

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 13 –19, 2017. Report #12.

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The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season fisheries managers that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. The goal is to have the weekly report posted on the OSM website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing>, by the close of business the following Monday. Additional information on a fishery of particular interest may be obtained by contacting the in-season manager, visiting the additional web links at the end of each area report, or by contacting George Pappas.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

To date, 274 permits have been issued for the 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas.

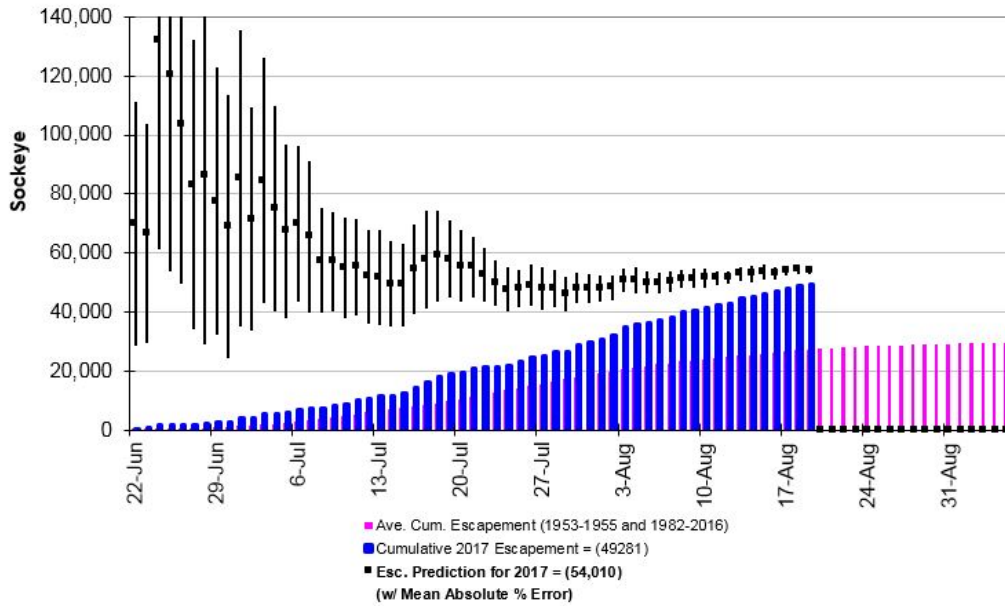
Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907)747-4297 jpkoller@fs.fed.us

Falls Lake - The US Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were installed on June 29. As of August 19, 3,070 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the fish pass and 683 sockeye have been reported harvested. The actual number of sockeye in the lake is probably at least 5,000 since many sockeye also migrate into the lake via the falls. A final estimate will be made using recapture data generated by the video net weir. The final escapement estimate in 2016 was 5,098 sockeye while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,000. Subsistence harvest accounted for 99% of terminal area harvest.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed June 29. As of August 19, 3,459 sockeye have passed the weir and harvesters have reported taking 996 sockeye. Last week's rain resulted in several thousand sockeye moving into the system at higher water levels. The current escapement remains well below average. In 2016, approximately 5,234 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 2,605 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 16. As of August 19, 49,281 Sockeye Salmon and have passed the weir. On July 14, 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. These limits were

based on an in-season model prediction of about 50,000 sockeye returning, which is still the current prediction. In 2016, an estimated 22,937 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake and the subsistence sockeye harvest reported to ADF&G was 2,304.



Final escapement predictions for Redoubt Lake Sockeye Salmon based on daily weir counts

Wrangell/Petersburg Area Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, Contact to be announced.

No new information since last week’s report.

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen (907-789-6257; bvanalen@fs.fed.us) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), Tongass National Forest

Total counts of Sockeye Salmon through the Neva and Kook Lake weirs as of August 15 were 2,575 and 1,872 (Figures 1 and 2). There were 2,389 Sockeye Salmon counted through the video net weirs at Sitkoh Lake through August 3. At Kanalku Lake, the ADF&G project leader Ray Vinzant reported on August 14 that 430 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through their video weir at the outlet of the lake.

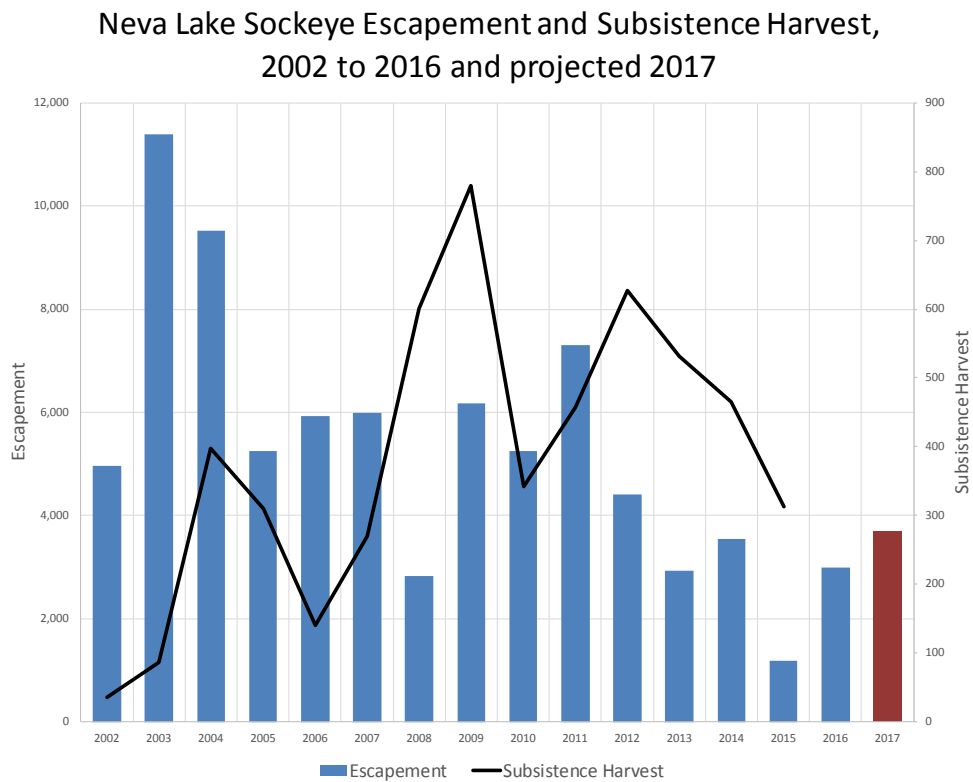
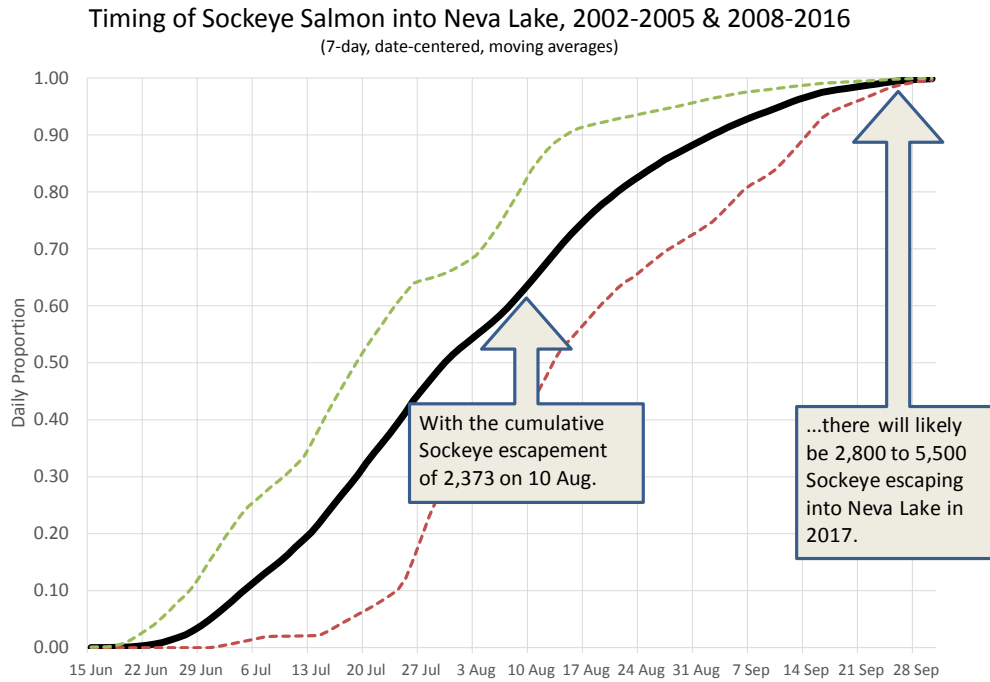
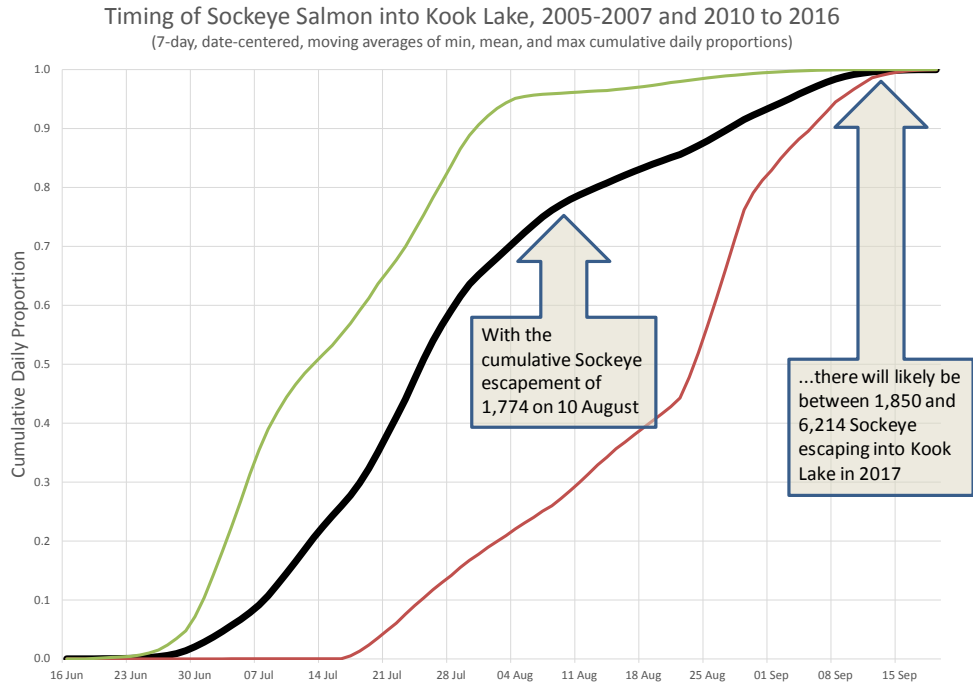


Figure 1. Timing and annual escapement charts for Sockeye Salmon escapements into Neva Lake, 2002 to 2017.



Kook Lake Sockeye Escapement 2005 to 2007, 2010 to 2016, and Projected 2017

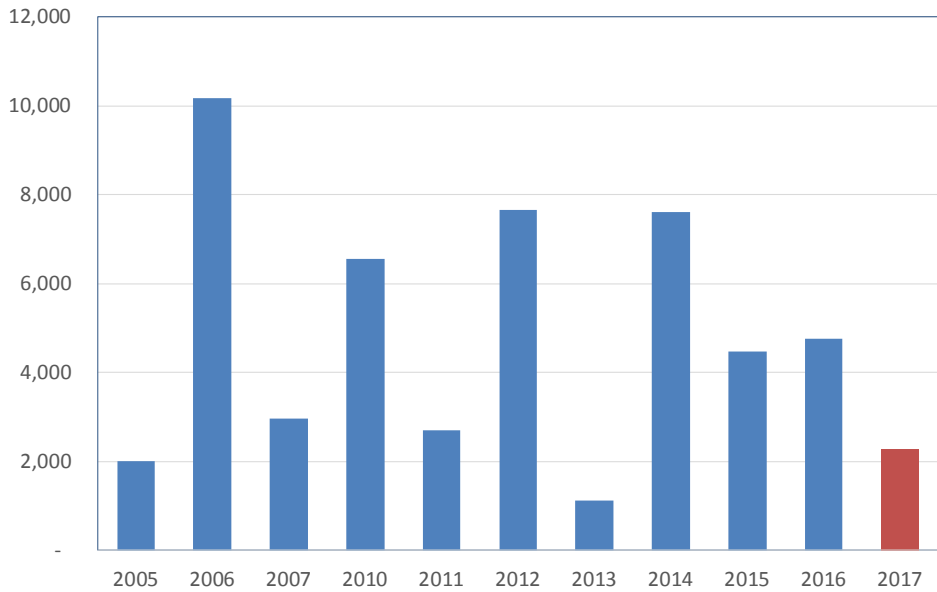


Figure 2. Timing and annual escapement charts for Sockeye Salmon escaping into Kook Lake, 2005-2007 and 2010 to 2017.

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

Of the 274 permits issued to date across the region, 192 have been issued to Federally-qualified subsistence users residing on Prince of Wales Island.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at Hetta and Eek Lakes are on-going. The Hetta weir has had 5,081 Sockeye Salmon counted to date. The Eek Lake weir project has counted approximately 200 Sockeye Salmon to date. The Klawock River weir has passed 4,817 sockeye to date.

Commercial seine and drift gillnet fishing in Districts 1-4 has started. The Chinook troll fishery began on July 1 and closed to the retention of Chinook Salmon at the end of the day on July 4. Estimated harvests for Districts 1-4 are: 2,310 Chinook, 86,495 Sockeye, 45,500 Coho, 2,308,050 Pink, and 798,400 Chum Salmon. Please note that Chinook and Coho Salmon estimates reported in this report are far lower as they do not include commercial troll harvest estimates for these districts.

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 – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

No Report Submitted.

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>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

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

PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova. (907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

This will be the last Prince William Sound/Copper River Delta summary for the 2017 season.

A total of 66 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Prince William Sound of Chugach National Forest in 2017. One-hundred and ten permits were issued in 2016. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. In 2016, 555 coho and 234 sockeye were reported harvested on Copper River Delta fresh waters in this fishery.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 jeffry_anderson@fws.gov

Final report for season was submitted last week.

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>

Alaska Department of Fish and Game emergency orders and news releases affecting upper Kenai Peninsula sport fisheries can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=area.list&Year=2017&AreaID=5>

SOUTHWEST ALASKA

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 report submitted.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Johnathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 271-2776 jonathon_gerken@fws.gov

No Report Submitted.

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

YUKON REGION

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

gerald_maschmann@fws.gov or Fred Bue fredrick_bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is closed for the season. The office staff can be contacted by calling Fairbanks at (907) 455-1849.

Summer Season Overview

The summer season is over in the Alaskan portion of the drainage. The Summer Chum passage at Pilot Station through July 18 was the third highest since 1995 with a preliminary a total run size estimate of approximately 3.5 million. The Chinook Salmon assessment is indicating a total run abundance above the upper end of the preseason forecast with approximately 259,000 passing the Pilot Station sonar, the highest since 2005. Chinook Salmon passage past the Eagle sonar is winding down and will switch to fall chum assessment next week. At this time 73,000 have been estimated to have passed the sonar. This is enough to meet Canadian escapement needs and harvest sharing commitments. Initial summer season management was focused on conserving Chinook Salmon. However, as the season progressed and confidence in assessment strengthened, subsistence opportunity increased for both salmon species as well as other harvest opportunities for Summer Chum Salmon.

Fall Season Outlook

The Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan went into effect for District 1 beginning July 16. Most of the Alaskan portion of the drainage has switched to fall season management. Based on current assessment information, the 2017 Fall Chum Salmon in-season run projection is for an above average run size near 2.5 million fish, well above expectations. This level of abundance is sufficient to meet escapement and subsistence needs, and provide a surplus for commercial and personal use purposes.

Fall Season Assessment Information

The LYTF began fall season operations on July 16, and as of August 17 has a cumulative Fall Chum Salmon CPUE of 2,592, above the median of 1,121. The Mountain Village test fishery (MVTF) began on July 18, and has a cumulative CPUE of 5,201, well above the median of 1,322. The mainstem sonar near Pilot Station began reporting all Chum Salmon as Fall Chum Salmon on July 19. Through August 17, near the average $\frac{3}{4}$ point of the run, the Pilot Station sonar project has a cumulative passage estimate of 1.5 million Fall Chum Salmon which is well ahead of the median of 434,300. The first pulse of Fall Chum Salmon hit Pilot Station on July 20, the second pulse hit on July 29, and the third on August 3. A fourth passed the sonar August 13 through August 18 and totaled a whopping 1.0 million Fall Chum Salmon!

The Coho Salmon had a slow start but numbers are picking up. The LYTF has a cumulative CPUE of 115 through August 17, slightly below the average. The MVTF has a cumulative CPUE of 227, below the average of 376. Total Coho Salmon cumulative

passage estimate past the Pilot Station sonar is 63,500, above the average of 46,000. The Coho Salmon run is between the ¼ point and mid-point of the run in the lower Yukon.

The Chandalar River sonar began operations on August 8 and has an estimated Fall Chum Salmon passage of 11,400 through August 17, above the average of 7,100. The Porcupine River sonar at Old Crow has an estimated passage of 387 Fall Chum Salmon. This project is relatively new so historical comparisons are not available at this time.

Fall Chum Salmon genetics from the Pilot Station sonar test fishery has been analyzed for the first three pulses, and stock proportions are within expected ranges.

Fall Season Management Actions

Most of the Alaskan portion of the drainage is under fall season management. Subsistence fishing in the Coastal District and District 3 is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Subsistence fishing in District 1 and 2 is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishing in District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C was relaxed from two, 48-hr. periods per week to 5 days per week at the start of their fall season. Drift gillnet fishing opened in the upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A on August 3. Subsistence fishermen in the middle river requested additional subsistence fishing time to harvest a strong pulse expected to pass their area during a scheduled closed fishing period. Because assessment near the mid-point in the run indicates with confidence that the Fall Chum Salmon run could support the additional fishing opportunity, District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C were liberalized to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Subsistence fishermen in all areas throughout the river may use gillnets with a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches.

Ten commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 1 with a preliminary harvest of 255,000 Fall Chum Salmon and 13,600 Coho Salmon. Nine commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 2 with a preliminary harvest of 82,000 Fall Chum Salmon and 3,600 Coho Salmon. Commercial market capacity in District 2 is greatly reduced from previous years, which has led to a significant portion of the fishing fleet shifting to District 1. Fall season commercial salmon fishing started in Subdistrict 4-A on July 29 and ended on August 12. Preliminary harvest after 5, 24-hr. commercial fishing periods is 7,304 Fall Chum Salmon. One commercial period in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C has a preliminary harvest of 944 Fall Chum Salmon. Fall season commercial harvests are expected in District 6 when the buyer is ready and fish arrive.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation had occurred during the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the Yukon River Panel meeting and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Fairbanks that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options.

The eleventh Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association teleconference was held on August 15. Fishermen, for the most part, are waiting for Fall Chum to arrive.

KUSKOKWIM REGION

Kuskokwim River – Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Contact kenneth_stahlnecker@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or lewis_coggins@fws.gov

No Report Submitted.

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

Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

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

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

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

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

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

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

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

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

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

Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.
(907) 443-2522 ken_adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound District

This year looks like another Top 10 silver harvest is coming, and for the fourth year in a row exceeding 100,000 silvers harvested. The ADF&G forecast was for a harvest of 90,000 - 120,000 silvers. Escapements have been above average.

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative commercial catch is 400 kings, 156,000 chums, 2,000 sockeyes, 20,000 pinks and 80,000 silvers by 122 permit holders. Subdistricts 2-6 (all except Nome) have gone to a weekly fishing schedule for the remainder of August. The fishing schedule is from 6 PM Tuesdays until 6 PM Thursdays, and from 6 PM Fridays until 6 PM Mondays.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open 7 days a week in all Norton Sound subdistricts, except the Nome Subdistrict which is now switching to the silver salmon fishing schedule.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative commercial catch is 7 kings, 6,000 chums, 1,700 pinks, 225 sockeyes and 400 silvers by 4 permit holders. The next commercial fishing period is from 8 PM Friday until 8 PM Sunday.

Subsistence Fishing: The Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule is in effect. It runs from 6 PM Wednesday to 6 PM Monday in all freshwater subsistence areas. All marine waters are open seven days a week. Beach seines are no longer a legal gear to harvest salmon. Cast nets and dip nets can be used in the subsistence areas during the net fishing schedule.

Solomon River Weir - A Fish and Game project. It has no escapement goals established. The project has been pulled, and the cumulative counts through August 11 were 8 kings, 4,000 chums, 61,000 pinks and 180 silvers. The chum count was a record and the silver count was a record for the time counted in the 5 year project history.

Nome River Weir – A Fish and Game project with assistance from NSEDC. It has escapement goals of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 3,200 pink salmon. The cumulative counts through August 14 were 18 kings, 7,800 chums, 700,000 pinks, 230 sockeyes and 900 silvers. In the 25-year project history, the chum count is a record, and the pink count is a record for an odd-numbered year and is over double the previous record pink count set in 2005. The silver count is off to the best start in 10 years.

Snake River Weir – A Fish and Game project between Fish and Game and NSEDC. It has an escapement goals of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The cumulative counts through August 11 were 2 kings, 4,500 chums, 19,000 pinks, 12 sockeyes and 50 silvers. For the

same date the chum count is the fourth highest, and the pink count is the second highest for an odd-numbered year in the 23 year project history. The silver count is below average. High water has prevented further counting.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch is 3 kings, 6,900 chums, 200 pinks, 75 sockeyes and 530 silvers by 7 permit holders. The silver catch has slowed and is on track for the 5th highest catch in the last 10 years of fishing, but well below the record catches that occurred in the 2010s.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. The cumulative counts through August 12 were 168 kings, 161,000 chums, 1.4 million pinks, 24 sockeyes 8,800 silvers. The silver count is above average. High water has prevented further counting.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch is 32 kings, 11,000 chums, 2,900 pinks, 300 sockeyes and 5,500 silvers by 21 permit holders. The silver catch has been well above average and on track for a Top 5 finish.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions, and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

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 August 14 were 54 kings, 33,000 chums, 500,000 pinks and 3,700 silvers. The silver count is off to the best start in 10 years.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch is 52 kings, 29,000 chums, 3,300 pinks, 200 sockeyes and 1,700 silvers by 16 permit holders. The silver catch is well below the recent record catches and ranks 7th highest in the last 10 years of fishing.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. The cumulative counts to July 30

were 2,200 kings, 90,000 chums, 1.6 million pinks and 2,400 silvers. High water has prevented further counting.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch is 39 kings, 41,000 chums, 1,500 pinks, 350 sockeyes and 29,000 silvers by 24 permit holders. The silver catches are well above average and on track for a Top 5 finish.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions.

Shaktoolik Tower/Sonar – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals established. The cumulative counts through August 14 were 1,270 kings, 120,000 chums, 1.8 million pinks and 8,100 silvers.

Unalakeet (Subdistrict 6)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch is 266 kings, 62,000 chums, 10,300 pinks, 880 sockeyes and 43,000 silvers by 53 permit holders. The silver catch is well above average and on track for a Top 10 finish.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions

Unalakeet River Floating Weir – a cooperative project of Fish and Game, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), Native Village of Unalakeet and BLM, with major funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. No escapement goals have yet been established. The project has been pulled, and the cumulative counts to August 10 were 2,900 kings, 144,000 chums, 5.8 million pinks, 1,100 sockeyes and 18,000 silvers. The silver count was the second highest trailing only the 2015 run.

North River Tower – Camp J. B. – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. It has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings, no goal established for chums, 25,000 pinks and 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative counts to August 1 were 1,044 kings, 23,000 chums, 1.4 million pinks and 900 silvers. High water has prevented further counting.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence gillnet and beach seining are open seven days a week. All subsistence sockeye limits have been waived.

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 August 14 were 98 kings, 45,000 chums, 80,000 pinks, 55,000 sockeyes and 200 silvers. The sockeye count may end up finishing second highest (56,000) to the record 85,000 sockeyes counted in 2004. Sockeye passage has slowed to a little over 100 fish daily. The average midpoint of sockeye passage through the weir this season was July 15, about 4 days earlier than the historical average.

Kotzebue District

Commercial Fishing: The commercial harvest is 366,000 chum salmon and ranks 10th highest of all time and may finish as high as sixth best in the 56 year history of the fishery. For the second year in a row it may exceed 400,000 chum salmon harvested. The ADF&G forecast was for a harvest of 250,000 to 450,000 chum salmon. The extra processing capacity with the floating processor in Kotzebue now allows for additional fishing time because airplane cargo capacity is not a limiting factor and the fishing fleet has not been placed on catch limits this year.

Kobuk River Test Fish - a Fish and Game project. After the previous weekend's break from commercial fishing, the Kobuk River test drifts have lit up with the 10th highest daily chum salmon catch index in the 25-year project history. Those catches trailed only 9 daily catch indexes during the record 2014 run. The cumulative test net catch index through August 14 ranks 8th highest in project history.

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