

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 23-28, 2018.

Report #18 - Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, 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.

Yukon River

Gerald Maschmann and Fred Bue, Fish Biologists, USFWS Fairbanks Office.

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The Emmonak Field Office is closed for the season. You can contact management staff at 907-455-1849 or 907-456-0406.

This will be the final summary submitted for the 2018 season. Please contact author at the above contact information if you have questions or comments.

The 2018 Fall Chum Salmon run is essentially over in the lower and middle portions of the Yukon area. A few upper Yukon fishermen are putting away “crib fish” for winter dog food. Most subsistence fishermen have transitioned to fall season activities such as moose hunting and preparing for the winter. Commercial fishing in the lower Yukon closed by regulation on September 10. The preliminary reconstructed run size based on the Pilot Station sonar plus the estimated harvest downstream is over 1.2 million fish, above the median of 801,300 fish and expectations. This level of abundance is typically sufficient to meet escapement and subsistence needs, and provide a surplus for commercial and personal use purposes. The Coho Salmon run appears to be tracking near the expected average total run size at this time. The preliminary reconstructed run size based on the Pilot Station sonar plus the estimated harvest downstream is 232,000 Coho Salmon, which is above the median of 200,500 fish. At this time managers are following the returns at upriver assessment and escapement projects, particularly the Chandalar River, Eagle, and Porcupine River sonars.

Fall Assessment Information

Lower Yukon assessment projects have ceased operations for the season. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Mt. Village Test Fishery, and Pilot Station sonar ended above the median for the season and showed a Fall Chum run about seven days later than normal, the latest on record. The Chandalar River sonar began operations on August 12 and ceased operations on September 28. The sonar has an estimated passage of 130,579 Fall Chum Salmon through September 26, well below the median of 216,419. However, the project has exceeded the lower end of its

escapement goal range of 74,000 to 152,000 and the tail of the run will be extrapolated out to account for late missed fish. The Eagle sonar transitioned over the fall season on August 21 and has a cumulative passage estimate of 98,675 Fall Chum Salmon through September 30, well below the average of 144,638. Both the Chandalar River sonar and Eagle sonar are still experiencing high rates of passage, taking into account the late run timing of the Fall Chum run, both projects are expected to surpass the upper ends of their escapement goals. The Porcupine River sonar at Old Crow, CA, has a passage count of 11,780 Fall Chum Salmon through September 30, well below the average of 30,775. The Fishing Branch River weir has a passage count of 4,371 Fall Chum Salmon through September 30, well below the average of 21,458.

Coho Salmon typically overlap the second half of the Fall Chum Salmon run. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery, Mt. Village Test Fishery, and Pilot Station sonar ended below the median for the season and showed a Coho Salmon run about four days later than normal and the latest run on record.

Fall Season Management Actions

The Coastal District and Districts 1 through 3 are open to subsistence salmon fishing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. District 4 and Subdistricts 5A, 5B, and 5C have had subsistence fishing opportunity increased from 5 to 7 days per week as an effort to compensate fishermen for foregone harvest when conserving Chinook Salmon earlier in the season. Subsistence fishing in Subdistrict 5D is open on its full standard schedule of 24 hours a day, seven days a week and Subdistricts 6A and 6B are on their standard schedules of two 42-hour periods per week. At this time, all areas allow 7.5" or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels during salmon fishing periods. Subsistence fishing in the Alaska portion of the mainstem Porcupine River has been restricted to 4 days per week to provide protection for Fishing Branch stocks that have shown lower productivity in recent years. Managers will be closely watching the passage past the Porcupine River sonar in Old Crow to determine if further restrictions will be necessary.

Twenty fall season commercial periods have occurred in District 1 and twenty-one in District 2 this season with a preliminary combined harvest of 370,266 Fall Chum Salmon and 106,079 Coho Salmon. Subdistrict 4-A had one fall season commercial period with an estimated harvest of 596 Chum Salmon. Commercial fishing is open 24-hours per day, seven days per week in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C with 900 Fall Chum Salmon harvested through August 20, the last period fished. This is a small scale commercial fishery with an expected harvest of around 2,000 Fall Chum Salmon. Commercial fishing began in District 6 on August 17. Preliminary harvest estimates are 3,902 Fall Chum Salmon and 551 Coho Salmon.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Outreach efforts continued during the season. The thirteenth and final YRDFFA weekly teleconference was held on August 28 with very few subsistence fishermen reporting. Some fishermen were satisfied with their Chinook Salmon harvest this season and others were short of filling their subsistence needs. Furthermore, the fall season outlook and management strategies were discussed on the later YRDFFA teleconferences. Participants communicated the importance of the fall chum

salmon run in meeting their subsistence needs due the lack of Chinook salmon in this year's harvests.

KUSKOKWIM RIVER

In Season Manager – Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact Kenneth_Stahlnecker@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov or author Aaron Moses Aaron_Moses@fws.gov

Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

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/>

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

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

Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), **Forest Service, Tongass National Forest**
September 21, 2018

Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Prince William Sound – Copper River

Copper River, 8/18/2018 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

Links:

ADFG 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>

ADFG Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

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

ADFG Gulkana River counting tower

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

ADFG Emergency Orders and News Releases

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

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

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Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office
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Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

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

Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

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

Reporting concluded for season. Contact author with questions and comments at above contact information.

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