

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 29-JULY 5, 2020. Report #6
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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

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

Herring – There was no commercial herring fishery in Sitka Sound in 2020. Please see this [summary of Sitka Sound herring 2020](#). Also, [summary of southeast Alaska herring 2020](#).

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were installed June 25. No sockeye have been counted yet but the run usually does not commence until the second week in July. No harvest has been observed yet. The final escapement estimate in 2019 was 1,983 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 528. Subsistence harvest accounted for 92% of terminal area harvest.

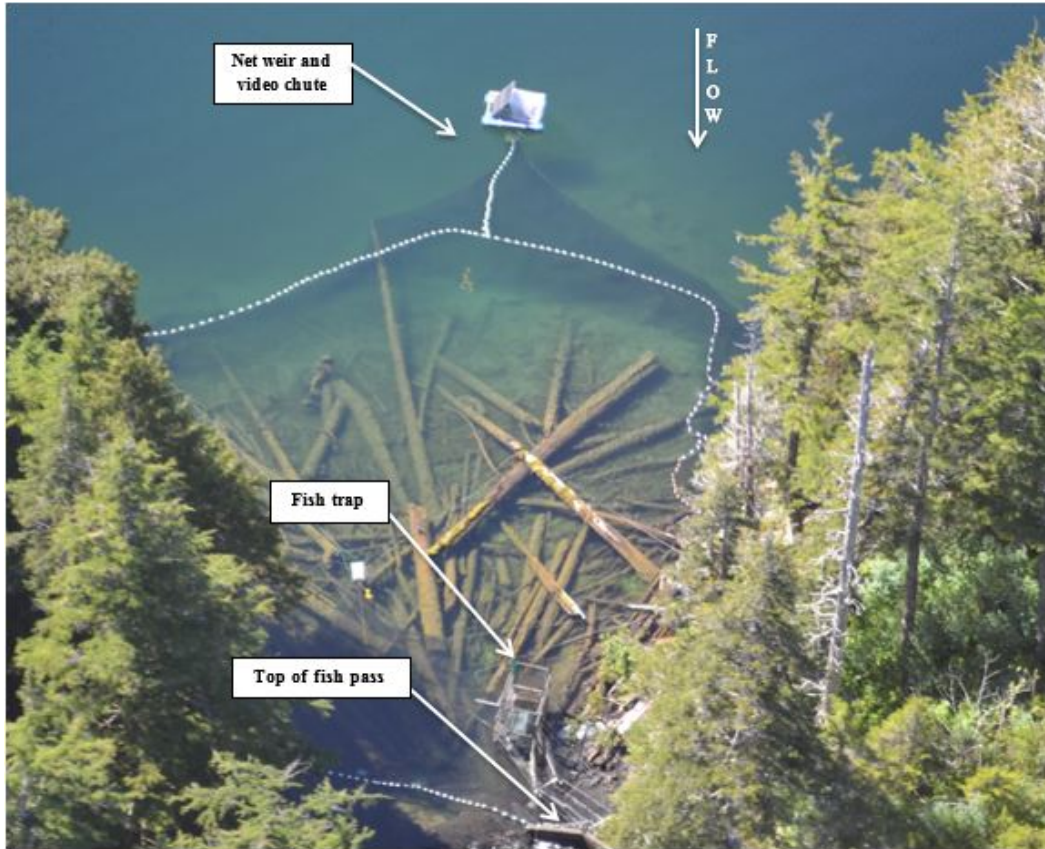


Figure 1. Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

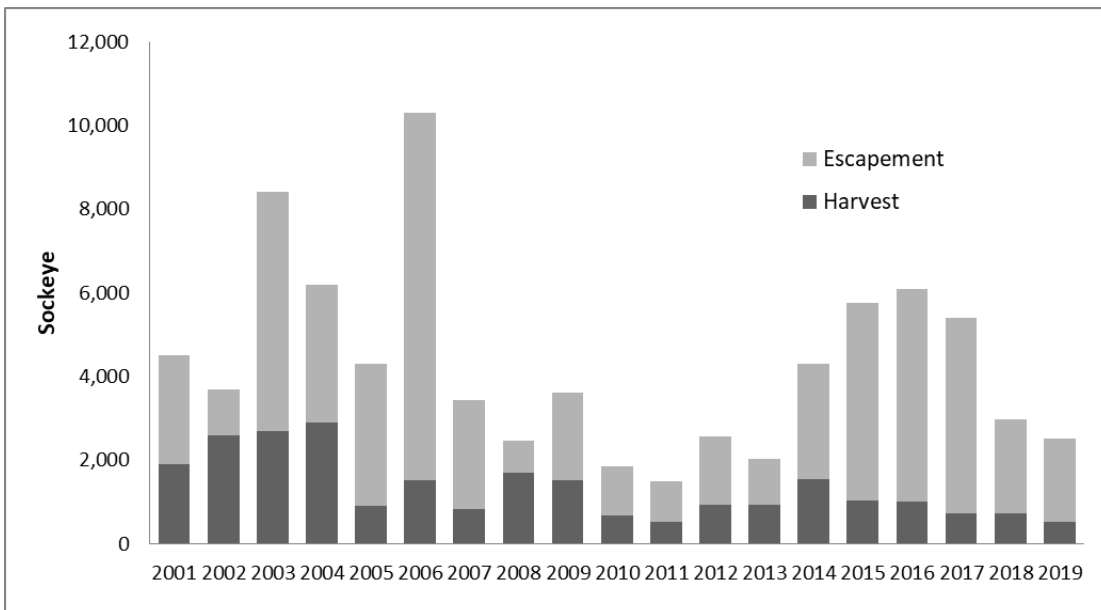


Figure 2. Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2019.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed the week of June 22. As of July 3, five sockeye have been counted. In 2019, approximately 3,036 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,450 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

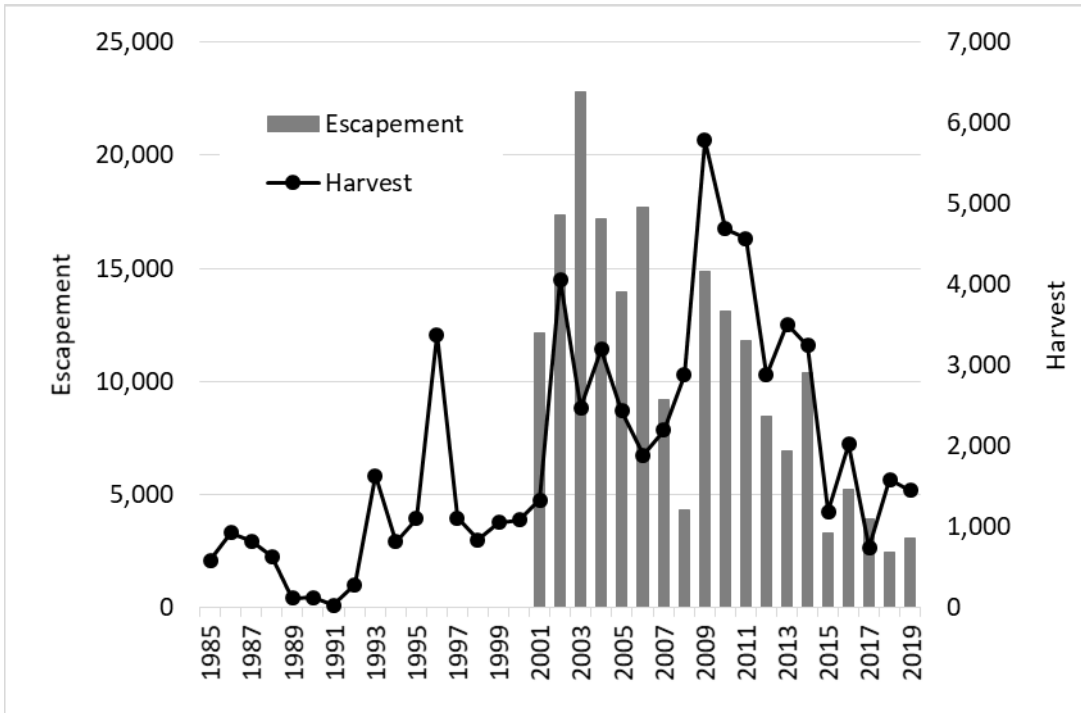


Figure 3. Reported harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2019.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 13. As of July 3, 468 sockeye have been counted. In 2019, an estimated 59,917 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake and about 11,000 were harvested. On July 3, 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. Almost 30,000 sockeye were harvested in commercial fishery openings throughout the season.

[News release, sockeye limits 2019](#)

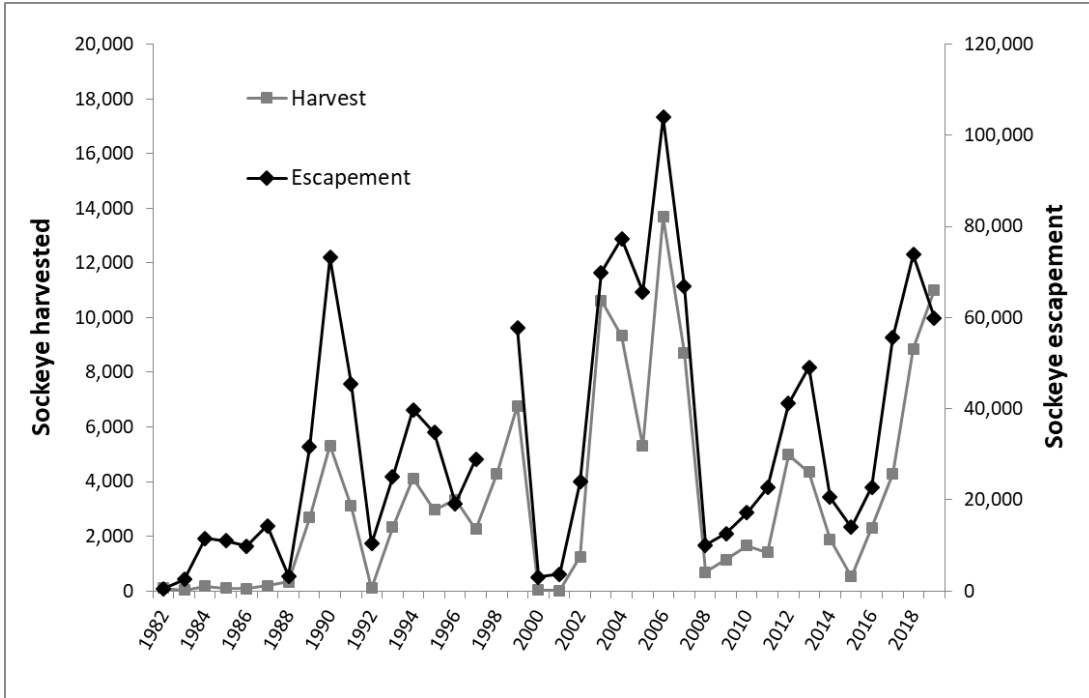


Figure 4. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake and subsistence harvest for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2019. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Gut Bay - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake monitor escapement and harvest of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon. Gut Bay is located south of Falls Lake on Baranof Island and an important source of sockeye for the village of Kake. Very little is known about the magnitude of this sockeye run. In 2019, 881 sockeye were counted at the weir and about 200 were harvested in the state subsistence fishery. The camp and equipment installation was completed on June 18. As of July 1, five sockeye have been counted and no harvest has been documented.

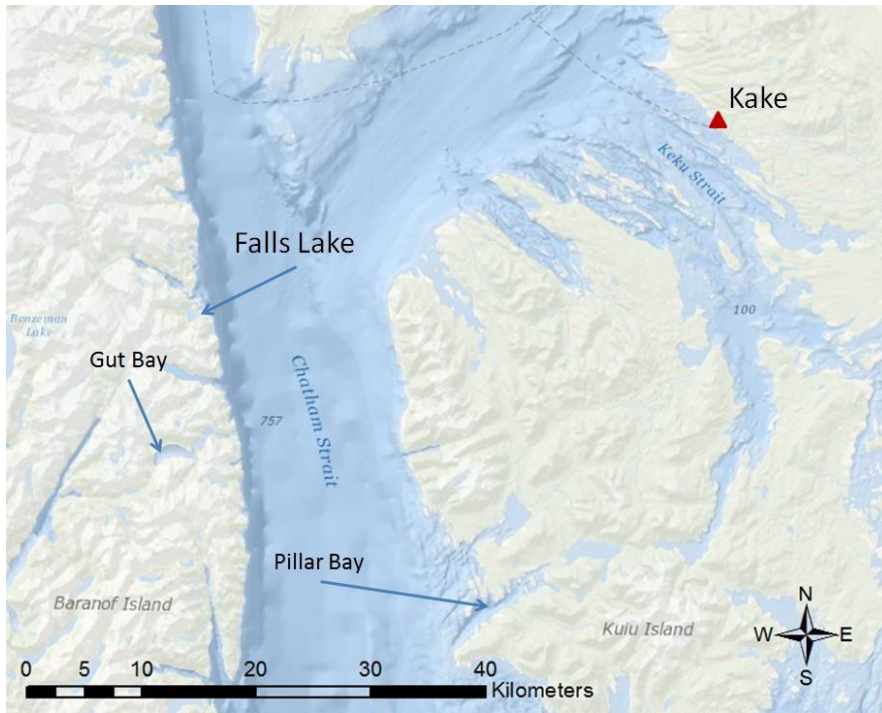


Figure 5. Location of Gut Bay in relation to Falls Lake and the village of Kake

Petersburg and Wrangell Area – Robert Cross, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest Robert Cross, (907)772-5944 robert.cross@usda.gov

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No update provided for week, author deployed in field.

The pre-season terminal run forecast for large Chinook Salmon in the Stikine River is 13,350 fish. This forecast is below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. Directed commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in the area have been closed to protect this return. There is a restricted commercial drift gillnet opportunity in District 6 from 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 28, through 12:00 noon, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. The 2020 pre-season Sockeye Salmon forecast is 103,400 fish, with 64,500 Tahltan and 38,900 Mainstem fish. The 2019 Sockeye Salmon forecast was 90,000 fish, which included 66,000 Tahltan Lake and 24,000 Mainstem Sockeye. The escapement objective for Tahltan bound Sockeye Salmon is 18,000 and 30,000 for Mainstem fish. The low Mainstem return resulted in an in-season closure of the 2019 Federal subsistence Sockeye Salmon fishery on July 22, 2019. The 2020 forecast is above the escapement objectives and a season closure is not anticipated. The 2020 Federal Stikine River Chinook subsistence fishery was closed by the in-season manager. The Federal Stikine River Sockeye Salmon subsistence fishery began Sunday, June 21. The river is returning to normal levels this week so participation in the fishery has increased but harvest is still low. A total of 95 Stikine River Federal subsistence

salmon permits (FFSE07) and 18 General Fish permits (FFSE04) have already been issued for residents in the Wrangell and Petersburg Districts.

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

No update provided for week, author deployed in field.

Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon: A Crew from the Forest Service installed the Neva Lake weir near Excursion Inlet on June 23 (Figure 1). This swim-through video weir is remotely monitored and maintained by a Hoonah Indian Association crew living in Excursion Inlet. Only one Sockeye Salmon has been counted swimming through the weir to date. Live video from the weir is available on the internet at

<http://nevalake.ddns.net:81>



Viewers can see underwater views of the video chute, site views from the surveillance cameras, and view recent motion-triggered clips. The first sockeye salmon through the weir passed through the weir the evening after installation (Figure 2).



Figure 1. The video weir at Neva Lake, June 24, 2020.



Figure 2. The first sockeye through the Neva Lake weir, June 23, 2020

Northern Southeast inside waters: Commercial salmon fisheries are off to a slow start. Very few boats fished the initial purse seine openings, and landings in most areas were nonexistent or confidential due to low effort. A few more boats showed up for the gillnet openings in Lynn Canal and Stephens Passage. In District 15 (Lynn Canal), about 75 boats harvested a total of 27,000 chum salmon, kicking off the start of fisheries targeting hatchery chum salmon returning to release sites at Amalga and Boat Harbors.

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

No new information submitted for this week.

The 2020 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has had 105 permits issued to date for the fishery.

Chinook Salmon are still present in good numbers in the local Craig and Klawock area are being harvested by subsistence users fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. The State of Alaska increased harvest opportunity in outside waters by increasing the daily harvest limit to three fish starting June 15.

Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of Sockeye Salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July. Recent visits to Hatchery Creek and Sarkar showed above average water levels but no fish. It is hoped the fish are delayed. Continued visits will occur weekly.

There are currently commercial Chinook Salmon troll fisheries occurring within terminal harvest areas in the Craig and Ketchikan areas. While the Craig area opened on May 1, the Ketchikan area harvest areas opened on June 1. These openings will probably wind down by the end of the month. The first summer troll opening (non-hatchery terminal harvest) for Chinook Salmon begins on July 1. It is anticipated that the 85,600 fish allocation would be harvested within 7-8 days.

The Kendrick Bay (District 2) terminal seine fishery for Chum Salmon and the Tree Point (District 1) drift-gillnet fishery both began on June 21. Total commercial harvests for Districts 1-4 are: 4370 Chinook Salmon, 1870 Sockeye Salmon, 450 Coho Salmon, 4450 Pink Salmon and 16,000 Chum Salmon.

There are two Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funded projects funded on Prince of Wales Island this season. The Hetta Lake weir became operational on June 8 and has passed 4 Sockeye Salmon through to date. The Eek Lake weir became operational on June 15, but has not had any Sockeye Salmon pass through yet.

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

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER

Copper River, 7/6/2020 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 205-0544, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has been limited in response to a weak salmon return. Only five (of potentially sixteen) open commercial fishing periods have occurred this season. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 81,228

Sockeye Salmon and 5,815 Chinook Salmon. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) reported this to be the fourth lowest commercial harvest in the last 50 years for the district. The ADF&G has recently announced a 12-hour open fishing period for the commercial fishery for Monday, July 6.

The ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began recording salmon passage on May 19. As of July 5, 428,438 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 88% of the cumulative management objective of 486,711 salmon for this date. A daily estimate of 6,264 salmon migrated by the sonar on July 5.

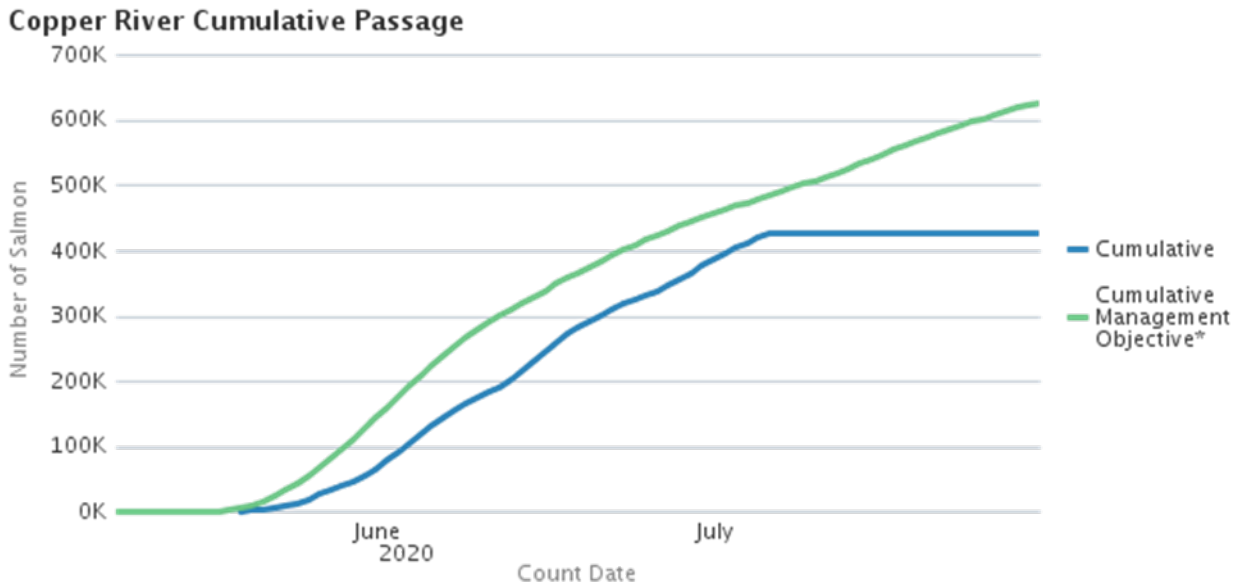
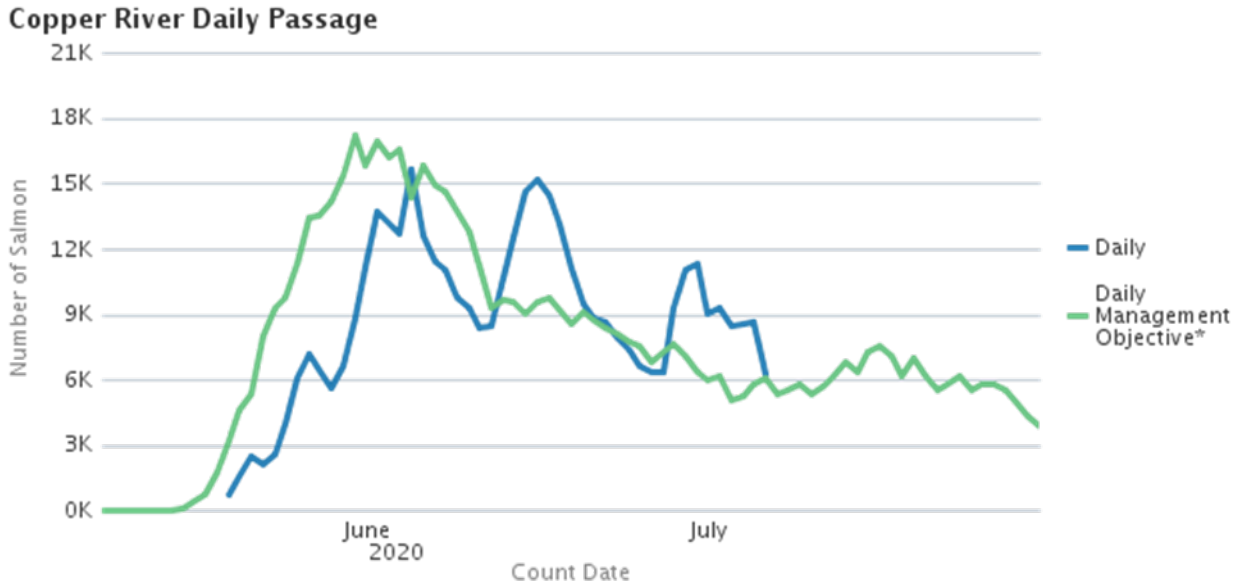
The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 2,447 Chinook Salmon through July 5. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 1,118 Chinook Salmon through July 5, of which, 111 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

Performance in the commercial fishery and in river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary early season assessments of the salmon return to the Copper River. Based on long-term average run timing and harvests, both indicators are below the expected levels for this date of the season. The overall returns of both Sockeye and Chinook Salmon appear to be weak; although the Sockeye Salmon return has improved from the start of the season, as indicated by sonar estimates. 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.

Special Action Request (FSA20-04) to allow Federal subsistence harvest of salmon in the lower Copper River due to public safety / food security concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic was addressed by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) at a meeting by teleconference on June 22. The Board rejected this request citing opposition from two Federally recognized Tribes and the Cordova City Council. It was noted that a similar Fisheries regulatory proposal (FP21-10) has been submitted that will provide additional public process for consideration.

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. Effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday June 20, the State sport fishery annual limit was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook Salmon for the Upper Copper River drainage. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was open for 168-hours from June 29 through July 5, and is scheduled to be open for a total of 84-hours from July 9 through July 12. Since June 22, the Chitina personal use fishery has been closed to the retention of Chinook Salmon for the remainder of the season.

2020 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 5



Source:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

The Federal subsistence fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict, the Glennallen Subdistrict, and the Batzulnetas area opened on May 15 and are expected to remain open through September 30. Through the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website, one hundred and eighty-five (185) Chitina Subdistrict permits, three hundred and forty-four (344) Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and one (1) Batzulnetas area permits have been issued to date. With the park offices and visitor contact stations closed to the public through the end of June due to public health

advisories and staffing delays related to COVID-19, and limited visitor service availability starting July 1, the permitting process has been adapted to ensure the safety of permit applicants and park staff.

With funding through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), WRST was again planning to operate the Tanada Creek salmon weir located at Batzulnetas. Installation of the weir was scheduled to begin in mid-June. However, a combination of a delayed spring time melt off of an above average snowload and elevated levels of early season precipitation created water levels that were too high for working in the creek. Recent site visits revealed evidence of extreme flooding, with debris and silt deposits well above the stream bank. Structural components of the weir appear to be damaged. Efforts to assess the need for repairs are planned for the week of July 6.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. The reported cumulative passage estimate through July 5 is 720 Chinook Salmon. This is a relatively very low estimate for this date in the season and is less than 10% of the 2019 season count of 8,304 through this date of the season; however, periods of high water and associated turbidity limited counts on some days of the 2020 season.

Links:

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com/Summary/DailySummary.aspx>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

ADF&G Emergency Orders and News Releases

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=area.list&Year=2018&AreaID=33>

ADF&G Gulkana River counting tower

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.displayResults&COUNTLOCATIONID=6&SpeciesID=410>

**PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova.
6 June 2017.**

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A total of 40 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Chugach National Forest portion of the Prince William Sound area of to date. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. One-hundred and twenty permits were issued in 2019 resulting in the reported harvest of 617 coho and 116 sockeye from fresh waters of the Copper River Delta.

COOK INLET AREA – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 Jeffry_Anderson@fws.gov

This is Jeff's last weekly summary and his last week of working for the USFWS. For those who have worked with Jeff over the years, please drop him a line this week and share a kind word.

The 2020 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon began on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Harvest reported through July 1 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 541 Sockeye Salmon. The rod and reel fishery on the Kenai River also opened on June 11 with the same seasons and areas as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations.

The Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery began on June 16 and continues through August 15. Harvest reported through June 30 includes 413 Sockeye Salmon.

Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30. No effort has been reported for this fishery through July 2.

Emergency Special Action 10-KS-01-20 remains in effect through July 15. This action closed the Federal subsistence rod and reel fishery for early-run Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake.

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
(907) 487-0226 or michael_brady@fws.gov or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230
Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

No update provided for week, author deployed in field.

The Buskin River Sockeye Salmon counts have been slow but picked up over the last week. It is anticipated that the lower escapement goal will be reached. To date, the 2020 escapement is 4,810 fish.

The 2020 Afognak Lake (Litnik) Sockeye Salmon escapement is doing considerably better than the 2018 escapement but lower than the 2019 counts, with 14,190 fish passing as of June 25. The escapement is on track to meet the lower escapement goal (20,000 fish).

The Karluk and Ayakulik River Sockeye Salmon escapements are medium in strength with both systems passing over 20,000 fish in the past week. To date, one commercial fishing opening has occurred for these areas, which is allowing subsistence users to attempt to meet their needs. The catch per unit effort is medium to strong for Karluk, with an abundant number of Sockeye Salmon being within the Karluk Lagoon. The Chinook Salmon counts on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers have been well below adequate levels. Although the Chinook Salmon numbers on the Karluk River has steadily been increasing, the Federal (SA 09-KS-01-20) and State (#4-FS-K-Sub-02-20) Area biologists have decided to implement subsistence restrictions on the Karluk River drainage to the taking of Chinook Salmon in the subsistence fishery. As of June 26, the Chinook Salmon counts for both the Ayakulik and Karluk Rivers are not anticipated to meet their respective lower escapement goals. If the low Chinook Salmon numbers continue on the Ayakulik River, it is a possibility that restrictions may be imposed there as well.

Any additional information that is received by our office will be amended to this report or be incorporated into next weeks' report.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

**BRISTOL BAY, CHIGNIK, ALASKA PENINSULA, and ALEUTIAN ISLANDS –
 Jonathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office**
 (907) 271-2776 Jonathon_Gerken@fws.gov

All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), and provide the basis for any inseason assessment and management.

The ADFG issues information for COVID-19: Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>

Bristol Bay:

The 2020 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run was forecast to be approximately 48 million fish for the nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak.

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

Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 5):

Kvichak SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000, current escapement = 107,070

Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum, current escapement = 120,222
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 681,144
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 467,130
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000, current escapement = 34,002
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000, current escapement = 567,372
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000, current escapement = 44,778
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000, current escapement = 465,173
Nushagak (Chinook)	SEG = 55,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 34,070
Togiak	SEG = 150,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 786

The total commercial harvest for Sockeye Salmon as of July 5 is approximately 7.3 million fish.

Chignik:

The 2020 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 1,296,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 586,000 Sockeye Salmon. The CMA is composed of five fishing districts: Eastern, Central, Chignik Bay, Western, and Perryville. The Sockeye Salmon run is composed of an early run (June 1 – July 31) and late run (July 31 – September). These dates generally describe the run-timing and overlap between runs occurs.

As of July 5, approximately 91,965 early run Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated. This count is significantly smaller than the escapement objective for this time period of 300,000 - 390,000 fish. As a result, the Federal Inseason Manager issued an Emergency Special Action, 08-SS-01-20, restricting fishing in federal public waters to only federally qualified users on June 18. This action unless rescinded or replaced by additional actions is in place until July 31. The tribal councils of Ivanoff Bay, Perryville, Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, and Chignik Lake submitted a joint letter requesting this action due to low Sockeye Salmon returns on June 16.

On June 25, the Federal Inseason Manager hosted a teleconference with Chignik area fishermen from Ivanoff Bay, Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, and Perryville. On June 30, the Federal Inseason Manager hosted a teleconference with residents of Chignik Lake. Topics were specific to impacts of the federal emergency special action implemented on June 18 that restricted Sockeye Salmon fishing to federally qualified users on federal public waters in response to low returns of early run Sockeye Salmon. Additional topics included subsistence harvest reports and impacts of additional restrictions. Fishermen were well aware of the low returns and reported that subsistence harvests were low and smoke houses were empty. In general, they thought additional restrictions were needed, but that those restrictions needed to be implemented in both federal and state waters simultaneously or they would not be effective. Fishermen noted that they viewed individual jurisdictional restrictions as targeting a specific harvest group. Chignik Lake fishermen reported being well behind in their subsistence harvests, reporting approximately 10% completion of their subsistence salmon harvest, and were strongly opposed to additional subsistence fishing restrictions. They noted environmental

conditions in Black Lake had significantly changed with high water temperatures and decreased water depth.

The late run Sockeye Salmon count for July 5 is 7,738 fish. The escapement objective for this time period is 12,000 – 30,000 fish. There is concern that the late run will be lower than expected.

The Chinook Salmon count for July 5 is 194 fish. Typically the largest portion of the Chinook Salmon run occurs during the second week of July.

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:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula. Federal waters are primarily located on upper headwater portions of the streams flowing on the North Peninsula, whereas Federal waters on those streams flowing on the South Peninsula are more encompassing within each watershed. Subsistence fisheries in both North and South Peninsula areas take place in marine environments under State of Alaska subsistence fishing permits. Annual subsistence harvest for all species in all areas is typically around 10,000 fish.

North Peninsula: There are only two preseason forecasts for this area, the Nelson River and late-run (post July 31) Bear Lake stocks. The 2020 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 362,000 fish for the Nelson River and 408,000 fish for late-run Bear Lake. No commercial fishing in fishing districts located in the Northern Peninsula Management Area has occurred to date and closures remain in place due to low escapement counts.

North Peninsula Management Area Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 4):

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000, current escapement = 29,743
Late-run Bear Lake	BEG = 117,000 – 195,000, current escapement = 88,887 (pre July 31 count)

South Peninsula: Commercial fishing has occurred on the South Peninsula in the Shumagin Islands and South Umiak Districts. Fishing in the Dolgoi District has not occurred due to low escapement number enumerated in Chignik River weir. The cumulative commercial harvest as of June 26 (last commercial period) is approximately 2.4 million with pink salmon being the predominant species harvested. Commercial

fishing periods have been announced in the Shumagin Island district beginning July 6. This fishery can be implemented due to the low per set catch numbers from the immature salmon test fishery.

South Peninsula Management Area Escapement Counts (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 4):

Ilnik River current escapement = 19,655

Orzinski River current escapement = 1,137

Sandy River current escapement = 24,968

McLees River current escapement = 2,227

Aleutian Islands.

All fisheries are forecast to meet escapement goals and provide harvest opportunity.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area

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

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area

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

Southcentral Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

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

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

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

YUKON RIVER

Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

(907) 456-0406, Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov

The Emmonak Field Office will be **closed** for summer management activities due to COVID-19 concerns. Essential services will be provided to fishermen online and over the phone.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The summer Chum Salmon outlook was for an above average run size large enough to provide for escapement and subsistence uses, with a surplus of up to 1.1 million summer Chum Salmon to be available for commercial harvest. The run appears to be late, and smaller than average for years since 2001. The current projection indicates that the run may fall below the outlook range. Managers remain confident that the run will still meet escapement goals, and provide for a normal subsistence harvest. Commercial harvest opportunities are currently on hold pending an improvement in the run outlook

The 2020 drainage-wide Chinook salmon pre-season outlook was for a run size of 144,000 to 220,000 fish, a slightly smaller run size than 2019. Inseason projections are indicating that the run size will be within the lower part of the preseason projection range. The run is projected to be about 90% complete through the lower river.

Assessment Information

Both the Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon runs were slow to develop in the 2020 season. Chinook numbers finally picked up with the first pulse which entered the lower river from June 20 to 23. At this time, the third pulse of Chinook Salmon, which began entering the Yukon River on about June 27, has likely passed through the LYTF area, but a strong fourth pulse has not yet been detected. Summer Chum numbers increased during the last week of June, but have subsequently dropped off again. The second pulse of Summer Chum salmon, which began in the LYTF area on June 27, is still in progress, and low daily numbers of fish caught in the LYTF since then indicate that subsequent pulses are late and possibly very weak. The third and subsequent pulses of Summer Chum Salmon may overlap in timing with fall Chum Salmon.

The cumulative CPUE for Chinook Salmon in the LYTF Big Eddy Drift project was 286 through July 5, below the average of 388 for this date. The cumulative CPUE at LYTF for summer Chum Salmon was 3,545 through July 5, also below the average of 8,935 for this date. At the Pilot Station sonar project, Chinook Salmon passage was estimated at 130,123 through July 5, below the average passage of 164,145 for this date. Summer Chum Salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar was estimated at 451,899 through July 5, well below the median of 1,381,496.

The Chinook Salmon run, now well over 90% finished travelling through the Yukon delta, is adequate to support subsistence harvests at about half the normal size. On the other hand, the Summer Chum Salmon run has come in smaller than in previous years since 2001, and current projections indicate a run of less than 1 million. Even this lower

than usual run size is expected to be adequate to support a normal subsistence harvest, but as of Monday morning, July 6, commercial opportunities are being suspended. Only small numbers of fish have been harvested commercially in previous opportunities, due in large part to poor weather, high water, and a lot of woody debris in the river.

Management Actions

Subsistence salmon fishing was opened to use of 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear in lower Yukon River, on reduced schedules of half their normal regulatory periods, beginning in District 1 on June 30, and Districts 2 and 3 on July 1. The South Coastal District remained open 24/7. Subsistence fishing was similarly opened to use of 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear and fishwheels in the upper Yukon River, on half regulatory periods, beginning in District 4 and District 5A, B, and C on June 30, and in District 5D and District 6A, B, and C on July 3.

Due to reports of poor subsistence catches as a result of weather, high water, and limited opportunities in the early season, subsistence fishing schedules were relaxed to the full regulatory period in Districts 2 and 3, starting July 5. The District 1 schedule remained at half regulatory periods due to interspersed commercial periods, as many fishermen in that district take advantage of both fisheries, or may only fish in one or the other. Fishermen reports coming in before the 4th of July holiday indicated that subsistence users up and down the river had largely been unable to meet their needs for Chinook Salmon, and wanted more opportunity before the run was over. Fishermen in the lower river indicated that many people had largely met their needs for Summer Chum Salmon, and would like to fish with larger mesh gear to avoid catching more. Assessment information through July 2 confirmed that the Chinook Salmon run was likely to fall within the projected range, at the lower end, and was probably at least 90% complete in the lower river. Therefore, the decision was made to further relax fishing gear restrictions to allow use of 7.5-inch mesh gillnets. Effective dates in the lower Yukon River, where most Chinook Salmon had already passed, were set at July 4 for the South Coastal District, July 5 for Districts 2 and 3 and the Innoko River, and July 7 for District 1 and the North Coastal area. Effective dates in the upper Yukon River, where some districts had not yet seen the large first and second pulses, were set at July 7 for District 4A Lower, July 11 for District 4A Upper plus 4B and C and the Koyukuk River, and remain to be announced for Districts 5 and 6.

Assessment information gathered over the holiday weekend confirmed expectations for the Chinook Salmon run, and gave further indication of a Summer Chum Salmon run that is very late, very weak, or both. Fishing schedules will be adjusted accordingly during the coming week.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders through the various State, Federal, and stakeholder organizations. On May 12, a pre-season planning teleconference lead by YR DFA was held that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook

and management options. The eighth regular weekly YRDFA teleconference was held on June 30. Fishermen throughout the drainage expressed concern about the recent subsistence salmon fishing closures and bad conditions with high water and lots of large woody debris throughout the river. Most fishermen indicated that they were still far from meeting their subsistence needs, particularly for Chinook Salmon, at this time. They do continue to recognize the need for conservation measures to protect the run, but are seeking some relief, now that both Chinook and summer Chum salmon runs have progressed, to avoid food shortages in the upcoming winter. Managers will continue to seek input from fishermen during the weekly YRDFA teleconferences and other discussions that will be held throughout the summer season. Assessment project and management updates will continue to be given on the **YRDFA weekly teleconferences each Tuesday at 1:00 pm at the following number: 1-800-315-6338, Passcode: 98566#**. Fishermen have been encouraged to participate.

KUSKOKWIM RIVER

In Season Manager – Vernon “Ray” Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact Vernon_Born@fws.gov (907) 543-3151 or Aaron Mosses Aaron_Moses@fws.gov (907) 545-3252

No new information submitted for the week.

The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) in season manager, with the authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, announced three subsistence fishing opportunity for Chinook salmon within YDNWR waters for federally qualified users.

On June 3rd, 6th and 9th 2020, the Federal in-season manager provided three 24-hour set gillnet (6” or less mesh) opportunities for Chinook Salmon, of which around 1,430 Chinook Salmon were harvested. On June 12,-15, and 18 the Federal inseason manager provided three 12-hour fishing opportunity with 6-inch mesh drift gillnets where an estimated 11,250 Chinook Salmon were harvested. Total harvest across all these provided opportunities is approximately 17,590 Chinook Salmon.

Given these fishing opportunities, people are still highly anticipating more fishing opportunities for Chinook Salmon to continue their traditional way of life and provide for their families. Many of the KRITFC members and the public have continued to express subsistence shortfalls for their families and way of life, as well. The harvest to date has not met the unrestricted historical subsistence harvest levels of 67,000-109,000 Chinook Salmon.

For the 2020 season, the Federal in-season manager wants to limit the possibility of going below the lower bound of the drainage wide sustainable escapement goal of 65,000 Chinook Salmon to a 20% chance. Based on the updated results generated from the Pstar portion of the Bayes Decision Tool and centered on the lower limit (65,000) and risk tolerance (20%), this implies that 45,000 more Chinook Salmon could be harvested by the subsistence fishery without the Federal in season manager’s risk tolerance being

exceeded (Staton and Catalano 2018; Bayesian information updating procedures for Pacific salmon run-size indicators: Evaluation in the presence and absence of auxiliary migration timing information, Canadian Journal of Fish and Aquaculture Sciences). Expected escapement under this scenario is 94,000 Chinook Salmon.

Based on the current assessment of the Chinook Salmon run and the performance of the subsistence fishery in first six opportunities, the Federal in season manager believes it is highly unlikely that 45,000 Chinook Salmon harvest is possible given the likelihood of increasing Chum/Sockeye to Chinook Salmon ratios, the increased likelihood of late run-timing, and the previously announced conservatively structured harvest opportunities recommended by the KRITFC and enacted by the Federal in season manager. Additionally, in terms of escapement, if 45,000 Chinook Salmon harvest is not obtained, the expected escapement will be more than 94,000 Chinook Salmon.

Test Fisheries:

As of June 28, 2020 the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 282. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 674 and 434, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 79. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 304 and 1,242, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for Sockeye is at 93. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 257 and 216, respectively.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

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

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

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Norton Sound District

Counting Projects:

High water has prevented the southern Norton Sound salmon escapement counting projects from operating but most northern Norton Sound projects are now operating. The following projects are operational: Kwiniuk River, Fish River, Bonanza River, Eldorado River, Nome River and Pilgrim River. The Kwiniuk River and Fish River are counting tower projects, and the other counting projects are weirs. Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) has the Fish, Eldorado, and Pilgrim projects operational and the department has the Bonanza, Nome, and Kwiniuk projects operational. The department thanks NSEDC for their over two decades of support running salmon projects and aiding with department projects throughout Norton Sound.

Other Coastal Waters (Stebbins and St. Michael)

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence fishing is open 7 days per week in southern Norton Sound from Pt. Romanof to Black Point. Regulation allows for the restriction of gillnet mesh size in the subsistence fisheries throughout Norton Sound if it is necessary to conserve Chinook salmon.

Subdistricts 6 (Unalakleet)

Subsistence Fishing:

By Board of Fisheries regulation, the King Salmon Management Plan for Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, and the Unalakleet River is in effect. From July 1 through August 10 beach seining is allowed 7 days a week unless changed by emergency order. In all waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6, salmon other than king salmon may be kept when beach seining. All king salmon caught when beach seining must be returned immediately to water unharmed. Beach seines must have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller.

The subsistence gillnet fishing schedule remains the same through July 15 unless changed by emergency order. The subsistence fishing schedule marine waters for the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts is from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Thursdays until 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions. Subsistence gillnet fishing in the fresh waters of the Unalakleet River is from 8 a.m.

Mondays until 8 p.m. Tuesdays and from 8 a.m. Fridays until 8 p.m. Saturdays. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing was opened from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 2 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 3. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir — A cooperative project of Fish and Game, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), Native Village of the Unalakleet and BLM, with major funding provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. Escapement goals for the weir have not yet been established. Not yet operational.

North River Tower — Camp J. B. — A Cooperative Project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. The project has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings, 25,000 pinks, 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey) and no goal yet established for chums. Not yet operational.

Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)

Subsistence Fishing:

By Board of Fisheries regulation, the King Salmon Management Plan for Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, and the Unalakleet River is in effect. From July 1 through August 10 beach seining is allowed 7 days a week unless changed by emergency order. In all waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6, salmon other than king salmon may be kept when beach seining. All king salmon caught when beach seining must be returned immediately to water unharmed. Beach seines must have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller.

The subsistence gillnet fishing schedule remains the same through July 15 unless changed by emergency order. The subsistence fishing schedule marine waters for the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts is from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Thursdays until 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. There are no gillnet mesh size restrictions.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 2 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 3. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Shaktoolik Sonar/Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals established. Not yet operational.

Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)**Subsistence Fishing:**

No restrictions on subsistence fishing are expected this year.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 2 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 3. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. Not yet operational.

Subdistrict 3 (Elim)**Subsistence Fishing:**

Except for 2014, when hook and line subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon was closed, there have been no other subsistence restrictions in over 30 years in Subdistrict 3 (Elim). Subsistence permits are required when subsistence salmon fishing in the Elim Subdistrict and other than the possibility of inseason Chinook salmon restrictions no other restrictions are expected.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened from 6 p.m. Thursday, July 2 until 6 p.m. Friday, July 3. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings, 11,500 – 23,000 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative counts through July 2 were 159 chums and 270 pinks.

Subdistrict 2 (Golovin)**Subsistence Fishing:**

Subsistence salmon permits are required when net fishing in northern Norton Sound (from Elim Subdistrict to Port Clarence District).

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened for 24 hours in Norton Sound Subdistrict 2, Golovin Subdistrict, from 6 p.m. Monday, June 29 until 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 30. Permit holders were

limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. The commercial catch was 1,391 chums, 198 pinks, 9 kings and 5 sockeyes by 9 permit holders. The chum catch was average but did drop from the 2,646 chums caught during the previous 24-hour fishing period.

Commercial salmon fishing reopened for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 1 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 2. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. The cumulative counts through July 2 were 330 chums, 318 pinks, 12 kings, 12 sockeyes. No counts were made the last two days because of high water.

Subdistrict 1 (Nome)

Subsistence Fishing:

The summer subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule for the Nome Subdistrict went into effect. The marine waters east of Cape Nome will continue to be open 7 days a week. All Nome Subdistrict freshwater subsistence areas and the marine waters west of Cape Nome will be open to gillnet fishing for five days each week from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday. Effective June 15, beach seining for salmon opened in all subsistence areas of the Nome Subdistrict whenever subsistence gillnet fishing is open. Unless closed by emergency order beach seining will remain open during gillnet fishing periods through August 15. Dip nets and cast nets can be also be used any time gillnet fishing is open.

Effective June 15 all gillnet and beach seine fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River closed. This closure is in effect to protect migrating sockeye salmon that hold in the Sinuk River bridge area before reaching the spawning grounds.

Stream-specific harvest limits are listed on the subsistence salmon fishing permits. There are no catch limits in marine waters.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing opened from 9 p.m. Thursday, July 2 until 9 p.m. Friday, July 3. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Bonanza River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have yet been established. The cumulative counts through July 2 was 1 chum salmon.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. Cumulative counts through July 2 were 44 chums and 96 pinks

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The cumulative counts through July 2 was 2 pinks.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required for the Port Clarence District, Pilgrim River drainage and Salmon Lake. Salmon Lake will only be opened by emergency order and permits are only available at the Fish and Game office in Nome.

Based on the well above average sockeye salmon runs the last five years the department expects 2020 to have a well above average run again. The department will compare the 2020 sockeye salmon run with historical escapement counts at the Pilgrim River weir after the first week of July and decide if a change is warranted in subsistence catch limit or if a closure may be necessary to reach the escapement goal range. The Pilgrim River escapement goal range is 6,800 to 36,000 sockeye salmon through the weir. No other subsistence fishing closures are expected in Port Clarence District.

Commercial Fishing:

Commercial salmon fishing remains closed in the Port Clarence Subdistrict due to lack of buyer interest.

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. It has an escapement goal of 4,000-8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & the Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. High water created some openings last weekend and weir is again fish tight. No salmon counted yet.

Kotzebue District.

Subsistence Fishing:

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2020.

Commercial Fishing:

The ADF&G intends to open the commercial fishery any time after July 9 when the buyers are ready or permit holders indicate they are ready to fish, and a market is available.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is not yet operational.

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