

**FINAL FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 1-7, 2023.** Report #17

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The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA****Yakutat**

Yakutat Susan Oehlers, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)784-3359; [susan.oehlers@usda.gov](mailto:susan.oehlers@usda.gov)

Reporting completed for the 2023 season. Please contact author if you have questions.

**Juneau**

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Final Report for 2023 Season., Please contact author with questions.

- **Salmon fisheries** - Sockeye fisheries in most areas have wound down, and escapements through the region are favorable. The Pink Salmon return is coming in well above the weak preseason expectations – the forecast was for a commercial harvest of 19 million fish, and now looks like it may exceed 50 million fish, limited mainly by processor capacity. Coho have begun moving into inside waters, and anecdotal reports are favorable.
- **Neva Lake** – The Neva Lake weir was installed on June 21, and is a cooperative project between the Hoonah Indian Association and the Forest Service. The weir is used to monitor Sockeye Salmon returns to Neva Lake. Harvesters are reminded that only Federally qualified subsistence users may harvest Sockeye from fresh water in the Neva/South Creek system. The harvest limit at Neva was increased from 10 to 20 Sockeye per household this year, and increased effort and harvest has been reported. The weir is being removed this week.



Figure 1. Video capture of an otter swimming through the Neva Lake weir.

### **Sheet'ká and Xunaa (Sitka and Hoonah) Area**

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Final Reports for season, please contact author with questions.

- **Chaas' Geeyí (Klag Bay)** - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which counts Sockeye entering Klag Lake and conducts on-site creel surveys of harvesters. The weir was operational as of June 25 and was removed beginning September 07. Over the 2023 season, 7,359 Sockeye have entered the lake, and 1,523 have been harvested. August 05, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game [closed the state subsistence and sport Sockeye Salmon fishery](#) at Klag Bay. In 2022, approximately 2,029 Sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,960 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for approximately 99% of terminal area harvest.
- **Kunáa Shak.áayi (Redoubt Lake)** - The Forest Service operated the Redoubt Lake weir from June 12 to September 05. Over the 2023 season, 153,414 Sockeye Salmon had entered the lake. This year surpassed the annual escapement for all other years on record (40+ seasons). On June 28, the Alaska Department of Fish and game [announced a liberalization](#) of the state personal use and subsistence fishery at Redoubt which took affect on July 1. This emergency order changed the Sockeye Salmon limit, in the state subsistence fisheries, to 25 Sockeye Salmon per household with an annual limit of 100 Sockeye Salmon per household. On July 7, an [Emergency Special Action](#) was authorized through the Federal Subsistence Program, which increased the daily limit for qualified federal subsistence users to 50 Sockeye per household with no annual limit. A separate

Federal Subsistence fishing permit, which can be acquired at the Forest Service office in Sitka, is required to participate in this opportunity.

In 2022, an estimated 90,005 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 9, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence Sockeye possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence Sockeye annual limit was set at 100. Preliminary personal use/subsistence harvest records indicate that 5,850 Sockeye Salmon were harvested from the Redoubt system under 246 subsistence/personal use permits. Approximately 5,549 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in Sitka Sound commercial fishery openings throughout the season. Most of these Sockeye are probably of Redoubt origin.



*Figure 2. Weir technicians pass fish on a gorgeous sunny day at the Redoubt Lake weir.*

### **Admiralty**

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- **Sitkoh Lake** - The Sitkoh Lake weir is a cooperative project between the USFS and the Angoon Community Association (ACA). The weir was installed on July 12. The swim-through video weir records Sockeye and other fish as they enter the lake. A Forest Service crew recently began testing a Starlink system to connect the weir to the internet for remote monitoring (Figure 3). The weir was removed last week.



*Figure 3. SCA intern Chaney Haavik (left) and USFS fisheries technician Juliet Harrison in front of the newly installed Starlink system at the Sitkoh Lake weir.*

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

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Final Reports for season, please contact author with questions.

### **Prince of Wales**

- **Hetta Lake** – The Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff passed 12,830 Sockeye Salmon for the year. The weir was pulled September 20.
- **Eek Lake** – The Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff passed 489 Sockeye Salmon this year. The weir was pulled on September 1.

### **SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA**

**Copper River, 8/28/2023 Update – Dave Sarafin, Copper River Federal Fisheries Management Biologist, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, [dave\\_sarafin@nps.gov](mailto:dave_sarafin@nps.gov)**

Reporting completed for the 2023 season, please contact author if you have questions. Please contact author if you have questions.

Links:

ADFG 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)

ADFG Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

ADFG Sport Fish Emergency Orders and News Releases

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>

**PWS, Copper River Delta, Chugach – Dr. Andrew Sanders, Chugach National Forest, Cordova. July 7, 2023 Contact – (907) 250-0439 or [Andrew.sanders@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.sanders@usda.gov)**

OSM fisheries update October 4th, 2023 – Last Report for 2023 Season but fisheries continue in area. Contact Author for more information or if you have questions.

Prince William Sound / Copper River Delta:

Water levels in areas streams have receded over the last week as thanks to clear, dry weather. Coho Salmon are still running and anglers have been successful in multiple Eastern Prince William Sound streams including Ibeck Creek and the Eyak River. Some fish are still bright, but most are blush. Angler pressure has declined to low-moderate levels. As of October 4th, 101 permits have been issued for the subsistence fishery consisting of the freshwaters outside of the Copper River Drainage within the Chugach National Forest.

The Forest Service has been patrolling at Ibeck Creek to monitor conditions and to provide information on Federal subsistence regulations and bear safety. Bear activity is increasing across the Copper River delta, and the Forest Service has received multiple reports of brown bear and black bear encounters at Ibeck and other popular fishing areas. The areas with highest bear activity have also been the areas with the highest volumes of bear attractants such as discarded salmon carcasses and roe. Anglers are strongly encouraged to pack out their fish whole and process them at the cleaning stations in town (located at the city harbor and out Orca Road), to keep their stringers and gear immediately next to them, and to utilize bear spray to defend their fish if approached by a bear.

This will be the last update for the 2023 season. For further information about the federal subsistence fisheries of the Copper River Delta area and Prince William Sound users can contact the Chugach National Forest Subsistence Staff – Andrew Sanders at 907-424-4759

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

Reporting concluded for season. Please contact author if you have questions.

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**  
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Subsistence fishing has been completed for the 2023 season. Please call author if you have any questions.

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

Reporting complete for 2023 season.

Please contact author if you have questions.

**Yukon River –USFWS Fairbanks Office. August 28-September 4, 2023**

Federal Manager, Holly Carroll (907) 351-3029, [holly\\_carroll@fws.gov](mailto:holly_carroll@fws.gov)

Please contact author if you have questions.

**In Season Manager – Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge** [Boyd\\_Blihovde@fws.gov](mailto:Boyd_Blihovde@fws.gov); Contact Spencer Reardon (907)543-1023 or [spencer\\_reardon@fws.gov](mailto:spencer_reardon@fws.gov)

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**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)

***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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Reporting complete for the 2023 season. Please contact author if you have questions.