

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 4-10, 2017. Report #2.

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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

The 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas is just beginning. To date, 92 permits have been issued.

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
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Deployed in field. No report this week.

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

Nothing new to report for this week. This year's run of Chinook Salmon to the Stikine River is forecasted to be 18,300 fish which is too low, at this time, to support directed commercial, sport, or subsistence fisheries on this stock. The ADF&G plans to protect Stikine Chinook Salmon by shifting the first commercial drift gillnet opening in Districts 6 and 8 from Monday, June 12 to Monday June 19, requiring a six-inch maximum mesh size, reducing fishing area, and opening for 48 hours instead of 72 hours.

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**

The Sockeye Salmon runs and subsistence fisheries have not started yet in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. Project personnel are preparing for the Sockeye Salmon monitoring projects at Neva Lake, Kook Lake, and Sitkoh Lake. The Neva video weirs will begin next week, the Kook video weirs the following week, and Sitkoh video weirs in early-

July. The weekly report submitted last week provides more information on these projects and on the stocks and fisheries in the area.

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

The 2017 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko spring subsistence steelhead fishery ended on May 31st. A total of 42 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. Permits from this fishery are being returned and are not due back until June 15. The total reported harvest to date is 11 Steelhead Trout and 5 Dolly Varden.

With Chinook Salmon in local marine waters, most subsistence users are still actively fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of sockeye, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

Commercial seine and drift gillnet fishing in Districts 1-4 will be starting soon. Limited terminal harvest area commercial troll opportunity for Chinook and Chum Salmon is occurring to target Alaska hatchery origin salmon; however, all spring fisheries have been closed until further notice to protect mainland Chinook returns. The department plans to re-open the Chinook troll fishery on July 1.

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

The harvest limit reduction for Chinook Salmon taken by dip net or rod and reel in the Federal subsistence fisheries of the Upper Copper River District was rescinded by Special Action on June 10. The limit returned to 5 by each of these gear types. This management action was taken after review of preliminary inseason Chinook Salmon run strength indicators, which indicate the sustainable escapement goal may be achievable and that continued restrictions in the Federal subsistence fishery should no longer be necessary. The inriver Chinook Salmon run strength will continue to be monitored to assess the potential need for Federal subsistence fisheries management action in the fisheries of the Upper Copper River District.

As of June 11, 2017 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 331,674 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 24% more than the projected escapement of 267,299 for this date, or 64,375 more salmon. A daily estimate of 11,190 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on June 11.

The Chitina Subdistrict is currently open and scheduled to remain open through June 18. It is then tentatively scheduled to reopen immediately on June 19 and remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Fifty-five (55) 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 June 1 and is expected to remain open until September 30th. One hundred sixty-seven (167) 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 state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. One (1) Federal permit has been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek fish weir was installed and fish tight on June 7. The first Sockeye Salmon was counted past the weir on June 11. As of June 11, cumulative weir counts are 4 Sockeye Salmon and no (0) Chinook Salmon. The water in the creek has risen to a normal level.

As of June 10, 2,182 Chinook Salmon had been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak. The upriver fishwheels at Canyon Creek have captured 376 Chinook Salmon, of which, 22 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on June 2. As of June 10, ninety-six (96) Chinook Salmon have been counted to date.

Six Special Actions have been issued by the inseason manager this season:

- Delaying Upper Copper River District Federal subsistence fisheries until June 1.
- Reducing the Chinook Salmon harvest limit to 2 for the combined gear types of dip net or rod and reel in Upper Copper River District Federal subsistence fisheries.
- Delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict Federal subsistence salmon fishery to June 8 and setting the tentative pre-season schedule for this fishery.
- Allowing the use of bait and multiple hooks by Federal subsistence users while fishing with rod and reel in the mainstem Copper River.
- Revising the starting date for the Chitina Subdistrict Federal subsistence salmon fishery to June 7.
- Rescinding the Chinook Salmon harvest limit reduction for dip net or rod and reel and returning the limit to 5 taken by dip net and 5 taken by rod and reel, in the Upper Copper River District Federal subsistence fisheries.

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

A total of 21 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Prince William Sound of Chugach National Forest to date. 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 Salmon and 234 Sockeye Salmon 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

The 2017 subsistence dip net fisheries for salmon will begin on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers June 15 and June 16, respectively. Seasons and areas 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 the community gillnet fisheries on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers. Regulatory dates for the Kasilof River experimental 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 issued over 100 Kenai River permits and over 20 Kasilof River permits in Ninilchik, Cooper Landing, and Hope over the past 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
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kevin_vanhatten@fws.gov

The Sockeye Salmon returns continue to be strong along the west side of Kodiak Island. As of Wednesday, June 7, 2017, 149,575 Sockeye Salmon have passed the Karluk River weir (escapement goal range 110,000 to 250,000 fish); this is the highest escapement in the past 10 years. The Ayakulik River is also strong with 47,413 Sockeye Salmon (escapement goal range: 140,000 to 280,000 fish) passing the weir, which is also the highest count in the past 10 years. Litnik “Afognak” River system is not as strong as lower west side systems with only 6,119 Sockeye Salmon (escapement goal range: 20,000 to 50,000 fish) passing the weir. Buskin River continues to be have strong returning numbers with 3,803 Sockeye Salmon (escapement goal range: 5,000 to 8,000 fish) passing the weir. Both USFWS and ADF&G have decreased the closed waters through Special Action (9-RS-01-17) for Buskin River to subsistence fishing, which is effective from June 8, 2017 to July 31, 2017. In an effort to management the Sockeye Salmon fishery along the west side of Kodiak, ADF&G continues to have commercial openings for most of the week.

The Sockeye Salmon caught for subsistence purposes from Karluk and Larsen Bay are smoking and drying. The commercial fishing on the west side of Kodiak Island has picked up and will possibly extend through the first week of July. The extended commercial openings are the result of good Sockeye Salmon numbers returning to both the Ayakulik and Karluk river systems.

Subsistence restrictions for Chinook Salmon have been set on both the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers. The runs on both these systems are poor, 209 Chinook Salmon on the Karluk River and 198 Chinook Salmon on the Ayakulik River, and are not expected to meet their respective escapement goals. Sport fishing for Chinook Salmon is already restricted through the end of the season.

Litnik (Afognak) and Buskin Rivers, as well as in front of Port Lions continue to be common options for Kodiak subsistence users who seek to harvest Sockeye Salmon. Fishing at the mouth of the Buskin River has increased, with up to 12 boats fishing at one time. Sport fishing for Sockeye Salmon on the Buskin is also occurring and by mid-week ADF&G raised the sport bag limit to 5 Sockeye Salmon per day.

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

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 2017 Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon run is forecast to be approximately 41.47 million fish for nine river systems: Kvichak, Alagnak, Naknek, Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, Igushik, Nushagak, and Togiak. Based on the forecast 31.2 to 51.7 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 opened on June 1 by regulation. Commercial fishing openings in the eastside districts are occurring in the Ugashik District through June 16, Egegik District through June 16, and Naknek-Kvichak District through June 23. Additional commercial fishing opportunity in these areas will be based

on escapement and inseason abundance. Fishing in westside 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 Port Moller test fishery will begin on June 10 to provide timing, composition, and abundance information. Escapement projects are currently being setup.

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 2017 Sockeye Salmon forecasted run size for the Chignik River Management Area (CMA) is 2,204,000 fish with a harvest estimate of 1,466,000 Sockeye Salmon. The CMA is composed of five fishing districts: Eastern, Central, Chignik Bay, Western, and Perryville. The ADFG conducted the first Chignik lagoon test fishery on June 7 and results indicate there is not a substantial buildup of Sockeye Salmon in Chignik Lagoon. As such, no commercial fishing periods have been announced. The escapement count at the Chignik weir is 62,504 as of June 8.

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	-25,000 in August and 50,000 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, Inik, McLees, and Orzinski systems. Preseason forecasts are made only for the Nelson River and late-run Bear Lake stocks. The 2017 Sockeye Salmon run size projections are 585,000 for the Nelson River and 450,000 for late-run Bear Lake. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon. Commercial openings for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries have been announced beginning June 10 through June 29.

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

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

Summer Season Outlook

The Summer Chum Salmon run is projected to be above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses. A surplus of up to 1.5 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 140,000 to 195,000 with managers optimistic the total run abundance could be near the upper end based upon recent performances of the 2015 and 2016 runs which came in unexpectedly near the upper end their projections and thus, possibly indicating an improvement in productivity. Subsistence conservation measures will be required to spread out the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. No directed Chinook Salmon commercial fishery is anticipated. Public meetings were held throughout the winter and spring to inform fishers of the outlook and receive input on this year's management strategies.

Assessment Information

Ice out on the lower Yukon River occurred on May 14, approximately seven days earlier than the historical average. Additionally, Bering Sea ice retreated off the coast early, leaving the Yukon River mouth ice free with no spring flooding. With ice out earlier than average and climate modeling provided by NOAA, ADF&G, and AOOS, managers are anticipating earlier entry timing for Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon. Subsistence fishermen in the lower Yukon have been reporting good catches in recent days, and manager observations of fish racks along the lower river are indicating that some fishermen are beginning to fill their racks with nice looking Chum Salmon. The first subsistence caught Chinook Salmon was reported on May 26 in Alakanuk, and four more reported caught on May 28. Lower Yukon Test Fishing (LYTF) project began on May 29 at the Big Eddy Chinook set gillnet site. The Big Eddy Chinook drift gillnet test fishery began on May 30th. The Big Eddy Chum drift gillnet test fishery began on May 30. Test fishing at Middle Mouth began on June 6. The Big Eddy and especially the Middle Mouth set net sites have experienced high debris loads, which has hampered assessment. The combined Big Eddy/Middle Mouth Chinook Salmon set gillnet test fishery CPUE of 3.33 through June 10 is slightly above the average of 2.87, but well behind the "early years" average of 7.20. The Big Eddy Chinook Salmon drift gillnet test fishery CPUE of 41.54 through June 10 is behind the average of 50.38. The Big Eddy/Middle Mouth combined Chum Salmon drift gillnet test fishery has a cumulative CPUE of 705.85 through June 10, ahead of the average of 32.87. The Pilot Station sonar began operations on May 31 and had their first full day of counts on June 1, which is

approximately 5 days early. Chinook Salmon passage estimates through June 10 are 17,385 fish, ahead of the average of 10,786, but behind the early year average of 20,970. Pilot Station detected what appears to be the first pulse of Chinook Salmon passing on June 9 when 6,677 Chinook were estimated to have passed. This coincides with a small increase at the LYTF on June 6. Pilot Station sonar Summer Chum Salmon passage estimates are 81,681, ahead of the median of 15,154. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fisheries in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. At this time, it is too early to assess the overall strength of either the Chinook or Summer Chum Salmon runs. The average first quarter point in the LYTF for Chinook Salmon is June 15, and June 19 for Summer Chum Salmon. Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon catches for both subsistence fishermen and the test fishery have been lower than anticipated but are increasing. Both of the FWS escapement monitoring projects, Andreafsky and Gisasa River weirs, initiated project setup this week and expect to be operational the week of June 19.

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 is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, with gear restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The northern portion of the Coastal District and District 1 will be managed as one district for 2017. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 1, 2, and 3 has been placed selective gear schedules beginning June 11 in anticipation of protecting the first pulse. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A has been placed on their regulatory schedule of two, 48-hour periods per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels beginning June 11 for the lower portion and June 14 for the upper portion. Chinook Salmon caught incidentally may be retained for subsistence purposes. Lower and Upper Subdistricts 4-A will be put on selective gear beginning June 14 and June 17, respectively. The previously announced news release putting Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C on their regulatory schedule of two, 48-hour periods per week restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fish wheels beginning June 18 is being “rescinded” due to the timing of the 1st pulse. Instead, Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C will remain open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with gillnet gear restricted to 7.5-inch or less mesh, close for 24 hours on June 18, and reopen 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with dip nets, beach seines, and live release fish wheels. Subsistence fishing in the Innoko River; Koyukuk River; District 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, although specific gear and fishing times will vary based on districts differences.

The first commercial Chum Salmon fishing period in District 1 opened 3 p.m. Saturday, June 10, and closes 3 a.m. June 11. This fishery was restricted to dip nets and beach seine gear, with all Chinook Salmon caught in this opening being required to be released alive.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation was performed 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 first Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association teleconference was held on June 6. Participation was light, but fishermen in the lower Yukon reported getting a few chums, and fishermen throughout the drainage reported dealing with lots of debris.

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

Summary:

Subsistence set net fishing on the Kuskokwim River will be opened by State of Alaska Emergency Order #3-S-WR-04-17 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Saturday, June 10, 2017 from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to the Headwaters of the Kuskokwim River. This fishery is restricted to 4-inch or less mesh size gillnets. These gillnets may not exceed 60 feet in length or 45 meshes in depth and may not be operated more than 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark.

Before 10:00 a.m. and after 10:00 p.m. June 10, 2017, the Kuskokwim River from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim to Kuskokwim River Headwaters will be closed to all subsistence fishing with gillnets under State of Alaska Emergency Order #3-WR-01-17.

Under order #3E-WR-01-17, fishing in the Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak and Aniak Rivers and also Kuskokuak and Old Kuskokuak sloughs will be closed to gillnet fishing from 12:01 a.m. May 20, 2017 until further notice.

Alternative types of fishing gear such as subsistence hook and line, subsistence fishing with fish wheels with live wells, and subsistence fishing with beach seines or dip nets are currently allowed until further notice for other salmon species. All Chinook salmon caught in set nets or alternative gear types must be released back into the river.

Effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 12, 2017, fishing for Chinook salmon on Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River, including salmon spawning tributaries which include the Eek, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Aniak Rivers and their tributaries will be closed to all users under FSA17-03, FSA 17-04, and 3-KS-02-17.

Test Fisheries:

As of June 8, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 8. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 89 and 60, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 9. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 16 and 15, respectively. There are no CPUE reports for other species at this time.

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.

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There is very little ice left in the Bering Strait region. As of late last week, the shorefast ice continued to show rapid deterioration with new leads developing in the Wales to Shishmaref area where the remaining shorefast ice generally extended 1-2 nautical miles from shore near Shishmaref, while shorefast ice was no longer present near Wales. The close pack ice was 15-22 nautical miles from shore near Shishmaref, while it extended only 8-12 nautical miles near Wales. The subsistence focus for people in northwest Alaska living north of Wales currently remains predominately focused on hunting. Hunters from Shishmaref report being restricted to hunting for bearded seals among small open leads. The tide moves ice in and closes leads so that hunters have to search for seals lying on top of the ice, if the ice is safe enough to walk on. No one has hunted for walrus due to the rotting ice edge preventing launching boats in order to reach the open sea. Kotzebue, Kivalina and point Hope were hunting among the remaining ice. Conditions are very different south of Wales, where Norton Sound waters are essentially ice free.

Norton Sound District

Salmon have begun to enter the coastal waters of Norton Sound. Small numbers of Chinook and Chum salmon are being reported as being harvested in recent days in eastern Norton Sound. Given the expected weak returns of king salmon this year, the ADF&G will be implementing specific fishing strategies for each subdistrict based on the expected run size of king salmon along with expected fishing effort and recent harvest patterns. The intent of these strategies are to provide limited harvest opportunities while ensuring that adequate numbers of Chinook Salmon reach spawning areas in eastern Norton Sound drainages.

The Department will evaluate early season run timing and abundance of Chinook Salmon using ground based escapement indices and fisherman reports from the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts. Inseason assessments of king salmon run abundance may indicate the need for additional conservation measures, or that run abundance warrants a relaxation of subsistence fishing restrictions. The Department will also consider setting fishing periods allowing the use of beach seines to target other salmon species in freshwater areas

Sport Fishing:

All freshwaters from Bald Head to Point Romanof were closed to sport fishing for Chinook Salmon effective Monday, May 1, 2017 by Emergency Order issued by the ADF&G Division of Sport Fish. The closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Inglutalik and Golsovia River drainages. The EO will remain in effect through August 15, 2017 or until inseason stock assessment indicates that the escapement goal for king salmon will be met on the Unalakleet River.

Subsistence Fishing:

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Effective midnight June 8, all flowing waters draining the Inglutalik and Ungalik Rivers, and all marine waters of the Subdistrict, were placed on a subsistence gillnet fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week. Periods are from 6 AM Mondays to 6 PM Tuesdays, and from 6 AM Saturdays to 6 PM Sundays. During the openings from Mondays to Tuesdays, subsistence users are restricted to set gillnets with a stretched mesh size of 6 inches or less. For weekend openings from Saturdays to Sundays, there are no restrictions on mesh size. This schedule will remain in place until July 1. However, fishing restrictions on the Inglutalik River may be relaxed earlier in the season depending upon escapement. The Koyuk River drainage is not affected by this action and will remain open to subsistence fishing with no restrictions in place. Additionally, the use of beach seines, dip nets and cast nets is open continuously by regulation in all waters of the Norton Bay Subdistrict, but any king salmon incidentally captured in those gear types must be immediately released alive and unharmed.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Effective midnight June 8, all marine waters and freshwaters of the Shaktoolik Subdistrict, were closed to subsistence salmon fishing. Next week, during favorable weather conditions, the Department plans to have a 36-hour subsistence fishing period in the marine waters with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The Shaktoolik River drainage will remain closed to subsistence salmon fishing until further notice. Gillnets used to target trout and whitefish in the Shaktoolik River and all other freshwater areas of the Subdistrict must have a mesh size no greater than 4 inches. Dip and cast nets may also be used, but any Chinook Salmon must be immediately released.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

Effective June 8 at midnight, all marine waters and freshwaters of the Unalakleet Subdistrict were closed to subsistence salmon fishing. The North River and the Unalakleet River drainage downstream of the North River including the marine waters within 500 yards of the Unalakleet River mouth have been closed to subsistence gillnet fishing since June 1 and will remain closed. Dip nets and cast nets may also be used but any king salmon captured must be immediately released. Next week, during favorable weather conditions, the Department plans to have a 36 hour subsistence fishing period in the marine waters with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

For Other Eastern Norton Sound and Coastal Waters

All marine waters from the western tip of Cape Denbigh east to Point Dexter, and all marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point, east of St. Michael were closed to subsistence salmon fishing effective June 8 at midnight. However, subsistence salmon fishing is open seven days a week in all waters from Wood Point west to Point Romanof.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area

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