fish. Buskin River sockeye salmon escapement is poor and is unlikely to meet its lower escapement goal. The cumulative count to date is 1,526 fish. Reports from local subsistence users shows that the catch per unit effort is very low. Many subsistence users have continued to travel to other systems within the area of Kodiak to meet their needs, i.e., Port Lions.

The Chinook salmon runs on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers are failing to meet their respective escapement goals, with only 340 Chinook salmon being recorded on the Karluk River and 548 Chinook salmon being recorded on the Ayakulik River.

Any reports of subsistence activities will be reported during the upcoming week.

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF July 17, 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 covered in this report.

Bristol Bay:

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for July 16:

Alagnak = No counts reported
 Egegik = 1,377,312
 Igushik = 366,732
 Kvichak = 3,240,690
 Naknek = 1,069,194
 Nushagak = 1,720,919; Chinook = 30,561
 Togiak = 85,770
 Ugashik = 633,788
 Wood River = 2,554,164

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 July 16 is 490,935 Sockeye Salmon. Early run Sockeye Salmon account for 403,100 fish and late run Sockeye Salmon account for 87,835 fish. The interim escapement objective for July 15 is around 282,000 – 400,000 early run fish and 38,000-103,000 late run fish.

There has been only 145 Chinook Salmon counted at the ADFG weir as of July 16. It is unlikely, based on the current rate of escapement, that the lower range (1,300) of the escapement goal for Chignik River Chinook Salmon will be achieved. In an effort to conserve the Chinook Salmon run, both state and Federal fisheries closures remain in effect.

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:

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for July 15:

Nelson = 163,133; Chinook = 3,393

Bear = 85,340

Ilnik = 96,081

Orzinski = 9,876

Sandy = 26,022

McLees = 19,183

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. July 10-July 17, 2023

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

Assessment and Management Information

The chum run is transitioning to the fall season, with summer chum salmon counts switching over at Pilot station on July 19. End of season estimates of summer chum indicate the drainage-wide goal was met (500,000-1.2 million). Selective gear openings (with dip nets, beach seines or manned fish wheels) are being continued 24 hours per day, 7 days a week until fall chum typically enter the river in significant numbers. At this time, the retention of chum salmon will close, in order to assess the run, until it is projected that all escapement goals will be met. Throughout the drainage, Chinook still need to be released, but chum, pink, coho and sockeye salmon can be retained from selective gears. Gillnets are still limited to 4-inches maximum mesh size, and 60 feet maximum length. Selective gear salmon opportunities in fall season are limited to federally qualified users in federal public waters by Temporary special action, and fishing closures are announced for the Coastal District and Districts 1-3 here: [TSA-02-FC-01-23](#).

The Chinook salmon run is nearly complete in the lower river, but is making its way to upper river spawning grounds. Early fish were just arriving in Fort Yukon and Eagle at the end of last week. **It is imperative that all Chinook be released alive from selective gear.**

The weirs throughout the drainage have been stalled by high water. Gisasa river weir has been counting, but lost fish counts for nearly a week due to high water, so estimates are considered underestimates at this time. The Andreafsky weir, despite installation, is still

experiencing high water that may render counts impossible for this season. Assessment project and management updates will be given on the **YRDFFA weekly teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#.**

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, were announced moving upriver based on run timing. See detailed management strategy here: [2023 FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE YUKON AREA \(doi.gov\)](#)

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

- Yukon River Summer Update #6:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1506817489.pdf>
- Yukon River Subsistence Fall season fishing schedule coastal district to Y-3 (Advisory announcement #1):
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1510590603.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

The Bethel Test Fish and Kuskokwim River Sonar numbers for Chinook and chum salmon

(<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fishcounts>) continue to indicate relatively low numbers. Sockeye salmon numbers are healthy and fishers are reporting high success on harvesting sockeye.

The Chinook run is now about 95% and the chum about 75% past Bethel (area with the most harvest). Additionally, fisher and harvest reports indicate little effort as many have had successful fishing seasons. Therefore, to allow Federally qualified subsistence users to target abundant sockeye, while conserving chum, set net only opportunities have been announced:

- July 17, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 10:00 pm (12 hours total)
- July 19, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 10:00 pm (12 hours total)
- July 21, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 10:00 pm (12 hours total)
- July 24, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 4:00 pm (6 hours total)
- July 26, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 4:00 pm (6 hours total)

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.
(907) 443-6104 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound District

Federal Regulation:

Federal public waters of the Unalakleet River, upstream from the mouth of the Chirosky River, are closed to the taking of Chinook Salmon from July 1–to July 31, by all users. The BLM field manager is authorized to open the closed area to Federally qualified subsistence users or to all users when run strength warrants.

Sport Fishing:

To help protect king salmon during periods of low abundance and provide future sport fishing opportunities, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game closed all fresh waters in Northwest Alaska from Bald Head to Point Romanof to sport fishing for king salmon effective 12:01 a.m. April 5, 2023. 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. Restricting fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure should minimize catch-and-release mortality for king salmon incidentally caught while sport fishing for other species. All king salmon caught incidentally may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

These temporary regulations will remain in effect through August 15, 2023, or until there are indications of a harvestable surplus of king salmon above escapement objectives. Escapements are determined by counts compiled at a counting tower on the North River, a tributary of the Unalakleet River, and counts at a floating weir located on the mainstem Unalakleet River.

The 2023 preseason outlook for the Unalakleet River drainage king salmon run is low, and the number of returning king salmon may be insufficient to meet escapement objectives and provide a moderate harvestable surplus for the subsistence fishery. According to the [Subdistricts 5 and 6 of the Norton Sound District and the Unalakleet River King Salmon Management Plan \(5 AAC 04.395\)](#), when the inriver subsistence fishery is closed to the retention of king salmon, sport fishing for king salmon will be closed.

Shaktoolik (5) and Unalakleet (6) Subdistricts

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing in marine waters of Shaktoolik and Unalakleet (Subdistricts 5 and 6) remain closed. Subsistence fishing with beach seines in the marine and fresh waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6 closed effective July 14. Dip nets and cast nets closed to subsistence fishing in the fresh and marine waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6. Set gillnets with a mesh size of 4-inches or less may be used in the Unalakleet River upstream from its confluence with the North River.

Salmon runs in Subdistricts 5 and 6 continue to be poor. The department is closing subsistence fishing with nets in the marine and fresh waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6 in an attempt to bolster escapements into the local area streams. The department will continue to review inseason run assessment and will update management actions as new information becomes available in future Advisory Announcements.

ADF&G plans to continue offering weekly subsistence opportunity in the marine waters of the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik Subdistricts. with the third 24-hour period opening on July 8 with mesh size restricted to 6-inches or less. The fourth opportunity with mesh sizes of 6 inches or less occurred on July 15. The department will relax restrictions if inseason projections point to king salmon escapement objectives. The department will also relax restrictions in July after the king salmon have migrated through the area. Additionally, beach seining in the marine waters of the subdistrict will be permitted in July; however. Any king salmon must be immediately released unharmed. The marine waters of Shaktoolik and Unalakleet (Subdistricts 5 and 6) opened for a 24-hr period from 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 1, through 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 2, with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or less. A third subsistence opportunity opened for a 24-hr period from 9:00 p.m. Saturday, July 1, through 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 2, with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or less. Dip nets and cast nets may be used in the North River, downstream of the North River, and Unalakleet River confluence; however, any king salmon caught must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. Set gillnets with a mesh size of 4-inches or less may be used in the Unalakleet River upstream from its confluence with the North River.

Subdistricts 5 (Shaktoolik) and 6 (Unalakleet) have been managed as one fishery because past studies have shown salmon bound for these subdistricts intermingle and that harvests in one subdistrict likely will affect the other. No commercial fishing is expected for Chinook or chum salmon, but pink salmon will be targeted commercially depending on buyer interest and gillnet fishing would likely occur beginning in July.

Abundance of the Chinook salmon run will be monitored using passage estimates from the Unalakleet River weir and a counting tower on the North River, an important Chinook salmon spawning tributary in the Unalakleet River drainage. The escapement goal range for the North River is 1,200–2,600 Chinook salmon. However, for a Chinook salmon directed commercial fishery to occur, the department must project an escapement of a minimum of 1,900 Chinook salmon past the North River tower.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 10 hours on July 7 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with nets restricted to 41/2 inches or less. The harvest for this period in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict was 473 pink, 499 chum, and 24 sockeye salmon from 6 permits. The harvest rates for pink salmon were 1/3 of the historical average and escapement in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict has been lagging the historic averages. Catch rates in the Unalakleet Subdistrict with 2,678 pink, 265 cum and 39 sockeye salmon by 10 permit holders were more robust than in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict. Pink salmon catch rates were about average for the Unalakleet Subdistrict. Another directed pink salmon commercial opening occurred for 10 hours between 8:00 a.m. and to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, July 14 in the Unalakleet Subdistrict with mesh size restriction of 41/2 inches or less.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir - No escapement goals yet established. A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, BLM and NSEDC; major funding provided by USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management. The weir was fish tight on July 1. The cumulative counts are 17 kings, 42 sockeyes and 130 pinks and 1,300 chums. Recent rains have caused the river to rise to such an extent that counting operations were suspended Monday, July 10. It might be a week or so before water levels return to workable conditions.

North River Tower Camp J. B. - Escapement goals: king 1,200 to 2,600, chum no goal established, pink 25,000, silver 550-1,100 (aerial survey goal), A NSEDC project. The tower has been operational since June 24 and has passed only 6 kings, 9 chums and 40 pink salmon. High water has suspended operations.

Shaktoolik Tower – No escapement goals yet established, A NSEDC project. The tower began counting on June 26 and has passed an estimated 760 king, 2,900 chum, 9 sockeye and 5,900 pink salmon. Chum salmon are about 1/3 of average, and currently pink passage is poor with only 2 percent of average passage.

NORTON Bay Subdistrict (4)Subsistence Fishing:

There are currently no restrictions to Subsistence fishing.

Commercial Fishing:

The Subdistrict opened to commercial fishing for 10 hours on July 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with net size restricted to 4 1/2 inches or less. Norton Bay opened for a 10-hour commercial salmon fishing on July 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a net mesh size of 41/2 inches or less. The harvest numbers are restricted due to the limited number of fishermen.

Inglutalik River Tower - no escapement goals yet established. A NSEDC project. The project became operational on June 28. Estimated passages are 200 king, 1,800 chum and 200 pink salmon.

Ungalik River Tower - no escapement goals established yet. A NSEDC project. The tower became operational on June 28. Estimated passage is 51 king, 2,700 chum and 670 pink salmon.

Elim Subdistrict (3)

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week.

Commercial Fishing:

A 24-hour commercial salmon fishing period opened in the Subdistrict from 6:00 p.m. July 12 to 6:00 p.m. July 13 with mesh size restricted to 6 inches or less. The cumulative harvest is 792 chum, 15 sockeye and 5 pink salmon.

Golovin Subdistrict (2)

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week.

Commercial Fishing

A 48-hour commercial salmon fishing period opened from 6 p.m. July 12 to 6:00 p.m. on July 14 with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The cumulative commercial harvest is 6,111 chum, 28 sockeye and 5 pink salmon. Catch per unit of effort Last week's commercial salmon gillnet fishing period resulted in 5 fishermen landing 2,463 chums, and 1 sockeye. Catch per unit of effort was good for this opening and remained almost twice the historical average.

Nome Subdistrict (1)

Subsistence Fishing:

The Nome Subdistrict remains on a subsistence fishing schedule in marine waters west of Cape Nome and in all fresh waters of the Nome Subdistrict from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays till 6:00 p.m. Mondays. Marine waters of the Nome Subdistrict east of Cape Nome remain open 7 days per week.

Effective June 15, beach seines, dip nets, and cast net could be used for salmon and will be open 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.

Commercial Fishing

Commercial salmon fishing opened in the Nome Subdistrict for a 24- hour period from 9:00 p.m. July 12 to 9:00 p.m. July 13 with a mesh size restricted 6 inches or less. The commercial harvest has been 520 chum and 6 sockeye salmon.

Eldorado River Weir -escapement goals-chum 4,400-14,200. A NSEDC project. The weir was fish tight the evening of June 30 and has passed 2 king, 1,366 chum and 40 pink salmon.

Port Clarence District

Pilgrim River Weir – A NSEDC project. The weir has been fish tight since July 6. Passage has been slow so far with only 17 chum and 40 pink salmon.

Subsistence Fishing:

The Pilgrim River will remain closed to subsistence net fishing, Escapement of sockeye salmon to the Pilgrim River has been week in recent years and has not met escapement goals. Restrictions may be relaxed if inseason assessment indicates there is a surplus to escapement needs. The entire Pilgrim River and its tributaries as well as the lower Kuzitrin River 300 yards upstream from its mouth remain closed to all net fishing. Subsistence net fishing remains open 7 days per week outside of the Pilgrim River closed area.

Commercial Fishing:

No commercial fishing periods are expected due to lack of market interest and the likelihood of sockeye salmon escapement goals not being met. The Pilgrim River will be closed to subsistence net fishing. Escapement will be monitored and if run strength warrants it, restrictions may be relaxed.

Kotzebue District

Subsistence Fishing:

No changes to existing subsistence fishing are anticipated.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 8 hours daily from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday, July 10, through Friday, July 14, in the Kotzebue Sound District. In Subdistrict 1 of the Kotzebue District, marine waters adjacent to the end of the runway from the Weather

Service Dome south of the main runway to the NANA building north of the main runway and extending one mile offshore into Kotzebue Sound perpendicular to the beach will be closed to both subsistence and commercial fishing in order to avoid birds being attracted to fishing nets near the end of the airport runway and becoming a safety hazard. Two buyers are registered to purchase chum salmon in Kotzebue this season. The 2023 Kotzebue commercial harvest forecast is 300,000 to 400,000 chum salmon fish.

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