

**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 13-19, 2020.** Report #8  
Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [George\\_Pappas@fws.gov](mailto:George_Pappas@fws.gov) Office of  
Subsistence Management, USFWS.

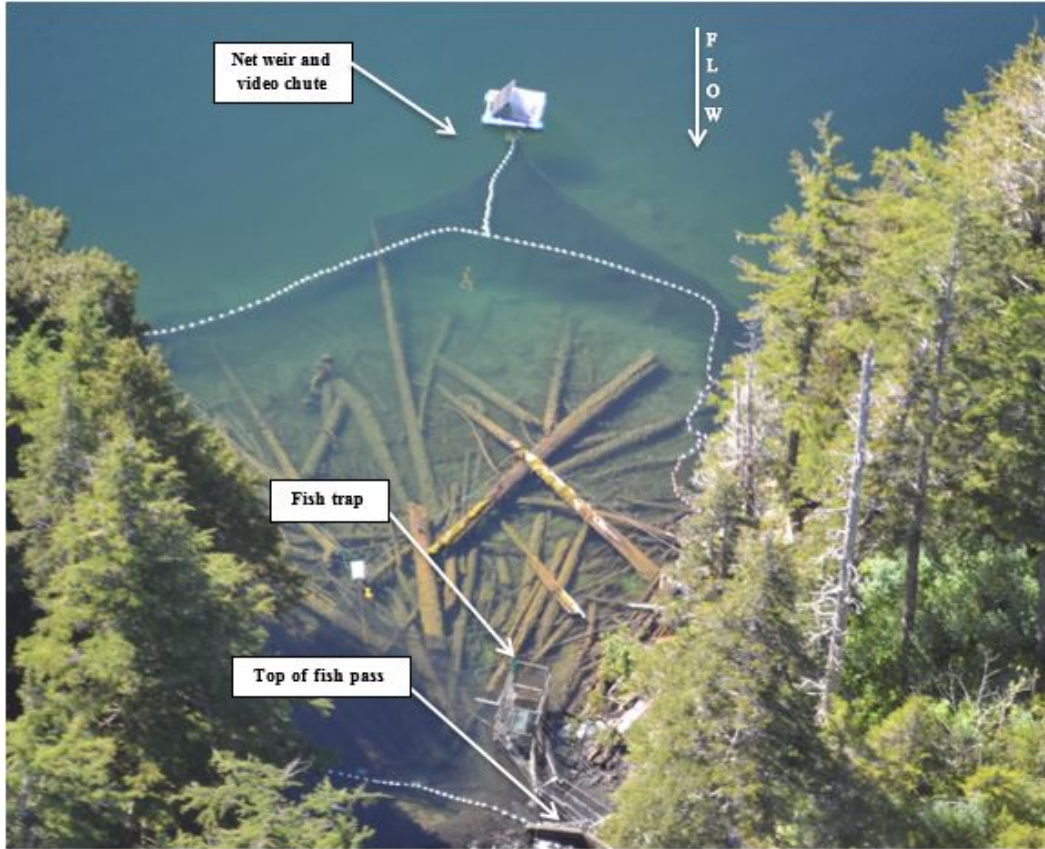
The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal 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**

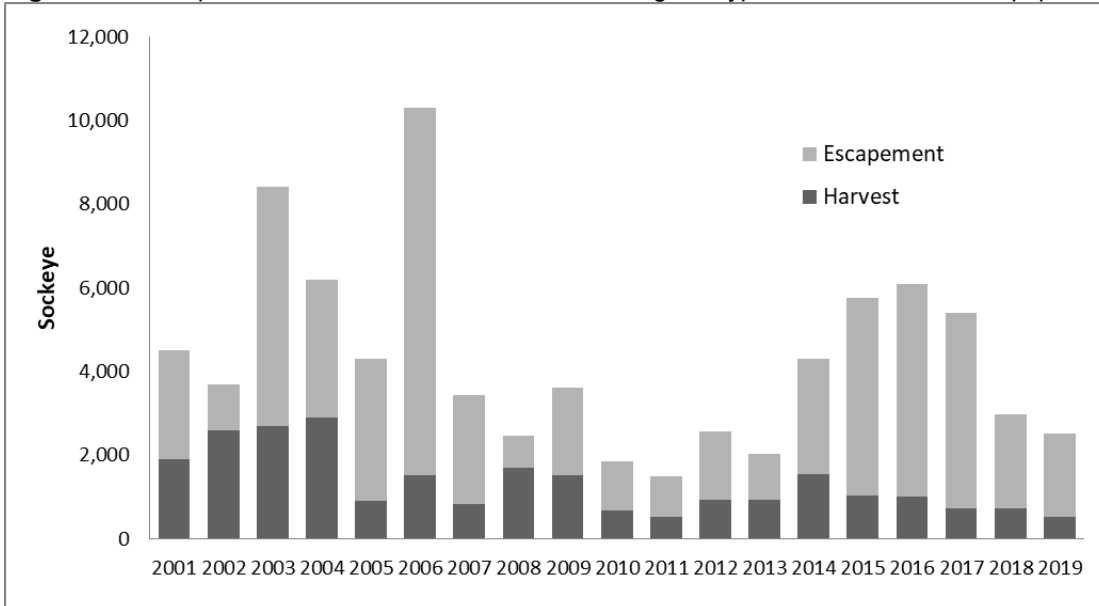
**Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**  
Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 [jpkoller@fs.fed.us](mailto:jpkoller@fs.fed.us)

**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. The first Sockeye Salmon was counted on July 3, which is about a week earlier than average. As of July 19, 36 sockeye have been counted but it is too early to speculate what the total run will be. The final escapement estimate in 2019 was 1,983 while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 528. Subsistence harvest accounted for 92% of terminal area harvest.



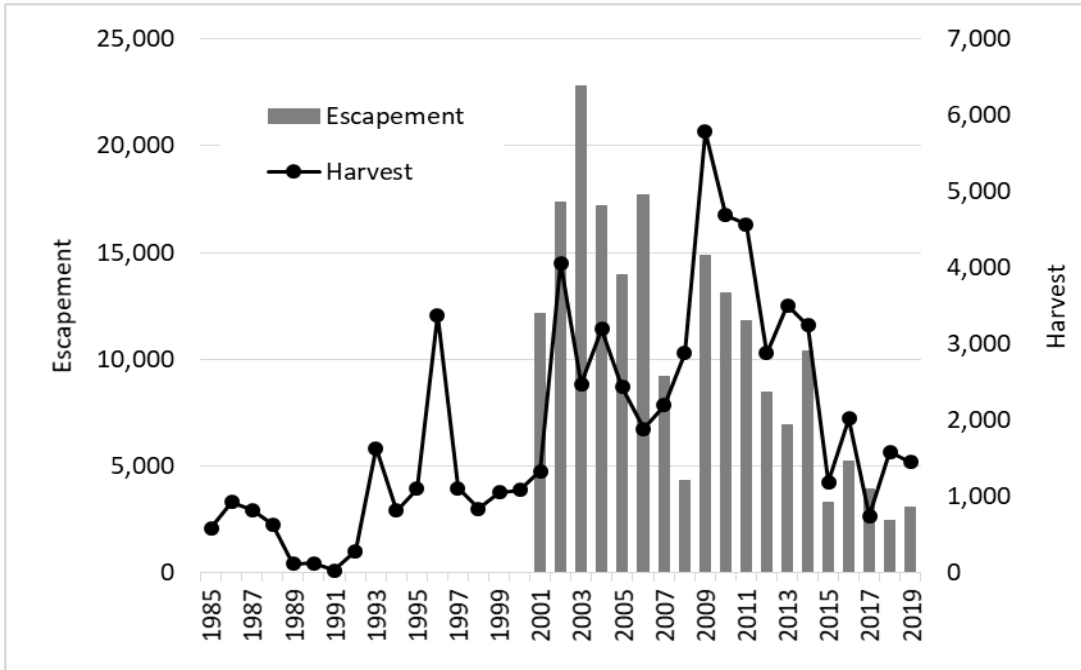
**Figure 1.** Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.



**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. Fish are starting to move and as of July 19, 119 sockeye have been counted and at least 905 have been harvested. 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.

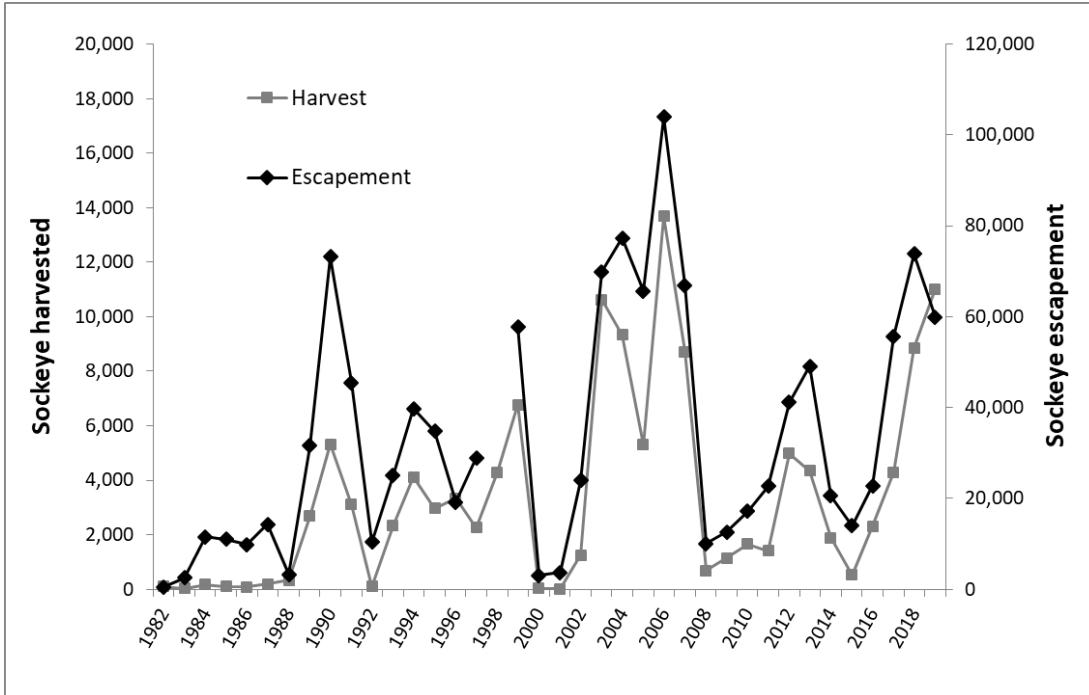


**Figure 3.** Reported harvest and escapement for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2019.

**Redoubt Lake** - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 13. As of July 19, 9,880 sockeye have been counted. The prediction model is estimating that about 33,000 Sockeye will enter Redoubt Lake this year. The run was slow to get started this year but fish are moving now and the limit will be raised this week.

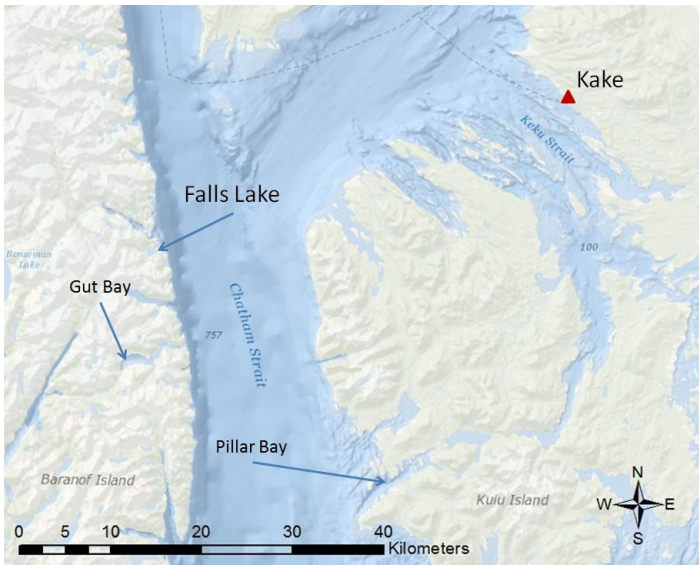
In 2019, an estimated 59,917 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake and about 11,000 were harvested. On July 3, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence sockeye possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence sockeye 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 20, five sockeye have been counted and at least 150 have been harvested. We are unsure if this run is late or weak.



**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](mailto:robert.cross@usda.gov)**

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, July 19, through 12:00 noon, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. The District 8 commercial drift gillnet fishery will be closed in response to low in-season model projections for Stikine River Mainstem Sockeye Salmon.

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 pre-season forecast is above the escapement objectives, but low harvest in and out of the river has resulted in low in-season model escapement projections for mainstem Sockeye Salmon.

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 has returned to normal levels this week so participation in the fishery is high, and harvest is steadily increasing. A phone survey of Stikine River salmon harvesters resulted in a cumulative harvest estimate of 705 Sockeye Salmon (stat week 28) although the harvest is likely higher. A total of 123 Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon permits (FFSE07) and 23 General Fish permits (FFSE04) have been issued for residents in the Wrangell and Petersburg Districts.

Southeast Alaska Drift Gillnet Harvest Estimates as of Statistical Week 28 (July 5 through July 11)

| District | Chinook | Sockeye | Coho  | Pink  | Chum  | Total  |
|----------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 6        | 150     | 2,100   | 1,500 | 4,100 | 9,300 | 17,150 |
| 8        | 1,100   | 600     | 20    | 250   | 1,900 | 3,870  |

**Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; [jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov](mailto:jacob.g.musslewhite@usda.gov)), Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**

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. 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.

There has been a welcome push of new fish into Neva Lake over the past week, with almost 400 sockeye on July 15. The total now stands at 552 sockeye as of July 16, with about a quarter of the historical run timing elapsed.



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



*Figure 2. Video capture of a sockeye passing through the Neva Lake weir, July 20, 2020*



*Figure 3. A moose strolls past the mountaintop repeater for the Neva Lake weir, July 8, 2020.*



**Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon:** The Sitkoh Lake video weir was installed on July 6-8 by a Forest Service biologist with the help of Student Conservation Association interns. The project uses a pair of remotely monitored video net weirs to count fish entering Sitkoh Lake, on the southeast corner of Chichagof Island (Figures 4 and 5). Video from the site is streamed to the Angoon Community Association office, where it is recorded on a computer. Personnel from the ACA will monitor the weir and use video to count fish entering the lake. Live video feed and clips from the weir can be accessed over the internet at <http://sitkohlake.ddns.net:81> .

No counts are available from the weir yet, but there appeared to be a healthy push of fish over the weekend. Last year at this time, we were still awaiting the first sockeye, which were delayed by low stream flows. That hasn't been a problem this year.



*Figure 4. The video weir at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake, July 9, 2020.*





*Figure 5. Video capture of a sockeye swimming through a video chute at the Sitkoh Lake weir, July 19, 2020.*

Northern Inside waters: Salmon returns throughout the northern inside water range from bad to worse. Hatchery chum catches have been poor, raising concerns about DIPAC being able to meet broodstock needs. Counts of sockeye at the Chilkoot and Chilkat weirs near Haines have been substantially below average, and catches of sockeye in Taku area gillnet fisheries have been poor, despite improved numbers at the fishwheels upriver. As expected, returns of pink salmon also appear to be weak throughout the region. Recent test fisheries at Hawk Inlet and Point Gardner that were not quite as dismal as previous weeks were the closest thing to a bright spot in recent indicators. Subsistence fishers are encouraged to report observations of abundance at subsistence fishing sites to help biologists monitor this year's returns.

Yakutat area: Things have been looking a little bit better in the Yakutat area. Counts of sockeye through the Situk weir are now up to 42,239 as of July 18, which is within the escapement goal of 30,000-70,000 sockeye. Also welcome is the count of Chinook, which is just a few fish shy of 1,000 as of July 18, approaching the upper end of the escapement goal of 450-1,050 large fish. As a result of the improved Chinook return, ADF&G has opened the subsistence fishery to the retention of Chinook. However, the Situk river mouth area is still closed to subsistence fishing, and gillnets must be attended at all times when fishing in the Situk River.

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

The 2020 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has had 145 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. On June 15, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) increased harvest opportunity in outside waters by increasing the daily harvest limit to three fish. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, ADF&G further liberalized the resident daily harvest limit by increasing the daily harvest limit to four fish. Many local subsistence users continue to utilize these liberalized harvest regulations.

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. State managed subsistence fisheries are currently open at Klawock Inlet, Sarkar, Red Bay, Salmon Bay Lake, Karta River, Hetta Inlet, Eek Lake, Hunter Bay, Klakas Inlet and Shipley Bay. Personal use opportunity is open at the Thorne River and Kegan Cove. All fisheries, except Hetta (August 31) and Klawock (August 7) will close on July 31. The first summer troll opening (non-hatchery terminal harvest) for Chinook Salmon closed on July 6. Other than in designated terminal harvest areas, retention of Chinook Salmon is now prohibited in the troll fishery. All vessels are now actively pursuing the other salmon species.

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. The first directed seine fishery in outside coastal waters of District 4 occurred on July 19. Estimated commercial harvests for Districts 1-4 are: 12,575 Chinook Salmon, 11,100 Sockeye Salmon, 9300 Coho Salmon, 382,650 Pink Salmon and 182,300 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 320 Sockeye Salmon to date. The Eek Lake weir became operational on June 15 and has passed 4 Sockeye Salmon 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](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=RI.home>

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

## **SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA**

### **PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER**

**Copper River, 7/20/2020 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), (907) 205-0544, [dave\\_sarafin@nps.gov](mailto:dave_sarafin@nps.gov)**

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has been limited in response to a weak salmon return. Only seven (of potentially twenty) open commercial fishing periods have occurred this season. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 97,360 Sockeye Salmon and 5,845 Chinook Salmon. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reports this to be the fourth lowest commercial harvest to date in the last 50 years for the district.

The ADFG 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 19, 516,199 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 90% of the cumulative management objective of 575,297 salmon for this date. A daily estimate of 3,897 salmon migrated by the sonar on July 19.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged a total of 2,466 Chinook Salmon for the season. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 1,201 Chinook Salmon through July 19, of which, 119 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 in-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 have been weak. In-river assessments of the Chinook Salmon return, along with assumptions of up-river harvests, indicate that the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 24,000 fish will likely not be met for this season. 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.

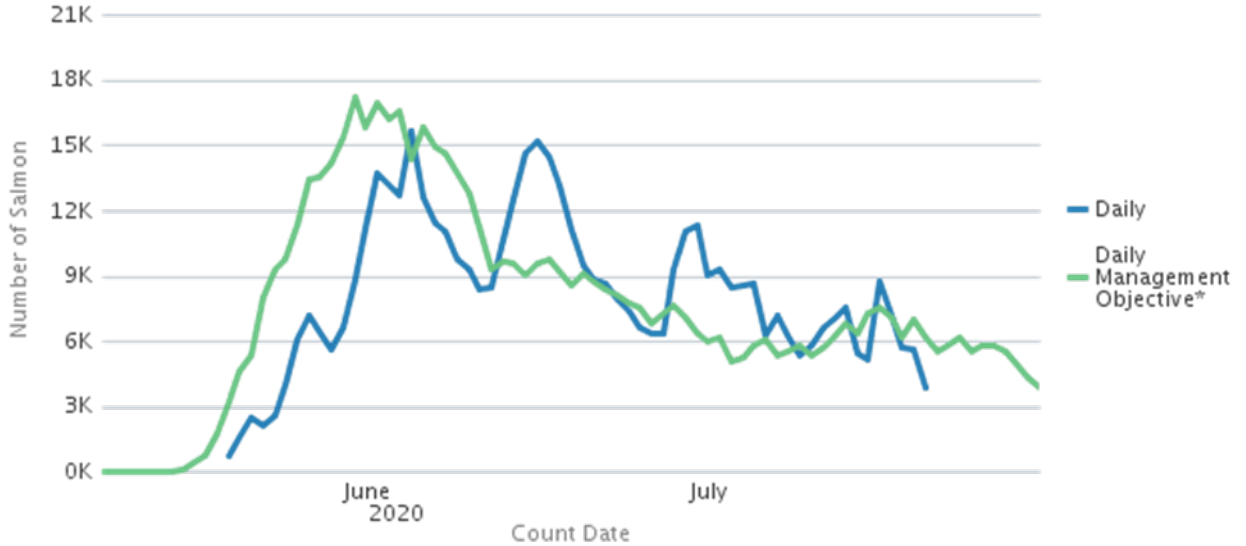
The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. Effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday June 20, the State sport fishery annual limit was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook salmon for the Upper Copper River drainage. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was open for 84-hours from July 16 through July 19, and is



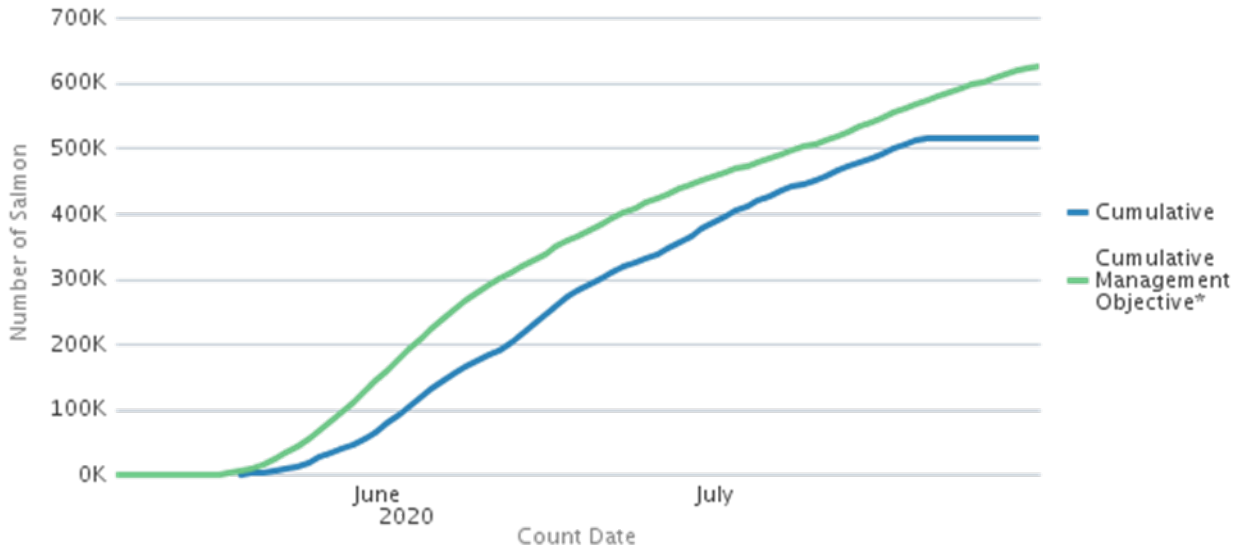
scheduled to be open for a total of 72-hours from July 24 through July 26. Since June 22, the Chitina personal use fishery has been closed to the retention of Chinook salmon for the remainder of the season.

**2020 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through July 19**

**Copper River Daily Passage**



**Copper River Cumulative Passage**



Source:

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon\\_escapement](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, two hundred and two (202) Chitina Subdistrict permits, three hundred and sixty-three (363) 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.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. The reported cumulative passage estimate through July 19 is 1,830 Chinook Salmon. This is a relatively low estimate for this date in the season and is approximately 25% of the 2019 season count of 7,380 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](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.** (907) 424-4759 [mburcham@fs.fed.us](mailto:mburcham@fs.fed.us)

No new report submitted for week.

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 – Kenneth Gates, Acting Delegated Official, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 [Kenneth\\_Gates@FWS.GOV](mailto:Kenneth_Gates@FWS.GOV)**

Ken has been assigned the duties of the In-season Federal Subsistence Fisheries Manager for the Kenai Peninsula following the departure of Jeff Anderson. Jeff has taken a job in the lower 48.

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 20 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 591 Sockeye Salmon. Forty-one Sockeye Salmon have been harvested in the Kasilof River dip net fishery. 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 July 19 includes 621 Sockeye Salmon.

Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30. No harvest occurred in this fishery for this reporting period.

Emergency Special Action 10-KS-01-20 expired on 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](mailto:michael_brady@fws.gov) or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230  
[Kevin\\_VanHatten@fws.gov](mailto:Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov)

The sockeye salmon runs around Kodiak Island are considered to be average, to date. Management practices for the Karluk, Ayakulik, and Upper Station systems switched from the early to late run sockeye salmon on July 16. Escapements for early run sockeye salmon within these systems have met their respective escapement goals.

The Chinook salmon runs on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers are failing to meet their respective escapement goals, with only 2,658 Chinook salmon being recorded on the Karluk River and 2,282 Chinook salmon being recorded on the Ayakulik River.



Subsistence needs of many villagers around Kodiak continue to have be successful in meeting their needs for harvesting sockeye salmon. The good returns have enabled many subsistence users to meet their needs along the northern section of the Kodiak Management Area.

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

***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 19):

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Kvichak            | SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000, current escapement = 3,943,512 |
| Alagnak            | SEG = 320,000 minimum, current escapement = 2,175,864        |
| Naknek             | SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 4,064,010    |
| Egegik             | SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000, current escapement = 2,324,658    |
| Ugashik            | SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000, current escapement = 1,327,422    |
| Wood River         | SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000, current escapement = 2,146,860    |
| Igushik            | SEG = 150,000 – 400,000, current escapement = 261,690        |
| Nushagak           | SEG = 370,000 – 900,000, current escapement = 1,203,273      |
| Nushagak (Chinook) | SEG = 55,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 41,801          |
| Togiak             | SEG = 150,000 – 270,000, current escapement = 63,900         |

All areas will provide subsistence harvest opportunity.

The total commercial harvest for Sockeye Salmon as of July 19 is approximately 35 million fish.

**Chignik:**

The 2020 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA). 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 19, approximately 186,242 early run Sockeye Salmon have been enumerated. This count is significantly smaller than the escapement objective for this time period of

350,000 - 440,000 fish and it is highly unlikely the run will make the minimum escapement goal. Emergency Special Action #08-SS-01-20, restricting fishing in federal public waters to only federally qualified users is still in place.

Subsistence harvest reports indicate minimal harvests.

The late run Sockeye Salmon count for July 19 is 53,403 fish. The escapement objective for this time period is 70,000 – 140,000 fish. There is concern that the late run will be lower than expected. Genetic samples indicate approximately a 50/50 breakdown of fish between the early and late runs.

The Chinook Salmon count for July 19 is 693 fish. Restrictions to Chinook Salmon fishing in the sportfish (Emergency Order # 2-KS-4-38-20), State subsistence Emergency Order #4-FS-L-SUB-02-20, and Federal subsistence (Emergency Special Action #08-KS-01-20) fisheries was restricted on July 18 due to the low numbers of fish enumerated at the weir. These actions were taken collaboratively with the ADFG commercial and sportfish division. Subsistence users throughout the Chignik area also voiced concerns about the low Chinook Salmon return and requested additional restrictions.

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 arear, 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. Commercial fishing in some fishing districts located on the Northern Peninsula Management Area were announced beginning July 9. The cumulative commercial harvest as of July 19 is approximately 1.1 million fish with Sockeye Salmon being the predominant species harvested.



North Peninsula Management Area Escapement Goals (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 19):

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Nelson River       | BEG = 97,000 – 219,000, current escapement = 134,245                         |
| Late-run Bear Lake | BEG = 117,000 – 195,000, current escapement = 254,476<br>(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 July 19 is approximately 2.8 million with pink salmon being the predominant species harvested.

South Peninsula Management Area Escapement Counts (current Sockeye Salmon escapement for July 19):

Ilnik River current escapement = 39,864  
 Orzinski River current escapement = 3,180  
 Sandy River current escapement = 55,898  
 McLees River current escapement = 4,024 – McLees River counts are lower than the 2017 to 2011 average of 20,292 fish.

#### Aleutian Islands.

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

#### ***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area***

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf](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](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**

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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 Summary**

The tail end of the 2020 Chinook Salmon run is now mostly through the mouth of the Yukon River, following 4 moderate-sized pulses and a prolonged, slow early season buildup. Daily Chinook Salmon passage estimates at the Pilot Station sonar dipped below 1,000 fish on 4 days during the past week and was zero on July 13, the first time since assessment began June 7. Numbers of summer Chum Salmon have declined steadily through 4 pulses, and with the shift to fall season management on July 16, all Chum Salmon entering the Yukon River are now being counted as fall Chum Salmon.

The Chinook Salmon run past Pilot Station sonar was within the pre-season outlook range, providing enough surplus for approximately half the average subsistence harvest. The Eagle sonar project near the Canadian border has been operational since July 1, and early projections indicated the run would meet the border escapement goal. The summer Chum Salmon run came in well below the projection this year. The drainagewide escapement goal was met, however, and the run provided for some subsistence and a very small, preliminary commercial harvest.

Most subsistence fishers in the Lower Yukon area and upriver as far as District 4 have finished harvesting Chinook and summer Chum salmon. In District 5, subsistence fishers are actively harvesting Chinook Salmon during scheduled openings, and still waiting for the bulk of the run to pass through the uppermost section, Subdistrict 5D.

### **Summer Season Assessment Information**

As of July 19, the cumulative passage of Chinook Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar was 156,371, compared with the average cumulative passage of 180,480 at this date. Canadian Chinook Salmon were estimated to be about 53% of the run past Pilot Station through July 5. A total of 7,336 Chinook salmon have been counted at the Eagle sonar project through July 19, compared with the average passage of 18,253.

As of July 18, the management transition date from summer to fall runs, the total passage of summer Chum Salmon estimated at the Pilot Station sonar of 690,991 was less than half the median total of 1,862,522. Beginning July 19, all Chum Salmon passing Pilot Station sonar are counted as fall run, even though they will still be mixed with summer run fish, and thus the total summer Chum Salmon run is larger than the final passage estimate. The most recent analysis, with samples from June 29 through July 9, estimated the summer component was still 99.7% of the total Chum Salmon run. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) assessment project ended summer operations on July 15. The final cumulative CPUE for Chinook Salmon was 291, unchanged since July 12 and well below

the average of 397. The final cumulative CPUE for summer Chum Salmon, of 4,602 was less than half the median of 9,945.

### **Summer Season Management Actions**

In the lower Yukon River, Districts 1, 2, and 3 remain on their full regulatory schedule of two 36-hour periods per week, with 7.5-inch gillnets, as they transition to fall management. The South Coastal District and Innoko River remain on their schedule of seven days per week, 24 hours per day, with 7.5-inch gillnets.

In the upper Yukon River, District 4 is on their full regulatory schedule of two 48-hour periods using 7.5-inch mesh gillnets and fishwheels, and the Koyukuk River is open seven days per week, 24 hours per day, with 7.5-inch gillnets and fishwheels. Subsistence fishing in Subdistricts 5A, B, and C opened on July 14 for two 24-hour periods per week, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch mesh, or fishwheels. In Subdistrict 5D, the half-regulatory schedule of one 84-hour fishing periods per week in place through July, has one period reduced to 48-hours, starting July 17 in the lower and middle portions of this subdistrict and July 24 in the upper portion. Fishing is restricted to 6-inch mesh throughout District 5. All of District 6 in the Tanana River was returned to the full regulatory schedule, with use of 7.5-inch mesh, starting on July 10. However, due to low Chinook Salmon counts so far in the Chena River, fishing will be restricted to selective gear with no retention of Chinook Salmon in all subdistricts starting July 20.

### **Fall Season Outlook**

The 2020 fall Chum Salmon preseason projection based on the relationship between summer chum salmon and fall chum salmon is for a run size of less than 450,000 fish. This projection does not meet the threshold of 550,000 fish needed to allow commercial fishing. The run will be monitored inseason to determine if any adjustments to the subsistence fishing schedule are needed to meet escapement and treaty objectives.

### **Fall Season Assessment Information**

On July 19, the first day of fall Chum Salmon assessment at Pilot Station sonar, the count was 8,873, compared with a median count of 15,315 in prior years. In the Lower Yukon Test Fishery, the daily CPUE for July 19 was 12, compared with an average daily CPUE of 47. No Coho Salmon were caught.

### **Fall Season Management Actions**

The South Coastal District and District 1 transitioned to fall season management on July 16, remaining on their full regulatory schedules as outlined for summer season, above. District 2 transitioned to fall management on July 19, and District 3 will transition on July 20, and also remain on their full regulatory schedules. Upriver districts will transition as the fall Chum and Coho salmon runs begin to arrive in these districts.

### **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 YRDFA was held that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. The ninth regular weekly YRDFA teleconference was held on July 14. Fishermen throughout the lower Yukon River indicated they had mostly met their subsistence needs for Chinook and summer Chum salmon, although catches were often lower than desired. Upriver, fishermen reported dropping water levels and some improvement in conditions, and were anticipating openings later in the week in their respective districts. 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](mailto:Vernon_Born@fws.gov) (907) 543-3151 or Aaron Mosses [Aaron\\_Moses@fws.gov](mailto:Aaron_Moses@fws.gov) (907) 545-3252**

#### **Summary:**

As of July 1, 2020 federal management for Chinook salmon has expired. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has resumed management of salmon species on the Kuskokwim River. Gill net mesh size and net length restrictions are still in place until further notice.

#### **Test Fisheries:**

As of July 12, 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 445. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 805 and 627, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 875. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 2,707 and 7,618, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for Sockeye is at 821. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2019 and 2018 were 1,826 and 1,555, 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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf)

***Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area***  
[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf)

***ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

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

***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

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

## **NORTHWEST ALASKA**

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### **Mid-July Salmon Assessment:**

The mid-July assessment shows the king runs have been better than expected. Pink runs are as strong as forecast. The chum run appears bleak, and the well above average run forecast like that of the last 3 years was way off. Chum salmon runs throughout Western Alaska have been well below average and having low chum runs throughout such a large area indicates that ocean conditions may not have been favorable to chum survival. Sockeyes do not look to be as strong as forecast and are tracking about a week late. The silver salmon forecast was for a well above average run, and there is a possibility of a good silver run.

### **Norton Sound District**

#### ***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)***

#### **Federal Regulation:**



By federal regulation, the 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.

#### Subsistence Fishing:

Net fishing is open 7 days a week, Gillnet length allowed is 50 fathoms, except in the Unalakleet River only 25 fathoms is allowed. Beach seining is allowed, but all king salmon caught must be returned immediately to the water unharmed.

#### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch to July 14 is 460 kings, 900 pinks and 1,959 chums by 20 permit holders. The chum catch has been very poor.

Commercial salmon fishing reopened for 4 hours from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Thursday, July 16 in the Subdistrict. Gillnets are restricted to a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller and 100 fathoms in aggregate length.

**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 NSEDC project. 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. Because of high water, the tower was unable to operate until July, and the crew was only able to begin counting 24 hours a day starting on July 7. All counts should be considered minimal. Cumulative counts through July 13 were 213 kings, 465chuns and 360,000 pinks.

**Unalakleet River Floating Weir** — The weir was not operated this year because high water prevented installation.

#### ***Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik)***

#### Subsistence Fishing:

Net fishing is open 7 days a week, Gillnet length allowed is 50 fathoms. Beach seining is allowed but all king salmon caught must be returned immediately to the water unharmed.

#### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 206 kings, 82 sockeyes, 900 pinks and 2,400 chums by 15 permit holders. The chum catch has been below average.

Commercial salmon fishing in the Subdistrict reopened for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 15 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 16. 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** – An NSEDC project with no escapement goals yet established. Because of high water, the crew was unable to count until July 10. All counts should be considered minimal. Cumulative counts through July 13 were 372 kings, 2,049 chums and 750,000 pinks.

#### ***Subdistrict 4 (Norton Bay)***

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Net fishing is open 7 days a week,

##### Commercial Fishing:

There were two prior fishing periods and the catch is confidential because only two permit holders fished.

Commercial salmon fishing reopened for 4 hours from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Thursday, July 16 in the Subdistrict with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller and 100 fathoms in aggregate length.

**Inglutalik River Tower** – A NSEDC project. No escapement goals yet established. The project has been delayed because of high water.

**Ungalik River Tower** – A NSEDC project. No escapement goals yet established. Because of high water the crew was unable to count until July 9. All counts should be considered minimal. Cumulative counts through July 13 were 39 kings, 3,864 chums and 250,000 pinks.

#### ***Subdistrict 3 (Elim)***

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Net fishing is open 7 days a week,

##### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch to July 14 is 125 kings, 1 sockeye, 119 pinks and 673 chums by 10 permit holders. The chum catch has been poor.

Commercial salmon fishing reopened for 4 hours from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Thursday, July 16 in the Subdistrict with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or smaller and 100 fathoms in aggregate length.

**Kwiniuk River Tower-Camp Joel** – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings, 9,100 – 32,600 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative counts through July 13 were 291 kings, 3,177 chums, 42 sockeyes and 600,000 pinks. This is the first time the king escapement goal has been made since 2015. The chum salmon escapement goal will likely not be reached for the first time since 2016. Pinks will surpass 1 million fish for the third even numbered year in a row.

### ***Subdistrict 2 (Golovin)***

#### Subsistence Fishing:

Net fishing is open 7 days a week.

#### Commercial Fishing:

The cumulative catch is 31 kings, 42 sockeyes, 928 pinks and 7,000 chums by 9 permit holders. The chum catches have been below average.

Commercial salmon fishing in the Subdistrict reopened for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 15 until 6 p.m. Thursday, July 16. 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. Because of high water, the project was knocked out in late June and began counting again on July 12. The cumulative counts through July 13 were 12 kings, 18 sockeyes, 1,620 chums and 620,000 pinks.

### ***Subdistrict 1 (Nome)***

#### Subsistence Fishing:

The summer subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule for the Nome Subdistrict is in 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 are open to gillnet fishing for five days each week from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday. There are no catch limits when fishing in the marine waters. There are catch limits in the fresh water subsistence areas that vary by river and are shown subsistence fishing permits which are required. Beach seining for salmon is allowed 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 also be used in the subsistence area whenever 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:

The cumulative catch is 23 kings, 32 sockeyes and 1,987 chums by 4 permit holders. Permit holders have only fished one period this season. Even though it was only 24 hours the king was triple the previous best catch for any opening since commercial fishing resumed in 2013.

Commercial fishing reopened in the Subdistrict for 24 hours from 9 p.m. Wednesday, July 15 until 9 p.m. Thursday, July 16. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

**Solomon River Weir** – A Fish & Game project, has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative counts through July 13 were 14 sockeyes, 91 chums, 77,000 pinks and 6 silvers. The historical average midpoint of the chum passage is July 21.

**Bonanza River Weir** – An ADF&G project. . No escapement goals have yet been established. The cumulative counts through July 13 are 7 kings, 865 chums and 88,000 pinks.

**Eldorado River Weir** – A NSEDC project has an escapement goal range at the weir of 4,400 – 14, 200 chum salmon. The weir has been operational since June 25 and the cumulative counts through July 13 are 9 kings, 9 sockeyes, 4,000 chums and 60,000 pinks. The historic third-quarter point of passage is July 18.

**Nome River Weir** – A Fish & Game project with escapement goals of 1,600 – 5,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The cumulative counts through July 13 were 4 kings, 105 sockeyes, 363 chums and 462,000 pinks. The historic average midpoint of chum and pink passage is July 22.

**Snake River Weir** – A NSEDC project has an escapement goal of 2,000 – 4,200 chum salmon. The cumulative counts through July 13 were 33 sockeyes, 120 chums and 50,000 pink salmon. The historic midpoint of the chum run is July 21.

#### Port Clarence District

##### Subsistence Fishing:

Subsistence gillnet and beach seining are open 7 days a week. The subsistence king salmon limit is 3 fish per season.

### 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. The cumulative counts through July 13 were 25 kings, 2,883 sockeyes, 907 chums and 3,000 pinks. The historical average midpoint of sockeye passage at the weir is July 19.

### **Kotzebue District.**

The ADF&G reminded both subsistence and commercial fishermen that the area offshore of the Kotzebue airport's main runway to one nautical mile out in the ocean is closed to all commercial and subsistence fishing. Fishing boats and other marine vessels may still transit through the closed fishing area, but no fishing gear can be in the water in the closed area.

The reason for the closure is that fishing often attracts birds that can create a hazardous situation for aircraft. This fishing closure is in effect for both commercial and subsistence fishing and will remain in effect until mid-October.

The closed area is a rectangular area defined from the Weather Service Dome, south of the main runway at the Kotzebue airport, to the NANA building north of the same runway and extending westerly one nautical mile out into the ocean approximately perpendicular to the beach.

### Subsistence Fishing:

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2020.

### Commercial Fishing:

The catch has been slow but picked up on the third opening. The cumulative catch was 2,100 chums by 9 permit holders.

Commercial salmon fishing was reopened for 10 hours daily from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. from Sunday, July 12 through Friday, July 17 in the Kotzebue District.

**Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is scheduled start later this month.**

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