

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 9 – July 15, 2017. Report #7.

Compiled by Don Rivard (907) 786-3882, donald_rivard@fws.gov and George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, 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, 216 permits have been issued for the 2017 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas.

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

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 29th. As of July 16th, 162 Sockeye Salmon have been counted through the fish pass and 245 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.

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which was installed June 29th. As of July 15th, 24 Sockeye Salmon have passed through the weir and the harvest of 177 Sockeye Salmon has been reported. In 2016, approximately 5,234 Sockeye Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 2,605 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational as of June 16th. As of July 15th, 12,311 Sockeye Salmon have passed the weir. In 2016, an estimated 22,937 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. On July 14th, 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.

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. District 6 and District 8 drift gillnet fisheries were opened on July 9 for a 96 hour opening and District 8 was extended for 24 hours. Effort and Sockeye Salmon harvests were well below average.

As of June 24th, 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) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256; 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 13 are 357 large Chinook Salmon, 53,642 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. The lower bound of the escapement goal is 450 large Chinook Salmon. Sockeye Salmon runs appear to be 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 will likely dominate harvests for the next three weeks.

Northern Inside Waters.

Taku and Lynn Canal drift gillnet fisheries had strong harvests of hatchery Chum Salmon and weak harvests of wild Sockeye Salmon this past week. In the fourth week of commercial purse seine openings for the season Point Augusta/Whitestone, Tenakee Inlet, and Hawk Inlet shore was fished on July 9 and Point Augusta/Whitestone, Tenakee Inlet, and the Amalga Harbor Special Harvest Area was fished on July 13. Hatchery Chum Salmon and wild pink salmon dominated the harvests. About 65% of the seine boats were fishing in northern inside waters this week.

Total counts of Sockeye Salmon through the Neva, Kook, and Sitkoh weirs are 942, 44, and 12 as of July 13.

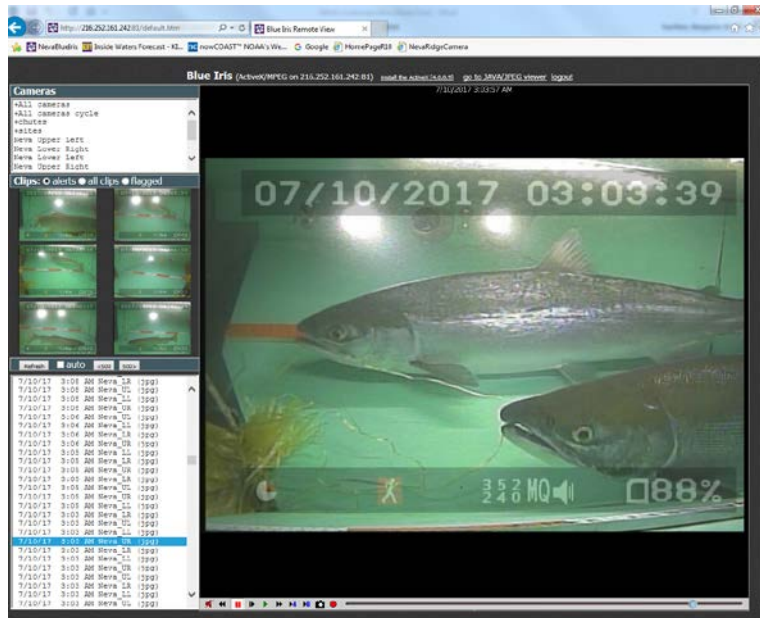


Figure 1. Remotely monitored screen shot of a pair of Sockeye Salmon passing through the video weir at the outlet of Neva Lake at 3 A.M., July 10, 2017.



Figure 2. Aerial view of the pair of video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake, July 6, 2017.

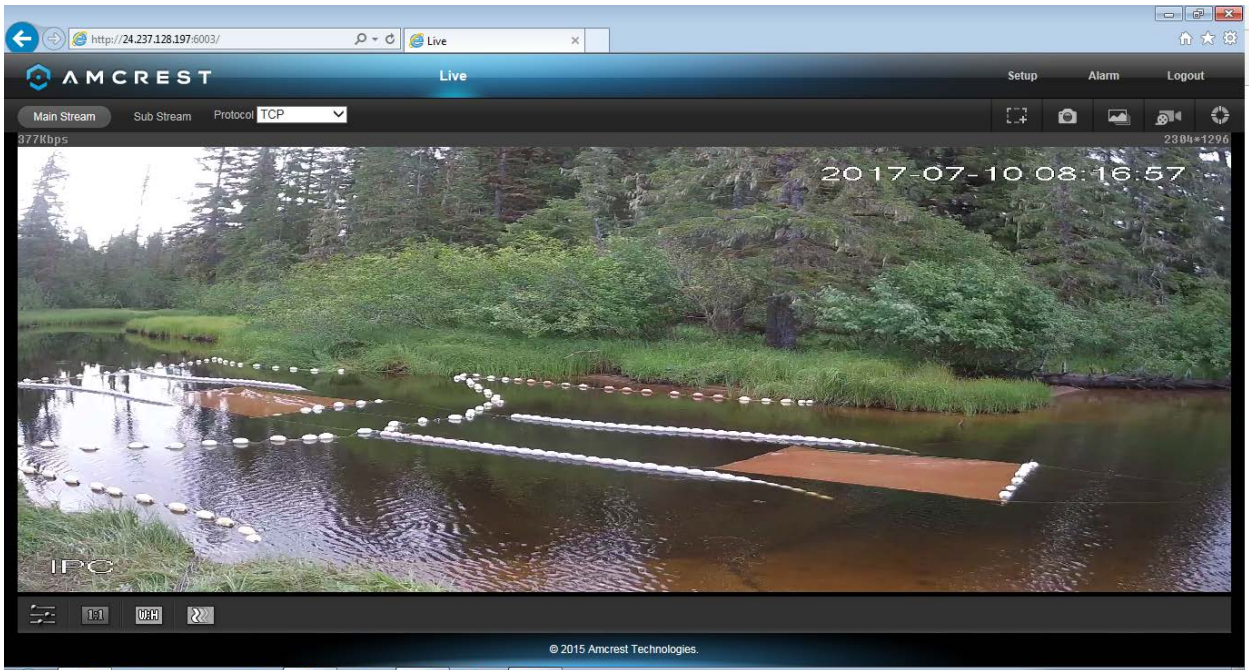


Figure 3. Screen grab from a surveillance camera of the remotely monitored pair of video net weirs at Sitkoh Lake.

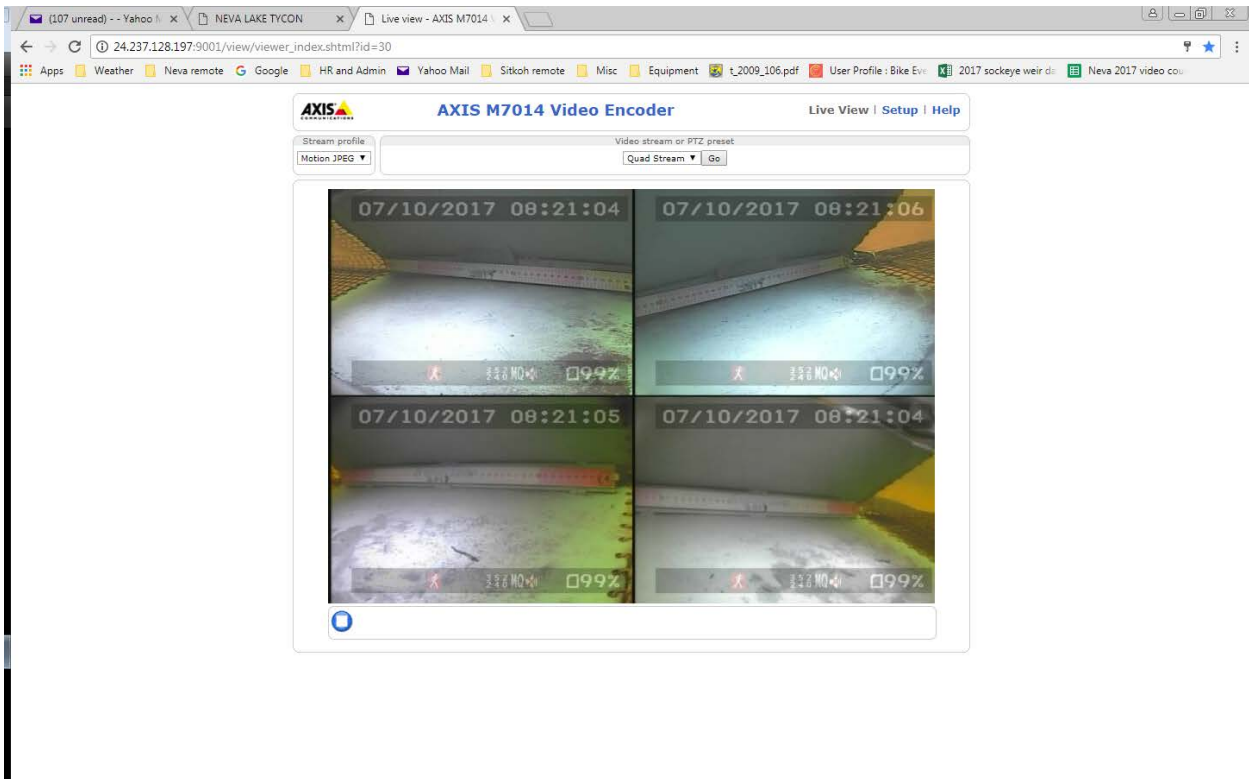


Figure 2. Screen grab of live video from the four video chute cameras at Sitkoh Lake.

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

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 1,842 Sockeye Salmon counted to date. The bipod weir has been installed at Eek Lake; however no Sockeye Salmon have been counted to date. The Klawock River weir has passed 98 sockeye to date.

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: 1050 Chinook, 15,020 Sockeye, 18,900 Coho, 180,250 Pink, and 628,200 Chum Salmon. Please note that Chinook and Coho Salmon estimates reported in this report are far lower as they do not include commercial troll harvest estimates for these districts.

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

As of July 16, 2017 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 665,793 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 21% more than the projected escapement of 552,025 for this date, or 113,768 more salmon. A daily estimate of 5,616 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 16.

The Chitina Subdistrict closed at 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 16. It is scheduled to reopen at 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 18 and remain open through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 23. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Ninety-seven (97) 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. Two hundred seventy-five (282) 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 July 15, cumulative weir counts are 7,777 Sockeye Salmon and 3 Chinook Salmon.

The Native Village of Eyak Baird Canyon fishwheels were shut down for the season on July 11. As of July 10, 3,635 Chinook Salmon had been tagged at the two project fishwheels at this lower river site. As of July 15, the upriver fishwheels at Canyon Creek have captured 1,658 Chinook Salmon, of which, 181 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 11, two thousand one hundred sixty (2,160) Chinook Salmon have been estimated past the site.

Eight 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 subsistence fishing in the Chitina Subdistrict during the week of July 3 through July 9.
- Decreasing the period open to subsistence fishing in the Chitina Subdistrict during the week of July 17 through July 23.
-

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 48 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

A total of 326 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 97 Kenai River

permits (FFCI01), 94 Kasilof River permits (FFCI02), and 5 Designated Fisher permits to Ninilchik households.

Harvest reported through July 13 in the dip net fishery at Russian River Falls is 1,399 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 13 is 315 Sockeye and 8 Pink salmon. The Kenai River community gillnet fishery began on July 1 and continues through August 15, then from September 10 – 30. Harvest reported through July 13 is 31 Sockeye Salmon.

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

(907) 487-0226 or michael_brady@fws.gov or Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230
kevin_vanhatten@fws.gov

The Chinook Salmon runs throughout the Kodiak Area have pretty much ended, with very few salmon still trickling in along the road system. Ayakulik River is fair but has not reached the lower bound of its escapement goal range and Karluk River Chinook Salmon escapement goal is not projected to be reached as well. Good numbers of Sockeye Salmon are still showing up in the Olga Bay streams and Saltery Creek. Pink Salmon are starting to show up in most of the area streams and in good numbers in a couple of the monitored streams.

Subsistence users from Old Harbor are focusing on Coho Salmon returning to Big Creek. Fishing for Sockeye Salmon at Pasagshak and Saltery Rivers and other road system rivers has started to pick up with high fishing opportunities occurring at Saltery.

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 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. Subsistence fishing opportunity has been made available around commercial fishing periods.

Current escapement counts as of July 13:

Kvichak – approx. 2.2 million Sockeye Salmon. This count is within the escapement goal range.

Alagnak – Aerial surveys

Naknek – approx. 1.6 million Sockeye Salmon. This count is within the escapement goal range.

Egegik – approx. 2.4 million Sockeye Salmon. This count exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Ugashik – 751,014 Sockeye Salmon. This count is within the escapement goal range.

Wood – approx. 3.7 million Sockeye Salmon. This goal exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Igushik – 410,820 Sockeye Salmon. This count exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Nushagak – 55,314 Chinook Salmon and 2.7 million Sockeye Salmon. The Chinook Salmon count is within the escapement goal. The Sockeye Salmon count exceeds the upper escapement goal range.

Togiak – 34,620 Sockeye Salmon, counting began July 2.

The total commercial harvest from the Ugashik (3.5 million fish), Egegik (9.3 million fish), Naknek-Kvichak (5.7 million fish), Nushagak (10.5 million fish), and Togiak (235,160 fish) is 29.3 million Sockeye Salmon.

The Port Moller Test Fishery operated by The Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute conducted its last test fish day on July 11. The primary genetic stocks represented for Sockeye Salmon are 45% Ugashik, 18% Egegik, 14% North Peninsula, and 10% Naknek based on 176 analyzed fish collected between July 9-11.

Chignik:

As of July 13, the escapement counts at the Chignik weir are early run 409,436 and late run 52,662 Sockeye Salmon and 478 Chinook Salmon with a total commercial harvest of 556,036 Sockeye Salmon and 2,196 Chinook Salmon. The Chinook Salmon run is exhibiting cause for concern in meeting the escapement goal of 1,300 – 2,700. The current Chinook Salmon escapement is a little less than half of the ten year average. There are historical years with worse escapement counts to date; 2008, 2012 and 2013, with 2013 being the only year that the minimum escapement was not met. Currently the commercial fishery is closed. Upon reopening the commercial fishery a restriction of non-retention of Chinook Salmon will be in place within the bay district. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has restricted the central district one time in the past, but the Chinook Salmon caught in that area are not all Chignik fish so there is some reluctance to restrict that district currently. Federal and State Managers are monitoring the run closely.

Alaska Peninsula:

As of July 13, the Nelson River escapement count is 211,086 Sockeye Salmon which is nearing the upper end of the escapement goal and 941 Chinook Salmon which is nearing halfway towards the escapement goal of 2,400 fish. The early run Bear Lake escapement count is 370,759 Sockeye Salmon which is above the 10 year average. The cumulative commercial harvest is approximately 7.3 million (7,434 Chinook Salmon, 4.6 million Sockeye Salmon, 17,425 Coho Salmon, 1.8 million Pink Salmon, and 727,612 Chum Salmon) for the Alaska Peninsula Management Area.

Aleutian Islands.

The Sockeye salmon escapement through the McLees Lake weir as of July 6 was 4,117 fish, which is well below the previous 10-year average for this date. This is the lowest escapement for this date since the weir became operational in 2001. Effective July 10, in an effort to conserve McLees Lake Sockeye Salmon, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will extend the duration of the 500 yard closure around the terminus of the McLees Lake outlet stream. Areas open to subsistence salmon fishing may be adjusted based on changes in run strength.

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 closed until July 20. The office staff can be contacted by calling Fairbanks (907) 455-1849.

Summer Season Outlook

The summer season is essentially over in the lower Yukon River. District 1 transitions to Fall season management on July 16. The Summer Chum passage at Pilot Station through July 13 is the third highest since 1995 and is projecting a total run size of approximately 3.5 million. A run of this size should support all 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 indicating a run abundance above the upper end of the preseason forecast. Subsistence conservation measures had been implemented early in the season as a cautious approach 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 Fall Chum Salmon directed commercial fishery well after the main Chinook Salmon run.

Assessment Information

The combined Big Eddy/Middle Mouth Chinook Salmon set gillnet test fishery CPUE of 38.49 through July 13 is above the average of 22.43 and ahead the “early years” average of 28.18. The Big Eddy Chinook Salmon drift gillnet test fishery CPUE of 598.78 through July 13 is ahead of the average of 407.18. The Big Eddy/Middle Mouth combined Chum Salmon drift gillnet test fishery has a cumulative CPUE of 29,883 through July 13, well ahead of the average of 6,684. The Pilot Station sonar Chinook Salmon passage estimate through July 13 is 255,000 fish, ahead of the average of 171,000, and ahead of the early year average of 201,000. The Pilot Station sonar Summer Chum Salmon passage estimate through July 13 is 3.07 million, well ahead of the median on this date of 1.77 million. Pilot Station detected approximately four pulses of Chinook Salmon and three pulses of Summer Chum Salmon. The Eagle sonar began operations on July 1 and has passed 11,813 Chinook Salmon through July 13, above average; however, it’s still early for this project.

The Anvik River sonar project began on June 16 and has passed 346,000 Summer Chum Salmon as of July 13, ahead of the median passage to date of 329,000. The Andrefsky River weir began operations on June 14 and through July 13 has passed 2,402 Chinook Salmon, below the average of 2,723, but above the lower end of the escapement goal of

2,100, and 48,200 Summer Chum Salmon, above average of 44,300. The Gisasa River weir project began operations on June 18 and through July 13 has passed 611 Chinook Salmon, below the average of 970, and 59,000 Summer Chum Salmon, above the average of 26,560. The Henshaw Creek weir began operations on June 25 and through July 13 has passed 411 Chinook Salmon, above the average of 376, and 200,000 Summer Chum Salmon, above the average of 24,000. The Chena and Salcha Rivers Chinook Salmon runs are assumed to be near average at this time although it is still early season for them and both have incomplete counts due to high water.

Summer Season 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. Those periods 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 six periods with 6.0-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvests in District 1 through July 13 is 340,000 Summer Chum Salmon, 3,876 Chinook Salmon caught and released, and 5,456 Chinook Salmon caught and taken home for subsistence purposes. District 2 had seven commercial fishing periods directed at Summer Chum Salmon with gear restricted to dip nets and beach seines then followed by three periods with 6.0-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. The preliminary commercial harvests in District 2 are 47,000 Summer Chum Salmon, and 766 Chinook Salmon caught and retained for subsistence purposes. 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 104,000 Summer Chum Salmon. Commercial fishing periods in Subdistrict 6-B are expected to open beginning July 14.

Fall Season Outlook

The Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan goes into effect for District 1 beginning July 16. Upriver management districts and subdistricts will switch to fall season management as the fall chum salmon migration reaches those areas. The ADF&G field office located in Emmonak will be open for fall season operations. The lower river test fishery will begin fall season operations on July 16, the Mountain Village test fishery on July 18, and the mainstem sonar near Pilot Station will begin reporting all chum salmon as fall chum salmon on July 19. The 2017 fall chum salmon preseason run projection, based on the summer chum to fall chum salmon relationship, is for a run size greater than 1.1 million fish. This level of abundance is typically sufficient to meet

escapement and subsistence needs, and provide a surplus for commercial and personal use purposes.

Fall Season Management Actions

Effective 4:00 a.m. Sunday, July 16, the Coastal District will be under fall season management. Subsistence fishing is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Subsistence fishermen may use gillnets with a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches. Effective 4:00 a.m. Sunday, July 16, subsistence fishing in District 1 will be open during the fall season for 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use gillnets with a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches. Effective 2:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 19, subsistence fishing in District 2 is open during the fall season for 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Subsistence fishermen may use gillnets with a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches. Effective 8:00 a.m. Friday, July 21, subsistence fishing in District 3 will be open for the fall season 7 days per week, 24 hours a day. Subsistence fishermen may use gillnets with a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches.

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 sixth Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association teleconference was held on July 11. 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; (907) 543-3151 or lewis_coggins@fws.gov

Summary:

Subsistence fishing in the Kuskokwim River Drainage, from the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River up to the confluence of the Johnson River (Section 1), will be allowed from 12:01 p.m. Thursday, July 13, 2017 with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or less mesh, 45 meshes deep, and 50 fathoms in length 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 332. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 643 and 543, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is at 5,519. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 2,288 and 1,521, respectively.

Cumulative CPUE for sockeye salmon is at 2,139. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2016 and 2015 were 1,606 and 1,802, 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

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.

(907) 443-2522 ken_adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound District

Sport Fishing:

The fresh waters from Bald Head (Isaac's Point) to Point Romanof were reopened to sport fishing effective Friday, July 14. The annual limit is one king salmon and the use of bait will be allowed,

Commercial Fishing: All six subdistricts are commercial fishing. Chum salmon catches are well above average. The chum salmon passage at Norton Sound salmon counting projects is projected to exceed all escapement goal ranges. Permit holders need to stay in close contact with the buyer in case it is necessary to suspend fishing because of capacity concerns.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Commercial Fishing: Only two fishermen have participated in the commercial fishery this season, and harvest figures are confidential. The latest commercial fishing period was from 9 PM Thursday, July 13 to 9 PM Monday, July 17.

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.

Solomon River Weir - A Fish and Game project. It has no escapement goals established. The cumulative counts through July 10 were 500 chums and 100 pinks. The chum count for the same date was the highest in the 5-year project history.

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 counts through July 10 were 2 kings, 22,000 chums, 400 pinks and 4 sockeyes. The chum count

was the highest for that date in the 23-year project history. The historical average midpoint of the chum run is July 14.

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 counts through July 10 were 1,400 chums, 5,500 pinks and 30 sockeyes. The chum count for that date was the fifth highest in the 25-year project history. 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 counts through July 10 were 1,100 chums, 250 pinks, 3 sockeyes and 1 silver. The chum count for the same date was the third highest in the 23-year project history. The historical average first quarter point of the chum run is July 15.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative commercial catch is 2 kings, 4,000 chums, 200 pinks and 5 sockeyes. The chum salmon harvest has been above average. The next fishing period announced will be 24 hours from 6 PM Saturday until 6 PM Sunday.

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 counts through July 10 were 150 kings, 93,000 chums and 137,000 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: The cumulative commercial catch is 11 kings, 6,000 chums, 1,000 pinks and 11 sockeyes for 20 permit holders. The chum salmon harvest has been above average. The next fishing period announced will be 24 hours from 6 PM Saturday until 6 PM Sunday.

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 counts through July 10 were 33 kings, 22,000 chums and 19,000 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 third quarter points of the runs past the tower are usually July 12 for chums and July 16 for kings.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch was 23 kings, 5,000 chums and 1,700 pinks for 9 permit holders. The chum salmon harvest was above average. The next fishing period announced will be 24 hours from 6 PM Saturday until 6 PM Sunday.

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 counts through July 10 were 2,200 kings, 43,000 chums and 220,000 pinks. In the 7-year history of the project, the chum count was the third highest with the run usually at the midpoint of passage on July 12.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: The cumulative catch is 5 kings, 23,000 chums, 1,500 pinks, 25 sockeyes and 2 silvers. The chum catch has been well above average. Due to the large volume of chum salmon, permit holders will need to stay in close contact with the buyer in case it is necessary to suspend commercial fishing because of capacity concerns. The fishing period originally scheduled for Friday, July 14 was cancelled at the request of the buyer. The next opening in the Subdistrict has been announced for a 12-hour period from noon to midnight Saturday, July 15.

Subsistence Fishing: Gillnet fishing is open in all marine and fresh waters with nets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less and 50 fathoms in length, Fishing with beach seines is allowed, but all king salmon must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

Shaktoolik Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals established. The cumulative counts through July 10 were 1,000 kings, 64,000 chums and 300,000 pinks. The king count was the second highest, and the chum the highest in the four-year history of the project for that date.

Unalakeet (Subdistrict 6)

Federal Regulatory Restriction: The Federal public waters of the Unalakeet 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: The commercial catch is 50 kings, 24,000 chums, 10,000 pinks, 70 sockeyes and 2 silvers for 29 permit holders. The chum catch has been well above average. Due to the large volume of chum salmon, permit holders will need to stay in close contact with the buyer in case it is necessary to suspend commercial fishing because of capacity concerns. Depending on the catch volume of Friday's 12-hour fishing period, it is possible that a 12-hour fishing period will be announced for Saturday if the buyer has sufficient capacity for another opening

Subsistence Fishing: Gillnet fishing is open in all marine and fresh waters with nets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less and 50 fathoms in length, but the Unalakleet River drainage is restricted to 25 fathoms in length. The Unalakleet River closed at 8 PM Tuesday, July 11 and reopened Friday, July 14. Fishing with beach seines is allowed, but all king salmon must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

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. No escapement goals have yet been established. The cumulative counts through July 10 were 2,300 kings, 60,000 chums, 700,000 pinks, 700 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 midpoint of passage at the weir is July 15 for both species.

North River Tower – Camp J. B. – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from ADF&G. It has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings, no goal established for chums, 25,000 pinks and 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey goal). The cumulative counts through July 10 were 780 kings, 10,000 chums and 300,000 pinks. The king count for the same date is above the 5 and 10-year averages, and the chum count is the highest in the 22-year project history. The historical average first quarter point passage for chums is July 12, and the midpoint passage for kings is July 15.

Port Clarence District

Subsistence gillnet use and beach seining are open seven days a week. All subsistence sockeye limits have been waived.

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 counts through July 10 were 30 kings, 4,400 chums, 400 pinks and 15,500 sockeyes. The sockeye count was the third highest for that date in the 15-year project history. The historical average midpoint past the weir is July 19. However the midpoint has often been before mid-July in years with big runs.

Kotzebue District

Commercial Fishing: Two buyers have registered, and commercial fishing began Monday, July 10 with daily 11-hour fishing periods through Friday, July 14. The daily periods ran from 10 AM until 9 PM. The first period saw 33 permit holders fishing. The catch was 6,400 chum salmon for an average CPUE. The 2017 commercial forecast is 250,000 to 450,000 chum salmon depending on sufficient cargo capacity to haul the fish out of Kotzebue. There is a possibility of exceeding the forecast based on the expected above average return of 4-year old chum salmon from the 2013 parent year, and that a floating processor is expected to arrive in a few weeks which could alleviate some of the cargo capacity issues.

Kobuk River Test Fish - a Fish and Game project. The project is scheduled to start next week.

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