

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 12-18, 2021. Report #8
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 – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 justin.koller@usda.gov

Herring – A commercial herring fishery occurred in Sitka Sound in 2021. Please see this [summary of Sitka Sound herring 2021](#). Also, [summary of southeast Alaska herring 2021](#).

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which was operational as of June 25. Four sockeye have been counted in the trap as of July 18, which is normal because some years the run is just commencing around this date. However, people have been fishing in the bay without much success. The final escapement estimate in 2020 was 800 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was estimated to be 253. Subsistence harvest accounted for 96% of terminal area harvest.

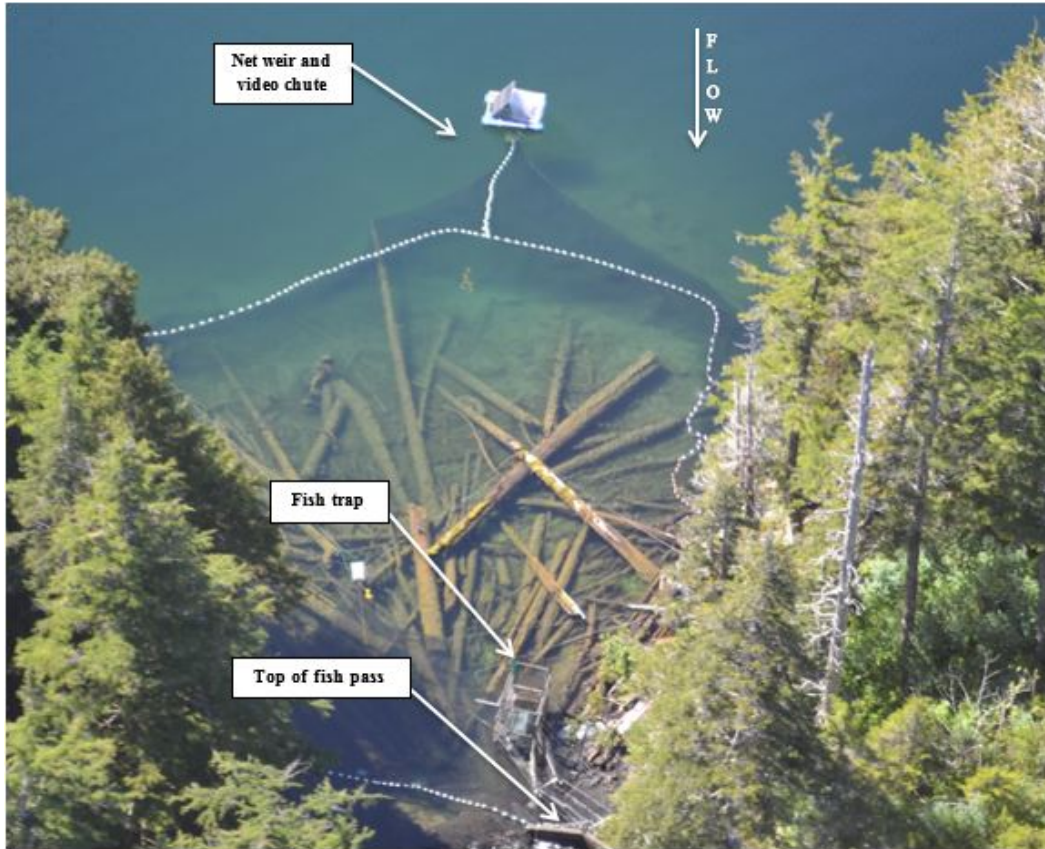


Figure 1. Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

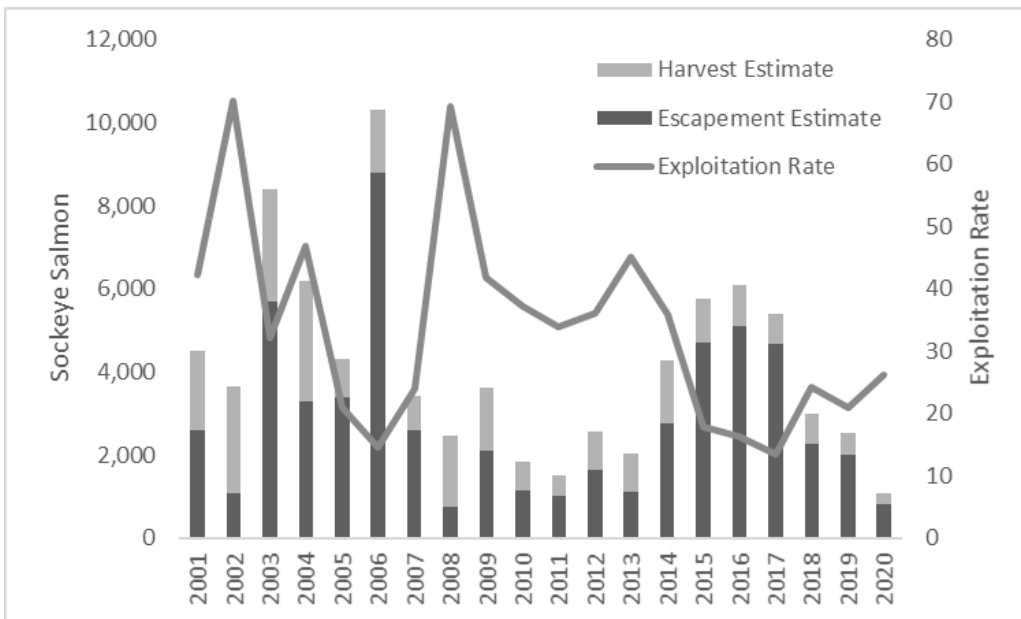


Figure 2. Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2020.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is was installed June 30. As of July 18, 682 sockeye have been counted at the weir and only 5 have been harvested. In 2020, approximately 4,122 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,599 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

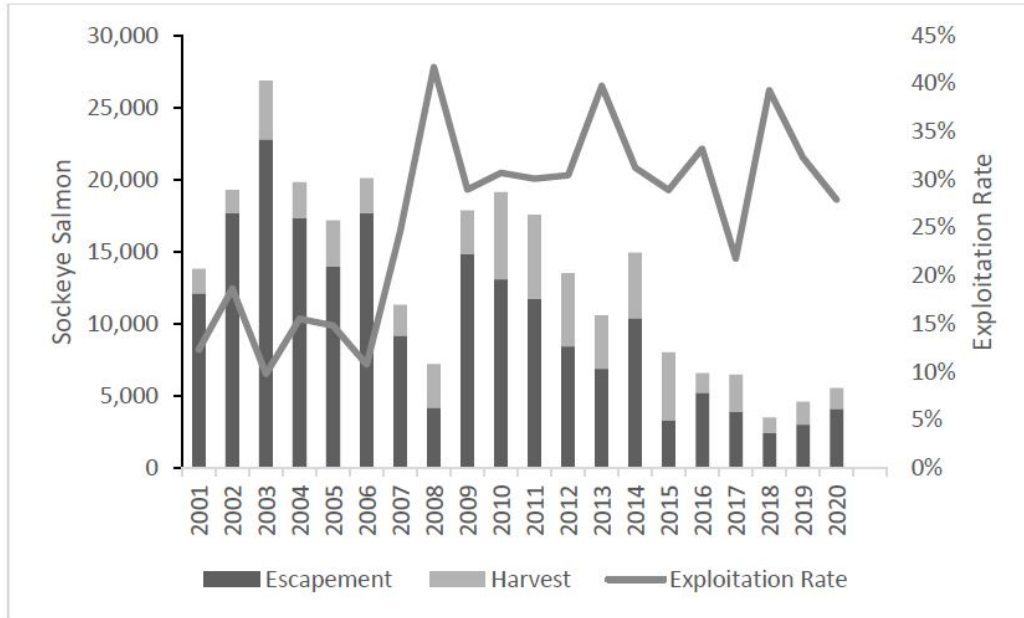


Figure 3. Creel survey harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2020.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 15. As of July 19, 16,320 sockeye have entered the lake. We are predicting that over 50,000 sockeye will pass through the weir this year. On July 10, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence sockeye possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household annual limit was set at 100. Many people are fishing for sockeye in Redoubt Bay and reporting good success. The first commercial seine opening occurred Sunday July 18. In 2020, an estimated 41,279 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. Over 40,000 sockeye were harvested in Sitka Sound commercial fishery openings throughout the 2020 season. Most of these sockeye are probably of Redoubt origin.

[News release, sockeye limits 2021](#)

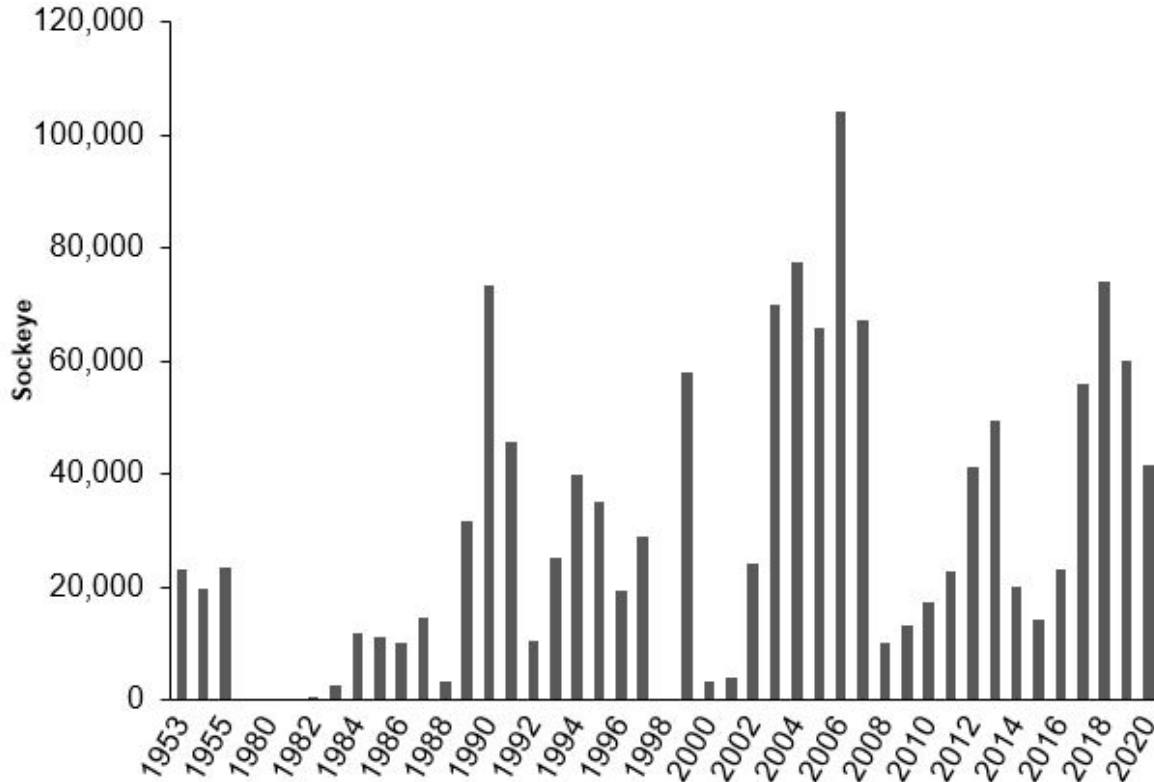


Figure 4. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2019. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Gut Bay - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake monitor escapement and harvest of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon. Gut Bay is located south of Falls Lake on Baranof Island and an important source of sockeye for the village of Kake. Very little is known about the magnitude of this sockeye run. In 2019, 881 sockeye were counted at the weir and about 200 were harvested in the state subsistence fishery. The Gut Bay project has been postponed until 2022 due to staffing shortages. Word is harvesters are catching a good amount of sockeye this year at Gut Bay.

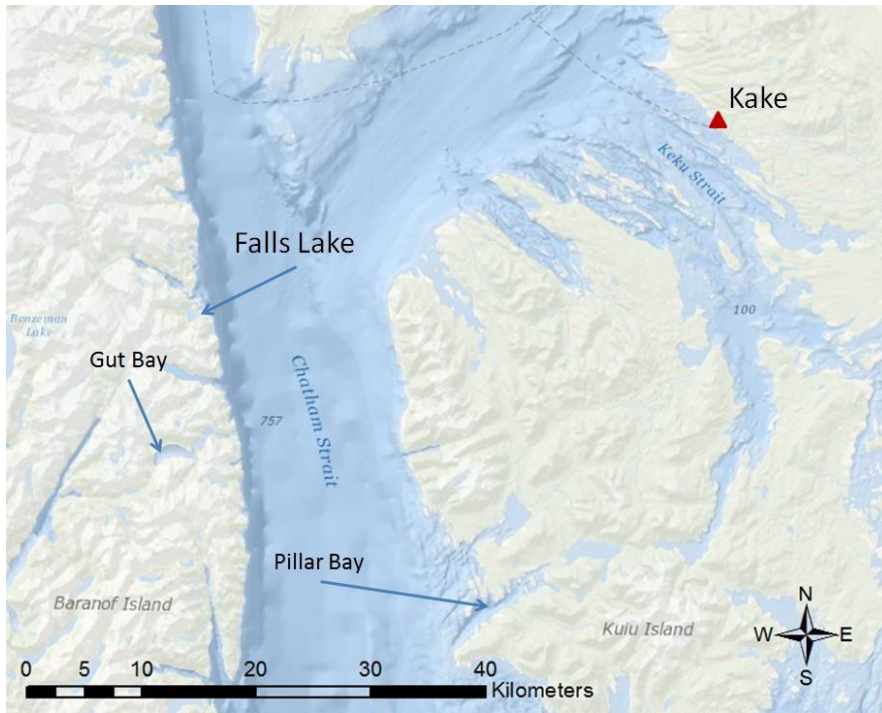


Figure 5. Location of Gut Bay in relation to Falls Lake and the village of Kake

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

The pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River is 9,900 fish. This forecast is below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. 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 2021 Stikine River pre-season Sockeye Salmon forecast is 56,000 fish, with 28,000 Tahltan and 28,000 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 and 30,000 for Mainstem fish. The 2021 forecast is below the escapement objective for the mainstem and may result in a season closure.

The 2021 Federal Stikine River Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery began June 21. High water likely slowed harvest effort during the first two weeks of the fishery. Sockeye harvest has begun to increase as the river level has receded and several households have reported harvesting their Sockeye limit. A total of 91 permits have been issued for the Stikine fishery and no harvest estimate is available at this time.

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), Forest Service, Tongass National Forest

July 19, 2021

Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon: A Forest Service crew installed the Neva Lake weir on June 18, 2021. This swim-through video weir is located near Excursion Inlet, and is maintained by a Hoonah Indian Association crew living onsite. As of July 13, 520 Sockeye have been counted through the weir, along with 1090 Dolly Varden and 190 Cutthroat Trout. Live video and clips from the weir can be accessed at <http://nevalake.ddns.net:81>.



Figure 1. Live video capture of a Sockeye swimming through the Neva Lake weir, July 19, 2021.

Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon: The Sitkoh Lake weir was installed by a Forest Service crew over July 6-8, 2021 (Figure 2). The weir project is a partnership between the USFS and the Angoon Community Association (ACA). Live video from the site is streamed to the ACA office in Angoon, where it is recorded on a computer and returning Sockeye are counted by ACA employees. Live video is currently not available to the public, but will be soon.



Figure 2. The Sitkoh Lake weir, located at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake.

Northern Inside water salmon fisheries: As expected, salmon fisheries throughout the northern inside waters of southeast Alaska have been relatively weak. Pink and chum salmon harvests in the gillnet and purse seine fisheries have largely been below average, and test fishery catches also have been below average. Notably to Chatham area subsistence harvesters, sockeye catches in the Hawk Inlet test fisheries have been low all season, and were 37% of the 10-year average in the most recent test fishery.



Figure 2. Forest Service crew member Shauna Riddensdale (left) and Student Conservation Association intern Sadie Swindall at the newly installed Sitkoh Lake weir, July 7, 2021.

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

USFWS Weekly Summary Author position vacant - TBA.

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, 7/8/2021 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

Management actions of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) limited early season commercial fishing opportunities in the Copper River District in response to low numbers of returning salmon. The season total commercial harvest for the Copper River District through July 13 is reported as 300,587 Sockeye Salmon and 6,894 Chinook Salmon.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) is currently in operation. After a relatively slow start to begin the season, sonar passage improved substantially during the past few weeks. As of July 14, 647,997 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 31% above the cumulative management objective of 495,350 salmon for this date of the season and exceeds the season objective of 575,297 salmon passing the sonar. A daily estimate of 13,230 salmon migrated past the sonar on July 14.

The Native Village of Eyak (NVE) Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 1,950 Chinook Salmon through July 12. This total capture number for this date of the season is low, relative to historical levels. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 1,293 Chinook salmon through July 12, of which, 108 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

Inriver sonar salmon passage estimates provide the primary mid-season assessment of the Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River. Although fishing opportunities and harvest in the commercial fishery were limited in the early part of the season, the assessment of inriver Sockeye Salmon run strength has now exceeded ADFG management objectives for the season, as estimated by the sonar. These objectives are designed to provide harvest opportunities to both Federal subsistence and other State upriver users, as well as to achieve the sustainable escapement goal for Sockeye Salmon.

As with Sockeye Salmon, fisheries managers also monitor assessments of the Chinook Salmon run strength; primary indicators are commercial harvest rates and data from the Chinook Salmon inriver abundance project operated by NVE. Additional insight is gained from the recent application of updated technology at the Miles Lake sonar site to provide species apportionment data. Inriver assessments are indicative of a weak return and managers believe that the Chinook Salmon sustainable escapement goal (SEG) will likely not be met.

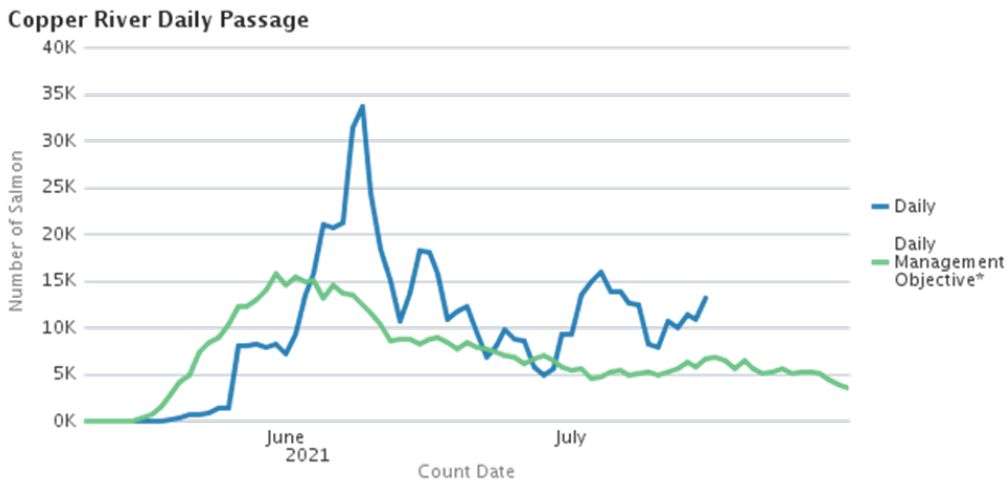
In response to this assessment of a weak Chinook Salmon return, the ADFG closed all State fisheries of the Upper Copper River drainage to the retention of Chinook Salmon; including the personal use fishery of the Chitina Subdistrict, the sport fisheries, and the subsistence fishery of the Glennallen Subdistrict. Concurrent with these closures,

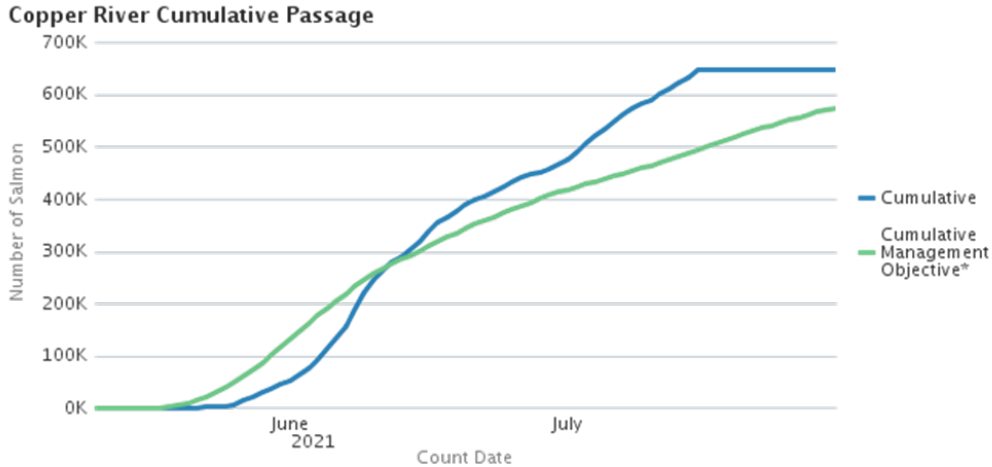
including that of the upper river subsistence fishery, the ADFG has continued to authorize periodic openings of the commercial and subsistence fisheries of the Copper River District to continue since the Chinook Salmon entry to the Copper River is historically nearly complete by early July.

The Chinook Salmon closures do not affect those fishing under Federal subsistence regulations. Harvest by Federal users through the remainder of the season is not expected to be high enough to have a significant impact on the sustainability of the stocks. At this time, no Federal Special Action has been issued by the inseason manager to restrict the harvest of Chinook Salmon, or for any other purpose, in the fisheries of the Upper Copper River. Federal managers will continue to monitor run strength indices to evaluate the need for appropriate fisheries management actions in the Federal waters of the Copper River Drainage.

Although Federal actions have not been taken, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) prepared and distributed an advisory announcement intended to inform all subsistence users of the present concerns for Copper River Chinook Salmon. This announcement was sent to all Upper Copper River District Federal subsistence fishing permit holders with email addresses on record. In the announcement, WRST requested that users consider voluntarily releasing healthy Chinook Salmon that may be beyond their subsistence needs.

2021 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 14





*Management objectives are based on historical run-timing to achieve the in-river goal.

Source:

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

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1, and closed to Chinook Salmon, effective June 28 through July 31. The State Chinook Salmon sport fisheries closed beginning June 26. With no retention of Chinook Salmon, the State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict is open through Sunday, July 18, and is then scheduled to be open for total of 144 hours during the week of July 12 through July 18.

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas area opened on May 15 and are expected to remain open through September 30. Through the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit database website, one hundred and eighty-eight (188) Chitina Subdistrict permits, three hundred and thirty-nine (339) Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and one (1) Batzulnetas area permit have been issued to date.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River has reported a cumulative passage estimate through July 14 of 924 Chinook Salmon. This is a relatively very low estimate for this date in the season and is below the 2020 season count of 1,452 through this date.

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>

ADFG Gulkana River counting tower

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

**PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova.
28 June 2021.**

(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

19 July 2021

A total of 33 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Chugach National Forest portion of the Prince William Sound area of 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. Ninety permits were issued in 2020

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

The 2021 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon is underway on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. Each fishery began on 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 on June 11.

A total of 433 permits have been issued to date to residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, and Ninilchik. Permit types include a general fishing permit and household permit. All permits were issued through the U.S. Postal Service.

No special actions have been issued to date. The early-run escapement of Chinook Salmon returning to the Kenai River was 4,131 large fish which is just above the minimum OEG of 3,900. The late-run of Kenai River Chinook Salmon is under

performing for this period of time and as a result the in-river sport fishery has been restricted to catch and release. Currently the late-run of Kenai River Chinook Salmon are not forecasted to meet the lower end of the OEG of 15,000 – 30,000 fish greater than 34 inches.

To date, 1,307 Sockeye Salmon have been reported as being harvested from the Kasilof River in the Community Gillnet Fishery of which only 845 have been reported as being received on a federal subsistence permit. A total of 663 Sockeye Salmon have been reported as being harvested to date in the dip net fishery at the Russian River falls. Ninety Sockeye Salmon have been harvested on the Kasilof River in the Federal dip net fishery.

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 around Kodiak Island are considered to be average, to date. Management practices for the Karluk, Ayakulik, and Upper Station systems switched from the early to late run sockeye salmon on July 16. Afognak, Litnik, sockeye escapement counts have met the lower escapement goal, with 28,641 fish passing the weir as of July 16. The Ayakulik River early sockeye escapement counts were strong with 265,755 fish passing the weir (escapement goal, E.G., range 140,000 – 280,000 fish). Karluk River early sockeye escapement counts did not meet the lower escapement counts with 128,423 fish passing the weir (E.G. range 150,000 – 250,000 fish). The Buskin River sockeye salmon run had very little fish returning to the system with only 942 passing the weir. To protect this run, all fishing activities have been restricted. Many subsistence users have continued to travel to other systems within the area of Kodiak to meet their needs, i.e. Port Lions and Pasagshak. Upper Station, Alitak District, has had a strong run of sockeye salmon, and the upper escapement goal was reached, 108,225 fish counted passing the weir.

The Chinook salmon runs on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers are failing to meet their respective escapement goals, with only 2,491 Chinook salmon being recorded on the Karluk River and 2,860 Chinook salmon being recorded on the Ayakulik River.

The Akalura video project continues to collect data via still photos and video. Review of photos for the month of June did not have any sockeye salmon moving into the system. It is unknown why no fish have been recorded migrating into the Akalura system as Dog Salmon weir recorded 61,503 fish and Upper Station recorded 35,328 fish. Kodiak staff are working on getting the photos reviewed to date as soon as possible.

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

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

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

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, and provide the basis for any inseason assessment and management.

Bristol Bay:

Subsistence fishing is open in all districts but will close around commercial fishing openings.

The Sockeye Salmon sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems are: (The current count as of July 18 are noted).

Escapement Goals:

Alagnak SEG = 320,000 minimum / current escapement = 2,899,866

Egegik SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000 / current escapement = 1,785,594

Igushik SEG = 150,000 – 400,000 / current escapement = 799,110

Kvichak SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000 / current escapement = 4,516,134

Naknek SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000 / current escapement = 2,697,390

Nushagak SEG = 370,000 – 900,000 / current escapement = 4,652,119

Nushagak SEG = 55,000 – 270,000 Chinook Salmon / current escapement = 53,369

Togiak SEG = 150,000 – 270,000 / Installed July 5 – current escapement = 102,972

Ugashik SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000 / current escapement = 2,522,694

Wood River SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000 / current escapement = 4,214,154

The cumulative commercial Sockeye Salmon catch is 37,749,703 fish.

Chignik:

The cumulative weir count as of July 18 is 247,441 early-run and 76,662 late-run Sockeye Salmon resulting in a total of 324,103 fish. The interim escapement objective for July 20 is 420,000 – 580,000 fish. There is concern that the early-run will not make the escapement goal. As such, the Federal Inseason manager issued an Emergency Special Action on July 8, 8-SS-01-21, restricting harvest of Sockeye Salmon to Federally qualified subsistence users. This Emergency Special Actions may be rescinded once Late-run Sockeye make up more than 80% of the daily returns.

The ten-year average (2010 – 2019), genetic proportions of early-run and late-run Sockeye Salmon for the week of July 19 are approximately 26% early-run and 74% late-run.

The cumulative weir count as of July 18 for Chinook Salmon is 469 fish. The typical mid-point of the Chinook Salmon run is July 20. 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 lower than expected Chinook salmon run, both state and Federal fisheries will be closed concurrently to maintain viability of the Chignik River Chinook salmon population on July 14, as stated in Emergency Special Action, 8-KS-01-21.

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:

Subsistence fishing is open in all districts but will close around commercial fishing openings.

North Peninsula Management Area Escapement Goals and Counts for July 17:

Nelson River BEG = 97,000 – 219,000, current escapement = 74,532

Bear River BEG = 117,000 – 195,000, current escapement = 302,303

South Peninsula Management Area Escapement Counts for July 17:

Ilnik River current escapement = 69,211

Orzinski River current escapement = 11,408

Sandy River current escapement = 48,495

McLees River current escapement = 12,065

The cumulative commercial catch is 9,853,733 fish with 5,399,352 Sockeye Salmon and 3,487,012 Pink Salmon being the largest components of harvest.

Aleutian Islands.

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area
http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area
http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf

Southcentral Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases

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

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

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

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska

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

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

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

Yukon River – Keith Herron Ivy, Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office. July 4 – 10, 2021

Federal Manager, Holly Carroll (907) 351-3029, holly_carroll@fws.gov, Keith Herron Ivy, (907) 312-3397, keith_ivy@fws.gov, Gerald Maschmann, (907) 456-0406, Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov

Assessment Information

The Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon runs are essentially over in the lower Yukon River and management is transitioning to the Fall Chum and Coho Salmon season. Chinook and Summer Chum salmon escapements at the East Fork Andreafsky Weir are both at record lows with escapement goals unlikely to be met. The Anvik River sonar Summer Chum escapement estimate is at a record low and the escapement goal is unlikely to be met. The Henshaw Creek Weir Chinook and Summer Chum escapement estimates are both at record lows. Chinook Salmon escapement estimates at the Chena and Salcha Rivers are below average. The Eagle Sonar Chinook Salmon passage estimates are below average at this time; however, it's still early for this project. The typical ¼ point for the Eagle Sonar is July 18. Canadian escapement projects are just beginning so it's too early to make an assessment for these projects.

The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) will transition to fall season assessment on July 16 and the Pilot Station sonar will transition to fall season assessment on July 19.

The Fall Chum Salmon preseason projection, based on the relationship between Summer Chum Salmon and Fall Chum Salmon run sizes, is for a run size less than 300,000 fish, which is critically low. According to the Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, the preseason projection does not meet the threshold of 300,000 fish needed to allow subsistence fishing. The current projected run size is unlikely to meet the drainagewide

escapement goal of 300,000-600,000 Fall Chum Salmon, tributary escapement goals and Canadian treaty objectives. Therefore, subsistence fishing for salmon will be closed to begin the fall season.

The latest fish passage and escapement estimates can be found at ADF&G's website at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts

Management Actions

Salmon fishing will remain closed until we can determine if there is any harvestable surplus. Subsistence salmon fishing is closed in the Coastal District, District 1, District 2, District 3, Innoko River, District 4, Koyokuk River, District 5, and District 6.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets are restricted to a maximum length of 60 feet. This gear may be used to target non-salmon species.

For detailed information on management actions and assessment, subscribe to ADF&G advisory announcements at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.search>

Inseason Outreach

The Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission's Executive Committee shared their management recommendations which align with the current conservative management approach: "the Executive Council believes that any fishing on the runs with these numbers would jeopardize the health of future salmon runs." The seventh YR DFA teleconference occurred on July 13. Many fishermen shared how important fishing is for their families and the hardship of not fishing. There was much discussion on the need to support communities in finding alternative food sources, emergency aid and solutions to address food security issues. **Call in to the YR DFA weekly teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#.**

Get announcements and more by liking the ADF&G Yukon River Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

KUSKOKWIM RIVER

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

This seasons' Chinook Salmon run may be late, or weak. However, in attempting to balance conservation with subsistence fishing opportunities, broad support for this announcement has been reached. On June 28th, 2021 Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) reported the historical passage of approximately 73% of the Chinook Salmon run. Additionally, Sockeye Salmon now compose over 60% of the Bethel Test Fish captures giving added protection to Chinook Salmon within the Kuskokwim River. In an abundance of caution, the Federal In-Season Manager at Yukon Delta NWR, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), and ADF&G agree that these below-mentioned fishing opportunities would be warranted for subsistence users.

Federally Qualified Subsistence Fishing Opportunities:

(1) Gillnet (set or drift) opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users will be open in Federal public waters in the main stem of the Kuskokwim River during the following dates and times:

- **July 16, 2021 from 06:00 AM to 6:00PM**

During this opportunity, subsistence users will be allowed to use gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh which may not exceed 45 meshes in depth; 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River; and may not exceed 50 fathoms (300 feet) in length below the Johnson River. Set gillnets need to be spaced 150 feet apart from another set gillnet. The salmon bearing tributaries listed in ESA 3-KS-01-21 will remain closed to the use of all gillnets for all salmon and all methods and means for Chinook salmon to all users during this period.

(2) Set Gillnet Opportunity:

- **July 17, 2021 starting at 12:01AM through July 18, 2021 11:59PM**

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

Unless amended by a subsequent ESA, all regulations, and restrictions to salmon fishing within federal waters of the Kuskokwim River are still in effect through ESA 3-KS-01-21. This includes the continued use of alternative methods of fishing with live release of Chinook Salmon (including use of hook and line, dip net, beach seine, and fish wheels with a live release wells).

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by calling 907-543-3151 or visit the Refuge [Facebook](#) page or www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon_delta/.

Test Fisheries and Harvest Estimate:

As of July 18, 2021 the CPUE for Chinook at the Bethel test fish is at 530. The 2020 and 2019 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 476 and 833, respectively.

Cumulative harvest of Chinook salmon on the Kuskokwim as of 7/05 is currently at 21,320.

As of July 18, 2021 the CPUE for Chum at the Bethel test fish is at 257. The 2020 and 2019 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 1,156 and 3,986, respectively.

As of July 18, 2021 the CPUE for Sockeye at the Bethel test fish is at 1,587. The 2020 and 2019 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 968 and 2,217, 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

Norton Sound District**Mid-July Salmon Assessment:**

High water resulted in a late start to ball escapement counting projects, but all are now operational and the salmon passage to date has been low. King salmon numbers have come in about as expected, but chum, pink and sockeyes are lagging. The expectation was for chum to start slow because 5-year-olds were expected to be weak as the first arriving chums, and the later arriving 4-year-olds would bring the escapement numbers up. Chum salmon escapements were very good in 2016 and 2017 so like last year's forecast was much better than what has shown up so far. Pinks look like they have fallen off the cliff from the last five years of record runs and now look to be tracking on the normal odd-numbered years run cycle with numbers much lower than the last two record odd-numbered years. Although the forecast

was for Pilgrim River sockeye run to continue to decline from last year's run, the sockeye counts are tracking lower than expected at this time.

Subdistricts 6 (Unalakleet)

Federal Regulation:

By federal regulation, the 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.

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing: Two 48-hour openings per week in marine waters and two 36-hour openings per week in the Unalakleet River. Beach seining is allowed 7 days a week with all kings required to be released.

Commercial Fishing:

No upcoming fishing periods.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir — A cooperative project of Fish and game United States BLM and NS EDC major funding provided by US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management.

Through July 12 the counts were 207 kings, 3,884 chums, 1,627 pinks, 213 sockeyes and 41 silvers. The average historical 1st quarter point for kings is now. This is the lowest chum count to date. The previous low was 14,000 chums in 2012. The average historical midpoint for chums is now.

North River Tower — Camp J. B. — A NSEDC project. The project has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings, 25,000 pinks, 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey) and no goal yet established for chums.

Counts through July 12 were 75 kings, 75 chums, 9,351 pinks. Only 5 days of counts, but the king count is tracking like last year with a final count of 1065 fish. The average historical midpoint for kings is now. The chum count is a historical low and the average historical quarter point is now. Pinks are at the average historical 5 percent point.

Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)**Subsistence Fishing:**

Two 48- hour openings per week in marine waters and 7 days a week in freshwaters. Beach seining is allowed 7 days a week with all kings required to be released.

Commercial Fishing:

No upcoming fishing periods.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – An NSEDC project with no escapement goals yet established.

Through July 12 the counts were 573 kings, 2,289 chums, 12,099 pinks and 12 sockeyes. The kings are below recent years but above the low years since counting began in 2014. King passage is usually in the average historical third-quarter point now. Chums are below all years and we are usually at the midpoint. Pinks are below all years and we are usually at the 1st quarter point now.

Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)**Subsistence Fishing:**

Net fishing is open 7 days a week,

Commercial Fishing:

No upcoming fishing periods.

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

High water resulted in counting operations stopping on July 6 and returning on resuming on July 11. Cumulative counts were 147 kings, 558 chums, 807 pinks and 6 sockeyes. Kings are tracking the same as 2018 and 2019, and the average historical third-quarter point would be now. Chums are below all

years, and the average midpoint would be now. Pinks would be at about the 5percent point of passage now.

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

Cumulative counts through July 12 were 192 kings, 101,365 chums, 8,556 pinks and 39 sockeyes. No comparisons can be made because the 2 previous years the earliest counting began was July 9.

Subdistrict 3 (Elim)

Subsistence Fishing:

Net fishing is open 7 days a week,

Commercial Fishing:

No upcoming fishing periods.

Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings, 9,100 – 32,600 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal).

Cumulative counts through July 12 were 18 kings, 795 chums, 258 pinks and 6 sockeyes. Kings are usually at the midpoint now. The chum count is one of the lowest for the 2nd week of July, and we usually pass the midpoint now. Pinks are the lowest count since 1999 and we are usually at the 5% point now.

Subdistrict 2 (Golovin)

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is open is open 7 days a week

Commercial Fishing:

The catch for the 24- hour opening ending Friday evening July 16 was 1,104 chums, 123 pinks and 31 sockeyes by 4 permit holders. The chum catch was

near average. The chum and sockeye average weights of 6.4 pounds and 56.6 pounds were well below average and the pink weight of 3.3 pounds was above average.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. NSEDC reports that if the water continues to drop the project could be operational by the end of the week.

Subdistrict 1 (Nome)

Subsistence Fishing:

The subsistence fishing net fishing schedule is in effect in all freshwater subsistence areas and the marine waters west of Cape Nome is open from 6 PM Wednesday until 6 PM Monday. East of Cape Nome the marine waters are open 7 days a week

Effective June 15 all gillnet and beach seine fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River closed. This closure is in effect to protect migrating sockeye salmon that hold in the Sinuk River bridge area before reaching the spawning grounds.

Stream-specific harvest limits are listed on the subsistence salmon fishing permits. There are no catch limits in marine waters.

Commercial Fishing:

No upcoming fishing periods.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project, has no escapement goals yet established.

Cumulative counts through July 12 were 27 chums, 114 pnks and 16 sockeyes. Counting started on July 7 and the average historical 1st quarter point for chums is now.

Eldorado River Weir – A NSEDC project has an escapement goal range at the weir of 4,400 – 14, 200 chum salmon.

The cumulative counts through July 12 were 2 kings, 610 chums, 182 pinks and 18 sockeyes. For chums the average historical 1st quarter point is now.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with escapement goals of 1,600 – 5,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The weir was fish tight on Sunday.

Counts through Monday, July 12 were 3 chums and 30 pinks.

Snake River Weir – A NSEDC project has an escapement goal of 2,000 – 4,200 chum salmon.

Cumulative counts through July 11 were 20 chums, 53 pinks and 8 sockeyes. Counting started on July 7 and the average historical 1st quarter point for chums is July 15.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is open 7 days a week.

Commercial Fishing:

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

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. It has an escapement goal of 4,000-8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & the Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake.

Counting began on July 6 and through July 12 the cumulative counts were 60 chums, 37 pinks and 5 hunt 501 sockeyes. Sockeye average historical 1st quarter point is now and the midpoint is July 21.

Kotzebue District.

Commercial fishing started July 11 and the first catch was like last year with 402 chums caught by 6 permit holders.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is scheduled start later this week.

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