

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 26-JUNE 2 , 2019. Report #1

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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 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

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which will be operational the first week of July. The final escapement estimate in 2018 was 2,261 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 720. Subsistence harvest accounted for 90% of terminal area harvest.

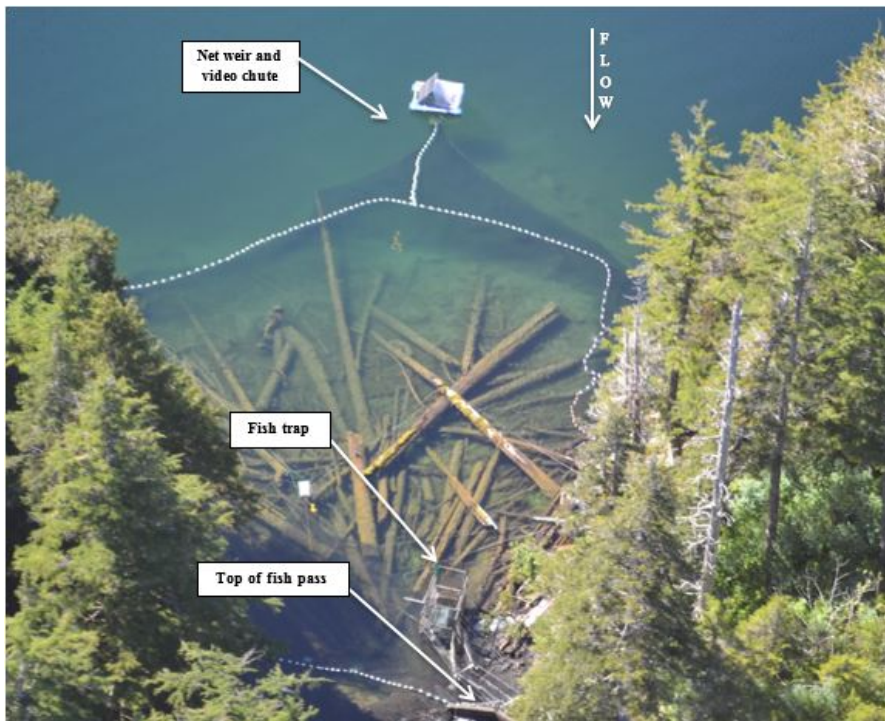


Figure 1. Aerial photo of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

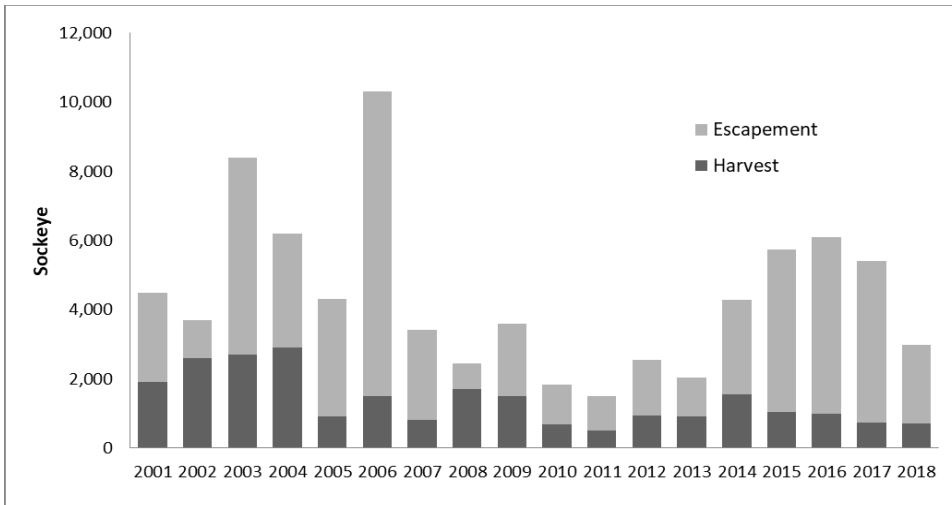


Figure 2. Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2018.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is scheduled to be operational the last week in June. In 2018, approximately 2,444 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,387 were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

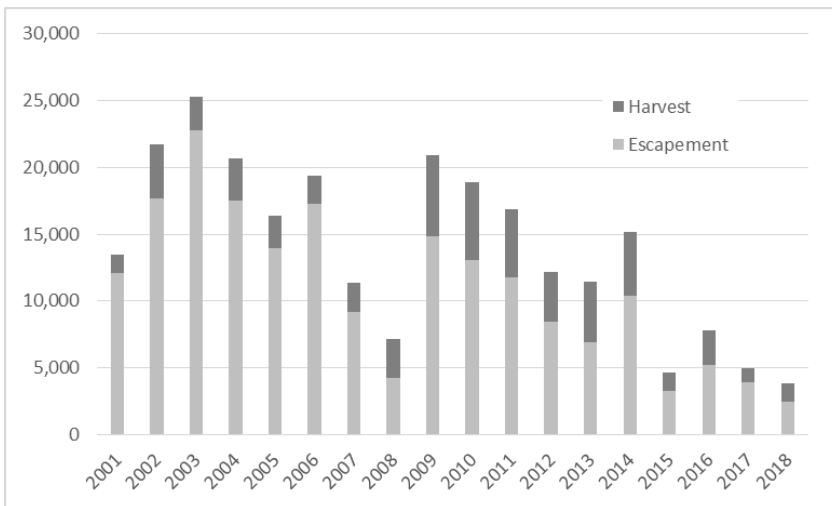


Figure 3. Reported harvest and escapement for rate for Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon, 2001-2018.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which is scheduled to be operational in mid-June. In 2018, an estimated 73,810 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 9, in accordance with the Redoubt Lake Management Plan, the individual/household subsistence sockeye possession limit was set at 25 and the individual/household subsistence sockeye annual limit was set at 100. These limits were based on an in-season model prediction of about 95,000 sockeye returning.

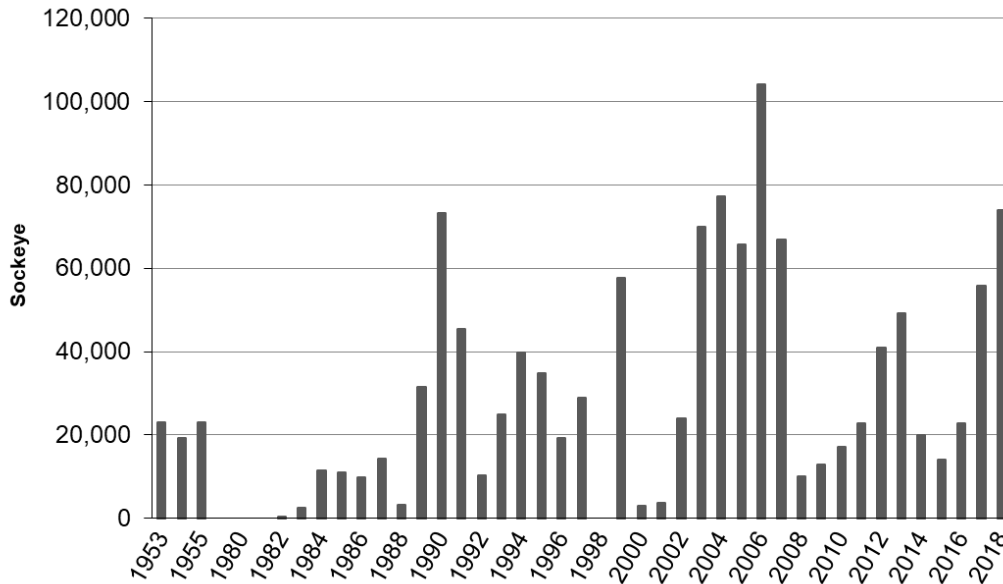


Figure 4. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2018. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Gut Bay - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake will begin monitoring escapement and harvest of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon this year. 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.

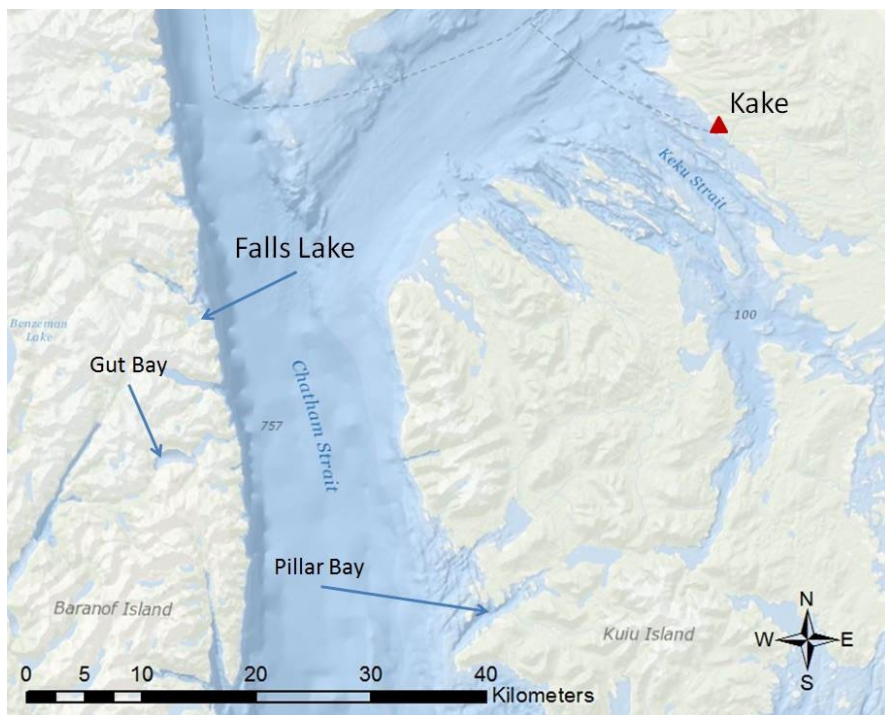


Figure 5. Location of Gut Bay in relation to Falls Lake and the village of Kake

Sitka Sound Pacific Herring – The commercial, subsistence, and spawning season for Pacific Herring in Sitka Sound occurs about mid-March through mid-April. The commercial sac roe herring fishery did not occur in 2018. The guideline harvest level (GHL) was 12,869, however, marketable size fish could not be located in high enough quantity to warrant a fishery. Accounts from the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and other harvesters indicate good quantity and quality of subsistence roe harvest. Miles of shoreline receiving herring spawn indicates the spawning season was about average. However, preliminary estimates of spawn-extent from shore, and deposition are encouraging and may bolster the post spawn biomass population estimate. This estimate will be available this Fall.

[Alaska Department of Fish and Game news release with a synopsis of the commercial season](#)

Sitka Chinook Salmon – The King Salmon season in Sitka is off to a slow start for both the commercial and sport fisheries. Fishers from both groups report below average catch rates although sport anglers are reporting an improvement over last spring. Management measures have decreased the bag limits for resident and non-resident sport anglers and curtailed commercial fishery opportunity.

[More information on King Salmon management in Southeast Alaska](#)

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

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

The Sockeye Salmon runs and subsistence fisheries have not started yet in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. Project personnel with the Forest Service and the Angoon Community Association are preparing for the Sockeye Salmon monitoring project at Sitkoh Lake, which is scheduled to begin in early July. The Kook Lake project will not operate this year, and the Neva Lake project is still tentative.

The Sitkoh Lake project will use a pair of remotely-monitored swim-through video weirs to get validated counts of salmon entering the lake. Live video from the site will be digitally transmitted to Angoon, where project personnel will record motion-triggered clips from the underwater video chute cameras. The feed from the underwater and site surveillance cameras can be viewed at any time over the internet.



Figure 1. Video weirs at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake, 2017

In the Yakutat area, counts of steelhead kelts through the ADF&G Situk weir are considerably below normal, with only 599 counted as of May 27th. This compares to counts of 3,123, 4,574, and 5,555 on the same date in 2017, 2016, and 2015 respectively. The weir was installed later than normal due to heavy spring rains, complicating the estimate of the steelhead return in 2018. ADF&G forecasts a run of 730 Chinook Salmon to the Situk River in 2018, and has closed the sport, subsistence and commercial fisheries in order to meet the biological escapement goal of 450-1,050 large Chinook Salmon. The Forest Service also will not issue permits for the subsistence take of Chinook Salmon in the Situk until further notice. The Sockeye Salmon runs in the Yakutat area begin in mid-June.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649 jreeves@fs.fed.us No report for this week.

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=RI.home>

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

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

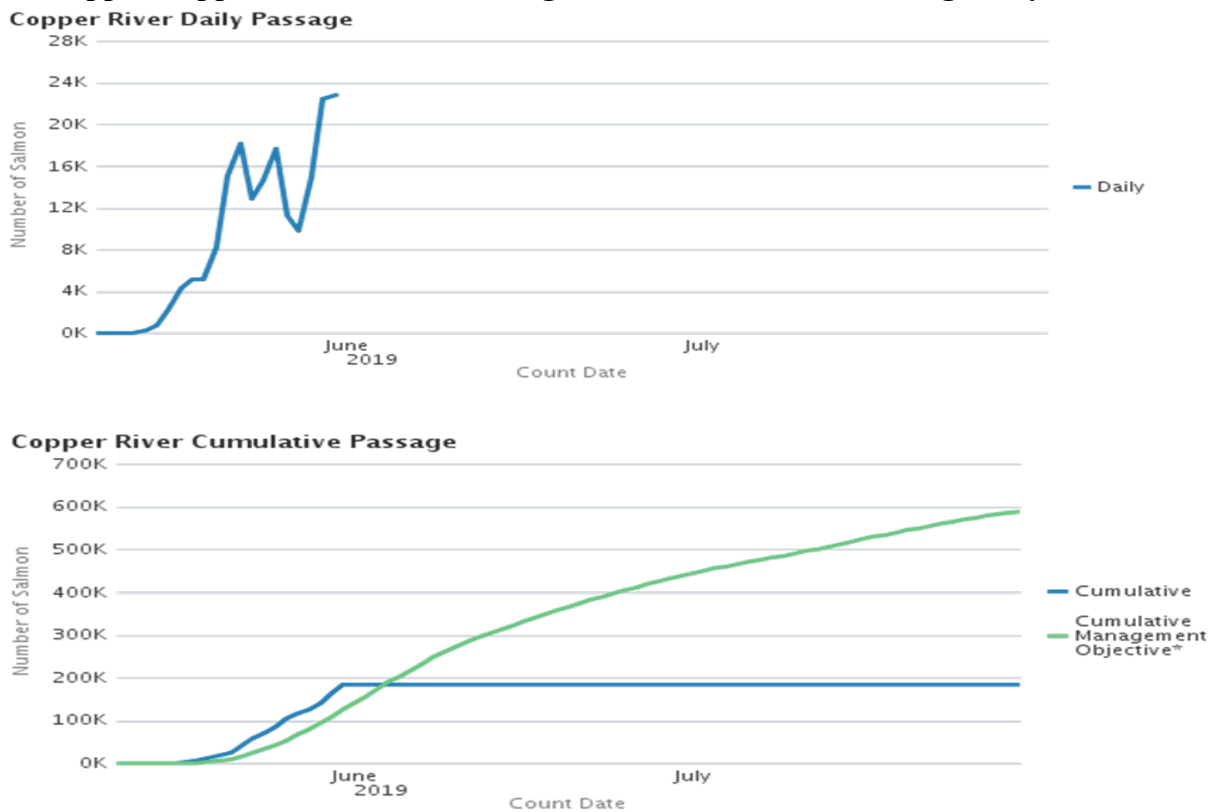
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER

Copper River, 5/31/2019 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, dave_sarafin@nps.gov

In January of 2019, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) provided preseason forecasts of 55,000 Copper River Chinook Salmon and 1,416,000 wild stock Copper River Sockeye Salmon. Relative to recent 10-year averages, these forecasts are above average for Chinook Salmon and below average for Sockeye Salmon. In February, Federal and State fisheries managers met to discuss this forecast, anticipated early season management strategies, and plans for improving communications with local stakeholders regarding the run strength assessments and management actions throughout the season.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began recording salmon passage on May 10. As of May 31, 202,464 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 43% above the projected passage of 141,927 for this date, or 60,537 more salmon. A daily estimate of 16,140 salmon migrated by the sonar on May 31. The Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River appears to be tracking approximately 3-4 days earlier than projected based on long-term average run timing. Federal managers will continue to monitor run strength indicators to evaluate the need for appropriate fisheries management actions in the Copper River Drainage.

2019 Upper Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar through May 30



Source:

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

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has opened for 5 fishing periods between May 16 and May 30. Total commercial harvest reported for the season is 326,357 Sockeye Salmon and 10,159 Chinook Salmon.

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict will open on June 1. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict is scheduled to open for a 72-hour fishing period from June 7 through June 9.

By regulation, the Federal subsistence fisheries of the Upper Copper River District and the Batzulnetas area are scheduled to be open from May 15 through September 30. In the past, regulatory Special Actions had been taken in the Chitina Subdistrict to periodically close and reopen the fishery following the schedule for the State personal use fishery. In 2018, the opening date was delayed from May 15 until June 1 as a precautionary measure to minimize potential impacts to early season salmon stocks bound for upriver spawning areas and harvest locations; a continuous fishing schedule was then maintained throughout the season. This was the first season continuous fishing was permitted. Harvest in the Chitina Subdistrict by Federally qualified fishers did increase in the 2018 season, however, the level of harvest was still very low compared to other upriver fisheries, and the harvest increase in the Chitina Subdistrict was offset by a similar decrease in harvest in the Glennallen Subdistrict. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

and Preserve fisheries management staff have received only positive feedback regarding the increased harvest opportunity for Federal subsistence users associated with this change in management practice.

The Federal subsistence fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict opened on May 15 and is expected to remain open through September 30. Sixty-six (66) Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15 and is expected to remain open until September 30. One hundred twenty-two (122) Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. No Federal permits have been issued.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fish wheels captured and tagged 1,936 Chinook Salmon through May 30. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 297 Chinook Salmon through May 30, of which, 11 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

Due to a lack of funding, the fish weirs at Tanada Creek and Long Lake will not be operated this year.

The ADFG counting tower in the Gulkana River was set up for operation on May 31; passage monitoring is scheduled to begin June 1.

No Federal Special Actions have been issued by the in-season manager this 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 Gulkana River counting tower

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

ADF&G 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.
6 June 2017.**

(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

No report submitted, expect first report next week.

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

The 2019 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon will begin on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Seasons for subsistence fishing with rod and reel are the same as for the taking of fish under Alaska sport fishing regulations. Most of the initial rod and reel subsistence effort will be focused at Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opens on June 11.

Permits have been issued for community gillnet fisheries on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. Regulatory dates for the Kasilof River community gillnet fishery are from June 16 through August 15. Regulatory periods for the Kenai River community gillnet fishery are from July 1 through August 15 and from September 10 – 30.

USFWS and USFS staff will issue permits in Cooper Landing (June 4) and Hope (June 6). USFWS staff issued permits in Ninilchik on May 14.

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

Report expected next 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

These areas support abundant returns of salmon, particularly Sockeye Salmon; as well as some of the largest commercial fisheries for salmon in Alaska. All of the assessments of salmon returns are conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and provide

the basis for any inseason assessment and management. None of the adjustments in commercial fishing management throughout any of these areas are anticipated to affect subsistence fishing in Federally-managed waters.

Bristol Bay:

The 2019 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run is forecast to be approximately 40 million fish for the nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak. Based on the forecast 27 million fish are available for commercial inshore harvest. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has strategies in place for all mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opens June 1 by regulation and commercial fishing openings have been announced. Fishing in eastside districts and Togiak will be allowed using a weekly schedule that will vary by district. The schedules are in place to balance fishing opportunity with escapement in the early part of the season, particularly for Chinook Salmon. As each run develops and Sockeye Salmon run characteristics become defined within individual districts, fishing time will be adjusted accordingly. In the Nushagak District, management of the Chinook Salmon fishery will govern fishing time in the early part of the season, followed by directed Sockeye Salmon management as abundance dictates.

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

Escapement Goals:

Kvichak	SEG = 2,000,000 – 10,000,000
Alagnak	SEG = 320,000 minimum
Naknek	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Egegik	SEG = 800,000 – 2,000,000
Ugashik	SEG = 500,000 – 1,400,000
Wood River	SEG = 700,000 – 1,800,000
Igushik	SEG = 150,000 – 400,000
Nushagak	SEG = 370,000 – 900,000
Togiak	SEG = 120,000 – 270,000

Chignik:

The 2019 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 1,739,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 1,001,000 Sockeye Salmon. The CMA is composed of five fishing districts: Eastern, Central, Chignik Bay, Western, and Perryville. In June, the first commercial fishing period in the Chignik Bay, Central, and Eastern districts and the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District may occur after approximately 20,000 Sockeye Salmon have escaped or are expected to escape into

the Chignik River. The Chignik River Chinook Salmon harvest is dependent upon the amount of commercial fishing time for Sockeye Salmon in July. The commercial harvest 10 year average is approximately 7,000 fish. The ADF&G will host a commercial fishing stakeholder meeting on June 3. The Federal inseason manager and OSM will host a federal subsistence meeting in Chignik Bay on June 8 with local subsistence users.

Note: The Board of Fisheries in February 2019 reduced the in-river goal from 75,000 to 20,000 Sockeye Salmon, 10,000 fish are required to pass the weir in August, in addition to minimum escapement objectives, while the remainder are required to escape during the month of September.

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 late run escapement goals
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, as well as the Aleutian Islands. The largest fisheries are managed under management plans. Management objectives vary by district and time. Several Sockeye Salmon escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, McLees, and Orzinski systems. Preseason forecasts are made only for the Nelson River and late-run Bear Lake stocks. The 2019 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 217,000 – 523,000 fish for the Nelson River and 182,000 – 635,000 fish for late-run Bear Lake. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon.

Escapement Goals:

Nelson River	BEG = 97,000 – 219,000
Late-run Bear Lake	BEG = 117,000 – 195,000

Aleutian Islands.

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

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.

Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov or

Fred Bue Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is open for summer management activities. The office can be contacted by calling (907) 949-1798.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The Summer Chum Salmon run is projected to be above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of up to 1.2 million Summer Chum Salmon is anticipated to be available for commercial harvest. However, commercial harvest opportunity will depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run. The Chinook Salmon outlook is projecting a below average run size of 168,000 to 241,000 fish, similar to last year. The 2019 Chinook Salmon run may be large enough to provide for similar subsistence harvests to last year. However, a cautionary approach will be taken early in the season, and inseason management strategies will be based on run assessment information once fish begin entering the river. If assessment indicates the Chinook salmon run size is near the upper end of the outlook range, and goals are projected to be met, subsistence fishing restrictions would likely be relaxed. If that occurs, commercial Chum Salmon fishermen may be given the opportunity to sell Chinook Salmon incidentally-caught in the Chum Salmon fishery. This would likely be at the tail end of the run, when the majority of Chinook Salmon have passed upriver for escapement and subsistence harvest purposes. The following management strategies were formulated after extensive public input:

- The sport fishery for Chinook salmon will begin the season closed (effective May 11) throughout the U.S. portion of the Yukon River drainage, excluding the

Tanana River drainage. Chinook salmon may not be retained or possessed. Management actions for the Tanana River drainage will be announced in early June.

- Before Chinook salmon enter the river, subsistence fishing will be open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Whenever gillnets are allowed, fishermen may choose to use *smaller* mesh gillnets than specified.
- As Chinook salmon enter each district, subsistence salmon fishing will be provided on a reduced regulatory schedule with 7.5-inch mesh gillnets.
- Commercial fishing for summer chum salmon will begin with selective gear, based on inseason run assessment and processor capacity.
- If inseason assessment indicates a poorer than anticipated run, subsistence fishing gear may be restricted to 6" or smaller and/or periods may be cancelled (similar to last year). If confidence is high that the Chinook salmon run is adequate and escapement goals are likely to be met, the use of 7.5-inch gillnets on a full regulatory schedule will be considered.
- The department may consider sale of Chinook salmon incidentally-caught in the commercial chum fishery. This would only be considered if: assessment indicates the Chinook salmon run size is near the upper end of the outlook range, goals are projected to be met, subsistence fishing opportunity has been provided and restrictions relaxed. Any sale would likely be after the majority of Chinook salmon have passed upriver for escapement and subsistence harvest purposes.

Assessment Information

According to Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center ice out on the lower Yukon River at the village of Emmonak occurred on May 8, well earlier than the historical median of May 20 and the second earliest since 1974. Additionally, Bering Sea ice retreated off the coast early, leaving the Yukon River mouth ice free with no spring flooding. Climate modeling provided by NOAA, ADF&G, and AOOS, managers are anticipating normal entry timing for Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon. A few Subsistence fishermen in the lower Yukon River area have been fishing since ice out and are reporting high debris loads. The first subsistence caught Chinook Salmon and Summer Chum Salmon was reportedly caught at Tin Can Point in a six-inch set net on May 23. One Chinook Salmon was caught in Russian Mission on May 24, and five Chinook Salmon were caught at Tin Can Point on May 24. Lower Yukon test fishing began on May 23-26. Fishing has been difficult due to very high debris loads and snags. Test fishing at Middle Mouth is anticipated to begin around June 5 depending on river conditions and debris loads. Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon catches for both subsistence fishermen and the test fishery have been sporadic. Managers anticipate test fishery catches to increase in the coming days. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 1; however, test fishing catches have been too low to generate passage estimates and they have only

caught sheefish so far in the test fishery. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fishery in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. At this time, it is too early to assess the overall strength of either the Chinook or Chum Salmon runs. The average first quarter point in the LYTF for Chinook Salmon is June 16 for the years 1989-2018, and June 19 for the years 1995-2018. The average first quarter point in the LYTF for Summer Chum Salmon is June 18 for the years 2001-2018.

Management Actions

Until more assessment data become available, management decisions will be consistent with the preseason projections. At this time, subsistence salmon fishing in the southern portion of the Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, and 3 are open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The northern portion of the Coastal District and District 1 will be managed as one district for 2019. Subsistence salmon fishing in the lower Yukon will be placed on half its regulatory schedule of two, 18-hour periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear when Chinook Salmon begin entering the river in significant numbers. This could be sometime this week. Chinook Salmon caught incidentally may be retained for subsistence purposes. Subsistence fishing in the Innoko River, Koyukuk River, Districts 4 and 5, Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B, Old Minto and Upper Tanana Areas are open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and restricted to 7.5-inch or less mesh gillnet and fish wheel gear. The personal use fishery in Subdistrict 6-C is open on its regulatory schedule of two, 42-hour periods per week restricted to 7.5-inch or less mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, gillnets that have mesh size 4-inches or smaller not exceeding 60 feet in length may be used to target non-Salmon species. The sequential activation of subsistence fishing restrictions will continue in all districts as the Chinook Salmon migrate upstream.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed during the fall of 2018 and spring of 2019 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, at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting, and at the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission annual meeting. On April 24, 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.

KUSKOKWIM RIVER

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

Summary:

These are the restrictions to the harvest of Chinook Salmon from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to the Yukon Delta NWR boundary above the village of Aniak:

- **June 1 –June 11, 2019:** Harvest of Chinook Salmon allowable with Dip Nets, Beach Seines, Fish Wheels & Rod and Reel in mainstem Kuskokwim River.
 - ****Gillnets in mainstem not allowed until announced****
 - **** Gillnets and all other methods in salmon spawning tributaries not allowed for Chinook Salmon ****
 - ****Gillnets in non-salmon spawning tributaries allowed above 100 yards****
- **OPPORTUNITY #1: June 1, 2019:** 6 inch or less set gillnets for federally qualified users from 11:00AM to 11:00PM.
 - Must be attached to bank, oriented perpendicular to river, may not exceed 60 feet in length in water, may not be operated more than 100 feet from ordinary highwater mark.

Test Fisheries:

As of June 1, 2019 the CPUE for Chinook at the Bethel test fish is at 4. 2018 and 2017 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 1 and 1 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

NEW = 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.
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The coastal waters of the southern Chukchi Sea and the waters of the Bering Sea are largely ice free. Marine mammal hunting has largely wound down, and many residents are beginning to look forward to a good summer of fishing.

The area covered in these weekly Fisheries Updates for Northwest Alaska include two federal subsistence management regions (the Seward Peninsula and the Northwest Arctic) and three State of Alaska districts (Norton Sound, Port Clarence and Kotzebue. The Seward Peninsula Region contains two of the districts: Norton Sound and Port Clarence. In turn, the Norton Sound District includes six numbered subdistricts: Unalakleet (6), Shaktoolik (5), Norton Bay (4), Elim (3), Golovin (2) and Nome (1). The Port Clarence District also includes the Pilgrim River and Salmon Lake. The Northwest Arctic Region contains one district (Kotzebue). The districts and subdistricts are based on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game organizational structure for the management of commercial and subsistence fisheries. Two other references a reader might encounter are Northern Norton Sound and Southern Norton Sound. Northern Norton Sound includes all marine and fresh waters of Subdistricts 1 through 3 (Nome, Golovin and Elim) as well as the Cape Wooley area of the Norton Sound District, and the Port Clarence District. Southern Norton Sound waters include the Norton Bay Subdistrict beginning at Bald Head, between Elim and Koyuk, to the southern Norton Sound District boundary at Point Romanof. This area includes Subdistricts 4 (Norton Bay), 5 (Shaktoolik) and 6 (Unalakleet). Report updates will generally begin with the southernmost areas, then move progressively northwards.

Since we are so far north our commercial fishing seasons tend to trail behind those in the more southerly areas so that we currently are seeing very little activity. Therefore we will begin this year's reports with snapshot summaries of the 2018 season followed by the 2019 season forecasts for a comparative starting point. As the season progresses and activity increases we will add in new events.

Norton Sound District

2018 Season Summary:

The 2018 season saw well above average to near record runs of chum, pink, sockeye and silver salmon. The coho commercial harvest was a record. The chum salmon commercial harvest was the second highest on record and the best since 1993. The sockeye salmon commercial harvest, although a small proportion of the overall harvest, was the second highest on record at over 3,600 fish. The pink salmon run was one of the greatest runs for an even numbered year and pink salmon escapements were records at some counting projects. No commercial fishing for king salmon was allowed; however the king salmon run met escapement for the first time since 2015.

2019 Season Outlook:

Salmon outlooks and harvest projections for the 2019 salmon season are based on qualitative assessments of parent-year escapements, sibling relationships, subjective determination of freshwater overwintering and ocean survival, and in the case of the commercial fisheries, the projections of local market conditions.

Strong chum and silver salmon runs are expected similar to last year when the chum run was the strongest since 1983, and the silver run set a record. ADF&G expects the commercial chum harvest to be about 170,000 to 220,000 fish. The silver salmon harvest is expected to be around 190,000 to 240,000 fish. The king salmon run, however, is projected to be weak with no commercial fishing targeting king salmon in Norton Sound.

The ADF&G Division of Sport Fish announced on April 24 restrictions on sport fishing for king salmon in the fresh waters from Bald Head to Point (Southern Norton Sound) effective June 15

Similar to last year, restrictions on subsistence fishing time in Subdistrict 4 (Norton bay) in order to protect king salmon will be needed. Various fishing restrictions may also be necessary in Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolok), Subdistrict 6 (Unalakleet) and the St. Michael and Stebbins area as well in order to protect king salmon. Details will be provided in future updates as the restrictions are put into place.

Herring catches had been reported in the Unalakleet area for several days in early May so the ADF&G opened the commercial herring bait fishery to set gillnets on May 9 until further notice. Norton Sound Seafood Products plans to buy approximately 40 tons of bait herring this season he bait herring quota this year is over 6,000 tons, but there is no buyer interest for the sac roe fishery.

The ADF&G Unalakleet field office will not open until June and a test fishery crew will not be conducting operations this season.

Kotzebue District

The Kotzebue District includes all the waters from Cape prince of Wales to point hope. The district is divided into three subdistricts. Subdistrict 2, located near the mouth of the Noatak River is closed to commercial fishing by regulation. Most commercial fishing occurs in Subdistrict 1 which is subdivided into six statistical areas to help managers determine catch locations. Chum salmon is the most abundant anadromous fish species although king salmon, pink salmon, silver salmon and sockeye salmon occur in lessor numbers as do Dolly Varden and sheefish.

2018 Season Summary:

The 2018 commercial harvest was a record of 695,153 chum salmon harvested by 95 permit holders for an average price of \$0.40 per pound

2019 Season Outlook:

The outlook for the 2019 season is based on the parent-year escapements and returning age classes observed in the commercial fishery and in the test fish samples from the Kobuk River last year. The 5-year-old component of the run is expected to be well above average based on the 4-year-old return in 2018. The 4-year-old component of the run is expected to be average based on the 3-year-old return in 2018. The 3-year-old and 6-year-old age classes are much smaller components of the run and are expected to be average. The commercial harvest is expected to fall within the range of 450,000 to 650,000 chum salmon, but there is a possibility of a record harvest of nearly 700,000 chum salmon if market conditions can accept that level of harvest. The Department intends to open the commercial fishery any time after July 9 when the buyers are ready, or the permit holders indicate they are ready to fish and a market is available.

No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2019.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area

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