

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 27 – September 3, 2017.

Report #14. Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, george_pappas@fws.gov, Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS. USFWS employee Don Rivard retired on August 31, 2017 and his contributions to the 2017 reporting process was appreciated.

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 fisheries managers that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. The goal is to have the weekly report posted on the OSM website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing>, by the close of business the following Monday. Additional information on a fishery of particular interest may be obtained by contacting the in-season manager, visiting the additional web links at the end of each area report, or by contacting George Pappas.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

To date, 274 permits have been issued for the 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas.

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907)747-4297 jpkoller@fs.fed.us

Falls Lake - The US Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were operating June 29 through August 25. As of August 25, 3,113 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the fish pass and 683 sockeye have been reported harvested. The actual number of sockeye in the lake is probably at least 5,000 since many sockeye also migrate into the lake via the falls. A final estimate will be made using recapture data generated by the video net weir. The final escapement estimate in 2016 was 5,098 sockeye while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,000. Subsistence harvest accounted for 99% of terminal area harvest.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed June 29. As of September 3, 3,860 sockeye have passed the weir and harvesters have reported taking 996 sockeye. The current escapement remains well below the 15 year average. In 2016, approximately 5,234 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 2,605 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 16. As of September 3, 54,610 Sockeye Salmon and have passed the weir, well above the long term average of about 30,000. On July 14, 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. These limits were based on an in-season model prediction of about 50,000 sockeye returning. In 2016, an estimated 22,937 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake and the subsistence sockeye harvest reported to ADF&G was 2,304.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, Contact to be announced.

On August 26, Martin Hutten reported “There have been 128 fishing permits issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery. There has been little participation in the Coho fishery so far this season. The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest is 10 large Chinook, 10 Coho and 1,895 Sockeye Salmon.”

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen (907-789-6257; bvanalen@fs.fed.us) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), **Tongass National Forest**

Total counts of Sockeye Salmon through the remotely monitored Neva weir was 3,013 through August 31 (Figure 1). Project personnel moved their computer and fish counting operations from Ocean Beauty Seafoods plant in Excursion Inlet to the Hoonah Indian Association office in Hoonah early this week. We now have a three-day, August 27-29, gap in fish counts. When we pull the video weir in late-September we will get the counts for these days off the memory cards that are in the mini-DVR's at the weir. At Neva, the weir counts also include 1,818 Dolly Varden Char, 140 Cutthroat Trout, 1,859 Pink Salmon, 21 Coho Salmon, and 1 stray Chinook Salmon (Figure 2).

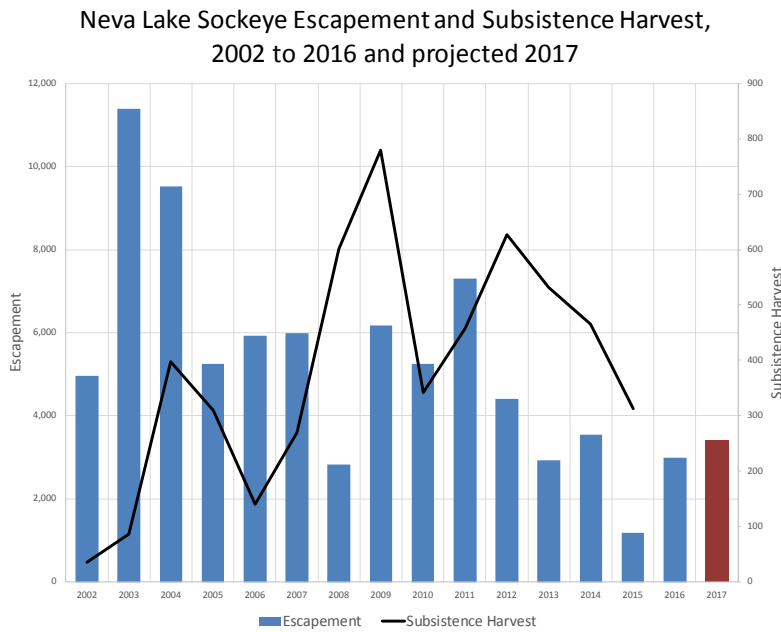
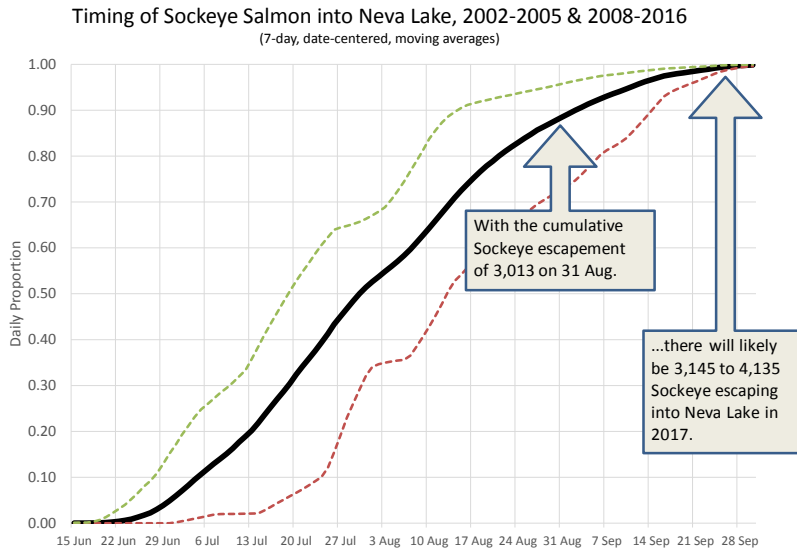
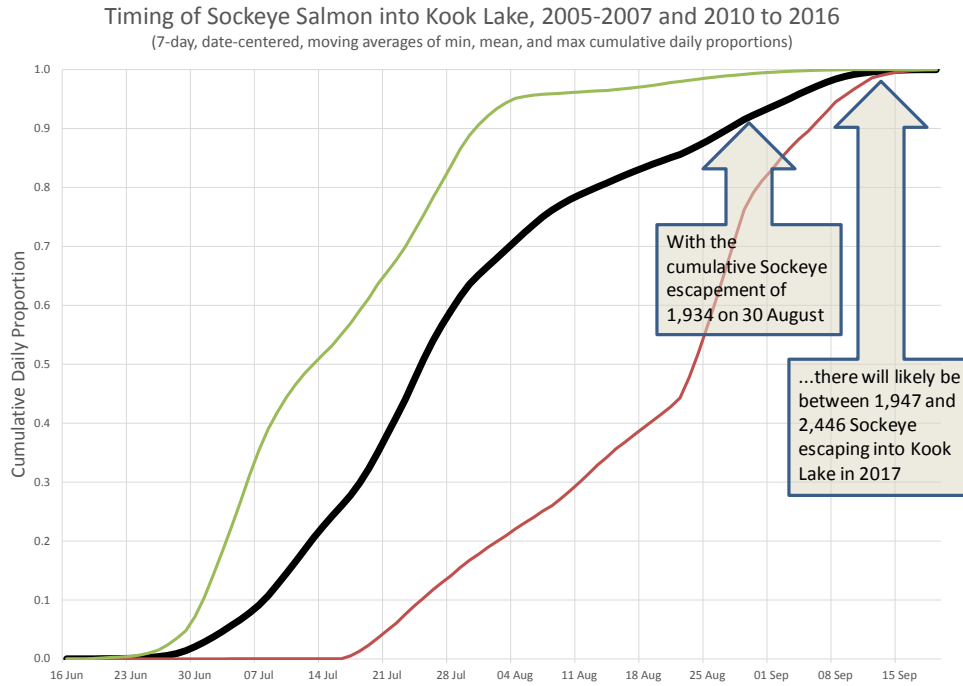


Figure 1. Timing and annual escapement charts for Sockeye Salmon escapements into Neva Lake, 2002 to 2017.



Figure 2. Quad-view of a Chinook Salmon passing through the Neva video weir, August 26, 2017.

At Kook Lake, there were 1,934 Sockeye Salmon counted through the video weirs as of August 30 (Figure 3). The Angoon Community Association crew at Kook Lake have also counted 3,417 Sockeye Salmon counted through the video net weirs at Sitkoh Lake through August 18. The latest weir count we have for Sockeye Salmon into Kanalku Lake was the 430 fish counted through August 14. The low escapement of Sockeye Salmon into these systems is related to the relatively high commercial seine effort in Icy and Chatham Straits this season. Alaska Department of Fish and Game has announced that the seine openings on September 1 and 2 will probably be the last openings for the season outside of those that might occur for fall-Chum Salmon.



Kook Lake Sockeye Escapement 2005 to 2007, 2010 to 2016, and Projected 2017

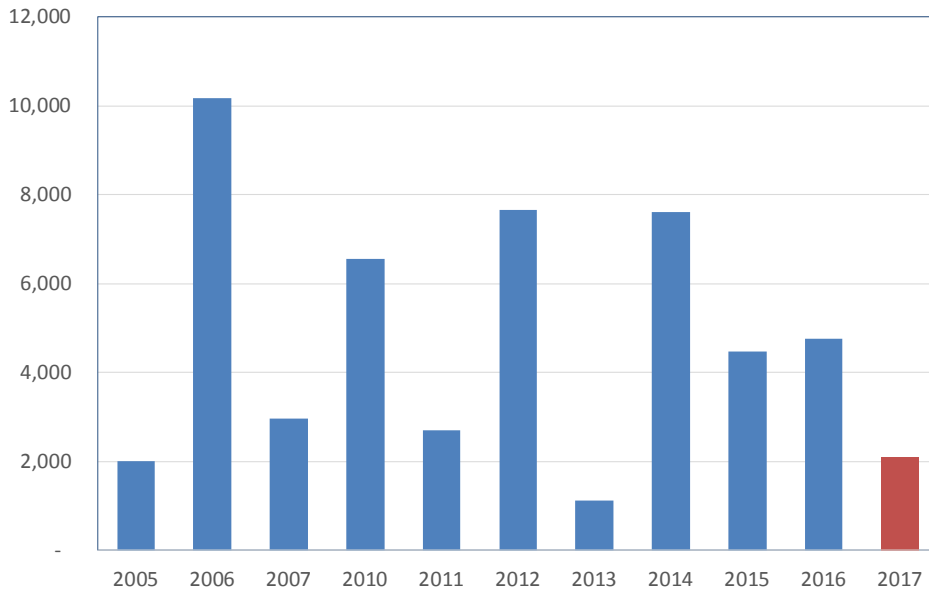


Figure 3. Timing and annual escapement charts for Sockeye Salmon escaping into Kook Lake, 2005-2007 and 2010 to 2017.

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

Reporting complete for the 2017 season.

[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.RI>

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

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

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

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Prince William Sound – Copper River

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

Reporting complete for 2017 season.

Links

ADF&G 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>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova. (907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

Reporting complete for 2017 season.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 jeffry_anderson@fws.gov

Final report for season was submitted last week.

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>

Alaska Department of Fish and Game emergency orders and news releases affecting upper Kenai Peninsula sport fisheries can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=area.list&Year=2017&AreaID=5>

SOUTHWEST ALASKA

Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
(907) 487-0226 or michael_brady@fws.gov or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230
kevin_vanhatten@fws.gov

Reporting complete for 2017 season.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Johnathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 271-2776 jonathon_gerken@fws.gov

Reporting complete for the 2017 season.

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

YUKON REGION

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.
gerald_maschmann@fws.gov or Fred Bue fredrick_bue@fws.gov
Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is closed for the season. The office staff can be contacted by calling Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

Fall Season Outlook

The Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan went into effect for District 1 beginning July 16 and is under fall season management throughout the Alaska portion of the drainage. Based on current assessment information, the 2017 Fall Chum Salmon in-season run projection is for a record run size near 2.2 million fish, well above expectations. This level of abundance is sufficient to meet escapement and subsistence needs, as well as provide a large surplus for commercial and personal use purposes. The Fall Chum Salmon season is winding down in the lower Yukon, however the Coho Salmon run still has approximately two more weeks to go.

Fall Season Assessment Information

The LYTF has a cumulative Fall Chum Salmon CPUE of 3,514 through August 30, well above the median of 1,778. The Mountain Village test fishery (MVTF) has a cumulative CPUE of 6,238, well above the median of 1,830. Through September 4, the Pilot Station sonar project has a cumulative passage estimate of 1.82 million Fall Chum Salmon which is also well ahead of the median of 700,000. The Pilot Station sonar is nearing the end of the Fall Chum run at this time. The first pulse of Fall Chum Salmon hit Pilot Station on July 20, the second pulse hit on July 29, and the third on August 3. A fourth passed the sonar August 13 through August 18 and totaled a whopping 1.0 million Fall Chum Salmon in a single pulse! Fifth and sixth pulses passed on August 21 and 28, respectively.

The LYTF has a cumulative Coho Salmon CPUE of 625 through August 30, near the median of 414. The MVTF has a cumulative CPUE of 1,262, above the median of 906. Total Coho Salmon cumulative passage estimate past the Pilot Station sonar through August 30 is 136,000, near the median of 132,000. The Coho Salmon run timing is near the average $\frac{3}{4}$ point of the run in the lower Yukon.

The Chandalar River sonar began operations on August 8 and counts were disrupted August 30 through September 2 due to rapidly rising water levels. The Chandalar sonar has an estimated Fall Chum Salmon passage of 98,000 through September 4, above the median of 75,000. The project is approaching the mid-point of the run. The Porcupine River sonar at Old Crow has an estimated passage of 9,717 Fall Chum Salmon. This project is relatively new so historical comparisons are of limited value and appear to be above the median at this time. Eagle Sonar near the U.S./Canada Border transitioned to fall season on August 21 with Fall Chum Salmon counts increasing steadily.

Fall Chum Salmon genetics from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery has been analyzed for the first five pulses, and stock proportions are within expected ranges.

Fall Season Management Actions

The Alaskan portion of the drainage is under fall season management. Subsistence fishing in the Coastal District and District 3 is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Subsistence fishing in District 1 and 2 is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for being closed before, during, and after each commercial fishing period. Regulation stipulates that subsistence fishing be closed 12 hours before, during, and after commercial fishing periods, however the State manager has been reducing the subsistence closures around commercial periods to allow for short notice commercial fishing periods. At this time, subsistence fishermen have not expressed dissatisfaction with the short notices. Subsistence fishing in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was relaxed from two, 48-hr. periods per week to 5 days per week at the start of their fall season. Drift gillnet fishing opened in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A on August 3. Subsistence fishermen in the middle river requested additional subsistence fishing time to harvest a strong pulse expected to pass their area during a scheduled closed fishing period. Because assessment near the mid-point in the run indicated with confidence that the Fall Chum Salmon run could support the additional fishing opportunity, District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C were liberalized to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Subsistence fishermen in all areas throughout the river may use gillnets with a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches. Commercial fishing in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers is not allowed. Additionally, subsistence fishing with four inch or less mesh gillnet gear in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers is being closed during commercial fishing periods to prevent commercial fishermen from fishing in these rivers under the guise of subsistence fishing. The abundance of fall chum salmon in the upper Porcupine River has been low in recent years when compared to other stocks in the Yukon River drainage. Fall chum salmon escapements into the Canadian Fishing Branch River, a tributary of the Porcupine River, have fallen short of meeting the escapement objective agreed upon by U.S. and Canadian representatives in 5 of the last 10 years despite other Yukon River stocks meeting or exceeding their escapement goals or objectives. Subsistence salmon fishing in the mainstem Porcupine River is being closed for 3 days per week.

Sixteen commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 1 with a preliminary harvest of 318,000 Fall Chum Salmon and 82,000 Coho Salmon. Fifteen commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 2 with a preliminary harvest of 134,000 Fall Chum Salmon and 33,500 Coho Salmon. Commercial market capacity in District 2 is greatly reduced from previous years, which has led to a significant portion of the fishing fleet shifting to District 1. The Fall Chum Salmon commercial season ends by regulation in the lower Yukon on August 31. Fall season commercial salmon fishing started in Subdistrict 4-A on July 29 and ended on August 12. Preliminary harvest after 4, 24-hr. commercial fishing periods is 1,402 Fall Chum Salmon. Two commercial periods in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C has a preliminary harvest of 1,952 Fall Chum Salmon. One commercial period in District 6 has a preliminary harvest of 811 Fall Chum Salmon, additional periods are expected.

In accordance with the Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan, the coho salmon directed commercial fishing season will open in District 1 on September 1. At this time two, 6-hour periods have been scheduled. By regulation, the coho salmon directed commercial fishing season ends after September 10.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation had occurred during the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the Yukon River Panel meeting and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Fairbanks that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. The thirteenth and final Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association teleconference was held on August 29. Fishermen in the Koyukuk, Galena, and Tanana areas are reporting catching lots of fall chum of high quality.

KUSKOKWIM REGION

Kuskokwim River – Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Contact kenneth_stahlnecker@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or lewis_coggins@fws.gov

Reporting complete for the 2017 season.

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

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) 443-2522 ken_adkisson@nps.gov

Reporting complete for the 2017 season.

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