

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 17-23, 2023. Report #9
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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

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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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- Based on commercial gillnet catches, returns of sockeye, chum, and pink salmon appear to be relatively strong in the Juneau area. The return of wild Sockeye to the Taku system is exceeding pre-season expectations and is projected to have already exceeded the escapement goal range of 40,000 – 75,000 fish.
- **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. Anecdotal reports indicate that sockeye are present throughout the Neva/South Creek system. Harvesters are reminded that only Federally qualified subsistence users may harvest sockeye from fresh water in the Neva/South Creek system.



Figure 1. Juliet Harrision, USFS; Gerard White Sr. (HIA) and Gerard White Jr. (HIA) in front of the Neva Lake weir

Sheet'ká and Xunaa (Sitka and Hoonah) Area

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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.
- **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 fishermen. The weir was operational as of June 25. As of July 22, twenty-one sockeye have entered the lake, and 1,166 have been harvested. 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.
- **Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 12. As of July 22, 58,222 sockeye have entered the lake. On June 28, the Alaska Department of Fish and game [announced a liberalization](#) of the state personal use and subsistence fishery at Redoubt would take affect on July 1. This emergency order changes 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 increases 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. SCA technician sampling fish (photo credit: Elizabeth Klein)

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.



Figure 3. SCA intern Chaney Haavik installs electronics at the Sitkoh Lake weir.

SCA intern Chaney Haavik installs electronics at the Sitkoh Lake weir.

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 and ends July 31. As of July 18, a total of 91 subsistence permits have been issued for 2023 and users reported a cumulative harvest of 696 Sockeye (60 percent reporting). Based on this survey an estimated 1,152 Sockeye Salmon have been harvested to date. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game in-river assessment fishery continues to track along with a much higher abundance of sockeye to date then what we have seen for the past two years. 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 Assessment Survey concluded on July 10 and the cumulative CPUE ended up at 19.39, just under the recent five-year average of 19.67. The Stikine River Chinook Fishery continues to be a concern on a Federal, State and local level as the estimate continues to be well below average.

Water temperature for the 7-day average on the Stikine is 8.9 C which is around normal compared to the 5-year average for this week. Gauge height on the Stikine River downstream of Shakes Slough ranged from 16.3 ft to 17.7 ft for the week of July 16. Currently, water levels are rising (17.7 ft) and the water temperature is on a rising trend (9.9 C) for the Stikine River.



Figure 4. Sockeye Salmon being pulled from a Stikine River subsistence set gillnet.

Prince of Wales

- **Hetta Lake** – The Hetta Lake weir is fish tight, and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff have passed 300 Sockeye Salmon so far. An estimated 969 Hetta Lake Sockeye have been harvested to date.
- **Eek Lake** – The Eek Lake weir is fish tight, and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association staff have passed 62 Sockeye Salmon so far. An estimated 10 Eek Lake Sockeye Salmon have been harvested to date.

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>

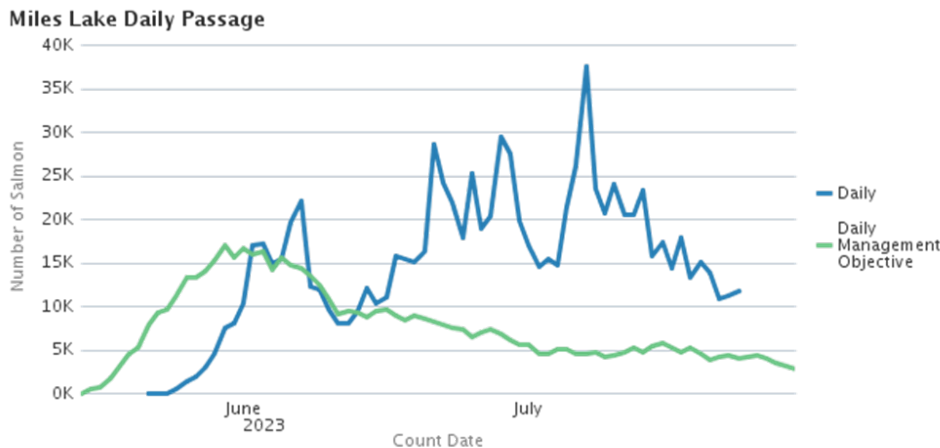
Statewide ADF&G Fish counts
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

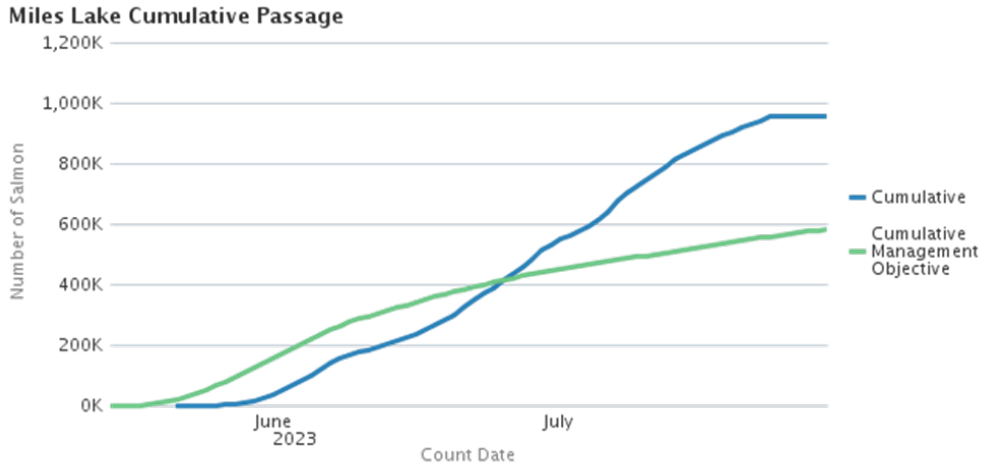
Copper River, 7/24/2023 Update – Dave Sarafin, Copper River Federal Fisheries Management Biologist, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reports the commercial fishing harvest in the Copper River District through July 22 to be 825,000 Sockeye Salmon and 10,400 Chinook Salmon.

As of July 23, the ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) has estimated the passage of 957,456 salmon migrating upstream for the season. The cumulative passage is now 72% above the management objective of 557,448 salmon for this date of the season. A daily estimate of 11,883 salmon migrated by the sonar on July 23.



Graph of Copper River Salmon Daily Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 23, 2023



Graph of Copper River Salmon Cumulative Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 23, 2023

Sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary assessment tool for the Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River. The sonar season total estimate is well above the management objective. Salmon passage rates have exceeded daily management objectives since June 13 and the escapement goal for the season has already been achieved. Salmon harvest is being reported throughout the river.

As with Sockeye Salmon, fisheries managers are also monitoring Chinook Salmon run strength; current assessments by the ADFG of in-river data project an abundance of approximately 50,000 Chinook Salmon; a level that should continue to provide harvest opportunities and still exceed the sustainable escapement goal range of 21,000 to 31,000 fish.

Federal managers monitor run strength indices throughout the season 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 and is scheduled to remain open through September 30. The State has indicated that the personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict is likely to remain open continuously for the remainder of the season, unless a significant change in occurs in the numbers of salmon estimated passing the Miles Lake sonar. Effective July 20, the State increased the Chinook Salmon sport fish possession limit in the Upper Copper River Drainage from 1 to 2 fish (daily bag limit remains at 1 fish).

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas vicinity are open May 15 through September 30. Records of the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website indicate that 193 Chitina Subdistrict, 269 Glennallen Subdistrict, and 2 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. To date, there have been 55 permits issued through

the OSM database. Through July 19, a total of 108 Sockeye Salmon and 4 Chinook Salmon have been 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. The first Sockeye Salmon was documented passing the weir on June 23. As of July 21, preliminary count estimates are of 1,675 Sockeye Salmon and 5 Chinook Salmon passing the weir.



Tanada Creek Salmon Weir, 2023

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. July 7, 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 Friday morning July 21, 55 permits had been issued, and users reported a cumulative harvest of 108 Sockeye Salmon and 4 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.

Water levels in area streams are receding although water levels are high at the 36 mile bridge on the Copper River. Pink Salmon are in, and anglers are reporting high success in the lower stream reaches. The outlet of Hartney Creek has been productive for anglers this week. Sockeye Salmon spawners have been observed moving into Power Creek, though many are still present in the area of the Eyak Lake weir.

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

No summary submitted.

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

Subsistence fishing activity has slowed considerably throughout the Kodiak Management Area over the past couple of weeks. Buskin River sockeye salmon escapement continues to be slow and is very unlikely the lower escapement goal will be reached. As of July 20, the total escapement count is 1,667 fish.

The Litnik sockeye salmon escapement has slowed a little bit over the past week with total escapement count of 33,196 fish on July 20, 2023.

Management practices have changed from early run to late run for sockeye salmon escapement on Karluk, Ayakulik, and Upper Station systems on July 16. Late run sockeye salmon on Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers are very low when compared to past numbers on this date.

The Chinook Salmon escapement continues to trickle into the Karluk and Ayakulik River drainages, but it is unlikely they will meet their respective lower escapement goals. The

Chinook salmon escapement to date for the Karluk River is 354 fish and the Ayakulik is 565 fish.

Any reports of subsistence activities will be reported during the upcoming week.

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF July 24, 2023.

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

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 covered in this report.

Bristol Bay:

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for July 23:

Alagnak = No counts reported
 Egegik = 1,558,662
 Igushik = 505,620
 Kvichak = 3,706,800
 Naknek = 1,156,206
 Nushagak = 1,764,658; Chinook = 31,286
 Togiak = 134,916
 Ugashik = 1,112,510
 Wood River = 2,643,636

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 July 23 is 557,733 Sockeye Salmon. Early run Sockeye Salmon account for 416,587 fish and late run Sockeye Salmon account for 141,146 fish. The interim escapement objective for July 20 is around 297,000 – 400,000 early run fish and 96,000-203,000 late run fish.

There has been only 157 Chinook Salmon counted at the ADFG weir as of July 23. It is unlikely, based on the current rate of escapement, that the lower range (1,300) of the escapement goal for Chignik River Chinook Salmon will be achieved. In an effort to conserve the Chinook Salmon run, both state and Federal fisheries closures remain in effect.

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:

Current counts for Sockeye Salmon at installed escapement projects for July 23:

- Nelson = 220,618; Chinook = 3,987
- Bear = 149,595
- Ilnik = 99,021 (weir pulled 7/19)
- Orzinski = 14,991
- Sandy = 36,257
- McLees = 24,016

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. July 17-July 23, 2023

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

Assessment and Management Information

The chum run is transitioning to the fall season, with chums counted at Pilot station sonar considered as fall chum beginning July 19. End of season estimates of summer chum passage at the sonar was approximately 846,000 which indicates the drainage-wide goal was met (500,000-1.2 million) for summer chum. While the improved summer chum run (over the last three years) bodes well for the Fall chum run, the Canadian-origin component of the fall chum run has been poor the last few years, so the run may not be large enough to meet escapement goals for the Canadian stocks of fall chum. At this time, selective gear openings (with dip nets, beach seines or manned fish wheels) are being continued 24 hours per day, 7 days a week until fall chum typically enter the river in significant numbers, then, retention of chum salmon will close, in order to assess the fall chum run, until it is projected that all escapement goals will be met. Throughout the drainage, Chinook still need to be released, but, pink, coho and sockeye salmon can be retained from selective gears. Gillnets are still limited to 4-inches maximum mesh size, and 60 feet maximum length. Selective gear salmon opportunities in fall season are limited to federally qualified users in federal public waters by Temporary special action, and fishing closures for fall chum salmon are announced for the Coastal District and Districts 1-3 here: [TSA-02-FC-01-23](#); and for District 4 here: [TSA-02-FC-02-23](#)

Eagle sonar is counting passage of Chinook, and is matching up well with a run timing that was about 5 days late at Pilot Station sonar. With about 58,000 Chinook counted at Pilot Station sonar, and 42% of the run (on average) being Canadian-origin fish, it is likely about 26,000 Chinook salmon are making their way to Canadian spawning grounds. **It is imperative that all Chinook be released alive from selective gear.**

The weirs throughout the drainage have been stalled by high water. Gisasa river weir has been counting, but lost fish counts for nearly a week due to high water, so estimates are considered underestimates at this time. The Andrafsky weir, despite installation, is still experiencing high water that may render viable counts impossible for this season. Assessment project and management updates will be given on the **YR DFA 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. See detailed management strategy here:

[2023 FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE YUKON AREA \(doi.gov\)](#)

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

- Yukon River Summer Update #7:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1513664484.pdf>
- Yukon River Personal Use Fishing Schedule, District 6 (Summer Advisory Announcement # 25):
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1513872786.pdf>
- Yukon River Subsistence Fall season fishing schedule Y-4 (Advisory announcement #2):
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1515538869.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

No summary submitted for this reporting period.

The Bethel Test Fish and Kuskokwim River Sonar numbers for Chinook and chum salmon

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fish>

[counts](#)) continue to indicate relatively low numbers. Sockeye salmon numbers are healthy and fishers are reporting high success on harvesting sockeye. The Chinook run is now about 95% and the chum about 75% past Bethel (area with the most harvest). Additionally, fisher and harvest reports indicate little effort as many have had successful fishing seasons. Therefore, to allow Federally qualified subsistence users to target abundant sockeye, while conserving chum, set net only opportunities have been announced:

- July 17, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 10:00 pm (12 hours total)
- July 19, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 10:00 pm (12 hours total)
- July 21, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 10:00 pm (12 hours total)
- July 24, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 4:00 pm (6 hours total)
- July 26, 2023 starting at 10:00 am through 4:00 pm (6 hours total)

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

Norton Sound District

Escapement Projects:

Escapement projects in southern Norton Sound have become operational with more projects setting up in the coming week in northern Norton Sound.

Federal Regulation:

Federal public waters of the Unalakleet River, upstream from the mouth of the Chirosky River, are closed to the taking of Chinook Salmon from July 1–to July 31, by all users. The BLM field manager is authorized to open the closed area to Federally qualified subsistence users or to all users when run strength warrants.

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.

Shaktoolik (5) and Unalakleet (6) Subdistricts

Subsistence Fishing:

The Unalakleet and Shaktoolik Subdistricts remain closed to subsistence in the marine and fresh waters in order to provide for conservation of king salmon returning to those Subdistricts. ADF&G had planned on relaxing restrictions in July after the bulk of the king salmon had migrated through the area. However, weak chum and pink runs has led the

department to extend the subsistence fishery closure in order to allow more escapement into those systems. As of July 14, the two subdistricts are closed to net fishing in the marine and fresh waters of those subdistricts except for set gill nets with a mesh size of 4 inches or less in the Unalakleet River above the North River confluence to target non-salmon species.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 10 hours on July 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with nets restricted to 4 1/2 inches or less. Harvests were confidential. The two Subdistricts remained closed to commercial salmon fishing this week to get more salmon onto the spawning grounds.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir - No escapement goals yet established. A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, BLM and NSEDC; major funding provided by USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management. The weir was fish tight on July 1. The cumulative counts are 17 kings, 42 sockeyes and 130 pinks and 1,300 chums. Recent rains have caused the river to rise to such an extent that counting operations were suspended Monday, July 10. Operations should be resuming this week if the weather cooperates.

North River Tower Camp J. B. - Escapement goals: king 1,200 to 2,600, chum no goal established, pink 25,000, silver 550-1,100 (aerial survey goal), A NSEDC project. The tower has been operational since June 24 and has remained operational most of the season except for a two-day period (July 10-11) when high, murky water halted operation. It has passed 69 kings, 111 chums, 9 cohos and 1,080 pink salmon.

Shaktoolik Tower – No escapement goals yet established, A NSEDC project. The tower began operations on June 26 and has passed an estimated 760 king, 2,900 chum, 5,900 pink and 9 sockeye salmon. and 5,900 pink salmon. Chum salmon are about 1/3 of average, and currently pink passage is poor with only 2 percent of average passage. The tower has been inoperable since July 9 but was expected to resume operations this week.

NORTON Bay Subdistrict (4)

Subsistence Fishing:

There are currently no restrictions to Subsistence fishing.

Commercial Fishing:

The harvest for the last commercial harvest is restricted due to the limited number of fishers, The Subdistrict will remain closed to commercial fishing this week in order to allow additional escapement into the local area rivers as escapement has been lagging.

Inglutalik River Tower - no escapement goals yet established. A NSEDC project. The project became operational on June 28. Estimated passages are 200 king, 1,800 chum and

200 pink salmon. High water closed operations July 10, but they are expected to resume this week.

Ungalik River Tower - no escapement goals established yet. A NSEDC project. The tower became operational on June 28. Estimated passage is 51 king, 3,000 chum and 2,300 pink salmon. The tower has experienced high water events that have caused days of missed passage.

Elim Subdistrict (3)

Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel - escapement goals: king 250, chum 9,100-32,600, pink 8,400, silver 650-1,300 (aerial survey goal). Fish and Game project. The tower became operational July 5. Initial escapements, coupled with an aerial survey conducted after the tower began operations to assess missed passage indicated that chum passage was on track to meet or exceed the escapement objectives for the project. Current escapement is 18 kings, 1,500 chum, 520 pinks and 12 sockeye salmon. Escapements have lagged expectations, and commercial fishing has been delayed to get more fish to the spawning grounds.

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week.

Commercial Fishing:

Escapements at the Kwiniuk Tower have been lagging so ADF&G is forgoing a commercial harvest this week in order to bolster escapement into the system. Last week's 24-hour commercial salmon fishing opening yielded a cumulative harvest of 1,023 chum, 26 sockeye and 12 pink salmon.

Golovin Subdistrict (2)

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is allowed 7 days per week.

Commercial Fishing

A 48-hour commercial salmon fishing period opened from 6 p.m. July 18 to 6:00 p.m. on July 20 with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The cumulative commercial harvest is 8,418 chum, 73 sockeye and 109 Caych per unit of effort dropped compared to the nearly double that the previous week.

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 could 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.

Commercial Fishing

With escapement goals expected to be met at the Eldorado River Weir, ADF&G announced two 48-hour commercial salmon openings were announced from 9:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday- Wednesday and Thursday – Saturday with mesh size of 6 inches or less. Last week's opening resulted cumulative catches of 529 chum and 6 sockeye salmon.

Eldorado River Weir -escapement goals-chum 4,400-14,200. A NSEDC project. The weir was fish tight the evening of June 30 and has passed 7 kings, 5,848 chum, 3 sockeye and 182 pink salmon. The project is expected to meet or exceed the escapement goal for chum salmon.

Port Clarence District

Pilgrim River Weir – A NSEDC project. The weir has been fish tight since July 6. Passage has been slow so far with 6 kings, 550 chum, 260 sockeye and 44 pink salmon. The project has been inoperable due to high and murky water and might be back online if the weather cooperates.

Subsistence Fishing:

The Pilgrim River will remain closed to subsistence net fishing, Escapement of sockeye salmon to the Pilgrim River has been week in recent years and has not met escapement goals. Restrictions may be relaxed if inseason assessment indicates there is a surplus to escapement needs. The entire Pilgrim River and its tributaries as well as the lower Kuzitrin River 300 yards upstream from its mouth remain closed to all net fishing. Subsistence net fishing remains 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**Subsistence Fishing:**

No changes to existing subsistence fishing are anticipated.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 8 hours daily from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 16, through Friday, July 21, in the Kotzebue Sound District.

In Subdistrict 1 of the Kotzebue District, marine waters adjacent to the end of the runway from the Weather Service Dome south of the main runway to the NANA building north of the main runway and extending one mile offshore into Kotzebue Sound perpendicular to the beach will be closed to both subsistence and commercial fishing in order to avoid birds being attracted to fishing nets near the end of the airport runway and becoming a safety hazard.

Two buyers are registered to purchase chum salmon in Kotzebue this season.

The 2023 Kotzebue commercial harvest forecast is 300,000 to 400,000 chum salmon.

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