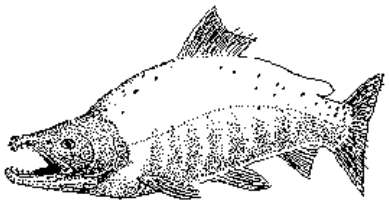
PRIORITY INFORMATION NEEDS

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES



2026 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

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Department of Interior
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The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) invites the submission of proposals for fisheries study plans and research designs to be initiated under the 2026 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program). The Notice of Funding Opportunity is accessible at the Monitoring Program webpage at https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding or by visiting the Grant Solutions website at www.grantsolutions.gov or the Grants.gov website at www.grants.gov and searching for *Opportunity Number* **D25AS00214**.

Although all proposals addressing subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands may be considered, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on priority information needs identified for each Monitoring Program region. The Monitoring Program is administered in seven regions: Northern, Yukon, Kuskokwim, Southwest, Southcentral, Southeast, and a Multi-Region that covers research needs that span across more than one region.

This document summarizes priority information needs for 2026 for all seven regions. Investigators preparing proposals for the 2026 Monitoring Program should use this document, relevant strategic plans, and the Notice of Funding Opportunity, which provides foundational information about the Monitoring Program, to guide proposal development.

Monitoring Program funding is not intended to duplicate existing programs. Agencies are discouraged from shifting existing projects to the Monitoring Program. When a long-term project can no longer be funded solely by an agency, and the project provides direct information for Federal subsistence fisheries management, a request to the Monitoring Program of up to 50% of the project cost is encouraged. For Monitoring Program projects for which additional years of funding is being requested, investigators should justify continuation by placing the proposed work in context with the ongoing work being accomplished.

The Monitoring Program seeks to combine ethnographic, harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, and biological data to aid in management. Investigators are encouraged to combine interdisciplinary methods to address information needs and to consider the cultural context of these information needs.

PRIORITY INFORMATION NEEDS BY REGION

Northern Alaska Region

The Monitoring Plan for the Northern Alaska Region is directed at information needs identified by the three northern Regional Advisory Councils (Seward Peninsula, Northwest Arctic, and North Slope). For the Northern Alaska Region, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information needs:

- Inventory and baseline data of fish in major rivers tied to subsistence use in Northwest Alaska. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on Traditional Ecological Knowledge literature in designing and carrying out research. When possible, applicants are encouraged to include fisheries proximal to the communities of Shishmaref, Buckland, Deering, Selawik, Kivalina, Point Hope, Kotzebue, and villages along the Kobuk and Noatak rivers.

- Evaluate changes in water levels, discoloration and mineral deposits, water temperature, and reduced oxygen in major river systems associated with subsistence fishery resources in the Northwest Arctic Region, and how these changes will affect fish vital for subsistence. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge of historic and recent water conditions in designing and carrying out research.

- Study the effects of expanding beaver populations and range on subsistence fisheries, including whitefish, in the Northwest Arctic Region. Include effects of dams on fish migration and effects of changes to water quality on fish health. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge of historic and changing beaver impacts in designing and carrying out research. Research should also consider the impacts of these changes on subsistence users themselves.

- Document Herring abundance, seasonal movements, and health and investigate causes of large herring mortality events in the Kotzebue area. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in designing and carrying out research.

- Document the effects of changing river and tributary conditions on salmon spawning in the Noatak and Kobuk River drainages, with focus on the potential effects of factors such as erosion, discoloration and mineral deposits, and changing precipitation on spawning viability. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in designing and carrying out research.

- Document abundance and migration timing of salmon in the Noatak and Kobuk River Drainages to address changing availability of subsistence fishery resources. Investigators should consult with local subsistence user and draw on their knowledge in designing and carrying out research.

- Document abundance and migration timing, especially of Dolly Varden, Arctic Char, Lake Trout, and whitefish species in the Northwest Arctic, to address changing availability of subsistence fishery resources. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in designing and carrying out research.

- Identify the spawning areas, critical habitat and range expansion in major rivers tied to subsistence for Whitefish, Northern Pike, salmon, Grayling, and Dolly Varden in the Northwest Alaska Region. Investigators should consult with local subsistence users and draw on their knowledge in designing and carrying out research.

- Chinook Salmon abundance estimate for the Unalakleet River.

- Changes in Grayling, Dolly Varden and Sheefish populations related to climate change.

- Chinook, Chum and Coho abundance estimate for the Pikmiktalik River, with comparison to historical counts.

- Coho Salmon abundance estimate for Boston, Fish, Pargon and Wagon Wheel Rivers.

- Summer and Fall Chum Salmon abundance estimates for the Agiapuk River drainage including American River and Igloo Creek.

- Investigate causes of salmon decline in Norton Sound freshwater drainages.

- Historical analysis of postseason salmon harvest surveys for residents of Unalakleet fishing in the Unalakleet Subdistrict, combined with assessment of causes of low harvest years and overall declines. Investigators must present results to the residents of Unalakleet.

- Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge and/or harvest monitoring, document new fish species and changes in abundance, and size, timing, and distribution of existing fish species.
- Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge and/or harvest monitoring to document the impacts of new or expanding species on other fish that are important to subsistence in the North Slope region.

- Document the effects of climate change including late freeze up on subsistence fishing access, harvest, and preservation, and the impact of these changes on community-wide harvest levels and food security on the North Slope. Research could investigate adaptations for continuing community-wide harvest levels where traditional preservation methods are impacted.

- Baseline fish habitat and water quality monitoring (especially temperature, dissolved oxygen, and silt) on the rivers and tributaries important to subsistence fishing for communities of the North Slope Region. Investigators are encouraged to include overwintering areas.

- Distribution, abundance, and stocks of broad whitefish on the Sagavanirktok, Ikpikpuk, Meade, Inaru, Tupaagruk Rivers, and other rivers important to subsistence.

- Seasonal movement and overwintering habitat of whitefish on the Colville Delta.

- Document population structure of abundance and health of Lake Trout and grayling in Peters, Schrader, Chandler, Shainin, and other Lakes.

- Health and abundance of Arctic Grayling populations in Anaktuvuk Pass area and Point Hope.

- Evaluate changes in water levels, discoloration and mineral deposits, water temperature, and reduced oxygen in major river systems associated with subsistence fishery resources in the North Slope region, and how these changes will affect fish vital for subsistence.

- Document and investigate the possible causes of mold, disease, and discoloration on Broad Whitefish and other subsistence species in the Colville River in the vicinity of Nuiqsut. Compare environmental conditions in the Colville River – including temperature – with those in the Ikpikpuk River, where whitefish are healthy, and mold has not been observed to date. Investigators are encouraged to draw on both stocks status and trends and Traditional Ecological Knowledge research methods.

Yukon Region

The Monitoring Plan for the Yukon Region is directed at information needs identified by the three Yukon Regional Advisory Councils (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior Alaska, and Eastern Interior Alaska). For the Yukon Region, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information needs:

- Impacts of climate change on harvest and use of fish; and impacts of climate change on fish, for example, impacts to fish migration, spawning, and life cycle.

- Knowledge of population, reproduction, and health of spawning habitat for Bering Cisco and Humpback Whitefish.

- Estimates of Chinook, summer Chum, fall Chum, and Coho salmon escapements and/or harvests with an emphasis on discrete stocks for Chum Salmon.

- Distribution, abundance, condition, and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon in the Yukon River drainage.

- Increase understanding of the abundance, distribution, migration patterns, and spawning locations of Chinook and Chum salmon in the Innoko River.

- Non-lethal estimates of "quality of escapement" for Chinook Salmon, for example, potential egg deposition, age, sex, and size composition of spawners, weight and girth of spawners, percentage of females, percentage of jacks, and spawning habitat usage, with an emphasis on Canadian-origin stocks.

- Community-based monitoring of salmon and resident species' presence, abundance, life history patterns, harvests, genetics and age-sex-length composition, incidental and delayed mortality from entanglements and drop-outs, habitat restoration needs, and/or environmental variables in tributaries to better understand fish and keep users engaged during years of limited fishing opportunities.

- In-season estimates of genetic stock composition of Chinook, summer Chum, and fall Chum salmon runs.

- Traditional ecological knowledge of fishes, for example, to identify salmon spawning and/or rearing locations and expand the Anadromous Waters Catalog.

- Advance genetic baselines for Chinook, summer Chum, fall Chum, and Coho salmon by screening additional populations and novel genetic markers to improve the accuracy, precision, and scale of stock composition estimates to inform stock assessment for Yukon River fisheries at the tributary level.

- Funding to facilitate interagency, Tribal, and stakeholder forums for gathering and sharing input on fishery management issues, including cross-jurisdictional and co-management of salmon.

- Seasonal salmon life-stage usage of tidal tributaries draining the Yukon Coastal District through an interdisciplinary approach documenting traditional ecological knowledge and biological surveys in order to update the Anadromous Waters Catalog and improve management's understanding of salmon in these streams.

- Meta-analysis of existing information and research examining the relative importance of freshwater (e.g., predation, stranding, heat stress, reduction in marine-derived nutrients) and marine (e.g., environmental conditions, bycatch, interception, migration routes, hatchery production and competition) factors in causing declines of Yukon River Chinook and Chum salmon and/or resident species to present at relevant Regional Advisory Council meetings.

- Effects of inriver predation on salmon as they migrate upriver.

Kuskokwim Region

The Monitoring Plan for the Kuskokwim Region is directed at information needs identified by the two Kuskokwim Regional Advisory Councils (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Alaska). For the Kuskokwim Region, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information needs:

- Drivers of Chinook, Chum, Coho, and Sockeye salmon population declines in the Kuskokwim River drainage including Kuskokwim Bay tributaries.

- Chinook, Chum, Coho, Pink, and Sockeye salmon inter- and intraspecies specific competition for resources in freshwater and marine environments.

- Northern Pike distribution, abundance, habitat preferences, and predation patterns upon juvenile salmon and other fishes in the Kuskokwim River watershed including Kuskokwim Bay tributaries (e.g. Kanektok River).

- Establish, develop, maintain, and collect long-term data sets of watershed-scale environmental variables to better understand their effects upon Chinook, Chum, and Coho salmon productivity within the Kuskokwim River watershed including Kuskokwim Bay tributaries.

- Reliable quantitative and/or qualitative estimates of salmon run size, escapement, and harvest in the entire Kuskokwim River watershed including Kuskokwim Bay tributaries.

- Explore new and cost-effective methods for conducting in-season salmon run and harvest assessments in the Kuskokwim River drainage, with an emphasis on community-based monitoring.

- Distribution, abundance, condition, and survival of juvenile and out-migrating Chinook, Chum, Coho, and Sockeye salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage.

- Impacts of environmental change in continued harvest and use of fish and impacts of climate change on fish, for example fish migration, spawning, and life cycle, and abundance.

Southwest Alaska Region

The Monitoring Plan for the Southwest Alaska Region is directed at information needs identified by the two Southwest Regional Advisory Councils (Bristol Bay and Kodiak/Aleutians). For the Southwest Alaska Region, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information needs:

- Reliable estimates of the abundance of salmon populations in the Kodiak Archipelago and Aleutian Island areas important for subsistence use and assessment of changes in these populations. Specific areas of concern include McLees Lake, Mortenson's Lagoon, Unalaska Lake, and Kodiak Archipelago stocks.

- Using scale analyses of fresh and saltwater growth patterns over multiple years, examine how recent changes in the ocean impact growth and survival of Chinook and Sockeye salmon within their range and habitats. The Kodiak/Aleutian drainages of particular concern include: (Buskin, Karluk, Ayakulik, McClees drainages) and/or the Bristol Bay/Alaska Peninsula drainages (Chignik, Nushagak, Big Creek, Alagnak, Meshik, and Togiak drainages). The Chignik drainage is of particular concern.

- Reliable estimates of Chinook Salmon escapement are needed, along with evaluation of escapement quality and harvest monitoring in the Alagnak River, Big Creek, Chignik River, Naknek tributaries, and Togiak River. This includes assessing egg deposition, sex and size composition of spawners, and spawning habitat quality and utilization to determine the reproductive potential of spawning stocks. Harvest monitoring is encouraged by user groups in the region, with particular emphasis on those within the Naknek drainage.

- Comparative ecological evaluation of lake rearing habitats of Sockeye Salmon stocks in southwest Kodiak Island, including Olga Lakes and Akalura Lake watersheds, and the assessment of (1) declines of salmon stocks and associated subsistence harvest opportunities, and (2) effects of climate change on salmon production in these lake systems.

- Annual estimates are needed for Sockeye Salmon escapement in the Lake Clark watershed.

- Evaluation of Chinook and Sockeye salmon populations in the Chignik River area to understand the decline in salmon stocks and associated subsistence harvest opportunities, such as reliable estimates of escapement, quality of escapement, and environmental impacts.

- Evaluate effects on subsistence users in the Southwest Alaska region resulting from changes in fish populations, including biological considerations of run timing, run quality, sex ratios, and age

composition, which incorporates local observations and knowledge. Research should include a multi-disciplinary approach and include elements of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as well as Stock Status and Trends.

- Enumeration of salmon smolt outmigration in the Buskin River system.

- Understanding and documenting subsistence sharing networks of fish throughout the Bristol Bay region and the importance of resource networks.

- Harvest use survey of Buskin River subsistence and how subsistence practices have changed in recent history during closures or reductions in harvest. Address how subsistence harvest has changed as access and harvest opportunity within the Buskin River has changed.

Southcentral Alaska Region

The Monitoring Plan for the Southcentral Alaska Region is directed at information needs identified by the Southcentral Alaska Regional Advisory Council. For the Southcentral Alaska Region, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information needs:

- Estimate Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon escapements into the Copper River drainage and delta systems with a high degree of certainty (for example, projects utilizing weir, sonar, and/or mark-recapture methods).

- Collect baseline information of juvenile Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon outmigration including abundance, and/or timing, condition, and mortality across the unique sub-watersheds of the Copper River and the Kenai Peninsula drainages.

- Understand food web dynamics and factors affecting early marine survival rates of southcentral origin wild Chinook and Coho salmon stocks including variables such as primary food resources and prey availability, competition with hatchery produced salmon, and prey buffering during periods of high/low abundance.

- Understand effects of environmental and/or climate change on stock specific migration timing and abundance of juvenile and adult salmon, as well as the implications for harvest management, in the Copper River and Kenai Peninsula drainages.

- Estimate measures of abundance, and/or run timing, spawning site fidelity, fecundity, age, sex, and length composition for Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon in the Copper River or Kenai Peninsula drainages.

- Identify and understand sources of inriver mortality (e.g. predation) on adult Chinook and Sockeye salmon as they migrate upstream within the Copper River drainage.

Southeast Alaska Region

The Monitoring Program for the Southeast Alaska Region is directed at information needs identified by the Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council. For the Southeast Alaska Region, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information needs:

- Reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapement and in-season harvest and estimates of stream discharge in the following systems: Kanalku, Klawock, Hetta, Falls, Sarkar, Kook, Neva, Karta, Hatchery, Eek, Kah Sheets, Klag, Gut, Kutlaku, Salmon Bay, Sitkoh, Hoktaheen, Alecks Creek, Lake Eva, Lake Leo, and Redoubt Lake.

- Reliable estimates of salmon escapement and in-season harvest of subsistence salmon systems.

- Escapement indices or population estimates for Eulachon at the Unuk River and Yakutat Forelands.

- Population assessment for Eulachon for northern Southeast Alaska.

- Traditional ecological knowledge of how each community distributes harvest between Sockeye Salmon systems available to them.

- Reliable estimates of salmon populations and harvests in the sport and subsistence fisheries at Kah Sheets and Alecks Creek, Lisianski River.

- Ethnographic study of the Yakutat subsistence salmon fishery.

- Reliable estimates of subsistence Sockeye Salmon harvest in the Klawock River drainage.

- Develop escapement goals for Sockeye Salmon systems with long term escapement data sets.

- Incorporate the use of indigenous co-management to develop escapement goals for Sockeye Salmon systems with long term escapement data sets.

- Assessment of Makhnati Island herring stock.

- Update community household fish harvest surveys.

- Use of DNA to determine the contribution of sockeye in the mixed stock fishery in Southeast Alaska.

Multi-Regional

The Multi-regional category is for projects that are applicable in more than one region. For the Multi-Regional category, the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity is focused on the following priority information need:

- Gain a better understanding of ecosystem factors negatively impacting subsistence salmon runs and harvest practices in Alaska, including ocean conditions, commercial fishing practices, freshwater conditions, and changing climate conditions.

- Statewide analyses of archived salmon scales to assess fresh and saltwater growth patterns over multiple years, examine how recent changes in the ocean affect growth and survival of Chinook and Sockeye salmon within their range and habitats.

- Understanding and documenting subsistence sharing networks of fish throughout the state and the importance of resource networks.