

**FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 2 – July 8, 2017. Report #6.**

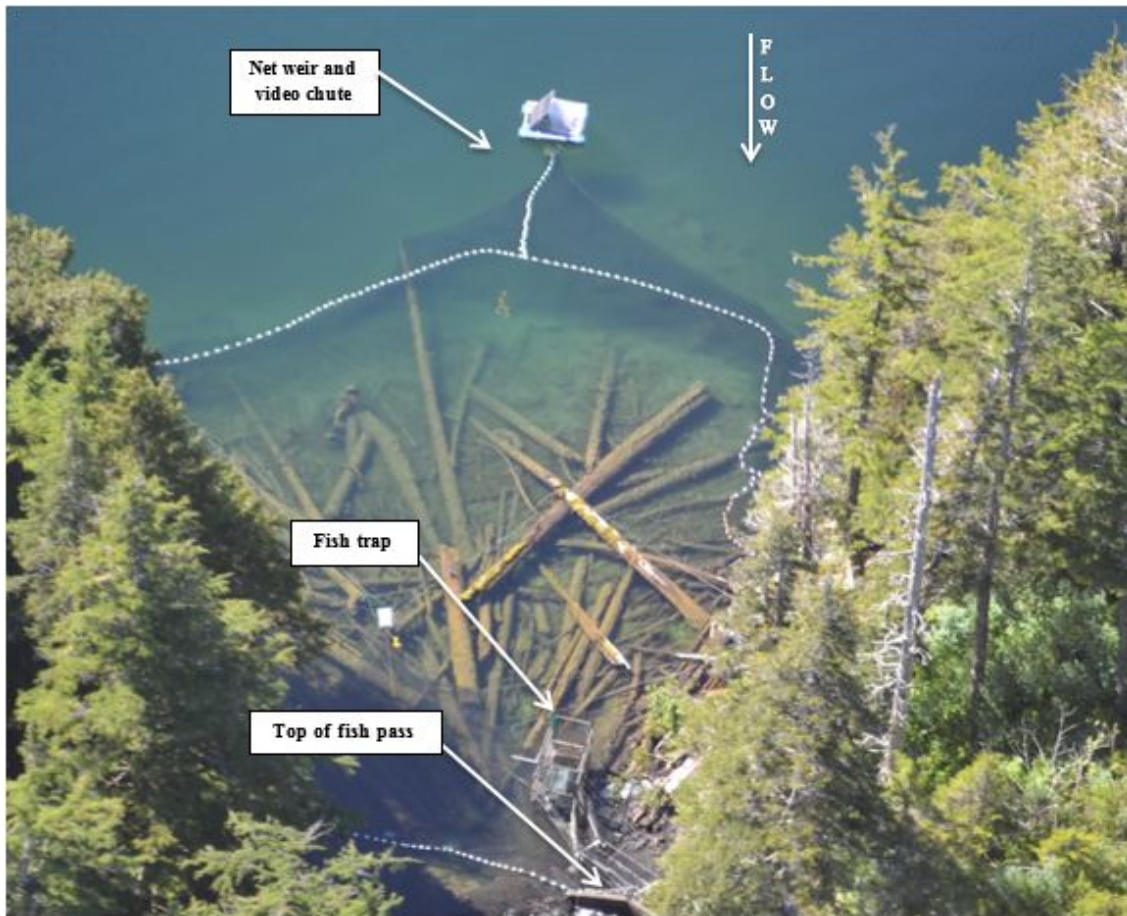
Compiled by Don Rivard (907) 786-3882, [donald\\_rivard@fws.gov](mailto:donald_rivard@fws.gov) and George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, [george\\_pappas@fws.gov](mailto:george_pappas@fws.gov). Fisheries Division, Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

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 fisheries managers that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. The goal is to have the weekly report posted on the OSM website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing>, by the close of business the following Monday. Additional information on a fishery of particular interest may be obtained by contacting the in-season manager, visiting the additional web links at the end of each area report, or by contacting George Pappas.

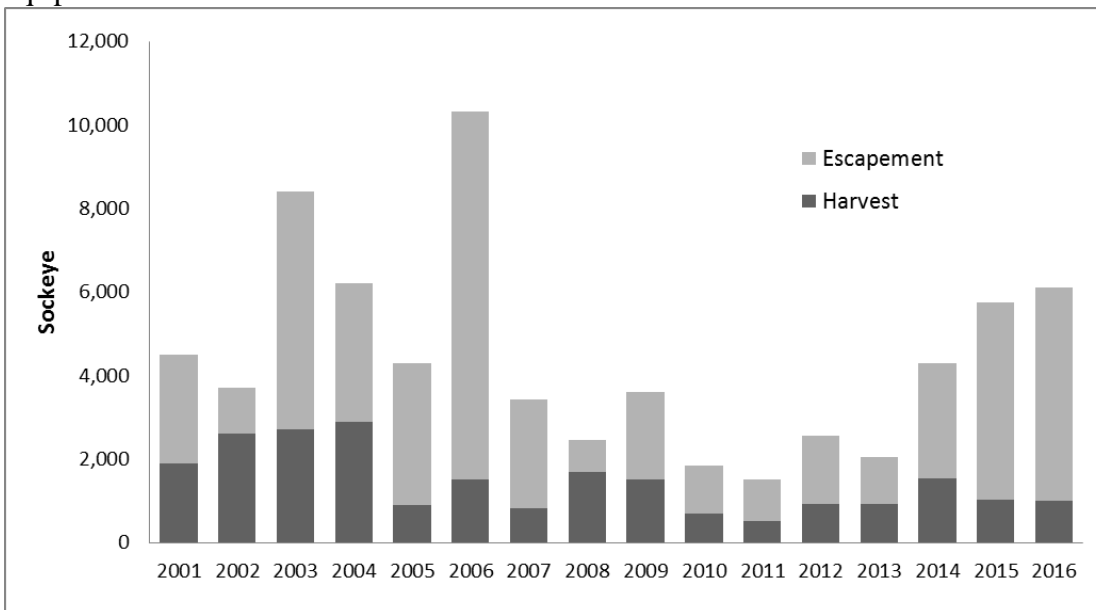
**SOUTHEAST ALASKA**

To date, 160 permits have been issued for the 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas.

Falls Lake - The US Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were installed on June 29<sup>th</sup>. As of July 9<sup>th</sup>, 62 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the fish pass and 9 Sockeye Salmon have been reported harvested. The final escapement estimate in 2016 was 5,098 Sockeye Salmon while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,000. Subsistence harvest accounted for 99% of terminal area harvest.

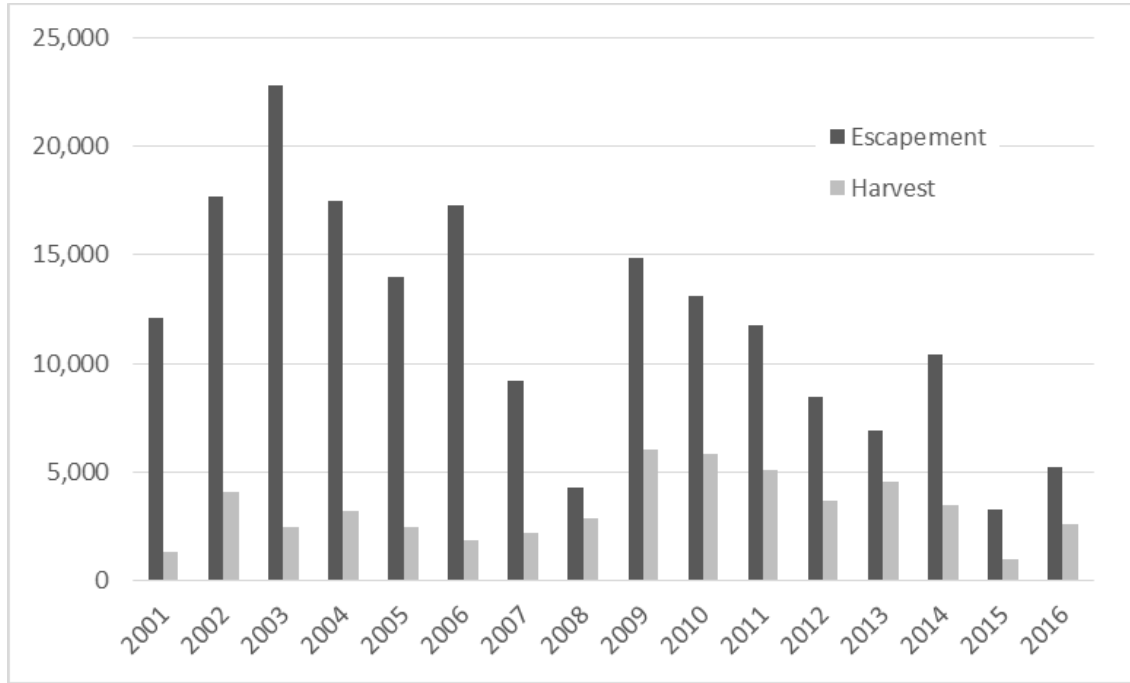


Aerial photo (2013) of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.



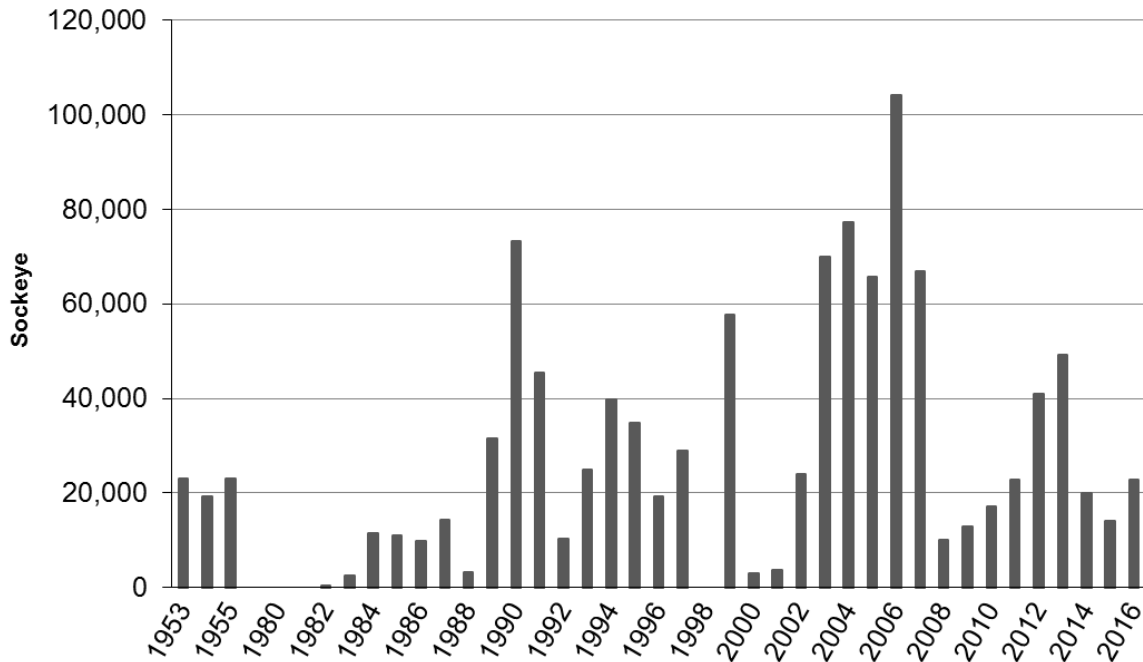
Escapement plus harvest equals total terminal run of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2016.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed June 29<sup>th</sup>. As of July 8<sup>th</sup>, 23 Sockeye Salmon have passed the weir. In 2016, approximately 5,234 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 2,605 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.



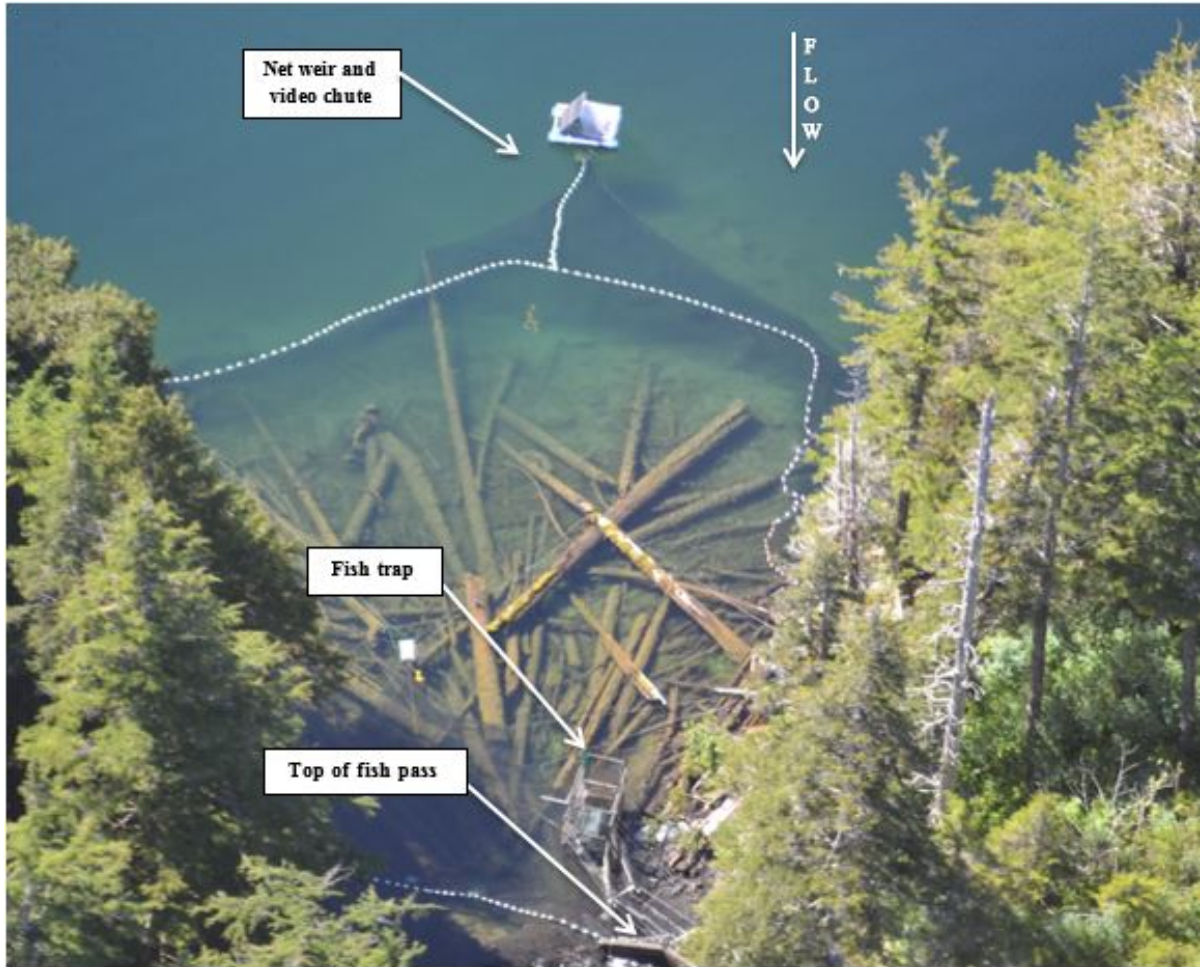
**Escapement and harvest of sockeye at Klag Bay, 2001-2016.**

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 16<sup>th</sup>. As of July 8<sup>th</sup>, 7,362 Sockeye Salmon have passed the weir. In 2016, an estimated 22,937 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 33,000 sockeye returning. Subsistence sockeye harvest reported to ADF&G was 2,304.

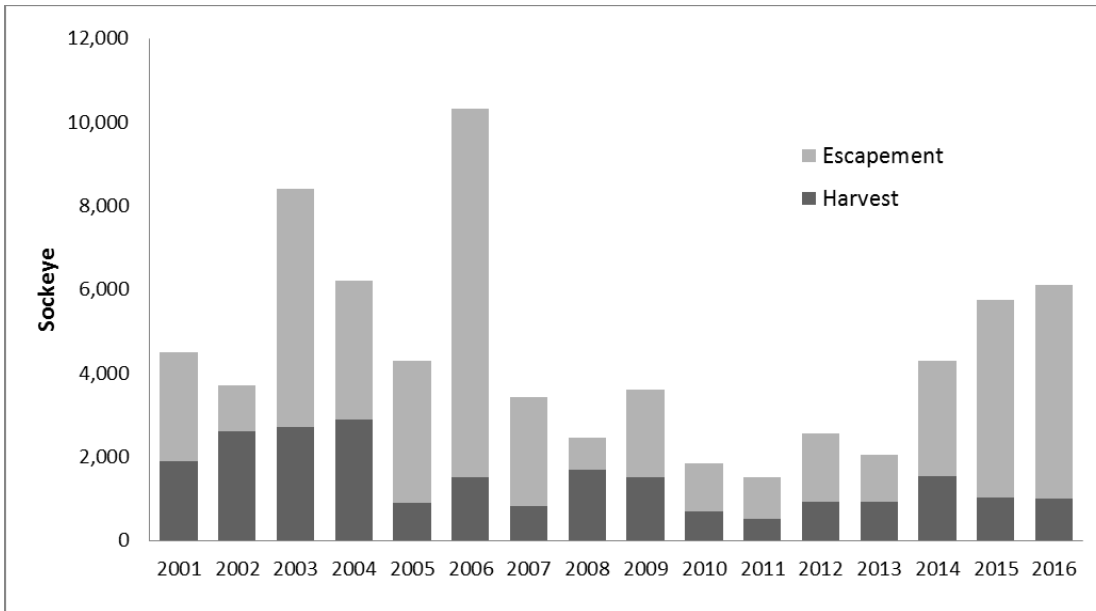


**Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2016. The weir was not operated in 1998.**

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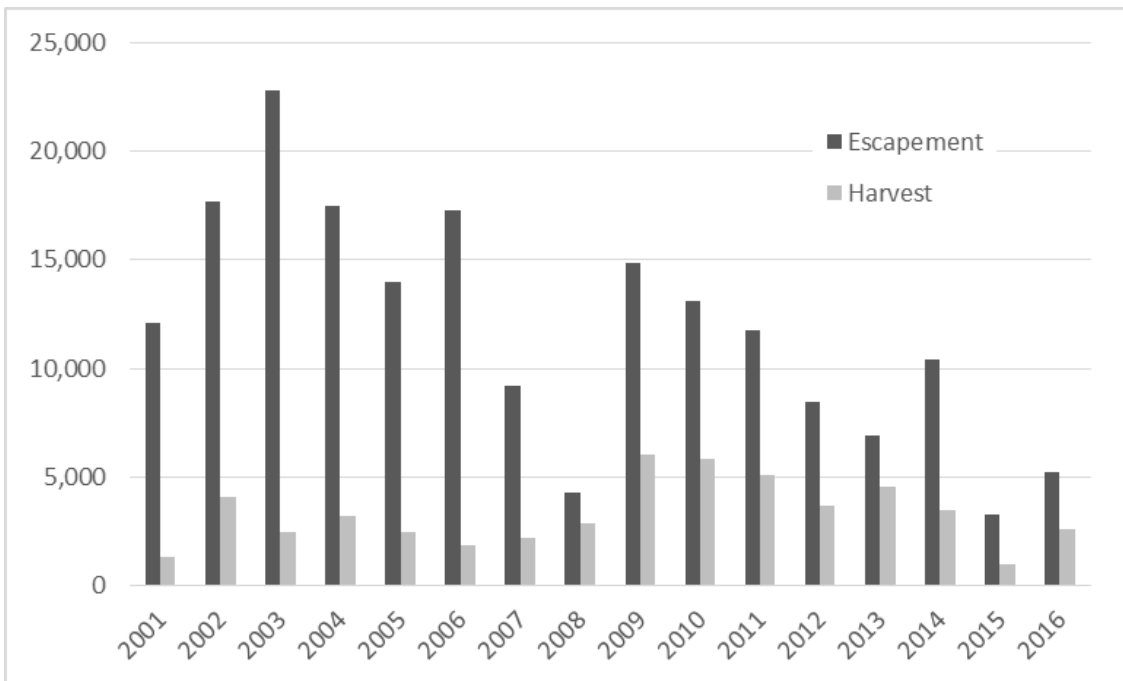


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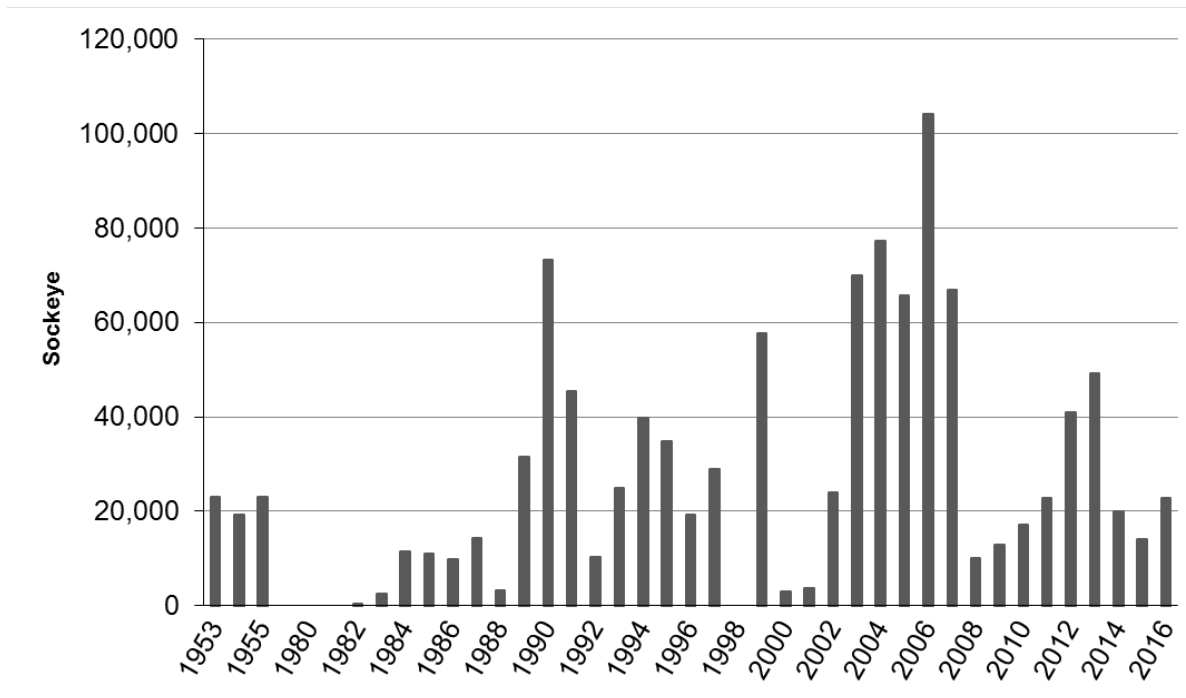
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Escapement and harvest of sockeye at Klag Bay, 2001-2016.

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Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2016. The weir was not operated in 1998.

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

This year’s run of Chinook Salmon to the Stikine River is weak and likely less than the 18,300 fish forecasted. Commercial, sport, or subsistence fisheries in the area are still being managed to reduce the take of this species. Harvest rates were moderate for Sockeye Salmon in the District 6 and 8 drift gillnet fisheries this week.

As of June 24<sup>th</sup>, there were 53 fishing permits issued for the Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon fishery. Fishing pressure so far has been light due to the Chinook Salmon closure delaying fishing to the Sockeye fishing opening (June 21).



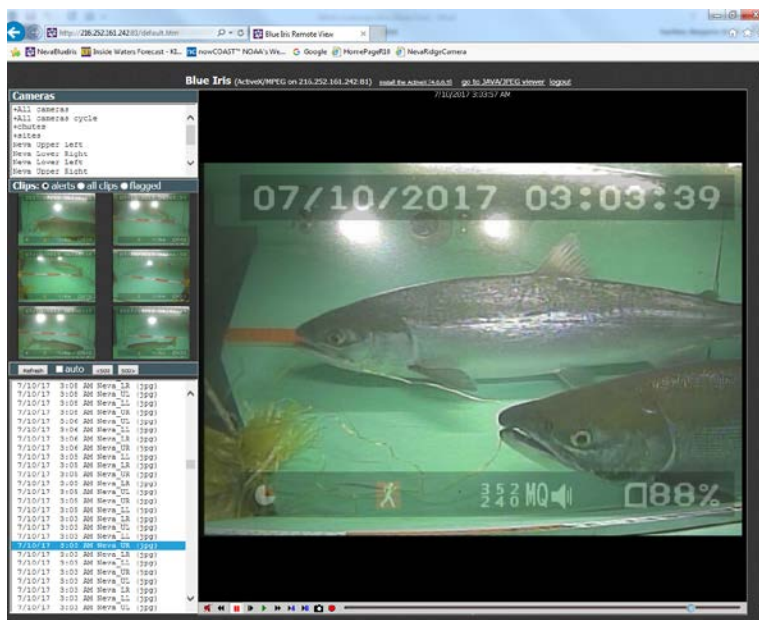
**Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska** - Ben Van Alen (907-789-6257; [bvanalen@fs.fed.us](mailto:bvanalen@fs.fed.us)) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; [jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us](mailto:jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us)), **Tongass National Forest**

Yakutat Area. Alaska Department of Fish and Game has been counting fish through their weir on the lower Situk River since May 6. Weir counts through July 8 are 141 large Chinook Salmon, 45,798 Sockeye Salmon, and 5,881 steelhead kelts. Commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries for Chinook Salmon in the Situk River and estuary will remain closed unless weir counts indicate that the escapement will be within goal ranges. Sockeye Salmon runs are average to above average in the Yakutat area this season. Most traditional set net fishing areas were open and fished last week and will be open again this week. Pink Salmon are just starting to run in the Yakutat area.

Northern Inside Waters.

Taku and Lynn Canal drift gillnet fisheries had record harvests of hatchery Chum Salmon this week and moderate harvests of wild Sockeye Salmon this past week. Likewise, in the third commercial purse seine openings for the season at Point Augusta and Tenakee Inlet there were moderate harvests of hatchery Chum Salmon and modest harvests of wild Pink and Sockeye Salmon.

To date, only 50 and 41 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the video weirs at Neva and Kook Lakes, respectively, but there was a good surge of fish last night (Figure 1). Project personnel widened and installed the lower net weir at Kook Lake on July 6 (Figures 2 and 3). Project personnel installed the pair of video net weirs at Sitkoh Lake on July 7 (Figures 4, 5, and 6). We have a wireless link to this site that allows 24/7 live view of three above water surveillance cameras and each pair of video chute cameras.



*Figure 1. Remotely monitored screen shot of a pair of Sockeye Salmon passing through the video weir at the outlet of Neva Lake at 3 A.M., July 10, 2017.*





*Figure 2. Angoon Community Association employees Ed Gamble, Jr. and Tony Williams, Sr. add a panel of web into the middle of the lower video net weir at Kook Lake, July 6, 2017.*



*Figure 3. Aerial view of the pair of video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake, July 6, 2017.*



Figure 4. We installed the pair of remotely monitored video net weirs at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake on July 7, 2017.

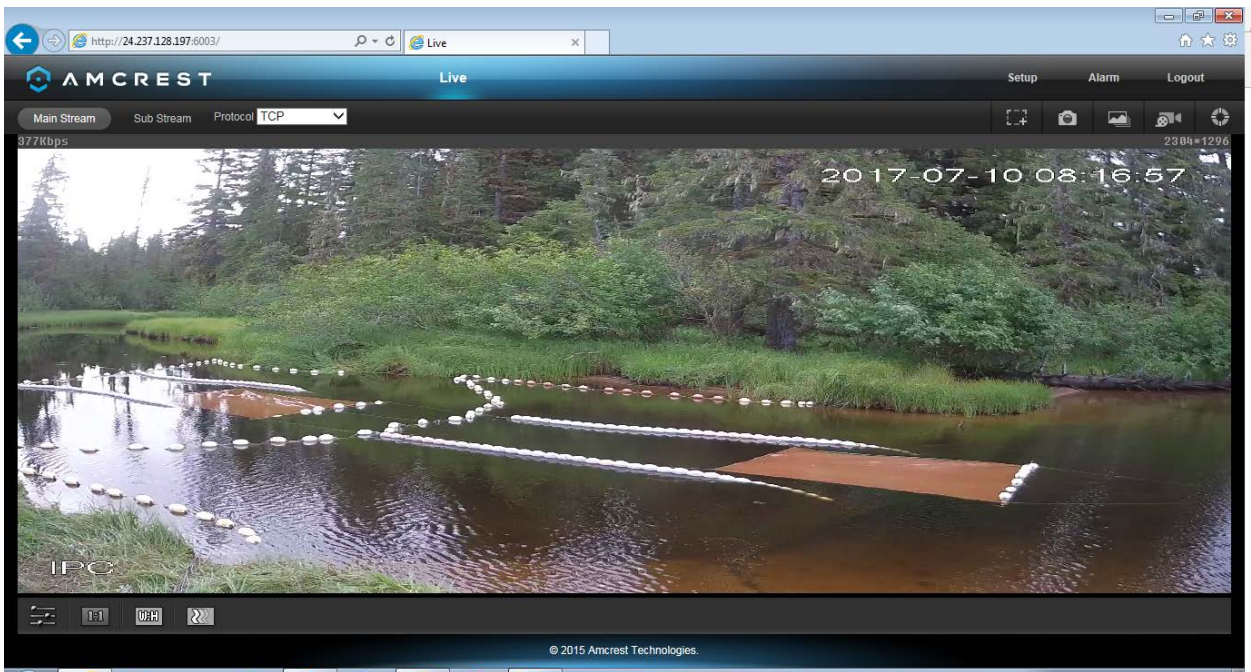


Figure 5. Screen grab from a surveillance camera at Sitkoh Lake.

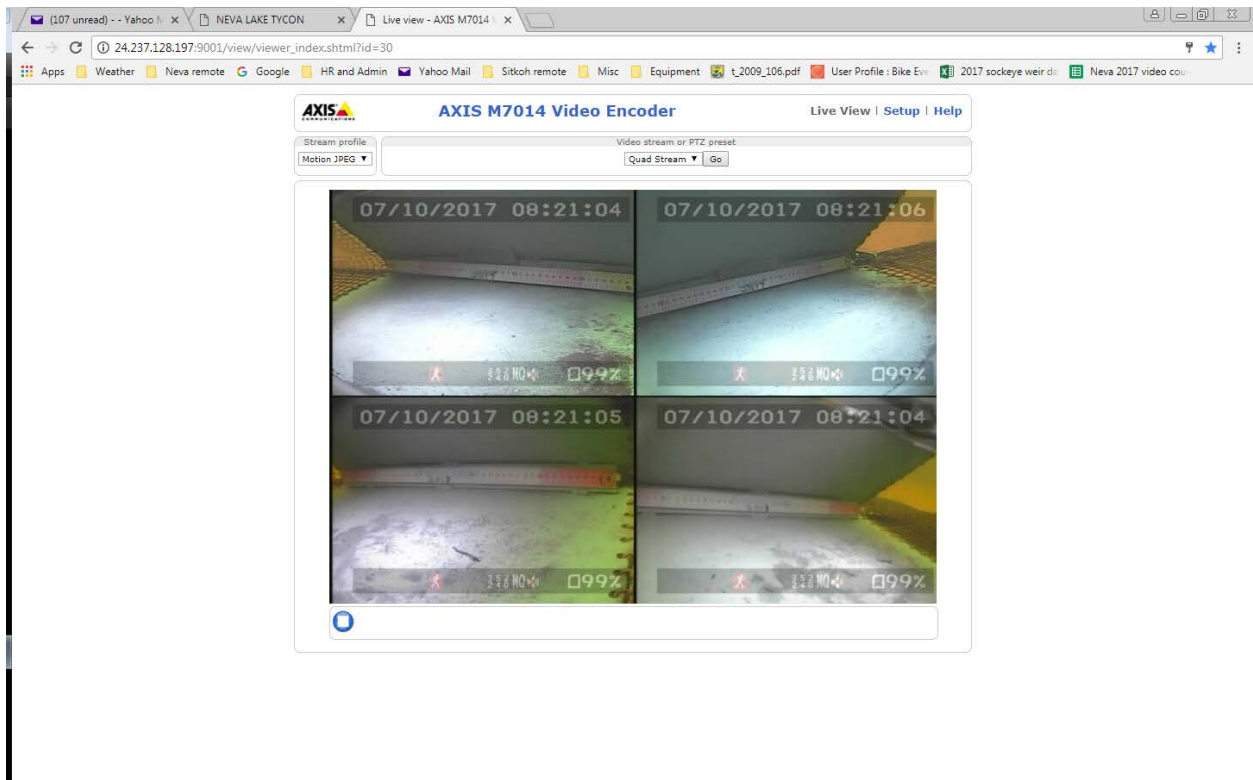


Figure 6. Screen grab of live video from the four video chute cameras at Sitkoh Lake.

**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 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas is just beginning. Of the 216 permits issued to date across the region, 161 have been issued to Federally-qualified subsistence users residing on Prince of Wales Island.

With Chinook Salmon and Halibut available 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 Salmon, most subsistence users are in preparation for subsistence harvest in July.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at Hetta and Eek Lakes are on-going. The Hetta weir has had 1,566 Sockeye Salmon counted to date. The bipod weir has been installed at Eek Lake, however no Sockeye Salmon have been counted to date. Since July 1 occurred during the weekend, the Klawock hatchery dropped pickets on July 3.

Commercial seine and drift gillnet fishing in Districts 1-4 has started. The Chinook troll fishery began on July 1 and closed to the retention of Chinook Salmon at the end of the day on July 4. Estimated harvests for Districts 1-4 are: 850 Chinook, 7120 Sockeye, 7400 Coho, 37,750 Pink, and 389,000 Chum Salmon



### **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.RI>

*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 – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve, (907) 822-7281, [dave\\_sarafin@nps.gov](mailto:dave_sarafin@nps.gov)**

As of July 9, 2017 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 618,246 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 24% more than the projected escapement of 499,087 for this date, or 119,159 more salmon. A daily estimate of 5,610 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 9.

The Chitina Subdistrict is closed from 8:00 a.m. Sunday, July 9 through 11:59 p.m. Monday, July 10. It is then scheduled to reopen at 12:01 a.m. on July 11 and remain open through July 16. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Ninety-six (96) 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 30<sup>th</sup>. Two hundred seventy-five (275) 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 permits 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. Heavy rains of last week created high instream water levels at the weir site, which peaked on July 4, but have been dropping since. The weir structure remained intact and counts continued throughout the period of high water. As of July 9, cumulative weir counts are 4,797 Sockeye Salmon and 3 Chinook Salmon.

As of July 7, 3,616 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 1,581 Chinook Salmon, of which, 166 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 July 9, two thousand forty (2,040) Chinook Salmon have been estimated past the site.

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

- Delaying Upper Coper 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.
- Increasing the period open to fishing in the Chitina Subdistrict during the week of July 3 through July 9.

#### 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 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](mailto:mburcham@fs.fed.us)

A total of 43 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 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](mailto:jeffry_anderson@fws.gov)

A total of 320 permits for Cook Inlet Federal subsistence fisheries have been issued to qualified households through July 6. This includes 89 Kenai River permits (FFCI01) and 7 Designated Fisher permits to Cooper Landing households; 32 Kenai River permits (FFCI01) and 2 Designated Fisher permit to Hope households; and 94 Kenai River permits (FFCI01), 91 Kasilof River permits (FFCI02), and 5 Designated Fisher permits to Ninilchik households.

Harvest reported through July 6 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 1,355 Sockeye Salmon. Harvest reported to date in the Kasilof River dip net fishery is one Sockeye Salmon.

The Kasilof River experimental gillnet fishery began on June 16 and continues through August 15. Harvest reported through July 6 includes 291 Sockeye and 6 Pink salmon. The Kenai River community gillnet fishery began on July 1 and continues through August 15, then from September 10 – 30. The net was fished on the Kenai River on July 3, but no fish have been harvested to date.

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

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

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

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

## **SOUTHWEST ALASKA**

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

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

Subsistence fishing effort for Sockeye Salmon is low at this time. There have been continuous commercial salmon openings over the past 2-3 weeks to manage over escapement into many west side Kodiak systems. Many resident users are targeting bottom fish like halibut.

Larsen Bay residents have finished harvesting the first run of sockeye and intend to harvest again in late summer/early fall time period. Port Lions, Ouzinkie and Afognak subsistence users have harvested much of their salmon.

### ***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](mailto: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 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.

Current escapement counts as of July 8:

Kvichak – approx. 1.2 million Sockeye Salmon. This count is nearing the lower end of the escapement goal of 2 million.

Alagnak – Aerial surveys

Naknek – approx. 1.1 million Sockeye Salmon. This count is within the escapement goal range.



Egegik – approx. 2.2 million Sockeye Salmon. This count exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Ugashik – 361,032 Sockeye Salmon. This count is nearing the lower end of the escapement goal of 500,000 fish.

Wood – approx. 2.7 million Sockeye Salmon. This goal exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Igushik – 256,278 Sockeye Salmon. This count is within the escapement goal range.

Nushagak – 54,030 Chinook Salmon and 2.3 million Sockeye Salmon. The Chinook Salmon count is near the lower end of the escapement goal range of 55,000. The Sockeye Salmon count exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Togiak – 12,654 Sockeye Salmon, counting began July 2.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opened on June 1 by regulation. Commercial fishing opportunities are being announced. The total commercial harvest from the Ugashik (1.5 million fish), Egegik (6.9 million fish), Naknek-Kvichak (3.1 million fish), Nushagak (8.6 million fish), and Togiak (151,323 fish) is 20.2 million with 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 to minimize harvest as they move through the district.

The Port Moller test fishery began on June 10 and has conducted three weeks of fishing. The primary genetic stocks represented for Sockeye Salmon are 23% Ugashik, 19% Egegik, 14% Naknek, 13% Kvichak, and 12% Nushagak based on 190 analyzed fish collected between July 4-5.

#### Chignik:

As of July 8, the escapement counts at the Chignik weir are 394,493 Sockeye Salmon and 309 Chinook Salmon with a total commercial harvest of 553,242 Sockeye Salmon and 2,183 Chinook Salmon. The Chinook Salmon run typically begins in early to mid-July as measured at the Chignik River weir.

#### Alaska Peninsula:

As of July 6, the Nelson River escapement count is 112,872 Sockeye Salmon and the early run Bear Lake escapement count is 219,680 Sockeye Salmon. The cumulative commercial harvest is approximately 6.5 million (6,591 Chinook Salmon, 4.1 million Sockeye Salmon, 38 Coho Salmon, 1.8 million Pink Salmon, and 658,936 Chum Salmon) for the Alaska Peninsula Management Area.

#### 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)

## **YUKON REGION**

**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 closed until mid-July. The office staff can be contacted by calling Fairbanks (907) 455-1849.

### Summer Season Outlook

The Summer Chum passage at Pilot Station through July 6 is the third highest since 1995 and is projecting a total run size of approximately 3.5 million. A run of this size should meet escapement goals, provide for normal subsistence harvests, and provide for a commercial surplus of approximately 2.0 million fish. Commercial harvest opportunities depend upon available markets and the strength of the overlapping Chinook Salmon run.

Chinook Salmon assessment is projecting a run abundance above the upper end of the preseason forecast. Subsistence conservation measures have been implemented to spread out the available subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals. At this time, subsistence salmon fishing opportunities have been relaxed to allow for Chinook Salmon harvests. No directed Chinook Salmon commercial fishery is anticipated, although there may be consideration for selling Chinook that are incidentally harvested in the Chum Salmon directed commercial fishery if the run continues above expectations.

### Assessment Information

The combined Big Eddy/Middle Mouth Chinook Salmon set gillnet test fishery CPUE of 37.33 through July 6 is above the average of 21.31, and ahead the “early years” average of 27.57. The Big Eddy Chinook Salmon drift gillnet test fishery CPUE of 592.54 through July 6 is ahead of the average of 400.33. The Big Eddy/Middle Mouth combined Chum Salmon drift gillnet test fishery has a cumulative CPUE of 29,611 through July 6, well ahead of the average of 6,544.88. The Pilot Station sonar Chinook Salmon passage estimate through July 6 is 240,000 fish, ahead of the average of 161,000, and ahead of the early year average of 201,000. The Pilot Station sonar Summer Chum Salmon passage estimate through July 6 is 2.73 million, well ahead of the median on this date of 1.5 million. Pilot Station detected approximately four pulses of Chinook Salmon and three pulses of Summer Chum Salmon. Efforts are being made to release Chinook Salmon alive that are caught in the test fisheries in order to conserve Chinook Salmon. The

Eagle sonar began operations on July 1 and has passed 1,300 Chinook Salmon, about average; however, it's still early for this project.

The Anvik River sonar project began on June 16 and has passed 270,000 Summer Chum Salmon as of July 6, ahead of the median passage to date of 177,000. The Andreafsky River weir began operations on June 14 and has passed 1,178 Chinook Salmon and 35,000 Summer Chum Salmon through July 6, both above average. The Gisasa River weir project began operations on June 18 and has passed 243 Chinook Salmon and 38,000 Summer Chum Salmon through July 6, both above average. The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 25 and has passed 92 Chinook Salmon and 46,000 Summer Chum Salmon through July 6, both above average.

### Management Actions

Managers are basing management actions on inseason assessment. Management actions have followed the strategies outlined in the preseason plan. Subsistence fishing for Chinook Salmon was restricted early in the season in the lower and middle Yukon areas when uncertainty in the run was high. As managers gained confidence that the Chinook Salmon run was coming in better than expected, subsistence fishing was relaxed to allow for the harvest of Chinook Salmon. At this time, in all districts, subsistence salmon fishing is open on each district's regulatory schedule with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and fishwheels.

District 1 had 10 commercial fishing periods directed at Summer Chum Salmon with gear restricted to dip nets and beach seines, which were followed by four periods directed at Summer Chum Salmon with 5.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets no greater than 30 meshes deep and three periods with 6.0-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvests in District 1 through July 6 is 289,000 Summer Chum Salmon, 3,876 Chinook Salmon caught and released, and 5,092 Chinook Salmon caught and taken home for subsistence purposes. District 2 had seven commercial fishing periods directed at Summer Chum Salmon restricted to dip nets and beach seines. The preliminary commercial harvests in District 2 are 44,000 Summer Chum Salmon, and 734 Chinook Salmon caught and released. Commercial fishing in Subdistrict 4-A for Summer Chum Salmon with live release fish wheels has been open 24/7 since June 25. Chinook Salmon must be immediately released alive in this fishery. Preliminary harvest estimates are 66,000 Summer Chum Salmon. Commercial fishing periods in Subdistrict 6-B are expected to open in the coming days.

### Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation had occurred during the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the Yukon River Panel meeting and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Fairbanks that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. On June 26, the Yukon River Advisory Group (YAG) comprised of the Yukon River

Panel delegation members teleconferenced with agency managers to discuss subsistence fishery pulse protection and potential options for selling incidentally harvested Chinook Salmon in the directed Summer Chum Salmon commercial fishery. There was support for not continuing pulse protection in Subdistrict 5-D and a majority opposition to selling incidental Chinook Salmon with these views guiding management actions this week. The fifth Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association teleconference was held on July 4. Participation was light, but fishermen in the lower and middle Yukon reported good numbers of fish on their fish rack, and were thankful for the opportunity to fish for Chinook Salmon. There were a few reports from Fort Yukon and Eagle of some early Chinook salmon subsistence catches.

## **KUSKOKWIM REGION**

**Kuskokwim River – Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.** Contact [kenneth\\_stahlnecker@fws.gov](mailto:kenneth_stahlnecker@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 and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Federal In-season Manager is rescinding previously issued special actions concerning the harvest of Chinook Salmon within Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge waters. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will manage fishing openings, closings, and fishing methods. The ratio of Chum and Sockeye Salmon to Chinook Salmon at the Bethel Test Fishery has averaged 29:1 over the past ten days, demonstrating that the salmon fishery has transitioned from a Chinook Salmon fishery to a Chum and Sockeye Salmon fishery and subsequent subsistence fishing opportunity will not greatly diminish the final number of Chinook Salmon escaping to spawning grounds. This action follows the conservation strategy discussed with the Kuskokwim River Inter-tribal Fish Commission and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Subsistence fishing in the Kuskokwim River Drainage, from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River up to the mouth of the Holitna River (Sections 1–4), will be allowed from 12:01 p.m. Saturday, July 8, 2017 until further notice. Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or less mesh, 45 meshes deep, and 25 fathoms in length.

The waters of the Kuskokwim River from a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.264' N, long 159° 33.459' W and lat 61° 35.611' N, long 159° 33.260' W upstream to a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.308' N, long 159° 29.167' W and lat 61° 34.731' N, long 159° 28.939' W (Figure 1) will be closed to subsistence fishing with gillnets from 12:01p.m. Saturday, July 8, 2017 until further notice.

**Test Fisheries:**

As of July 9, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery is 311. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 605 and 523, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 4,597. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 1,826 and 1,370, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for sockeye salmon is at 1,676. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 1,238 and 1,651, 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](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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.**

(907) 443-2522 [ken\\_adkisson@nps.gov](mailto:ken_adkisson@nps.gov)

**Norton Sound District**

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.

**Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.**

(907) 443-2522 [Ken\\_Adkisson@nps.gov](mailto:Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov)

**Norton Sound District****Sport Fishing:**

All freshwaters from Bald Head to Point Romanof remain closed to sport fishing for king salmon 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.

**Commercial Fishing:** All six subdistricts had commercial fishing periods during the past week. The chum salmon catches were above average.

***Nome (Subdistrict 1)***

**Commercial Fishing:** No harvest figures are available from the first 48-hour commercial fishing period from noon Sunday, July 3 to noon Tuesday, July 4. The next commercial salmon fishing will open for 48 hours in the Nome Subdistrict only east of Cape Nome from 6 PM Friday, July 7 until 6 PM Sunday, July 9. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length.

**Subsistence Fishing:** The Nome Subdistrict subsistence salmon gillnet fishing schedule is in effect. It runs from 6 PM Wednesday to 6 PM Monday in all freshwater subsistence areas and the marine waters west of Cape Nome. The marine waters east of Cape Nome

continue to be open seven days a week. There are no catch limits when fishing in the marine waters. Catch limits in the freshwater subsistence areas vary by river; a permit is required and the catch limits can be found on the back of the permit. Beach seines, cast nets and dip nets can be used in the subsistence areas during the net fishing schedule. Effective June 15, all gillnet and beach sein fishing upstream of Boulder Creek on the Sinuk River was closed in order to protect migrating sockeye salmon that hold in the Sinuk River bridge area before reaching the spawning grounds.

**Solomon River Weir** - A Fish and Game project. It has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative count through July 3 was 20 chums and 10 pinks.

**Eldorado River Weir** - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. It has an escapement goal of 6,000-9,200 chum salmon. The cumulative count through July 3 was 5,500 chums and 40 pinks. The chum count is the highest for that date in the 23-year project history. The historical average first quarter point of the chum run is July 9.

**Nome River Weir** - A Fish and Game project with assistance from NSEDC. It has escapement goals of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 3,200 pink salmon. The cumulative count through July 3 was 240 chums, 16 pinks and 3 sockeyes. The historical average first quarter point of the chum run is July 14.

**Snake River Weir** - A Fish and Game project between Fish and Game and NSEDC. It has an escapement goals of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The cumulative count through July 3 was 78 chums. The historical average first quarter point of the chum run is July 15.

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

Commercial Fishing: There were six permit holders fishing in the first 24-hour commercial fishing period that started on June 29. The harvest was 1 king, 2,000 chums, 60 pinks and 5 sockeyes. The chum salmon harvest was average for late June. A second commercial fishing opening of 24 hours was announced by ADF&G to begin at 6 PM Tuesday, July 4. Permit holders were limited 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and mesh size of 6 inches or less for gillnets.

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

**Fish River Tower** - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. The cumulative count through July 3 was 120 kings, 43,000 chums and 10,000 pinks. The king count is the lowest, and the chum count is the highest for that date in the 4-year history of the project.

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



**Commercial Fishing:** There were 16 permit holders fishing in the first 24-hour commercial fishing period that started on June 29. The harvest was 7 king, 3,300 chums, 240 pinks and 7 sockeyes. The chum salmon harvest was above average for late June. A second commercial fishing opening of 24 hours was announced by ADF&G to begin at 6 PM Tuesday, July 4. Permit holders were limited 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and mesh size of 6 inches or less for gillnets.

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

**Kwiniuk River Tower – Camp Joel** – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings, 11,500 – 23,000 chums, 8,400 pinks and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative count through July 3 was 9 kings, 10,000 chums and 700 pinks. The king count was well below both the short and long term averages. The chum count was above all averages for that date. The historical average midpoints of the run past the tower are usually July 6 for chums and July 8 for kings.

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

**Commercial Fishing:** There were 9 permit holders fishing in the first 24-hour commercial fishing period that started on June 29. The harvest was 11 kings, 1,700 chums and 500 pinks. The chum salmon harvest was above average for late June. A second commercial fishing opening of 24 hours was announced by ADF&G to begin at 6 PM Tuesday, July 4. Permit holders were limited 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and mesh size of 6 inches or less for gillnets.

**Subsistence Fishing:** Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length. When beach seining, all king salmon must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

**Inglutalik River Tower** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. The cumulative count through July 3 is 1,800 kings, 20,000 chums and 12,000 pinks. In the seven-year history of the project, the king count is the third highest for the same date with the run passage at the tower usually at the midpoint, and the chum count the second highest with the run usually at the first quarter point of passage.

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

**Commercial Fishing:** Commercial salmon fishing opened for a 24-hour period in the Subdistrict from 6 PM Saturday, July 1 until 6 PM Sunday, July 2. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Captured king salmon could be retained for personal use, but not sold. There were 16 permit holders fishing this first 24-hour period, and the harvest was 5 kings, 5,200 chums, 1,200 pinks and 6 sockeyes. The chum harvest was above average for early July.

A second commercial salmon fishing period of 24 hours was announced to open from 6 PM Wednesday, July 5 until 6 PM Thursday, July 6. Again, gear was restricted to 100 fathoms in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or less. King salmon could be retained for personal use but not sold.

Subsistence Fishing: Effective July 1, subsistence fishing with beach seines is allowed seven days a week, but all king salmon captured in beach seines must immediately be returned to the water unharmed. Currently, subsistence gillnet fishing is generally prohibited in the marine and freshwaters of the Subdistrict unless otherwise announced by ADF&G through mid-July. One 24-hour subsistence set gillnet fishing period was opened in the fresh waters of the Subdistrict from noon Friday, July 7 to noon Saturday, July 8, with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. King salmon passage has been increasing at the Shaktoolik River and North River towers and at the Unalakleet River weir. This one time in-river gillnet fishing period is intended to provide fishing opportunity to subsistence fishers who have been unable to fish in the marine waters because of the lack of an ocean capable skiff. Also, during this 24-hour set gillnet fishing period, any king salmon captured in a set gillnet may be kept. ADF&G also announced a subsistence salmon gillnet fishing period of 48 hours in the marine waters of the Subdistrict. It ran from noon Monday, July 3 to noon Wednesday, July 5 with set gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

**Shaktoolik Tower** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative count through July 3 was 435 kings, 11,000 chums and 1,600 pinks. The king count was the second highest, and the chum the highest in the four-year history of the project for that date.

### *Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)*

Federal Regulatory Restriction: The Federal public waters of the Unalakleet River upstream from the mouth of the Chirosky River closed by federal regulation to the taking of Chinook (king) salmon by all users effective July 1. The closure will remain in effect to July 31 unless the run strength of king salmon warrants the BLM field manager announcing an earlier opening of the closed area to Federally qualified subsistence users or to all users.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened for a 24-hour period in the Subdistrict from 6 PM Saturday, July 1 until 6 PM Sunday, July 2. Permit holders were limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Captured king salmon could be retained for personal use, but not sold. There were 27 permit holders fishing this first 24-hour period, and the harvest was 50 kings, 5,900 chums, 8,200 pinks and 50 sockeyes. The chum harvest was above average for early July. A second commercial salmon fishing period of 24 hours was announced to open from 6 PM Wednesday, July 5 until 6 PM Thursday, July 6. Again, gear was restricted to 100 fathoms in aggregate length and a mesh size of 6 inches or less. King salmon could be retained for personal use but not sold.

**Subsistence Fishing:** Effective July 1, subsistence fishing with beach seines is allowed seven days a week, but all king salmon captured in beach seines must immediately be returned to the water unharmed. Currently, subsistence gillnet fishing is generally prohibited in the marine and freshwaters of the Subdistrict unless otherwise announced by ADF&G through mid-July. One 24-hour subsistence set gillnet fishing period was opened in the fresh waters of the Subdistrict from noon Friday, July 7 to noon Saturday, July 8, with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. King salmon passage has been increasing at the Shaktoolik River and North River towers and at the Unalakleet River weir. This one time in-river gillnet fishing period is intended to provide fishing opportunity to subsistence fishers who have been unable to fish in the marine waters because of the lack of an ocean capable skiff. Also, during this 24-hour set gillnet fishing period, any king salmon captured in a set gillnet may be kept. ADF&G also announced a subsistence salmon gillnet fishing period of 48 hours in the marine waters of the Subdistrict. It ran from noon Monday, July 3 to noon Wednesday, July 5 with set gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

**Unalakleet River Floating Weir** – a cooperative project of Fish and Game, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), Native Village of Unalakleet and BLM, with major funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. The cumulative count through July 3 is 500 kings, 18,000 chums, 900 pinks, 50 sockeyes and 9 silvers. Both the king and chum counts were the highest in the eight-year history of the project for the same date. The historical average passage at the weir is 15 percent for both species on July 4.

**North River Tower – Camp J. B.** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. The cumulative count through July 3 was 93 kings, 3,000 chums and 700 pinks. The king count for the same date is below the 10-year average. The chum count is the highest in the 22-year project history. The historical average passage at the tower is 15 percent for kings and 5 percent for chums on July 4.

### **Port Clarence District**

Subsistence gillnet and beach seining are open seven days a week. The annual Pilgrim River subsistence catch limit is 25 sockeyes per household to ensure that everyone gets their first taste of the bounty. If the run strength is similar to last year, then the ADF&G will waive the sockeye limit later in the season.

**Pilgrim River Weir** – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish and Game. It has an escapement goal of 4,000-8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & the Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The cumulative count through July 3 was 12 kings, 1,000 chums, 24 pinks and 6,000 sockeyes. The historical average first quarter point of sockeye passage at the weir is July 12; however, last year it was July 8.

### **Kotzebue District**

Commercial Fishing: The ADF&G plans on opening commercial fishing any time after July 9 when buyers are ready or permit holders are ready to fish and a market is available. The commercial fishing season closes after August 31 by regulation. The ADF&G announced that two to three buyers are expected this season. For the first time since the 1990s, one buyer plans to bring in a floating processor and tender the first week of August.

**Kobuk River Test Fish** - a Fish and Game project. The project is scheduled to start the third week of July.

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