

**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 10-16, 2019.** Report #3  
Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [George\\_Pappas@fws.gov](mailto:George_Pappas@fws.gov) Office of  
Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Please keep in mind, many of the authors do not have alternates or are deployed in the field on occasion and do not have access to communications to submit a weekly report. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA**

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

No report submitted this week.

**Petersburg and Wrangell Area – Robert Cross, Forest Service Tongass National Forest,**  
Robert Cross, (907)772-5944, [robert.cross@usda.gov](mailto:robert.cross@usda.gov)

This year's run of Chinook Salmon to the Stikine River is weak, forecasted at 8,250 fish. This forecast is well below the bottom range of the 14,000 to 28,000 fish goal. Directed commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in the area have been closed to protect this return.

Currently, all purse seine and non-terminal harvest area troll fisheries are closed in the area. There is restricted drift gillnet opportunity in District 6 scheduled to begin June 16. District 8 drift gillnet fishery will be delayed until June 23 at the earliest.

The Stikine River directed Sockeye Salmon Federal subsistence fishery will begin June 21. The Sockeye Salmon forecast is predicting a low return of fish during the second half of the subsistence fishery (starting July 14). If the returns are as low as predicted, then an in-season closure of the Sockeye Salmon fishery may occur during the second half of the season. In-season data will be available after the first week of July. A total of 39 fishing permits have been issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery. The Stikine River Federal Salmon Factsheet was updated to reflect regulation changes effective for the 2019 fishery and was distributed to existing permit holders.

Currently 116 Federal general salmon/trout/char permits have been issued in the Southeast Alaska/Yakutat region. Of these, 19 have been issued to Federally-qualified subsistence users residing in the Petersburg/Wrangell area.

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

The Sockeye Salmon subsistence fisheries are just starting in the Admiralty and Juneau areas. The Forest Service and the Hoonah Indian Association will be installing the Neva Lake video weir this week. The Sitkoh Lake weir will be installed in early July by a Forest Service and Angoon Community Association crew. Both projects will use underwater video to record Sockeye Salmon and other fish swimming through a pair of weirs, and the video will be transmitted to an offsite computer. Project personnel will use motion-triggered recordings to make daily counts of salmon swimming through the weirs.

The commercial salmon fishery kicked off the season this weekend with both purse seine and gillnet openings beginning on Sunday, June 16. Seine open areas in northern Southeast include Hidden Falls, Pt. Augusta, and Tenakee Inlet. For gillnetters, the Lynn Canal and Taku/Stephens Passage areas were open.

In Yakutat, the Situk River weir has counted 2,316 Sockeye Salmon and 8 Chinook Salmon as of June 15. The forecast is for a total return of just 300 Chinook Salmon to the Situk, well below the escapement goal of 450-1,050 large fish. Chinook retention is prohibited in both subsistence and commercial fisheries, and all Chinook should be released. Subsistence fishermen are required to monitor their gillnets at all times when fishing for salmon.

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

The 2018 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas had 241 permits issued for the fishery. To date, 82% of the permits have been returned reporting a harvest of 9 Chinook, 7 Chinook Jack, 352 Coho, 94 Pink, and 393 Sockeye Salmon. Also reported were 2 Steelhead Trout, 2 Rainbow Trout, 27 Cutthroat Trout and 22 Dolly Varden. Low flows during the majority of the summer in Southeast Alaska may explain why these harvests are lower than those of 2018.

The 2018 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko winter subsistence steelhead fishery ended on February 28th. Access was more available this season due to a light snow load preventing travel to fishing locations. A total of 20 permits were issued during the fishery. All permits were received back and a total of 5 Steelhead were reported harvested.

The 2019 Prince of Wales/Kosciusko spring subsistence steelhead fishery ended on May 31st. A total of 63 permits were issued to Prince of Wales Island residents during this fishery. Permits from this fishery being are starting to be returned and are not due back until June 15. The total reported harvest to date is 17 Steelhead Trout.

Although Chinook Salmon abundance has been determined to be very low this year, hatchery return Chinook Salmon are present in the local Craig and Klawock area resulting in many subsistence users actively fishing under sport fishing regulations at this time. Although a couple of Prince of Wales Island streams have June returns of Sockeye Salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

There are currently some commercial Chinook troll fisheries occurring in terminal harvest areas within the Ketchikan and Craig areas. Harvest to date is 1496 Chinook. The Kendrick Bay terminal seine fishery for Chum Salmon will be beginning soon.

The District 1/Unuk River Eulachon fishery was closed pre-season in February 2019. Although weather and ice prevented access during the week of March 11th, a USFS monitoring crew accompanied by a Ketchikan Indian Community employee deployed to the Unuk River on March 18th concurrent with the arrival of fish that prior weekend. This monitoring crew remained on site until April 1 utilizing a combination of foot, boat, and aerial surveys to document Eulachon presence within the drainage. Eulachon were observed in the river until March 30<sup>th</sup>, with abundances being very low during the last week on the river. Unless Eulachon arrived prior to the break-up of river ice, it is believed this year's abundance was lower than what was seen during 2018. Local managers, as well as those in Canada and Washington, are continuing to manage Eulachon extra-conservatively as they do not believe the populations are stable enough to provide for fishing opportunity and are anticipating this trend to continue based on the declines in ocean conditions affecting salmon and other species. Follow up communications with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have indicated poor returns to the Columbia River and associated tributaries validating this management assumption.



Upper Landing Slough area of the Unuk River during March 12, 2019 aerial survey (J. Reeves photo)



Small school of Eulachon noted in the Eulachon River, 2019 (A. Saunders photo)



March 20, 2019 walking survey at low tide to assess for Eulachon presence in the Unuk River (A. Saunders photo).



Light presence of Eulachon eggs in red circled areas (S. Naujokas photo)

### **Southeast Alaska Web Links**

*Tongass National Forest News Room* <http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

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

*ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link*  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

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

*Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska*  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

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

**SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA**

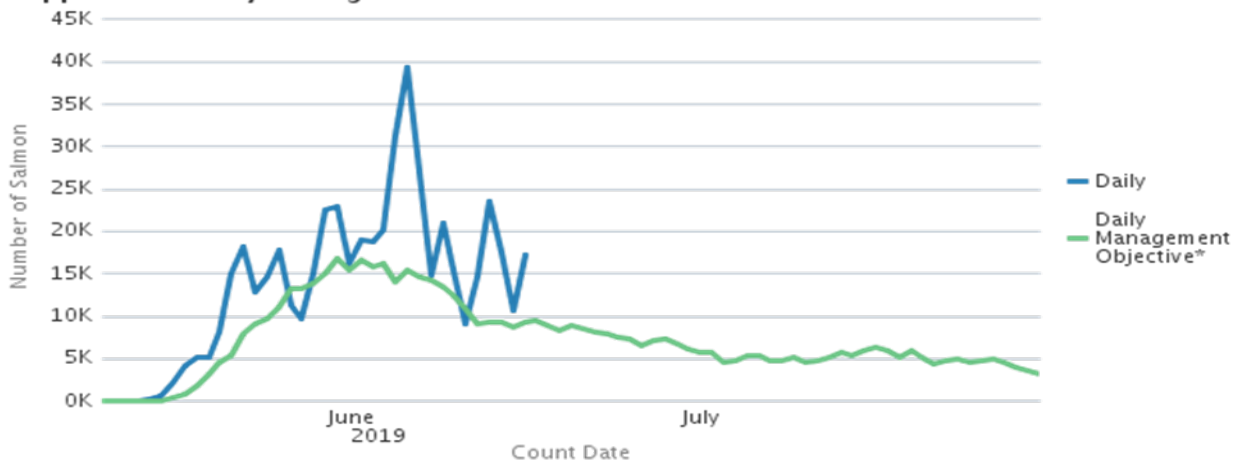
**PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER**

**Copper River, 6/8/2019 Update – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, dave\_sarafin@nps.gov**

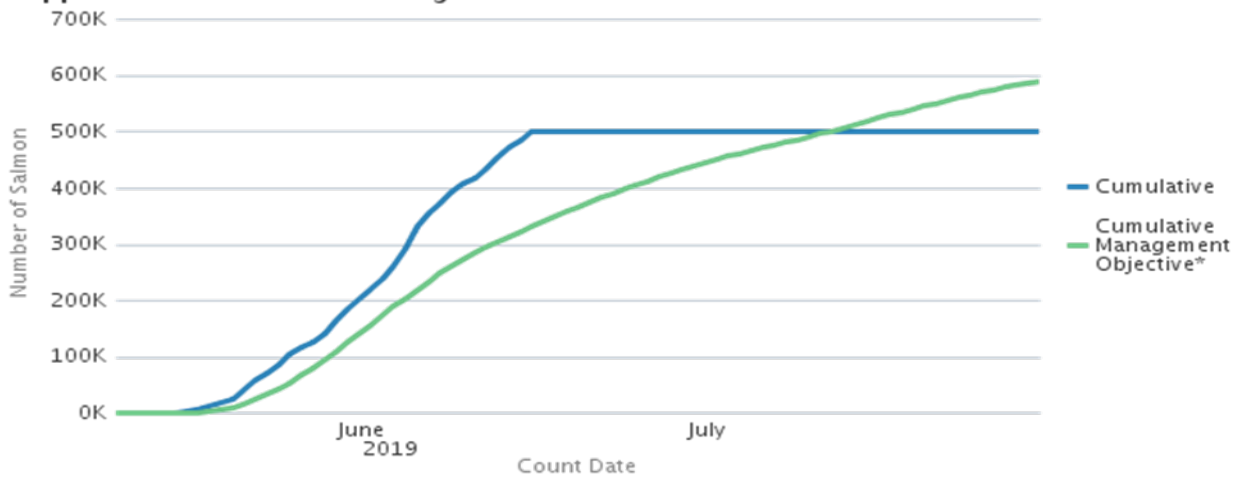
The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) began recording salmon passage on May 10. As of June 15, 502,140 salmon have been estimated migrating upstream for the season. This estimate is 51% above the projected passage of 331,828 for this date, or 170,312 more salmon. A daily estimate of 17,247 salmon were estimated to pass the sonar on June 15. The Sockeye Salmon return to the Copper River continues to be tracking well above forecast. 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 June 7.**

**Copper River Daily Passage**



**Copper River Cumulative Passage**





## Source:

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon\\_escapement](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement)

The commercial fishery in the Copper River District has opened for 9 fishing periods between May 16 and June 14. Total commercial harvest reported for the season is 776,728 Sockeye Salmon and 16,560 Chinook Salmon.

The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1. The State personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict opened on June 7 and is currently scheduled to remain open through June 23.

The Federal subsistence fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict opened on May 15 and is expected to remain open through September 30. One hundred and thirty (130) 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. Two hundred thirty-eight (238) 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 4,417 Chinook Salmon through June 15. The upriver fish wheels at Canyon Creek have captured and examined 1,995 Chinook Salmon through June 15, of which, 215 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. The reported cumulative passage estimate through June 15 is 726 Chinook salmon.

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](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 In-season 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.**

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A total of 32 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Chugach National Forest portion of the Prince William Sound area of to date. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. Ninety-seven permits were issued in 2018 resulting in the reported harvest of 255 Coho and 96 Sockeye Salmon from fresh waters of the Copper River Delta.

**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)**

A total of 284 permits for Cook Inlet Federal subsistence fisheries have been issued to qualified rural residents through June 14. This includes 208 Household Annual permits (KKTCI3), 69 General Subsistence Fishing permits (KKTCI2), and 7 Designated Fisher permits.

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 focused on Sockeye Salmon in the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers which opened on June 11. Subsistence users reported good success during the first few days of the rod and reel fishery.

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.

Fish counts at some Alaska Department of Fish and Game-operated assessment projects are available on-line at

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

**Kodiak Island Area – Michael Brady, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR**

(907) 487-0226 or [michael\\_brady@fws.gov](mailto:michael_brady@fws.gov) or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230

[Kevin\\_VanHatten@fws.gov](mailto:Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov)

Sockeye salmon returns have continued to be slow to date. Many systems showed strong returns earlier this month but have since slowed down. Very few subsistence users have attempted to fish in front of the Buskin River system but there has been an increase in the

number of users on Litnik. The boundaries for Ouzinkie and Saltery River have been reduced which started on June 7, 2019 and will remain in effect till further notice. Chinook salmon returns into Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers remain steady and are about the same as last year.

Any further information that is received at our office will be relayed in the following weeks report.

***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**

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 for Igushik, Bristol Bay Eastside, and Nushagak districts. The preliminary commercial harvest estimates for June 13 are 14,701 fish, 91% of the harvest has been Sockeye 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 cumulative weir count as of June 13 is 7,686 Sockeye Salmon. The interim escapement goal for this time is 95,000 to 125,000. The average historical midpoint of the Chignik early run Sockeye Salmon is June 20. Current information indicates that the early run Sockeye Salmon is late and expectations are similar to the 2018 run. The 2018 early run Sockeye Salmon run did not meet escapement goals. The Federal inseason manager and OSM hosted a federal subsistence meeting in Chignik Bay on June 8 and Chignik Lagoon on June 9 with local subsistence users and additional meetings will occur if run strength continues at low levels.

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. Commercial periods have been scheduled and implemented with the total commercial harvest as of June 12 at 1.2 million fish with Pink Salmon accounting for 86% of the harvest. South side peninsula fisheries may see restrictions if Chignik River stocks do not see improvement. Several Sockeye

Salmon escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, and 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. The cumulative weir count as of June 13 for the Nelson River is 9, Bear River is 1,098, Ilnik is 13,236, and Sandy River is 47 fish.

**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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf)

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

**Southcentral Alaska Web Links**

***Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases***  
<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

***ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

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

***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska***  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

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

**Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.**  
[Gerald\\_Maschmann@fws.gov](mailto:Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov) or  
Fred Bue [Fredrick\\_Bue@fws.gov](mailto: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 pre-season outlook is for an above average run size, large enough 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 for 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 normal subsistence harvests. However, due to uncertainty, a cautionary approach is being taken early in the season with fishing time reduced by half the regular schedule. As fish begin entering the river, management strategies will be based on in-season run assessment information. 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 near the tail end of the run, when the majority of Chinook Salmon have passed upriver for escapement and subsistence harvest purposes. If in-season assessment indicates a poorer than anticipated run, subsistence fishing time may be reduced or gear may be limited to selective gear types with no retention of Chinook salmon allowed.

### **Assessment Information**

Subsistence fishermen in the lower Yukon River area have been fishing since ice out. The first subsistence caught Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon was reported on May 23 at Tin Can Point. High debris loads immediately following ice out hindered both subsistence fishing and lower Yukon test fishing efforts. Debris loads have decreased, but fishermen are still contending with snags and logs. Fishing activity has increased despite the difficult fishing conditions and some fishermen from Districts 1 and 2 have met initial Chinook Salmon harvest needs. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) began between May 23 and June 6. The LYTF Chinook Salmon test set net has a cumulative CPUE of 4.05 through June 15, well below the average of 6.87. The LYTF Chinook Salmon test drift net has a cumulative CPUE of 46.81 through June 15, also well below the average of 122.56. The LYTF saw a significant increase in Chinook Salmon on the morning of June 16, indicating what might be the first pulse entering the river. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 2. The cumulative passage of Chinook Salmon past the sonar through June 15 is 25,778, below the average of 36,053 fish. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fishery in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. The LYTF Summer Chum Salmon drift net has a cumulative CPUE of 136 through June 15, well below the average of 630. The cumulative passage past the Pilot Station sonar is 13,154 Summer Chum salmon, below the median of 16,976 fish. It is still early in both the Chinook and Summer Chum runs, however, it appears that the Chinook Salmon run is entering near average run timing, while the Summer Chum Salmon is entering with late run timing. The average first

quarter point at the Pilot Station sonar for Chinook Salmon is June 18, and June 24 for Summer Chum Salmon with late run timing.

### **Management Actions**

Until more assessment data become available, management decisions will be consistent with the preseason outlook and management strategies discussed with fishermen at the preseason fishermen's meeting. The northern portion of the Coastal District and District 1 will be managed as one district for 2019. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 1 and 2 has been placed on half their regulatory schedule for two, 18-hour open periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 will be placed on half its regulatory schedule for two, 18-hour open periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear on June 16. Subdistrict 4-A will be placed on half its regulatory schedule for two, 24-hour open periods per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet and fish wheel gear. Subsistence fishing in the Innoko and Koyukuk rivers, District 5, Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B, Old Minto and Upper Tanana Areas are open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 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 may be used to target non-salmon species. The sequential activation of the reduced subsistence fishing schedule will continue in all districts as the Chinook Salmon migrate upstream.

The Alaska Board of Fish (BOF), in their January 2019 meeting, passed new regulations making dip nets a legal subsistence salmon fishing gear in the Yukon. Subsistence fishermen may use dip nets for salmon during the open subsistence salmon fishing periods. Additionally, the BOF legalized the use of drift gill nets in District 4. Subsistence fishermen in District 4 may use drift gill nets during the open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Directed Summer Chum Salmon commercial fishing is anticipated to begin in District 1 when Summer Chum numbers increase. Periods will be directed towards Summer Chum Salmon using dip nets and beach seines with incidentally caught Chinook Salmon being immediately released alive.

### **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.

The second YRDFA weekly teleconference occurred on June 11. Some fishermen in Districts 1 and 2 reported being done with their Chinook Salmon fishing needs, while others were just getting started. Most fishermen in Districts 3 and 4 are just gearing up for the season, however, some early fishermen reported catching a few Chinook salmon as far up river as Ruby.

### **KUSKOKWIM RIVER**

**In Season Manager – Vernon “Ray” Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact [Vernon\\_Born@fws.gov](mailto:Vernon_Born@fws.gov) (907) 543-3151 or [Lewis\\_Coggins@fws.gov](mailto:Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov)**

#### **Summary:**

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) in-season manager has announced a fishing opportunity within the YDNWR from the boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River upriver to the boundary above the village of Aniak. This opportunity for federally qualified users that are residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Cheforak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganak to the harvest of Chinook Salmon.

The next fishing opportunity will be on June 19, 2019 from 06:00 A.M. to 06:00 P.M. this opportunity is for **BOTH** set and drift gillnets on the Kuskokwim main stem. Gillnet restrictions are as follows:

- 6 inch or less gillnets for federally qualified users, 45 mesh deep,
- Net length 150 feet (25 Fathoms) above Johnson River,
- Net length 300 feet (50 Fathoms) below Johnson River.

Reminder: After each opportunity has ended, the Kuskokwim River main stem will be CLOSED to all gillnets until next opportunity.

Chinook Salmon retention using dip nets, beach seines, fish wheels, and rod and reel on federal public waters of the main stem of the Kuskokwim River and non-salmon tributaries is allowed even when gillnets are closed.

The following areas are closed to all methods and means of Chinook Salmon harvest effective June 1, 2019:

- The Eek River;
- The Kwethluk River drainage at its confluence with Kuskokuak Slough
- The Kasigluk and Kisaralik river drainages including Old Kuskokuak Slough to



ADF&G regulatory markers at the confluence of Old Kuskokuak Slough with Kuskokuak Slough;

- The Tuluksak River drainage including its confluence with the Kuskokwim River and downstream approximately 1-mile to ADF&G regulatory markers; and
- The Aniak River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers at its confluence with the Kuskokwim River;
- The Aniak Box described as waters of the Kuskokwim River main stem from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at Aniak downstream to a line formed from the northwest corner of the runway (latitude 61° 35' 16" N, longitude 159° 33' 28" W), due north to a point on the southeast corner of the sandbar (latitude 61° 35' 37" N, longitude 159° 33' 16" W)

These harvest opportunities are to provide for the continuation of subsistence uses of Chinook Salmon that are critical to cultural and traditional needs. While the Chinook run is expected to be smaller than average, it is strong enough to allow these limited opportunities for a directed harvest for federally qualified subsistence users.

These limited opportunities have been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Actions (**3-KS-05-19** and **3-KS-06-19**) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

#### **Test Fisheries and Harvest Estimate:**

As of June 16, 2019 the CPUE for Chinook at the Bethel test fish is at 244. The 2018 and 2017 Chinook CPUE for this day were at 161 and 43, respectively.

Harvest estimate for Chinook salmon on the June 12<sup>th</sup> was 8,040 Chinook salmon. Harvest on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June has a preliminary harvest number of 7,500.

#### **Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links**

*Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:*

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

*Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area*

[http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish\\_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf)

*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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf)

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

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

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

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

***Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:***

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

***Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:***

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

## **NORTHWEST ALASKA –**

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### **Norton Sound District.**

The king salmon run is again expected to be below average in Norton Sound. King salmon have been designated a stock of concern by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet subdistricts. As a result the ADF&G will have additional subsistence fishing restrictions and closures with the overall goal of providing limited harvest opportunities while ensuring that adequate numbers of king salmon reach spawning areas in eastern Norton Sound drainages.

Because of high water this year the department and Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation expect delays in getting weirs and towers operational to count adult salmon escapement. The department forecast is for a well above average chum salmon run this year, and the department will use harvest based management until the escapement counting projects are operational. Harvest based management compares the catch from a fishing period with catches from previous years during the similar dates and takes into consideration fishing effort and weather conditions. Short duration commercial fishing openings will allow utilization of the expected harvestable surplus of chum salmon while not jeopardizing subsistence or escapement needs.

**Sport Fishing:** The Division of Sport Fish closed all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof to sport fishing for king salmon effective 12:01 a.m., June 15, 2019. This closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia Rivers' drainages. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in these drainages. These temporary regulations will remain in effect through August 15, 2019, or until there are indications of a harvestable surplus above escapement objectives, which are indexed by a counting tower on the North River, a tributary of the Unalakleet River.

**Commercial Fishing:** On June 13, ADF&G announced commercial salmon fishing openings for 24 hours in Norton Sound Subdistricts 1, 2, 3 and 4 (the Nome, Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts) from 6 PM Monday, June 17 until 6 PM Tuesday, June 18. Permit holders would be limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

**Subsistence Fishing:** *Southern Norton Sound.* When fishing within State managed waters, rod and reel is not a legal subsistence fishing gear in southern Norton Sound and a Sport Fish license is required when fishing in open waters. 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. The marine waters of southern Norton Sound from Bald Head (near Elim) south to Wood Point (near Saint Michael) will close to subsistence salmon fishing on June 15. And except for the Koyuk River subsistence salmon fishing in all fresh waters from Bald Head to Black point will close on June 15.

The department will evaluate early season run timing and abundance of king salmon using ground-based escapement indices and fishermen 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.

#### ***Other Eastern Norton Sound Coastal Waters (including Stebbins and St. Michael)***

All Marine Waters from the western tip of Cape Denby east to Point Dexter and all marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point, east of St. Michael will close to subsistence salmon fishing effective the evening of June 14 at midnight. However, in all waters from Wood point west to Point Romanof, subsistence salmon fishing will remain open seven days a week.

#### ***Subdistricts 6 (Unalakleet)***

Effective the evening of June 14 at midnight, all marine waters and freshwaters of the Subdistrict closed to subsistence salmon fishing. The North River and the Unalakleet River drainage from downstream of the North River including the marine waters within 500 yards of the Unalakleet River mouth was closed to all subsistence net fishing, except for dip nets and cast nets. Any king salmon caught in a dip net or cast net must be immediately returned to the water. Next week the department plans to have a subsistence fishing period during favorable weather conditions in the marine waters with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or smaller.

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

Effective the evening of June 14 at midnight, all marine waters and freshwaters of the Subdistrict closed to subsistence salmon fishing. Next week the department plans to have a subsistence fishing period during favorable weather conditions in the marine waters with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6 inches or smaller. 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 nets and cast nets may be used but any salmon captured must be immediately released.

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

Commercial Fishing: ADF&G has announced that a commercial salmon fishing period will open next week for a period of 24-hours from 6 PM Monday, June 17 until 6 PM Tuesday, June 18. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subsistence Fishing: Effective the evening of June 14 at midnight, all marine waters and freshwater of the Subdistrict except for the Koyuk River drainage were placed on a subsistence gillnet fishing schedule of two 36-hour periods per week. The schedule will be from 6 AM Saturdays to 6 PM Sundays and from 6 AM Mondays to 6 PM Tuesdays. During the openings from Mondays to Tuesdays, subsistence users will be restricted to set gill nets with a stretch mesh size of 6 inches or smaller. For the weekend openings from Saturdays to Sundays, there will be no restrictions on mesh size. The Koyuk River is not affected by this action and will remain open seven days a week.

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

Commercial Fishing: ADF&G has announced that a commercial salmon fishing period will open next week for a period of 24-hours from 6 PM Monday, June 17 until 6 PM Tuesday, June 18. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subsistence Fishing: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required for fishing in State managed waters. Catch limits are listed on the back of the permit for the rivers that have catch limits. Other than the possibility of inseason king salmon restrictions, no other restrictions are expected,

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

Commercial Fishing: ADF&G has announced that a commercial salmon fishing period will open next week for a period of 24-hours from 6 PM Monday, June 17 until 6 PM Tuesday, June 18. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subsistence Fishing: A subsistence salmon fishing permit is required in State managed waters. Catch limits are listed on the back of the permit for the rivers that have catch limits. No restrictions in subsistence fishing are expected.

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

Commercial Fishing: On June 14 ADF&G announced that a 24 hours fishing period originally announced on June 13 as from 6 PM Monday, June 17 until 6 PM Tuesday, June 18, would be changed to 9 PM Monday, June 17 until 9 PM Tuesday, June 18. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gill nets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required, and stream specific harvest limits are listed on the permit. These include: Cripple River - no chum catch allowed; Penny River - no chum catch allowed; Nome River - 100 coho per household; Salmon River - 40 chum per household and 20 coho per household. There are no catch limits in the marine waters.

Effective June 15, the Nome Subdistrict was placed on a subsistence salmon fishing schedule of from 6 PM Wednesday until 6 PM Monday for the marine and fresh waters, except that the marine waters east off Cape Nome will remain open 7 days a week.

### **Port Clarence District**

Commercial Fishing: The department expects the commercial fishery to remain closed because of a lack of buyer interest despite the in-river goal of 30,000 sockeye salmon in the Pilgrim River being expected to be reached.

Subsistence Fishing: Gillnet and beach seining are open seven days a week. Subsistence salmon fishing permits are required for the Port Clarence District, Pilgrim River drainage and Salmon Lake. Catch limits are listed on the subsistence permits. These are: Pilgrim River - 3 king salmon per household and 25 sockeye salmon per household; Salmon Lake: open by emergency order only: 200 sockeye salmon per household

### **Kotzebue District**

Subsistence Fishing: No subsistence fishing restrictions are expected in 2019.

Commercial Fishing: The department intends to open the commercial fishery any time after July 9 when the buyers are ready or permit holders indicate they are ready to fish and a market is available.

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