

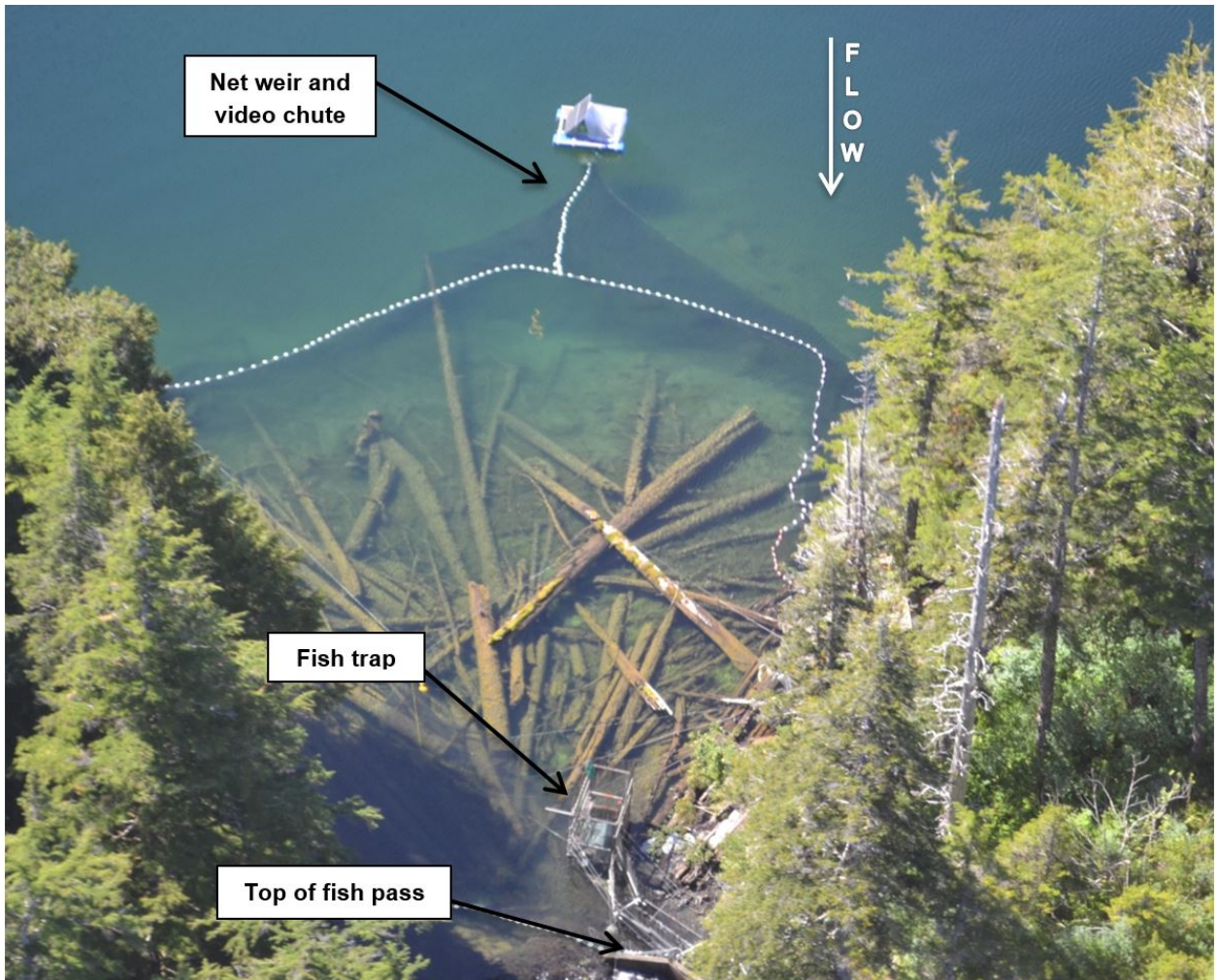
**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 24- 30, 2018.** Report #5  
Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [George\\_Pappas@fws.gov](mailto:George_Pappas@fws.gov) Office of  
Subsistence Management, USFWS.

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.

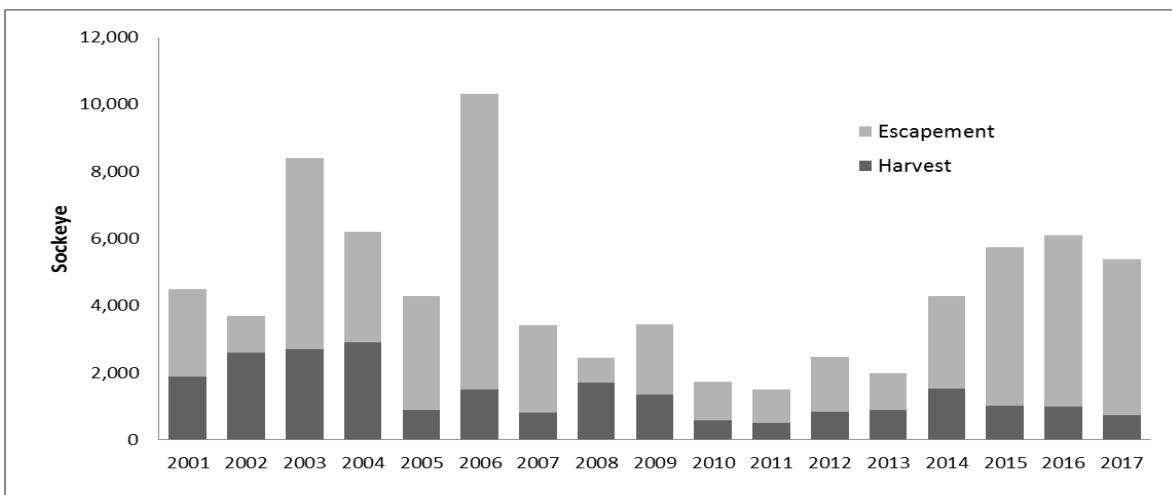
### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA**

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

**Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon** - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which will be operational the first week of July. The final escapement estimate in 2017 was 4,662 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 732. Subsistence harvest accounted for 89% of terminal area harvest.

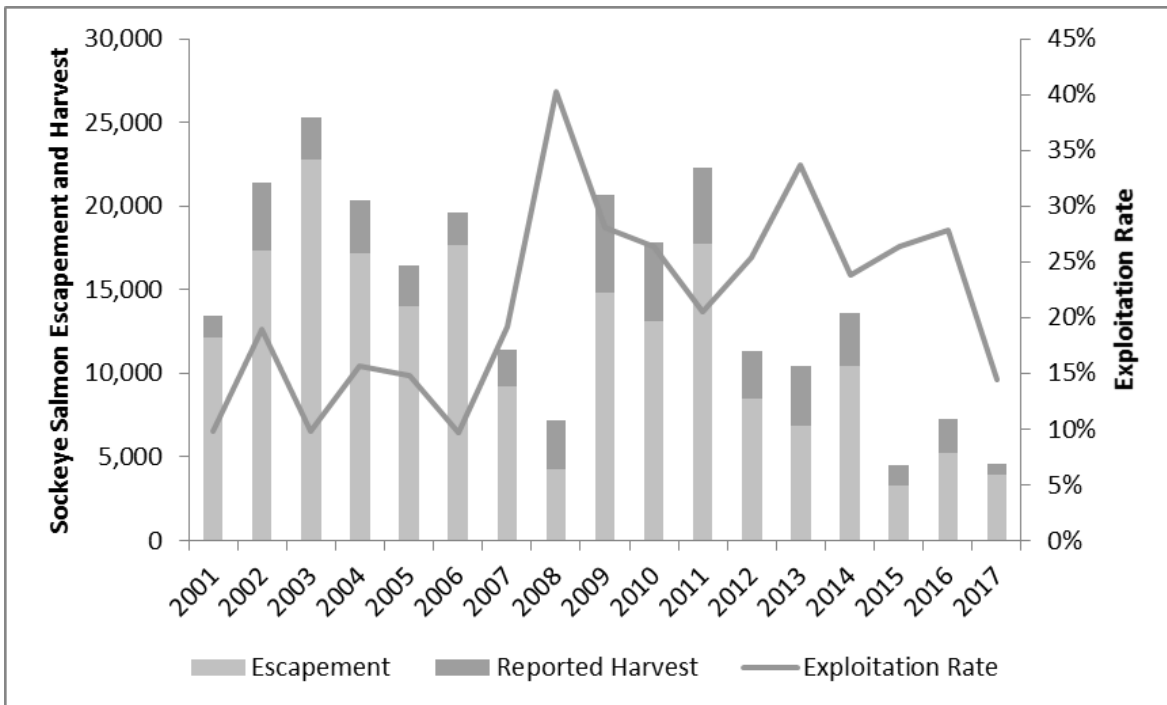


**Figure 1.** Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.



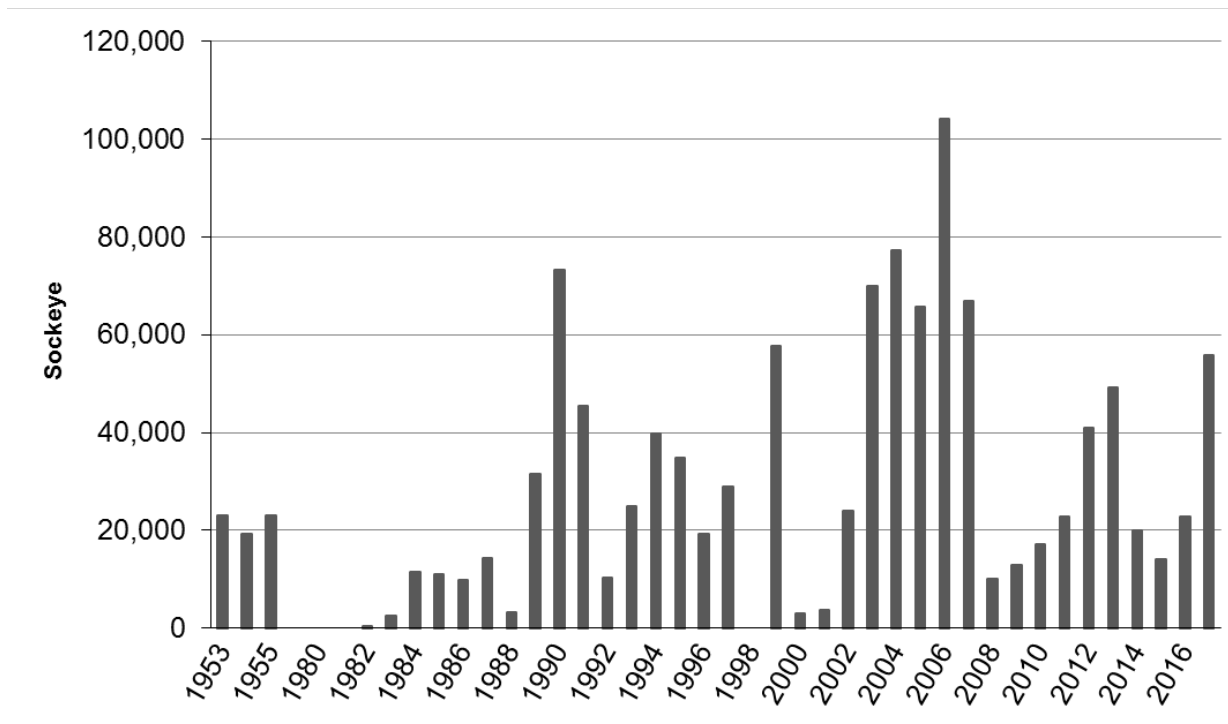
**Figure 2.** Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2017.

**Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2017, approximately 3,898 Sockeye Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,087 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.



**Figure 3.** Reported harvest, escapement, and exploitation rate for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2017.

**Redoubt Lake Sockeye Salmon** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operating as of June 16. As of June 26, 1,746 Sockeye Salmon have entered the lake which is above average. In 2017, an estimated 67,556 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. Almost half of the escapement consisted of jacks which is unusual. Jacks are male Sockeye Salmon that spend only one year in saltwater before returning to spawn. On July 11, 2017, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence Sockeye Salmon annual limit was set at 100. These limits were based on an in-season model prediction of about 55,000 returning.



**Figure 4.** Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2017. The weir was not operated in 1998.

**Sitka Sound Pacific Herring** – The commercial, subsistence, and spawning season for Pacific Herring in Sitka Sound occurs about mid-March through mid-April. According to preliminary accounts and data, the commercial and subsistence seasons were not successful in 2018 while the spawning season was marginally successful. The commercial fishery closed on April 3 with only about one third of the guideline harvest level (GHL) harvested. Accounts from the Sitka Tribe of Alaska indicate poor quantity and quality of subsistence harvest, and that their subsistence needs were not met. Other harvesters have said their catch rates were lower than the Tribes. Miles of shoreline receiving herring spawn indicates the spawning season was below average. However, preliminary estimates of spawn extent from shore and deposition are encouraging as related to the post spawn biomass calculation. This estimate will be available this Fall.

[Alaska Department of Fish and Game news release with a synopsis of the commercial season](#)

**Sitka Chinook Salmon** – The Chinook Salmon season in Sitka continues to be slow in both the commercial and sport fisheries. Fishers from both groups report below average catch rates. Management measures have decreased the bag limits for resident and non-resident sport anglers and curtailed commercial fishery opportunity.

[More information on King Salmon management in Southeast Alaska.](#)

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

Currently 149 Federal salmon/trout/char permits have been issued in the Southeast Alaska/Yakutat region. Of these, 102 have been issued to Federally-qualified subsistence users residing on Prince of Wales Island.

Although Chinook Salmon abundance has been determined to be very low this year, hatchery return Chinook Salmon are present in the local Craig and Klawock area resulting in many subsistence users actively fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of Sockeye Salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

Sockeye Salmon should be beginning to show at both the Thorne River and Hatchery Creek. Limited subsistence activity has started to occur at these sites. The larger, more historic fisheries will not begin until July. These fisheries include: Hetta Lake, Klawock Lake, Sarkar, Karta River, Salmon Bay Lake and Red Lake. There are no forecasts for returns to these locations.

The Hetta Lake weir has been operational since June 7, with 151 Sockeye Salmon counted at the site. The Eek Lake weir has been operational since June 12<sup>th</sup> with no fish reported to date. Both projects are run by the Hydaburg Cooperative Association.

There are currently some commercial Chinook Salmon troll fisheries occurring in terminal harvest areas within the Ketchikan and Craig areas. Other open commercial fisheries include The Kendrick Bay terminal seine fishery for Chum Salmon in District 2 and the drift gillnet fishery in District 1. Commercial troll will begin on July 1 with an allocation of 52,800 Chinook Salmon. Cumulative harvest to date for Districts 1-4 are 3270 Chinook Salmon, 3240 Sockeye Salmon, 730 Coho Salmon, 395 Pink Salmon and 53,000 Chum Salmon.

**Petersburg/Wrangell area**

This year's run of Chinook Salmon to the Stikine River is weak and was forecasted at 6,900 fish. This forecast is less than half of 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 purse seine and non-terminal harvest area troll fisheries are closed in the area. There is limited drift gillnet opportunity in District 6 as this is the only commercial fishing district open at the moment in the area. District 8 will have its first opening this weekend. Cumulative harvest to date for Districts 6-8 are: 990 Chinook Salmon, 2100 Sockeye Salmon, 2100 Coho Salmon, 900 Pink Salmon and 10,900 Chum Salmon

The Federal Stikine River directed Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery has been going since June 21<sup>st</sup>. A total of 56 fishing permits have been issued for the Stikine River

subsistence salmon fishery. Fishing pressure has been light due to high and rising river conditions this week. The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest is 0 large Chinook and 45 Sockeye Salmon.

Currently 149 Federal salmon/trout/char permits have been issued in the Southeast Alaska/Yakutat region. Of these, 21 have been issued to Federally-qualified subsistence users residing in the Petersburg/Wrangell area.

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

June 29, 2018

**Yakutat area:** Sockeye Salmon returns to the Yakutat area are looking poor, as weir counts on the Situk River are at the lowest on record. As of June 27, only 1,678 Sockeye had been counted through the weir, compared to an average of 20,000 fish for this date. Commercial setnetting in the Yakutat has been closed in response, and sport fisheries are closed to the retention of Sockeye Salmon. Subsistence fisheries are still open on a limited basis, from 6:00 am Friday through 6:00 pm Sunday. Subsistence harvesters should be prepared for further closures on short notice.

**Northern Southeast inside waters:** Early indicators of the strength of the Sockeye Salmon return to northern Southeast are also discouraging. Catches in Lynn Canal and Taku area commercial fisheries are far below average, and counts at escapement monitoring projects are far below normal. Only 61 Sockeye have been captured at the Taku River fishwheel through week 26, compared to the ten year average of 530. Similar trends have been seen at the Chilkat and Chilkoot River escapement projects. The poor returns appear to be region-wide, so subsistence fishers should be prepared for poor returns and possible management actions. All subsistence fishers are encouraged to contact Forest Service subsistence biologists with reports from the field. On the bright side, commercial catches of primarily hatchery-origin chum salmon appear to be strong.

**Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon:** No Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the Neva Lake video weir, which was installed on June 22. By this date, only about 3% of the run has typically passed through the weir, so it's still too early to tell much. Project staff have had to settle for observing various mammals while waiting for the Sockeye to show up (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Otter (left) and beaver (right) passing through the Neva Lake video weir.

### **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](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 – Dave Sarafin, (907) 822-7281- [Dave.Sarafin@NPS.gov](mailto:Dave.Sarafin@NPS.gov), Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve**

The Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River appears to be extremely low. The State of Alaska has issued Emergency Orders restricting or closing all state fisheries except for the subsistence fishery of the Copper River District near Cordova. The restrictions to date include: limited early season commercial fishing periods, Chitina personal use fishery closure, Sockeye Salmon sport fishing closure, and limiting the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery to 2 days per week. Federal managers are presently monitoring run strength indicators to evaluate the need for appropriate management actions. Recent trends of increasing run strength have been reported from in river indicators, which provide the likelihood of achieving the established sustainable escapement goal.

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District was limited during the early season in response to low numbers of Sockeye Salmon observed in run strength indices. Three 12-hour open commercial fishing periods occurred, the last of which, was on May 28. Total Sockeye Salmon harvest from the three commercial fishing periods was approximately 26,000 fish. ADF&G has reported the cumulative harvest to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest harvest to date in the last 50 years.

As of June 30, 2018 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 381,549 salmon had migrated upstream past the sonar thus far during the season. This estimate is 88% of the cumulative management objective of 431,499 for this date in the season. A daily number of 22,656 salmon was estimated to pass by the sonar counter on June 30. This daily passage estimate is nearly triple the projected passage of 7,588 for this date based on average daily sonar counts since 1978. The water level of the Copper River at the sonar site remains high, but has been dropping since peaking on June 21.

The Federal subsistence fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict opened on June 1 and is expected to remain open through September 30. The State closed the Chitina personal use fishery on June 18, likely for the season. Seventy (70) Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15 and is expected to remain open until September 30. The State closed all Sockeye Salmon sport fishing in the Upper Copper River Drainage on June 18. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. Beginning Monday June 25, state subsistence fisheries in the Glennallen Subdistrict are limited to 2 days per week. Two hundred eighteen (218) Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. One Federal permit has been issued so far.

Installation of the Tanada Creek fish weir was completed Thursday, June 21. As of June 30, no salmon have been observed or recorded at the site. The water level and water temperature in the creek are both near average for late June.



As of June 27, 4,881 Chinook Salmon had been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak. The upriver fishwheels at Canyon Creek have captured 2,259 Chinook Salmon, of which, 206 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River has reported passage estimates for the periods of June 8 -11 and June 17-28, with a season total of 150 Chinook Salmon reported. The Gulkana River remains somewhat high and turbid.

One Federal Special Action has been issued by the in season manager this season:

- Delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict Federal subsistence salmon fishery to June 1.

#### Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon\\_escapement](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. 2 July 2018.** (907) 424-4759 [mburcham@fs.fed.us](mailto:mburcham@fs.fed.us)

A total of 38 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 by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. Ninety-seven permits were issued in 2017. In 2017, 514 Coho Salmon and 127 Sockeye Salmon were reported harvested on Copper River Delta fresh waters in this fishery.

**Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office** (907) 260-0132 [Jeffry\\_Anderson@fws.gov](mailto:Jeffry_Anderson@fws.gov)

A total of 303 permits for Cook Inlet Federal subsistence fisheries have been issued to qualified households through June 29. This includes 78 Kenai River permits (FFCI01) and 9 Designated Fisher permits to Cooper Landing households; 28 Kenai River permits (FFCI01) and 2 Designated Fisher permit to Hope households; and 105 Kenai River permits (FFCI01), 76 Kasilof River permits (FFCI02), and 5 Designated Fisher permits to Ninilchik households.

The 2018 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon opened on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Harvest reported to date in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 1,113 Sockeye Salmon. The rod and reel fishery on the Kenai River also opened on June 11 with the same seasons and areas as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations.

The Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery began on June 16 and continues through August 15. Harvest reported through June 27 includes 421 Sockeye Salmon. Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30.

Emergency Special Action 10-KS-01-18 was issued to close the Federal subsistence rod and reel fishery for early-run Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake through July 15. The early-run will likely not achieve the lower bound of the optimal escapement goal and the restriction was necessary to conserve early-run Kenai River Chinook Salmon.

Fish counts at some Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Department)-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>

**Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR**

(907) 487-2600/0230 or [michael\\_brady@fws.gov](mailto:michael_brady@fws.gov) or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230  
[Kevin\\_VanHatten@fws.gov](mailto:Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov)

The Buskin River Sockeye Salmon escapement has not met its lower escapement goal (5,000 fish) and the forecast is poor.

The Sockeye Salmon escapement for the Afognak drainage (Litnik) is also poor and is below the 5 year average.

The Karluk and Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapement continues to be strong but is slowing down, with the Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapement exceeding its upper escapement goal and the Karluk River Sockeye Salmon escapement being close to exceeding its upper range. Increased commercial fishing activities have controlled high numbers of Sockeye Salmon from entering their respective systems. Discussions with villagers from Karluk and Larsen Bay have indicated catch per unit effort for subsistence harvest to be medium to strong.

***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**  
 (907) 271-2776 Jonathon\_Gerken@fws.gov

All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and provide the basis for any in-season assessment and management.

**Bristol Bay:**

The 2018 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run is forecast to be approximately 41 to 61 million fish for nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak Rivers. Based on the forecast 31.2 to 51.7 million fish are available for commercial inshore harvest. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has strategies in place for all mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opens June 1 by regulation and commercial fishing openings have been announced. Commercial harvest as of June 30 is approximately 8,435,875 for all salmon species throughout all districts with the majority of harvest occurring in the Nushagak district.

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

Kvichak River	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000
Alagnak River	SEG = 320,000 minimum
Naknek River	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Egegik River	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Ugashik River	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000
Igushik River	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000
Nushagak River	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000
Togiak River	SEG = 120,000 – 270,000

The Sockeye Salmon cumulative counts and the 5 year average for June 30 are:

- Kvichak River = 2,208 fish, 5 year average = 406,870 fish.
- Alagnak River = Escapement project not started
- Naknek River = 141,252 fish, 5 year average = 378,761 fish.
- Egegik River = 321,684 fish, 5 year average = 532,931 fish.
- Ugashik River = Escapement project not started
- Wood River = 1,197,420 fish, 5 year average = 881,532 fish.

Igushik River = 52,116 fish, 5 year average = 81,560 fish.

Nushagak River = 183,439 fish, 5 year average = 546,915 fish.

Nushagak River = Chinook Salmon SEG = (55,000 – 120,000), 64,079 fish, 5 year average = 64,074.

Togiak River = Escapement project not started

Chignik:

The 2018 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 1,749,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 1,011,000 Sockeye Salmon. As of June 30, 144,248 Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game operated weir, where 300,000 fish were anticipated. It is unlikely, based on the current rate of escapement, that the lower end of the escapement goal for early-run Sockeye Salmon in the Chignik River drainage will be achieved. The Federal In-season Manager, pursuant to delegated authority from the Federal Subsistence Board under ANILCA Title VIII section 815, issued an emergency special action (**8-RS-01-18**) to close Federal public waters of the Chignik River drainage to the harvest of Sockeye Salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users who are in the possession of a Social and Cultural Harvest Permit beginning June 22, 2018, through July 31, 2018. Thus far, one permit has been issued.

The Chinook Salmon count as of June 30 is 127 fish. It is too early to evaluate the Chinook Salmon run at this time. The historical average quarter point of the Chinook Salmon run at the weir is July 7.

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	-25,000 in August and 50,000 in September in addition to late run escapement goals
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:

In response to low Sockeye Salmon escapement to the Chignik River, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has reduced by half the seine and drift gillnet fishing periods to 40 hours on June 18. This reduction remains in effect. The management action is designed to allow more fish to escape through the South Peninsula fisheries. The current commercial harvest in the Alaska Peninsula Management Area through June 29 is 1.8 million, of which 916,000 were Sockeye Salmon.

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Several Sockeye Salmon escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, and Orzinski systems. Enumeration in 2018 has been affected by high water and runs are still

developing. To date, counts appear to be lower than historical 5 year averages. The cumulative counts and 5 year average as of June 28:

Nelson River = 6,542 fish, 5 year average = 108,198 fish.

Bear River = 43,325 fish, 5 year average = 75,881 fish.

Sandy River = 227 fish, 5 year average = 19,527 fish.

Ilnik River = 17,572 fish, 5 year average of 46,036 fish.

Orzinski Lake = 19 fish, 5 year average of 1,129 fish.

Preseason forecasts are made only for the Nelson River and late-run Bear Lake stocks. The 2018 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 428,000 for the Nelson River and 308,000 for late-run Bear Lake. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

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.

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf](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](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 – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.**

[Gerald Maschmann@fws.gov](mailto:Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov) or

Fred Bue [Fredrick\\_Bue@fws.gov](mailto:Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov)

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is closed until July 16.

**Summer Season Outlook**

The Summer Chum Salmon run is currently projecting a below average total run size of about 1.3 - 1.4 million fish at this time. Although below average, a run of this size is large enough to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of up to 550,000-650,000 Summer Chum Salmon is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest. However, commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run.

The Chinook Salmon run is projecting a below average to poor total run size of 150,000 – 165,000 fish at this time. This is below the lower end of the preseason forecast of 173,000 to 251,000 fish and is tracking similar to 2015. Subsistence conservation measures have been implemented to spread out the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. Starting in the lower Yukon and moving up river with the Chinook Salmon migration, subsistence has been placed on half their normal regulatory windows schedule, subsistence fishing has been restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear, and some subsistence periods have been cancelled. Managers are confident that this year's Chinook Salmon run will meet escapement goals and provide for some subsistence harvest by continuing reduced fishing time and gillnet mesh size restrictions.

**Assessment Information**

Subsistence fishermen in the lower Yukon River area have been fishing since ice out. High debris loads immediately following ice hindered both subsistence fishing and lower Yukon test fishing efforts. Debris loads have decreased significantly since ice out and is no longer disrupting fishing operations. The Lower Yukon Test Fish (LYTF) project has a cumulative Chinook Salmon set net CPUE of 26.29 through June 30, above the average of 20.92, however the set gillnets did not fish efficiently due to debris buildup during the first several weeks of operation. Gillnets that are drifted do not typically foul nearly as set nets because they float along in the river current at the same speed as the debris. The Chinook Salmon drift gillnet test fishery has a cumulative CPUE of 402.96 through June 30, above the average of 359.04. The Summer Chum Salmon drift gillnet project has a cumulative CPUE of 11,760.46 through June 30, well above the average of 5,207.18. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 1; however, test fishing catches were also hampered by high debris loads the first week of operations. The cumulative Chinook Salmon passage estimates past the Pilot Station sonar through June 30 are 119,140 salmon; below the average of 141,287 salmon. The run is near the ¾ point. A large third pulse of Chinook Salmon has just passed the Pilot Station sonar. The cumulative Summer Chum Salmon passage estimates past the Pilot Station sonar through June 30 are 874,812 above the median of 1,093,691 salmon. The Summer Chum Salmon run is between the mid-point and ¾ point.

### **Management Actions**

Management decisions have been consistent with the preseason outlook and discussions held with fishermen prior to the start of the season. Subsistence fishing was unrestricted early in the season. As Chinook Salmon began entering the river, the regulatory windows subsistence salmon fishing schedule was implemented at half the normal fishing time. The schedule was implemented in up-river districts with the migration timing of Chinook Salmon. When assessment indicated that the Chinook Salmon run was entering below expectations, additional subsistence restrictions were put in place. These included pulling one to two periods in most districts and restricting fishing to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Subsistence fishing with dip nets or beach seines has not been implemented at this time. Managers are beginning to relax subsistence salmon fishing and have opened one half period in Districts 3 and 4 to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets to allow some harvest opportunity for Chinook Salmon. During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fishing for non-salmon species is allowed. However, only gillnets with a 4-inch or smaller mesh size may be used. Chinook Salmon caught incidentally may be retained for subsistence purposes.

Directed Summer Chum Salmon commercial fishing began in District 1 on June 9 and District 2 on June 12. All periods are directed towards Summer Chum Salmon using dip nets and beach seines with incidentally caught Chinook Salmon being immediately released alive. Through June 30, the preliminary Summer Chum Salmon harvest estimates are 158,000 fish with approximately 8,392 Chinook Salmon caught and released. Commercial fishing began in Subdistrict 4-A near Kaltag on June 26. All periods are directed towards Summer Chum Salmon using live release fish wheels with all Chinook Salmon being released immediately back into the water. Preliminary harvests reports are not yet available at this time.

### **Consultation**

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018 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, at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting, and at the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission annual meeting. On May 2, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Anchorage that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options.

The fourth YRDFFA weekly teleconference held on June 26, heard reports of some subsistence fishing activity on lower river districts and water levels beginning to drop in upper river areas. Fishermen in the middle portion of the river complained of not being able to get enough Chinook Salmon and requested fishing with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. A Chinook salmon has been reported as being caught as far up river as Fort Yukon.

On June 26, 27, and 28, a series of public meetings were held in the Yukon River communities of Russian Mission, Shageluk, Grayling, Anvik, and Holy Cross to discuss

local fisheries issues. Among the participants from outside the area were the Lieutenant Governor, the ADF&G Commissioner, the President of TCC, the Director of the Yukon InterTribal Fish Commission, an Alaska Board of Fisheries member, and the ADF&G Subsistence Division Director as well as both State and Federal fisheries and Refuge managers. The USFWS Regional Director had planned to accompany the group, but did not make it unfortunately. Public turnout was very good and the opportunity to directly communicate with high-ranking officials was appreciated.

### **KUSKOKWIM RIVER**

**In Season Manager – Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact [kenneth\\_stahlnecker@fws.gov](mailto:kenneth_stahlnecker@fws.gov); (907) 543-3151 or [Lewis\\_Coggins@fws.gov](mailto:Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov)**

The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) in season manager, with the authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board and in consultation with the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission, announced a subsistence fishing opportunity for Chinook salmon within YDNWR waters for federally qualified users. This opportunity was 12 hours in duration, starting at 10:00AM June 24 and ending 10:00PM June 24, 2018. An estimated 18,650 (16,650-20,750 salmon were harvested. Chinook salmon harvest was estimated at 6,100 (5,310- 6,960). Chum salmon harvest was estimated at 8,890 (7,700- 10,130) and Sockeye harvest was estimated at 3,660 (3,110- 4,250) A total of 410 drift boats were estimated to have occurred during this opportunity. Estimated Chinook salmon harvested on the Kuskokwim River as of June 24, 2018 was at 17,250.

There was one more fishing opportunity on June 29, 2018. There is no preliminary harvest data available at this time.

#### **Test Fisheries:**

As of June 30, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 479. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2017 and 2016 were 242 and 499, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 1,594. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2017 and 2016 were 2,183 and 747, respectively. Cumulative CPUE for Sockeye is at 412. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2017 and 2016 were 692 and 437, 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](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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf)

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

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

***ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:***

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

***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:***

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

***Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:***

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

**Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.**

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**Norton Sound District**

As water level conditions improve, counting projects that have been delayed are beginning to become operational. ADF&G thanked Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) for their continued support of salmon escapement counting projects throughout Norton Sound for over two decades.

**Sport Fishing:** All fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof remain closed to sport fishing for king salmon by State E.O. The closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages. This emergency order will remain in effect through August 15, 2018, or until inseason assessments project that the escapement goal will be met for king salmon on the Unalakleet River.

***Other Norton Sound Coastal Waters***

All waters from Wood Point west to Point Romanof are open to subsistence salmon fishing seven days a week.

***Subdistrict 6 (Unalakleet)***

**Subsistence Fishing:** Effective the evening of June 8 at midnight, all marine waters and fresh waters of Norton Sound Subdistrict 6 were closed to subsistence salmon fishing.

The North River and the Unalakleet River drainage downstream of the North River including the marine waters within 500 yards of the Unalakleet River mouth have been closed to subsistence gill net fishing since June 1, and will remain closed. Dip nets and cast nets may be used, but any king salmon captured must be immediately released. The department plans on offering one 24-hour subsistence salmon opening per week in the marine waters. Subsistence salmon catches during the previous subsistence salmon opening (from noon Tuesday, June 19 to noon Wednesday, June 20), in combination with forecasted good marine weather allowed for another subsistence salmon opening from noon Saturday, June 23 to noon Sunday, June 24. This opening applied only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Wood Point, and set gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Again, the combination of catches from the previous subsistence salmon fishing period combined with forecasted favorable weather allowed the department to announce another subsistence salmon fishing opening in the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Wood Point from 6 PM Thursday, June 28 to 6 PM Friday, June 29 with set gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

**Unalakleet River Floating Weir** — A cooperative project of Fish and Game, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDG), Native Village of the Unalakleet and BLM, with major funding provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. Escapement goals for the weir have not yet been established. The Unalakleet River floating weir is scheduled to become operational early next week if the water level continues to drop.

**North River Tower — Camp J. B.** — A Cooperative Project of NSEDG with Assistance from ADF&G. 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. The North River Tower became operational at 6 PM Tuesday, June 27. The crew counted 3 chum and 12 pink salmon as of that midnight.

### ***Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)***

Subsistence Fishing: Effective the evening of June 8 at midnight, all marine waters and fresh waters of Subdistrict 5 were closed to subsistence salmon fishing. However, the department plans on having one 24-hour subsistence salmon fishing period per week in the marine waters of the Subdistrict during favorable weather conditions. Subsistence salmon catches during the previous subsistence salmon opening (from noon Tuesday, June 19 to noon Wednesday, June 20), in combination with forecasted good marine weather allowed for another subsistence salmon opening from noon Saturday, June 23 to noon Sunday, June 24. This opening applied only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Wood Point, and set gillnets were restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Again, the combination of catches from the previous subsistence salmon fishing period combined with forecasted favorable weather allowed the department to announce another subsistence salmon fishing opening in the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Wood Point from 6 PM Thursday, June 28 to 6 PM Friday, June 29 with set gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. The Shaktoolik River drainage will remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing until further notice. Gill nets used to

target trout and whitefish in the Shaktoolik River and all other freshwater areas of the Subdistrict must have a mesh size no greater than 4 inches. Dip nets and cast nets may also be used, but any king salmon captured must be immediately released.

**Shaktoolik Tower** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals established. The tower is now operational after having been delayed due to high water levels.

#### *Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)*

Subsistence Fishing: ADF&G implemented a subsistence salmon fishing schedule the second week of June. All flowing waters draining the Inglutalik and Ungalik Rivers, and all marine waters of Norton Bay Subdistrict were placed on a subsistence fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week. Periods run from 6 AM Mondays to 6 PM Tuesdays, and from 6 AM Saturdays to 6 PM Sundays. During the openings from Mondays to Tuesdays, subsistence users will be restricted to set gill nets with a stretch mesh size of 6 inches or less. For weekend openings from Saturdays to Sundays, there will be no restrictions on mesh size.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing opened for 24 hours in the Subdistrict from 6 PM Saturday, June 23 until 6 PM Sunday, June 24. Permit holder were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Chum salmon catches were above average for this first period. The catch for the Norton Bay Subdistrict was 7 kings, 3 pink and 1,196 chum salmon caught by 8 permit holders. A second commercial fishing period was opened for 24 hours from 6 PM Wednesday, June 27 until 6 PM Thursday, June 28.

**Inglutalik River Tower** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. The tower is now operational after having been delayed due to high water levels.

#### *Subdistrict 3 (Elim)*

Subsistence Fishing: Except for 2014, when hook and line subsistence fishing for king salmon was closed, there have been no other subsistence restrictions and over 25 years in Subdistrict 3. Subsistence permits are required when subsistence salmon fishing in the Subdistrict. Other than the possibility of in-season king salmon restrictions, no other restrictions are expected

Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing opened for 24 hours in the Subdistrict from 6 PM Saturday, June 23 until 6 PM Sunday, June 24. Permit holder were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Chum salmon catches were above average for this first period. The catch for the Elim Subdistrict was 22 king, 11pink and 3,715 chum salmon caught by 12 permit holders. A second commercial fishing period was opened for 24 hours from 6 PM Wednesday, June 27 until 6 PM Thursday, June 28.

***Subdistrict 2 (Golovin)***

Subsistence Fishing: Permits are required for subsistence salmon fishing and no restrictions in subsistence fishing time are expected.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing opened for 24 hours in the Subdistrict from 6 PM Saturday, June 23 until 6 PM Sunday, June 24. Permit holder were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. Chum salmon catches were above average for this first period. The catch for the Golovin Subdistrict was 15 king, 1 Sockeye Salmon, 4 pink and 2,030 chum salmon caught by 8 permit holders. A second commercial fishing period was opened for 24 hours from 6 PM Wednesday, June 27 until 6 PM Thursday, June 28.

***Subdistrict 1 (Nome)***

As of June 27, ADF&G and NSEDC have been unable to get any weirs operational in the Subdistrict due to continuing high water.

Subsistence Fishing: By regulation, the summer subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule went into effect in the Nome Subdistrict on June 15. The marine waters east of Cape Nome continue to be open seven days a week. All Nome Subdistrict freshwater subsistence areas and the marine waters west of Cape Nome are open to gillnet fishing for five days each week from 6 PM Wednesday until 6 PM Monday. Also effective June 15, beach seining for salmon opened in all subsistence areas of the Nome Subdistrict whenever subsistence gillnet fishing is open. Unless closed by emergency order, beach seining will remain open during gillnet fishing periods through August 15. Dip nets and cast nets can also be used anytime gillnet fishing is open. Also, effective June 15, all gillnet and beach seine fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River was closed. This closure is in effect to protect migrating Sockeye Salmon that hold in the Sinuk River Bridge area before reaching the spawning grounds.

Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required, and stream specific harvest limits are listed on the permit. There are no catch limits in the marine waters.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened for the season in the Nome Subdistrict with a 24-hour period from 9 PM Wednesday, June 27 until 9 PM Thursday, June 28. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length.

**Port Clarence District**

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required for the Port Clarence District, Pilgrim River drainage and Salmon Lake. Catch limits are listed on the subsistence permits. No subsistence fishing closures are expected, but the department will limit Sockeye Salmon subsistence to a harvest of 25 fish initially, and will re-increase or waive the limit if the run is similar to the last several years.

Commercial Fishing: The department expects the commercial fishery to remain closed because of a lack of buyer interest despite the in-river goal of 30,000 Sockeye Salmon of

Pilgrim River expected to be reached.

### **Kotzebue District**

Subsistence Fishing: No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2018.

Commercial Fishing: the department intends to open the commercial fishery any time after July 9 when the buyers are ready, or the permit holders indicate they are ready to fish and a market is available.

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