

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 20-25, 2023. Report #5
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 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

Yakutat

Susan Oehlers, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)784-3359;
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- **Situk River** – Remains closed to harvest of Chinook Salmon under both State and Federal regulations due to conservation concerns.

Juneau

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- **Neva Lake** – The Neva Lake weir was installed on June 21. The cooperative project is operated by the Forest Service and the Hoonah Indian Association, and monitors Sockeye Salmon returns to the lake. The harvest limit in the Neva system was increased from 10 to 20 Sockeye per household this year, providing additional opportunity for subsistence users. Users are reminded that only Federally qualified subsistence users are permitted to harvest Sockeye in Federal waters (i.e. freshwater) of the Neva system.

Sheet'ká and Xunaa (Sitka and Hoonah) Area

Ashley Bolwerk, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, (907)747-4299;
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- **Herring** – A commercial herring fishery occurred in Sheet'ká X'áat'i (Sitka Sound) in 2023. Please see this [summary of Sitka Sound herring 2023](#). More information can be found on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's ["Commercial Herring Fishery" homepage](#). Here is the [2023 summary of southeast Alaska herring](#).
- **Falls Lake** – The Falls Lake weir project was not funded in the latest FRMP cycle.

- **Chaa's' Geeyí (Klag Bay)** - 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 2022, approximately 2,029 Sockeye Salmon 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.
- **Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 12. As of June 24, 3,653 Sockeye Salmon have entered the lake. 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 Salmon are probably of Redoubt origin.

Admiralty

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- No reports yet this year from the Angoon area – local users are encouraged to share observations from the field. The Sitkoh Lake weir will be installed in early July.

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

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- **Stikine River** – The 2023 Federal Stikine River Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Subsistence Fishery began on June 21. As of June 23, a total of 47 subsistence permits have been issued for 2023. Tahltan Lake bound Sockeye Salmon are reported to have entered the Stikine River according to local Alaska Department of Fish and Game Biologists. No information is available on Sockeye Salmon harvest at this point. The 2023 Stikine River pre-season Sockeye Salmon forecast is 86,000 fish, with 57,000 Tahltan and 29,000 Mainstem fish. The 2022 Sockeye Salmon estimate was 56,000 fish, which included 28,000 Tahltan Lake and 28,000 Mainstem Sockeye Salmon. The escapement objective for Tahltan-bound Sockeye Salmon is 18,000 fish and 30,000 for Mainstem fish.

The 2023 pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River is 11,700 fish. This forecast is below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. The area's commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries have been closed to protect this return. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Chinook Salmon Assessment Program for the Stikine River is underway and nearing the halfway point in run timing. So far, 67 large Chinook Salmon have been sampled, which is slightly better than last year during the same time frame, but still below average.

Water temperature for the 7-day average on the Stikine is 8.4 C which is slightly low compared to the 5-year average for this week. Gauge height on the Stikine River downstream of Shakes Slough ranged from 16.3 m to 18.9 for the week of June 18 which is slightly above average. It remains to be seen if cool and wet late spring conditions are delaying the run.

Prince of Wales

- **Hetta Lake** – The Hetta Lake weir is operational, and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff have passed 30 Sockeye Salmon and have observed salmon jumping in the bay.

Eek Lake – The Hydaburg Cooperative Association and Forest Service staff have assembled the weir and are awaiting their first Sockeye Salmon to arrive.

Southeast Alaska Web Links

Tongass National Forest News Room <http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area
http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

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

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

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

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Copper River, 6/26/2023 Update – Dave Sarafin, Copper River Federal Fisheries Management Biologist, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) has authorized nine 12-hour fishing periods through June 22, with a cumulative harvest reported as 496,000 Sockeye Salmon and 9,010 Chinook Salmon. The Copper River District opened today, June 26, for a 36-hour fishing period.

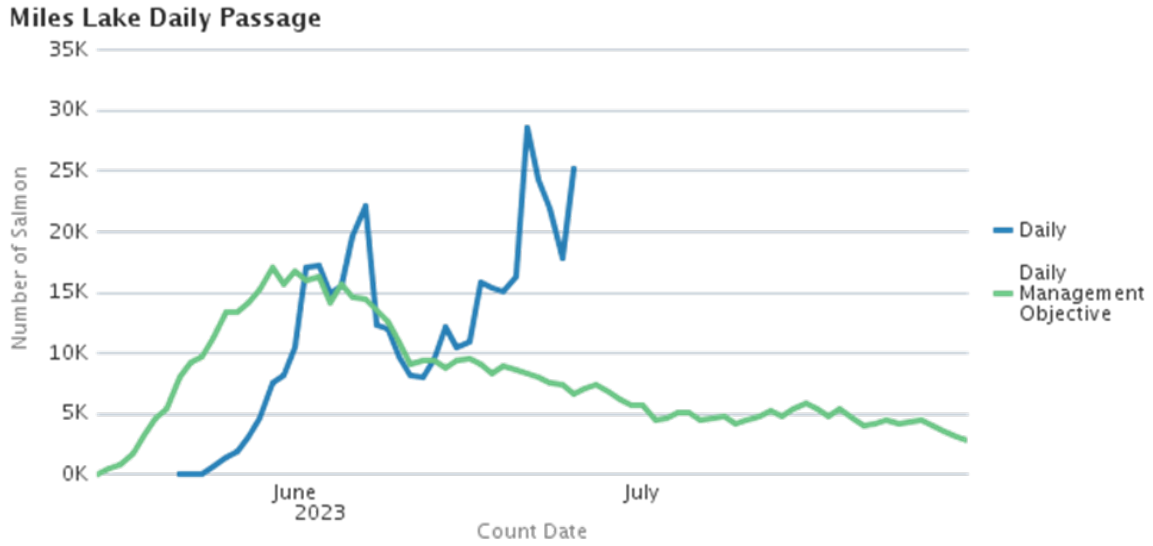
The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began limited operation of only the North Bank sonar on May 22; operation of the South Bank sonar began May 25. Salmon passage was first recorded on May 25. As of June 25, 418,545 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. The cumulative passage is now just above the management objective of 417,644 for this date of the season. A daily estimate of 25,297 salmon migrated by the sonar on June 25.

Sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary mid-season assessment tool for the Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River. The sonar season total estimate is now at the management objective. Salmon passage rates have recently increased, with daily passage estimates exceeding daily management objectives since June 13. For each the past 5 days, daily passage has ranged from 2.4 to 3.8 times higher than the daily management objective. Salmon harvest is being reported throughout the river. At Slana, one of the uppermost fish wheel harvest locations, the first subsistence salmon harvest was reported on June 19.

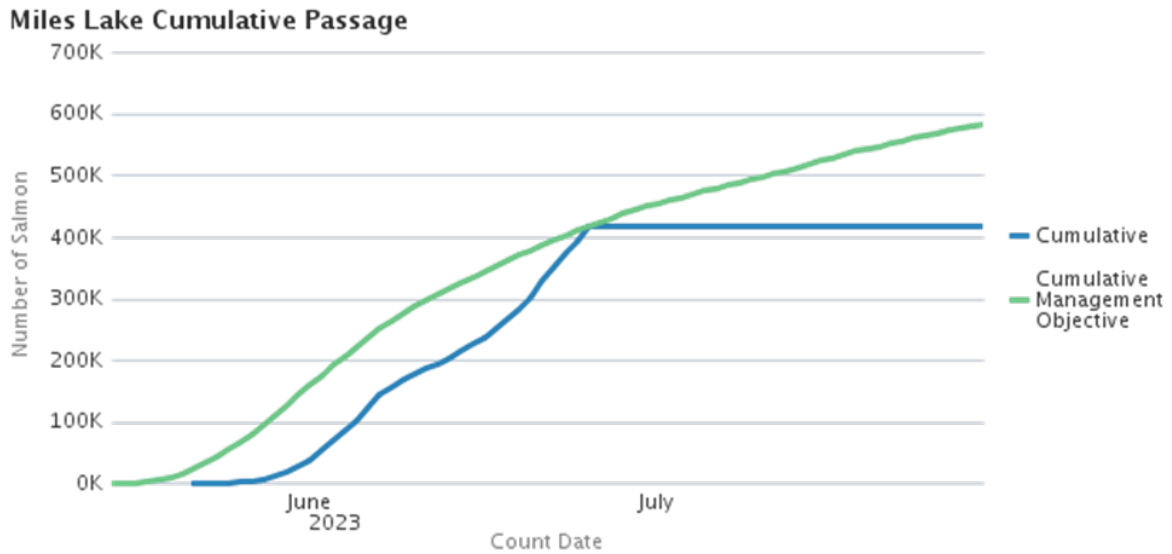
As with Sockeye Salmon, fisheries managers are also monitoring Chinook Salmon run strength; a primary assessment tool of in-river abundance is the Chinook Salmon mark-recapture project operated by the Native Village of Eyak (NVE). Additional insight is gained from the recent application of updated technology at the Miles Lake sonar site to provide species apportionment data. Recent assessments by the State indicate that the inriver return appears to be at a level that should meet the lower bound of the sustainable escapement goal range, while continuing to provide harvest opportunities.

Federal managers will continue to monitor run strength indices to evaluate the need for appropriate fisheries management actions in the Copper River Drainage. No Federal Special Actions have been issued by the in-season manager this season.

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened June 1. After a delayed initial opening (June 15) of the State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict, the personal use fishery has since been opened periodically in association with the numbers of salmon estimated passing the Miles Lake sonar.



Graph of Copper River Salmon Daily Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through June 25, 2023



Graph of Copper River Salmon Cumulative Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through June 25, 2023

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas vicinity opened on May 15 and are expected to remain open through September 30. Records of the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website indicate that 155 Chitina Subdistrict permits, 217 Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and 1 Batzulnetas permits have been issued to date.

The Federal subsistence salmon fishery in the Lower Copper River near Cordova is open from June 1 through September 30. Salmon harvest is only allowed in the Copper River within ½ mile of the Copper River Highway, only by dip net or rod and reel, dip netting

from boats is prohibited, and all salmon harvest must be reported within 48 hours. Permits are available at the Cordova Ranger Station (Chugach National Forest). To date, there have been 37 permits issued through the OSM database, with a total of 38 Sockeye Salmon and 3 Chinook Salmon reported for the season.

With funding through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), WRST is again operating the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas. Installation of the weir was completed on June 22. Staff are in the process of reviewing video data since the weir was completed. A partial day review of June 23 documented passage of 1 Sockeye Salmon.

Links:

ADFG Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

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. May 29, 2023 Contact – (907) 250-0439 or Andrew.sanders@usda.gov

Prince William Sound / Copper River Delta: The lower Copper River dipnet fishery opened on June 1st. As of Monday morning June 26, 37 permits had been issued, and users reported a cumulative harvest of 43 Sockeye Salmon and 3 Chinook Salmon. The Copper River Highway is accessible to 36 Mile. For more information about conditions in the Copper River and the commercial drift gillnet fishery, please see the *Prince William Sound – Copper River* weekly update which can also be found in this report.

Salmon returns in the other streams of the Copper River Delta are still low, but increasing marine mammal activity near the mouths of many smaller streams and reports of jumpers in the Sound suggest that the Pink Salmon are beginning to move in. Stocked Chinook Salmon are returning to Fleming Spit, and anglers are seeing some success fishing from the beach there. Water levels in area streams are high from the persistent rains over the last week.

For further information about the federal subsistence fishery in the Lower Copper River, users can contact the US Forest Service Cordova District office by calling 907-424-7661 or Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve staff -- Dave Sarafin at 907-822-7281 or Barbara Cellarius at 907-822-7236. Updates regarding changes affecting the Federal subsistence fisheries in the Copper River are available by calling the Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center at 907-822-7250. More information regarding the federal subsistence fisheries in the remainder of the Copper River Delta area and Prince William Sound can

be obtained by contacting 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 Contact:(907)260-0126 or kenneth_gates@fws.gov

The 2023 Cook Inlet Federal subsistence fishing is underway. Federal fisheries on Kenai and Kasilof rivers began June 15 and June 16, respectively. Regulatory dates for the Kasilof River community gillnet fishery are from June 16 through August 15. Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30.

Seasons for subsistence fishing with rod and reel are the same as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations. Most of the initial rod and reel subsistence effort will be focused at Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opened June 11.

Four Hundred forty-three permits have been issued to residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, Ninilchik, and Moose Pass. Permit types include a general fishing, household, designated fisher, and community gillnet permits. To date, 684 Sockeye Salmon have been harvested in all fisheries between the Kasilof and Kenai rivers: 159 by gillnet in the Kasilof River and 525 by dipnet at the Russian River falls.

No special actions have been issued for Cook Inlet Federal fisheries. However, escapement remains poor for Chinook Salmon returning to upper Cook Inlet. To date, reported escapement in the Kenai River for early-run Chinook Salmon is 1,541 large fish. The escapement is well below the established SEG and OEG for the Kenai River. We will be closely monitoring Federal harvest of Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River and will take necessary action if warranted.

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>

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

Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
(907) 487-2600/0230 michael_brady@fws.gov or
Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

The Sockeye Salmon escapement for the Buskin River drainage continues to be low, with a cumulative to date count of 1,250 fish, as of June 22, 2023. The USFWS Kodiak NWR Emergency Special Action (SA-9-RS-01-23) and Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Emergency Order (#4-FS-K-Sub-02-23) remains in effect. The Litnik (Afognak) Sockeye Salmon run started slow but has increased over the past few weeks and is approaching the 9-year average. As of June 22, 2023, the cumulative count to date for Litnik is 16,902 fish.

The Karluk Sockeye Salmon escapement has been strong and has met the lower escapement goal of 150,000 fish. The sockeye salmon escapement count to date is 165,080 fish. The Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapement started slow but has increased over the past week, with an average of over 15,000 fish per day passing the weir. The Sockeye Salmon escapement to date is 112,713 fish.

The Alitak bay district has seen the return of Sockeye Salmon in strong numbers, with Upper Station easily exceeding its lower escapement goal of 43,000 fish, with 51,336 fish counted to date.

The Chinook Salmon escapement for both the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers continue to be poor, with 201 fish and 304 fish being recorded, respectively.

Any additional information pertaining to subsistence harvest will be amended to this report.

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF June XX, 2023.

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

This report to be updated on Tuesday 6/27 as staff are deploying to Cold Bay to hold public meetings regarding recent Federal subsistence fisheries closure recensions.

These areas support abundant returns of salmon, particularly Sockeye Salmon; as well as some of the largest commercial fisheries for salmon in Alaska. All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), and provide the basis for any inseason assessment and management. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in waters under Federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction.

Bristol Bay:

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for June 18:

Alagnak = No counts reported
Egegik = 30
Igushik = No counts reported
Kvichak = No counts reported
Naknek = No counts reported
Nushagak = 14,823; Chinook = 10,142

Togiak = No counts reported
 Ugashik = No counts reported
 Wood River = 3,414

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

Escapement Goals:

Kvichak	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000
Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000
Nushagak	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000; Chinook Salmon = 55,000 – 120,000
Togiak	SEG = 120,000 – 270,000

Chignik:

The Chignik River cumulative weir count as of June 18 is 58,800 Sockeye Salmon. Early run Sockeye Salmon account for 57,980 fish and late run Sockeye Salmon account for 820 fish. The interim escapement objective for June 20 is around 89,000 – 196,000 early run fish and 200-1,500 late run fish.

There have been no Chinook Salmon counted at the ADFG weir as of June 18. Managers will be watching as these runs progress and take appropriate action if passage does not improve.

Escapement Goals:

Early Run Sockeye Salmon/ Black Lake	BEG = 350,000 – 450,000
Late Run Sockeye Salmon/ Chignik Lake	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000
-In-river Goal	-10,000 in August and 10,000 in September in addition to minimum escapement objectives
Chinook Salmon	BEG = 1,300 – 2,700
Pink Salmon – Even year	SEG = 170,000 – 280,000
Chum Salmon	SEG = 45,000 – 110,000

Alaska Peninsula:

Preseason forecasts are made only for the Nelson River and late-run (post July 31) Bear Lake stocks.

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for June 18:

Nelson = 2.007; Chinook = 7

Bear = 1,745; Chinook= 1
 Inik = 23,130; Chinook = 1; Pink= 1
 Orzinski = 85
 Sandy = 88
 McLees = 1,136

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.

Yukon River –USFWS Fairbanks Office. June 19--June 25, 2023

Federal Manager, Holly Carroll (907) 351-3029, holly_carroll@fws.gov

Assessment and Management Information

The Chinook salmon run is turning out to be as poor as expected, and at nearly the historical midpoint of the run, is unlikely to be large enough to meet escapement goals. Closures for harvest of Chinook continue to be warranted. Summer chum, however, are looking to be doing better than last year, and run projections indicate we are likely to exceed the bottom end of drainage wide escapement goal (500,000-1.2 million) and provide enough harvestable surplus for subsistence fishing. Selective gear openings (with dip nets, beach seines or manned fish wheels) are being announced starting in the lower river and will move upriver based on the regulatory windows schedule and run timing. These chum salmon opportunities will be limited to federally qualified users in federal public waters by Emergency special action.

Andreafsky river weir crew are still delayed on the installation of the weir by high water. The Gisasa River weir crew are on site and will install the weir as soon as water levels drop sufficiently, and water is dropping quickly.

Assessment project and management updates will be given on the **YRDFA weekly teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#.**

Management Strategies based on the preseason outlooks and inseason assessment:

The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) received special action request FSA23-02 asking the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to close Federal public waters of the Yukon River drainage to the harvest of Chinook, Chum and Coho salmon except by federally qualified subsistence users from June 1 through September 30, 2023, and to require that Federal subsistence fishing schedules, openings, closures and methods be determined by the Federal Fisheries Manager. This request falls within the scope of authority of the Federal manager, Holly Carroll and has been transferred to her by the

Board. Subsistence salmon fishery closures began in the lower river June 2, and will be announced moving upriver based on run timing. See detailed management strategy here: [2023 FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE YUKON AREA \(doi.gov\)](#)

Fishery Special Actions:

- Yukon River selective fishing for summer chum salmon in Coastal District and Districts Y-1, Y-2, and Y-3 – found at: <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/fsa-02-ks-01-23-coast-y1-2-3-selective-fishing.pdf>

This week's Advisory Announcements co-authored by ADF&G and USFWS and distributed by ADF&G were:

- Yukon River Summer Update #3: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1485167560.pdf>
- Closure of Koyukuk River: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1487853622.pdf>
- Closures in District 5D: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1487941119.pdf>
- Closures in District 6: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1486042282.pdf>
- selective fishing for summer chum in Coastal District and Y1, Y2: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1488751840.pdf>
- Selective fishing for summer chum in Y3: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1488842741.pdf>

Where to Find Yukon Fishery Information:

To hear the fishing schedule and fish counts please call the toll-free Fishing Schedule and Fish Counts hotline: 866-479-7387.

Recent Fishery special actions are posted here:

<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions>

For Federal News Releases and Special actions, like

www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

For detailed information on management actions and weekly assessment updates, subscribe to ADF&G advisory announcements at

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

For daily counts and State Advisory announcements like the ADF&G Yukon River Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG/

If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov

In Season Manager – Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Boyd_Blihovde@fws.gov; Contact Spencer Reardon (907)543-1023 or spencer_reardon@fws.gov

For the June 17 drift and set net opportunity, an estimated 19,554 (16,585-23,096) salmon were harvested: Of which, 10,437 (8,959-11,989) were Chinook Salmon, 2,957 (2,290-3,674) were Chum Salmon, and 6,160 (4,472-8,058) were Sockeye Salmon. This was the highest Chinook Salmon harvest for a similar timeframe since 2016, when harvest monitoring started. The previous opener on June 12 was the lowest Chinook Salmon harvest since 2016.

The Bethel Test Fish and Kuskokwim River Sonar numbers for Chinook Salmon (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fishcounts>) have remained relatively low.

Given the Alaska Department of Fish and Game 2023 run forecast of 115,000-170,000 Chinook Salmon and relatively high harvest on June 17, but the relatively low catch per unit effort from the Bethel Test Fish and sonar counts, the USFWS and the Kuskokwim River Inter-tribal Fish Commission agreed to a June 23rd drift and set net opener. This date is later in the month than has been practiced in recent years due to the conflicting information: It was chosen to allow for a few more days for Chinook Salmon to run past the Bethel area (area where majority of the harvest occurs) during the peak Chinook run with some anticipated expectation that Chinook Salmon number would improve. Additionally, the expectation was that Sockeye Salmon numbers will build to allow for net saturation, which is thought to reduce Chinook Salmon harvest.

Both the USFWS and Kuskokwim River Inter-tribal Fish Commission will review the harvest estimates from June 23rd along with the Bethel Test Fish and Kuskokwim River Sonar data next week.

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf

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

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

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

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

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

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

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

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

(907) 443-6104 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

While there are still areas of open pack ice in and north of Bering Strait, some folks' subsistence thoughts are turning to setting nets as salmon and white fish begin to show up with the disappearance of shore ice.

Norton Sound District

Sport Fishing:

To help protect king salmon during periods of low abundance and provide future sport fishing opportunities, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game closed all fresh waters in Northwest Alaska from Bald Head to Point Romanof to sport fishing for king salmon effective 12:01 a.m. April 5, 2023. This closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in these drainages. Restricting fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure should minimize catch-and-release mortality for king salmon incidentally caught while sport fishing for other species. All king salmon caught incidentally may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

These temporary regulations will remain in effect through August 15, 2023, or until there are indications of a harvestable surplus of king salmon above escapement objectives. Escapements are determined by counts compiled at a counting tower on the North River, a tributary of the Unalakleet River, and counts at a floating weir located on the mainstem Unalakleet River.

The 2023 preseason outlook for the Unalakleet River drainage king salmon run is low, and the number of returning king salmon may be insufficient to meet escapement objectives and provide a moderate harvestable surplus for the subsistence fishery.

According to the [Subdistricts 5 and 6 of the Norton Sound District and the Unalakleet River King Salmon Management Plan \(5 AAC 04.395\)](#), when the inriver subsistence fishery is closed to the retention of king salmon, sport fishing for king salmon will be closed. At this time, restrictions are planned to close the inriver Unalakleet River subsistence fishery for king salmon effective June 15, 2023. The Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages are closed as well because the department does not have reliable information for these stocks. However, these stocks trend similar to the Unalakleet River stock and are managed as a unit.

Shaktoolik (5) and Unalakleet (6) Subdistricts

Subsistence Fishing:

The marine waters of Shaktoolik and Unalakleet (Subdistricts 5 and 6) opened for a 24-hr period from 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 24, through 6:00 p.m. Sunday, June 25, with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or less. Dip nets and cast nets may be used in the North River, downstream of the North River, and Unalakleet River confluence; however, any king salmon caught must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. Set gillnets with a mesh size of 4-inches or less may be used in the Unalakleet River upstream from its confluence with the North River.

Subdistricts 5 (Shaktoolik) and 6 (Unalakleet) have been managed as one fishery because past studies have shown salmon bound for these subdistricts intermingle and that harvests in one subdistrict likely will affect the other. No commercial fishing is expected for Chinook or chum salmon, but pink salmon will be targeted commercially depending on buyer interest and gillnet fishing would likely occur beginning in July.

Abundance of the Chinook salmon run will be monitored using passage estimates from the Unalakleet River weir and a counting tower on the North River, an important Chinook salmon spawning tributary in the Unalakleet River drainage. The escapement goal range for the North River is 1,200–2,600 Chinook salmon. However, for a Chinook salmon directed commercial fishery to occur, the department must project an escapement of a minimum of 1,900 Chinook salmon past the North River tower.

NORTON Bay Subdistrict (4)

Except as noted previously, subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week. Limited commercial fishing is likely to occur with time and gear restrictions.

Elim Subdistrict (3)

Except as noted previously, subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week. Limited commercial fishing is likely to occur with time and gear restrictions.

Golovin Subdistrict (2)

Except as noted previously, subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week. Limited commercial fishing is likely to occur with time and gear restrictions.

Nome Subdistrict (1)

Subsistence Fishing:

The Nome Subdistrict remains on a subsistence fishing schedule in marine waters west of Cape Nome and in all fresh waters of the Nome Subdistrict from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays till 6:00 p.m. Mondays. Marine waters of the Nome Subdistrict east of Cape Nome remain open 7 days per week.

Effective June 15, beach seines, dip nets, and cast net can be used for salmon and will be open 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. In the Nome subdistrict all nets must be removed from fresh and marine waters west of Cape Nome on Monday, June 19, by midnight.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence Fishing:

As previously announced, the Pilgrim River closed to all net fishing effective at midnight Wednesday, June 14, which includes the lower Kuzitrin River 300 yards upstream from its mouth and in the entire Pilgrim River and its tributaries until further notice. Subsistence net fishing will be open 7 days per week outside of the Pilgrim River closed area.

Commercial Fishing:

No commercial fishing periods are expected due to lack of market interest and the likelihood of sockeye salmon escapement goals not being met. The Pilgrim River will be closed to subsistence net fishing. Escapement will be monitored and if run strength warrants it, restrictions may be relaxed.

Kotzebue District

The commercial salmon fishery is scheduled to open July 10 by regulation for the 2023 season. Chum salmon harvest is projected to be 300-400,000 fish.

No new information is currently available. If you read last week's report, you can stop here. If not, read on.

the mouth of the Noatak River is closed to commercial fishing by regulation. Most fishing occurs in Subdistrict 1, which is subdivided into six statistical areas to help managers determine catch location. Within the Kotzebue District, chum salmon *Oncorhynchus keta* are the most abundant anadromous fish. Other salmon species

(Chinook *O. tshawytscha*, pink *O. gorbuscha*, coho *O. kisutch*, and sockeye salmon *O. nerka*) occur in lesser numbers, as do Dolly Varden *Salvelinus malma*, and sheefish (inconnu) *Stenodus leucichthys*.

Management Area	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Summer Chum	Fall Cum
Kotzebue	0	0	0	0	0	300-400

*The 2023 all-salmon commercial harvest outlook by management area, in thousands of fish.

The Kotzebue District salmon fisheries management outlook is to inform fishermen, processors, and other interested people of the management strategies for the commercial salmon fishery. The Kotzebue District includes all waters from Cape Prince of Wales to Point Hope. The Kotzebue District is divided into three subdistricts. Subdistrict 2, near the mouth of the Noatak River is closed to commercial fishing by regulation. Most fishing occurs in Subdistrict 1, which is subdivided into six statistical areas to help managers determine catch location.

Within the Kotzebue District, chum salmon *Oncorhynchus keta* are the most abundant anadromous fish. Other salmon species (Chinook *O. tshawytscha*, pink *O. gorbuscha*, coho *O. kisutch*, and sockeye salmon *O. nerka*) occur in lesser numbers, as do Dolly Varden *Salvelinus malma*, and sheefish (inconnu) *Stenodus leucichthys*.

Historical Fishing Effort

Subsistence Fishery

Subsistence fishing has long been an important food gathering activity for people of the Kotzebue Sound drainages. The most recent subsistence survey of salmon harvest is from 2014 that estimated a total of 30,640 chum salmon that were harvested from the Kobuk River, and 6,577 chum salmon that were harvested from the Noatak River and Kotzebue residents reported a harvest of 21,144 chum salmon with the majority harvested in marine waters. Over 90% of the subsistence salmon harvests are chum salmon.

Commercial Fishery

There have been two major buyers in the commercial fishery in recent years. In 2018, there was a record harvest of 695,153 chum salmon caught by 95 permit holders that sold chum salmon for an average price of \$0.40 per pound. The 2019 harvest was 494,593 chum salmon caught by 92 permit holders that sold chum salmon for an average price of \$0.39 per pound and in 2020 only 149,808 chum salmon were harvested by 68 permit holders for an average price of \$0.45 per pound. During the 2021 season, 96,492 chum salmon were harvested by 52 permit holders for an average price of \$0.46 per pound.

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs11/norton.pdf>