

2020 Summary

COOK INLET SPORT FISH MANAGEMENT AREAS Northern Cook Inlet, Northern Kenai Peninsula, and Lower Cook Inlet

Northern Cook Inlet Management Area



Greater Susitna River/ Knik Arm Area

Below average escapements have resulted in preseason and inseason restrictions and closures on the Deshka, Eastside, Talkeetna, and Yentna king salmon stocks and other isolated streams since 2012. 2020 marks the first year of king salmon management under four new stock-based goals set on the Susitna River drainage. The preseason forecast for Deshka River king salmon was for a total run of 10,570 king salmon, with an 80% prediction interval of 1,860 - 19,280 fish. Given a new Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) of 9,000 - 18,000 fish and ability to adjust management actions during the season using weir counts, allowing catch-and-release fishing opportunity from the outset of the season was warranted. Catch-and-release fishing was also allowed by emergency order on the Yentna and Talkeetna stocks, the East Fork Chulitna River, and on small streams of the upper Susitna River (Unit 3) as escapements on these systems in 2019 showed improvement over 2017-2018 levels and an upward trend demonstrated over the past three years. The Eastside Susitna stock remained closed to king salmon fishing as abundance in this area of the Susitna River drainage has remained chronically low, even in 2019 when other Susitna River stocks showed increases in abundance over past years. The Little Susitna River was the only wild stock king salmon fishery opened late in the season in 2019. Although there was a harvestable surplus in 2019, an upward trend in abundance was not yet apparent and this fishery started the season with conservative catch-and-release fishing, but no harvest allowed.

Westside Susitna Tributaries

The Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) for the Deshka River of 9,000-18,000 king salmon was achieved and the sport fishery opened for the final six days of season downstream of the weir. The final weir count was 10,638 king salmon. Water conditions were favorable for fish passage this season and even though the weir was installed late, the count was considered to be complete and on time. Aerial escapement surveys were conducted postseason on three streams contributing to the Yentna king salmon stock and Alexander Creek of the lower Susitna. Assessment of the Yentna Optimal Escapement Goal (OEG) is pending data analysis; however, counts on Lake Creek, Talachulitna, and Peters Creek were below the recent 5-year average for those streams. The



survey on Alexander Creek of 596 fish was below the SEG. In general, Westside Susitna survey counts were below 2018-2019 levels, but above 2017 levels. This year's run was characterized by younger age fish, which on some streams were difficult to site, even under good survey conditions. Analysis of age data collected at the Dëshka River weir is underway and likely the larger than anticipated showing of age 1.2 fish will result in this age class being under forecast, while the older age 1.3 and 1.4 fish may be over forecast.

Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective May 1, 2020, restricted king salmon fishing in Units 1 and 3-6 of the Susitna River drainage to nonretention and closed Unit 2 for the season. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure was allowed in the waters normally open to king salmon fishing in Units 1-6 of the Susitna River drainages. Sport fishing for other species was allowed seven days per week from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. including the waters in Unit 2 that are normally closed on certain days during the king salmon season.

Eastside Susitna Tributaries

Management decisions effecting Eastside Susitna streams (Units 2, 3, 5, and 6) are based upon postseason aerial surveys over eight streams that are used to estimate run size and escapement of the Eastside (Unit 2 streams along the Parks Highway) king salmon stock and the Talkeetna River stock, which are two new stock goals for 2020. Assessment of the Eastside and Talkeetna stock goals is pending data analysis; however, low survey counts on Willow, Little Willow, Montana, and Goose creeks that collectively contribute to the Eastside king stock were not improved over 2018-2019 levels, years in which the Eastside stock goal would have been missed. The new East Chulitna River goal, an individual tributary goal, was missed.

Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective May 1, 2020, restricted king salmon fishing in Units 1 and 3-6 of the Susitna River drainage to nonretention and closed Unit 2 for the season. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure was allowed in the waters normally open to king salmon fishing in Units 1-6 of the Susitna River drainages. Sport fishing for other species was allowed seven days per week from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. including the waters in Unit 2 that are normally closed on certain days during the king salmon season.

Knik Arm

The Little Susitna River and the stocked terminal fishery at Eklutna Tailrace are the only Knik Arm streams open to the harvest of king salmon by regulation. The SEG for the Little Susitna River is 2,100-4,300 king salmon as assessed by weir and 700-1,500 fish as assessed by aerial survey. The majority of the fish counted through the weir this season were counted at night using video, even during a period of significant flooding and poor water visibility that occurred during a six-day period from June 13 through June 18, 2020. Fortunately, it is likely few kings passed the weir undetected as appreciable upstream migration did not begin until after June 25. Guides reported following a large group of fish as they slowly moved through the lower 30 miles of river over a two-week period prior to June 24. The guides stated there were few fish below or above this group of fish. Fishing became good between the Little Susitna Public Use Facility and the weir by June 24, two days prior to these fish passing the weir. The SEG was met by July 9, with a final count of 2,445 king salmon. The fishery was restored to regulation downstream of the weir for the final three days of the season. The aerial survey was not conducted this year due to cloudy water conditions. Fishing at the Eklutna Tailrace was slow throughout the season.



Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective May 1, 2020, restricted king salmon fishing in the Little Susitna River drainage to nonretention. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure was allowed in the waters normally open to king salmon fishing in the Little Susitna River drainage. Sport fishing for other species was allowed seven days per week from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- On July 11, 2020, the Little Susitna River reopened to king salmon fishing downstream of the weir for the remainder of the king salmon season.

West Cook Inlet

Sport fisheries on the Chuitna, Theodore, Lewis, and the Beluga rivers drainages are closed by regulation. The SEGs on the Theodore and Chuitna rivers were not met.



Susitna Tributaries

Weirs are operated to count sockeye salmon escapement into two lakes- Judd Lake (Talachulitna River) and Larson Lake (Larson Creek) on the Susitna River. The weir on Chelatna Lake (Lake Creek) was not operated this year due to budget reductions. On Larson Creek, the sport fishery is in relatively close proximity to the weir, allowing for timely inseason management of the fishery. The SEG for Judd lake was attained. The sport fishery at the mouth of Larson Creek was closed on August 6, 2020 due to a near record low cumulative count by that date. The Larson Creek SEG of 15,000-35,000 sockeye salmon was missed with a final count of 12,018 fish.

Management Actions

- On August 6, 2020, sport fishing for all species of salmon closed in the Larson Creek drainage and within a one-quarter mile radius of its confluence with the Talkeetna River.

Knik Arm

A weir is operated on Fish Creek to assess escapement and as a tool to manage the personal use dip net fishery. The SEG for the Fish Creek is 15,000-45,000 sockeye salmon. A personal use dip net fishery may open based upon an escapement projection in excess of 35,000 fish between July 15 and July 31. A final count of 64,234 fish was above the SEG range.

Management Actions

- On July 19, 2020, the Fish Creek Personal Use Dip Net Fishery was opened for all salmon species, except king salmon, for a 13-day period through July 31.
- On August 4, 2020, the salmon limits, except king salmon, were increased to six per day and in possession in all waters of Fish Creek opened to salmon fishing. However, only two per day and in possession may be coho salmon. In addition, sport fishing was allowed seven days per week from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day.





Susitna Tributaries

Due to budget reductions, the Deshka weir was pulled August 12, 2020 at the historical 50th percentile of the run. Through this date 5,368 coho salmon were counted. The projection at this time for coho was the lower end of the goal would be achieved at 10,284 fish (SEG 10,200-24,100), below a previous 10-year average of 16,200 fish. Water levels were good, and fish progressed through the coho season steadily. Throughout the season, anglers reported consistent slow fishing success across the Susitna and Yentna rivers drainages, with some good days in which limits were taken.

Management Actions

- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 sport fishery season.

Knik Arm

Weirs were operated on the Little Susitna River, and Fish Creeks. Due to budget reductions, the Jim Creek project was cut. The SEG on the Little Susitna River is 10,100-17,000 fish. The sport fishery restricted the use of bait August 4 prior to bait being allowed by regulation August 6, 2020. At this time, the projection and anticipated harvest would put the fishery below the bottom end of the SEG. August 11 the coho fishery was further restricted to a one fish bag limit as the projection continued to drop near the 42nd percentile of the run. A late push of coho came through on August 24 and the bottom end of the goal was achieved. All restrictions were rescinded beginning the next day. The Little Su run was similar to other coho runs around the Knik Arm and Susitna considered mediocre. The Little Su weir was pulled on August 29 earlier than normal with flood waters projected. The final coho count was 10,765 fish and the estimated escapement was 9,931 (preliminary escapement estimate uses weir count minus five-year average harvest above the weir).

The Fish Creek SEG of 1,200-6,000 coho salmon was met August 4, 2020 and the final weir count was 4,555 fish. The weir count is considered incomplete as the Fish Creek weir was pulled August 14 due to reductions in budgets. The projection for coho on that day was 12,934 fish. The SEG for Jim Creek of 250-700 coho salmon is assessed post season by a foot survey of McRoberts Creek, a small spawning tributary within the Jim Creek system. The survey counted 735 coho salmon. A count of 877 fish on Upper Jim Creek, another spawning tributary, was average. Fishing was reported to be average and good early in the season through about the first week of August. Fishing success became slow throughout the Knik Arm area during the rest of the season.

Management Actions

- On August 4, 2020, the use of bait was prohibited on the Little Susitna River.
- On August 4, 2020, the salmon limits, excepted king salmon, were increased to six per day and in possession in all waters of Fish Creek opened to salmon fishing. However, only two per day and possession may be coho salmon. In addition, sport fishing was allowed seven days per week from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day.
- On August 13, 2020, coho bag limit was reduced to one fish on the Little Susitna River and the use of bait continued to be restricted.
- On August 22, 2020 bag limits were increased from two to three coho on Fish Creek and fishing was allowed 7 days per week from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day.
- On August 24, 2020 all restrictions on the Little Su were rescinded. The use of bait was allowed and the bag and possession limit for coho salmon was restored to two fish.



West Cook Inlet

Coho salmon escapement is not monitored on West Cook Inlet area streams and ADF&G must rely on trends in harvest and angler effort taken from the Statewide Harvest Survey and reports from anglers and guides when assessing these stocks. The combination of high stream temperatures and low water were the likely cause of prespawning mortalities observed in Bachatana Slough and Montana Bill Creek in the West Cook Inlet area. Several thousand coho salmon were reported dead in these shallow streams, likely a direct result of low water and high stream temperatures. In general reports from anglers fishing West Cook Inlet streams was good throughout the season.

- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 sport fishery season.



Northern Kenai Peninsula Management Area



Kenai River - Early Run

The outlook for the early-run of Kenai River king salmon in 2020 was below average, with a large fish (>75 cm mid eye to tail fork length or approximately >34 inches in total length) forecast of 4,794 fish. The 2020 forecasted total run of large king salmon was within the Optimal Escapement Goal (OEG) of 3,900-6,600 fish which allows the fishery to be opened under general regulation. The run-timing to the river mile 14 sonar for large king salmon was 5-days late at the midpoint of the run on June 16 from the average of June 11. The estimated preliminary total in-river run of 2,459 large fish was less than the forecast and the second smallest on record.

Management Actions

- On June 10, 2020, king salmon fishing was closed from the Kenai River mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake until June 30. The king salmon fishing closure continued until July 31, in waters from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake.
- Netting
 - Approximately 51% were large fish or ≥ 750 mm in total length.
 - Sex ratio of large fish >750 mm was 30% male and 70% female.
 - King salmon sampled were predominately ocean-age 3 fish (40%) followed by ocean-age 4 fish (39%) and ocean-age 2 fish (17%).
- Harvest
 - 32 large king salmon were harvested in the early-run sport fishery (includes catch-and-release mortality).

Table 1. Summary of preliminary catch, harvest, and escapement, Kenai River early-run king salmon (≥ 750 mm) fishery, 2020.

Escapement Goal Range	3,900-6,600 large king salmon (≥ 750 mm)
Total Catch ^a	97
Total Harvest ^a	Below sonar =17; Above sonar =15; Total =32
Sonar Estimate In-River	2,444
Preliminary Escapement	Approximately 2,427

^aLower River (below Soldotna Bridge).

Kenai River - Late Run

The outlook for the late-run of Kenai River king salmon in 2020 was well below average, with a large king salmon (>75 cm mid eye to tail fork length) forecast of approximately 22,700 fish. Although the forecasted total run of large fish approximated the mid-point of the large fish OEG of 15,000- 30,000 fish, historical



harvest data indicated the OEG would not be met without restricting fisheries. Run timing was average with the midpoint occurring on July 26, 2020. The preliminary inseason estimate of the total run of large king salmon is 12,132 fish. The preliminary escapement estimate is 11,908 large king salmon.

Management Actions

- On July 1, 2020, bait and retention of king salmon 34 inches and greater was prohibited on the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek. This restriction was in conjunction with the Kenai River early-run king salmon sport fishing closure that remained in effect from ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake.
- On July 15, 2020, retention of king salmon of all sizes was prohibited from the mouth of the Kenai River upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure was allowed.
- On July 24, 2020, king salmon fishing was closed from the Kenai River mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake until July 31. The use of bait was also prohibited.
- On August 1, 2020, bait and multiple hooks were prohibited from the mouth of the Kenai River upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake until August 15 to reduce incidental catch of king salmon.
- Netting
 - Approximately 64% were ≥ 750 mm in total length.
 - Sex ratios for large fish > 750 mm was 45% male and 55% female.
 - King salmon sampled were predominately ocean-age 4 fish (48%) followed by ocean-age 3 fish (30%), ocean-age 2 fish (13%) and ocean-age 5 fish (2%).
- Harvest
 - 99 large king salmon were harvested (includes catch-and-release mortality).

Table 1. Summary of preliminary catch, harvest, and escapement, Kenai River late-run king salmon (≥ 750 mm) fishery, 2020.

Escapement Goal Range	15,000-30,000 large king salmon (≥ 750 mm)
Total Catch ^a	1,299
Total Harvest ^a	Below sonar =32; Above sonar =67; Total =99
Sonar Estimate In-River	11,499
Preliminary Escapement	Approximately 11,908

^a Lower River (below Soldotna Bridge).

^b Includes estimate of kings that spawn downstream of sonar.

Kasilof River

This spring, approximately 141,331 king salmon smolt were successfully stocked into Crooked Creek to augment natural production and enhance recreational sport fishing opportunity in the Kasilof River. The



natural component of the Crooked Creek early-run king salmon return is managed to achieve a Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) of 700-1,400 king salmon. The estimated escapement of wild (naturally-produced) king salmon was 830 fish. The egg take goal for future stocking of Crooked Creek was 33 pairs of naturally-produced king salmon of which 35 pairs were spawned in 2020.

Management Actions

- On June 10, 2020, the early-run king salmon limits were restricted to two hatchery-produced fish, 20 inches or greater in length in the Kasilof River drainage. The retention of naturally-produced king salmon was prohibited. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure was allowed.
- On July 1, 2020, bait and multiple hooks were prohibited in the Kasilof River drainage.
- On July 15, 2020, retention of king salmon was prohibited while sport fishing in the Kasilof River downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge. Bait and multiple hooks continued to be prohibited.



Kenai River

The Upper Cook Inlet sockeye salmon forecast projected a total run of 4.3 million fish: 2.2 million fish in the Kenai River, 723,000 fish in the Kasilof River, with the remaining 1.3 million fish comprised of Susitna River, Fish Creek and unmonitored systems. Based on the preseason forecast, the sockeye salmon run was managed on the lower tier for runs of less than 2.3 million Kenai River sockeye salmon, with an inriver goal of 1.0-1.2 million sockeye salmon. The preliminary inriver Kenai River sonar passage estimate was 1,813,386 sockeye salmon. Subtracting the recent 10-average harvest upstream of the sonar produces an preliminary escapement estimate of 1,516,386 sockeye salmon. Final estimates will be available when the 2020 SWHS is completed in the fall of 2021.

Management Actions

- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 sport fishery season.

Russian River - Early Run

The escapement goal for Russian River early-run sockeye salmon is a Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) of 22,000-42,000 fish. The weir count on July 14, 2020, was 27,103 sockeye salmon and achieved the BEG.

Management Actions

- On June 11, 2020, the Russian River Sanctuary Area opened early for sport fishing.
- On July 3, 2020, the Russian River Sanctuary Area closed to sport fishing.

Russian River - Late Run

The escapement goal for Russian River late-run sockeye salmon is a Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) of 44,000-85,000 fish. The final Russian River weir count on September 08, 2020 was 78,832 and achieved



the SEG.

Management Actions

- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 sport fishery season.

Kasilof River

The forecast for Kasilof River sockeye salmon was 723,000 fish. Kasilof River sockeye salmon are managed for a Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) of 140,000-320,000 salmon, and an OEG of 140,000-370,000 fish. The sockeye salmon sonar quit enumerating salmon passage on August 22, 2020, with a preliminary estimate of 545,651 fish.

Management Actions

- On July 15, 2020, sockeye salmon limits were increased to six per day, twelve in possession; however, no more than two per day and in possession could be coho salmon, in all portions of the Kasilof River open to salmon fishing.



Kenai River

Freshwater guide logbook reports were discontinued in 2019. These guide logbook reports were used in the past to gauge Kenai River coho salmon sport catch, harvest, and angler effort. Angler reports indicate that coho salmon were showing up in the harvest during the last week of July and catches were reported as good through August and slowed in September.

Management Actions

- On August 1, 2020, bait and multiple hooks were prohibited in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to Skilak Lake to minimize incidental catch of late-run king salmon.



Kasilof River and Kenai River

Final results from the 2020 season have not been compiled, but preliminary information indicates 25,441 Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use permits were issued electronically. The number of paper permits and total permits issued is not yet known. Typically, about 86% of the Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use permits have some Kenai River harvest reported on them. The Kasilof River dipnet fishery opened by regulation June 25-August 7, 2020 with expanded fishing area allowed on July 3, 2020. The Kenai River dipnet fishery opened by regulation on July 10-July 31, with no retention of king salmon.



Harvest Reports

- The total number of Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use permits issued for the 2020 season is not yet known. Nonetheless, 12,966 Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use permits have been returned to date via online reporting, an initial return rate of 51%. A reminder letter will be mailed to permit holders who have not yet returned their harvest record. Typically, permit returns from the reminder letters brings the total permit returns to approximately 82%. Harvest data will be keypunched by the end of October and estimates of total harvest will be available in January 2021.

Management Actions

- On July 3, 2020, the Kasilof River dipnetting area was expanded. Dipnetting from the shore was allowed from ADF&G markers on Cook Inlet beaches upstream to the Sterling Highway Bridge and boat dipnetting was allowed from ADF&G markers located on Cook Inlet beaches upstream to ADF&G markers at approximately river mile 3 of the Kasilof River.
- On July 10, 2020, the retention of king salmon in the Kenai River personal use fishery was prohibited.



Lower Cook Inlet Management Area



Anchor River

The 2020 preseason inriver forecast of 4,276 king salmon fell within the Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) of 3,800-7,600 fish; however, given the uncertainty with recent annual runs preseason restrictions were issued. King salmon escapement was monitored on the South and North forks of Anchor River beginning in early-May and continued throughout the run. The preliminary escapement estimate of 3,558 fish which failed to achieve the SEG. The cumulative run-timing to both forks (July 5) was 22 days late compared to the historical average mid-point of June 14. The sport fishery occurred for 12 days prior to closing by emergency order. Fishing was described as poor over the season.

Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective May 16, 2020, restricted sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook artificial lures during king salmon season.
- On June 3, 2020, the Anchor River and Deep Creek closed to all sport fishing through July 15.

Ninilchik River

No preseason forecast was estimated for the 2020 wild Ninilchik River king salmon run. Hatchery king salmon are stocked in the Ninilchik River to support the inriver sport fishery. The fishery occurred with preseason restrictions that prohibited the retention of wild king salmon. The harvest of hatchery king salmon was allowed during both the three 3-day weekends and the hatchery only season. The hatchery king salmon run was above average and provided anglers good fishing over both seasons.

King salmon escapement was fully enumerated just above the fishery for the second year at approximately two miles upstream from the mouth. An instream video weir was operated from mid-May to early-August at this location, and the count was 1,114 wild king salmon and 2,151 hatchery king salmon. The mid-point of the wild and hatchery runs to the lower weir were, on June 17, 2020, and June 29, respectively.

The broodstock collection weir, located approximately five miles upstream from the mouth, was still used to monitor escapement in regard to meeting the current Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) of 750-1,300 wild king salmon. The broodstock collection weir location also used instream video and was operated from mid-May through mid-August. The wild weir count was 960 king salmon and the hatchery weir count was 2,047 king salmon. After accounting for the removal of broodstock, the escapement was 833 wild king salmon, which met the SEG. Based on weir counts at both locations, 86% of the wild king salmon and 95% of the hatchery king salmon counted through the lower weir also reached the broodstock collection weir.

Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective May 23, 2020, reduced the king salmon limits to one hatchery king salmon, 20 inches or greater in length in the Ninilchik River drainage.
- On June 16, 2020, sport fishing gear was restricted to one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure through July 15 in the Ninilchik River drainage. In additional annual limit requirement for hatchery king salmon was removed through October 31.



Deep Creek

No preseason forecast was estimated for the 2020 Deep Creek king salmon run. The fishery began with preseason restrictions based on management actions for the Anchor River and forecasted below average runs throughout Cook Inlet. Deep Creek has a SEG of 350 king salmon and was assessed post-season via a single aerial survey. The 2020 survey occurred on July 29, 2020 and 327 king salmon were counted, which failed to achieve the SEG. The 2020 king salmon escapement was also fully enumerated using an ARIS sonar and underwater video weir located approximately 2.5 miles upstream from the mouth. The preliminary escapement estimate was 1,957 king salmon with the mid-point of the run on July 3. In 2020, the Deep Creek king salmon sport fishery occurred for 6 days before closing by emergency order. Fishing was described as poor to fair.

Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective May 16, 2020, restricted gear to unbaited, single-hook artificial lures during king salmon season.
- On June 3, 2020 the Anchor River and Deep Creek closed to all sport fishing through July 15.

Marine Fisheries

Sport fishing for king salmon in Cook Inlet was popular in both the Winter (September 1-March 31) and the Summer (April 1-August 31) fisheries. The summer fishery in north of Bluff Point began with preseason restrictions to protect king salmon returning to Cook Inlet drainages. Statewide Harvest Survey harvest estimates for these fisheries and will not be available until 2020. In general, fishing was good and angler effort was high in the fall months of the winter fishery. Effort was low in Upper Cook Inlet during the summer fishery.

Management Actions

- A preseason emergency order effective April 1, 2020, reduced the king salmon annual limit of fish 20 inches or greater in length from five to two fish in the Cook Inlet saltwaters North of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat).
- On June 3, 2020, king salmon fishing was prohibited, including catch-and-release,,in the Upper Cook Inlet saltwaters within one mile of shore North of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat) through July 15
- On July 24 king salmon fishing was prohibited, including catch-and-release,,in the Upper Cook Inlet saltwaters within one mile of shore North of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat) through July 31.



Terminal Stocked Salmon Fisheries

Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon

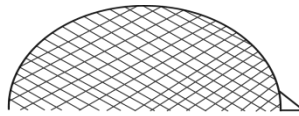
In 2020, the stocking goals were met for Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon (NDFL) on the Homer Spit with approximately 315,000 king salmon smolt and 120,000 coho salmon smolt. This year's king salmon stocking was the third consecutive year with a 30% increase over historical stockings. Statewide Harvest Survey estimates harvest for these fisheries and will not be available until 2021. Overall, the king salmon fishery was likely above-average harvest for recent years and the coho salmon fishery was likely below-average. There were several



hundred king salmon harvested by anglers during the period open to snagging.

Management Actions

- On June 30, 2020, snagging was allowed in the NDFL through July 2 to harvest the remainder of the king salmon milling in the lagoon prior to coho salmon returning.
- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 coho salmon sport fishery season.



Personal Use Dip Net Fisheries

China Poot Creek

The China Poot Creek personal use dip net fishery does not require a permit for participation so there is no harvest and effort data available for 2020. Participants reported harvesting fewer sockeye salmon this season compared to the last few years. The reduced success is most likely attributed to changes in commercial fishing, cost recoveries operations associated with the stocking and potentially smaller overall run size.

Management Actions

- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 personal use fishery season.



Razor Clams

Eastside

All Eastside Cook Inlet beaches remained closed to sport and personal use clamming in 2020 due to the continued historical low abundances of adult-sized razor clams at Clam Gulch and Ninilchik. The affected area runs from the mouth of the Kenai River to the southernmost tip of the Homer Spit. Little recruitment of new juvenile clams was detected at the Ninilchik and Clam Gulch beaches during the spring/summer abundance surveys. Abundance of juvenile clams is still well above historical average and adult abundances are increasing but still below the historical averages.

Management Actions

- A pre-season emergency order effective January 3, 2020, closed all Eastside Cook Inlet beaches to personal use and sport clamming for all clam species from the mouth of the Kenai River to the southernmost tip of the Homer Spit for 2020.

Westside

The Westside Cook Inlets beaches remained open to commercial, sport, and personal use clamming in 2020. Harvest estimates for the sport fishery are not available yet.

Management Actions

- No management actions were implemented during the 2020 sport fishery season.





Cook Inlet Tanner Crab

The 2019 - 2020 season occurred from October 1, 2019, through March x, 2020. The 2019 Kachemak Bay trawl survey estimated abundance of legal male crab was sufficient to trigger the standard sport and subsistence fisheries in Kachemak Bay which increased the gear from one to two pots and increased the bag and possession limit from three to five legal male crab. In all other areas the sport and subsistence fisheries were limited to one pot and the bag and possession of three legal male crab. The preliminary combined sport and subsistence Tanner crab harvest in the Cook Inlet & North Gulf Coast area was 7,690 male Tanner crab. During the 2019 - 2020 season, 1,407 sport and subsistence permits were issued. Of these, 90% reported and will be eligible to receive a permit for the upcoming season. In total, 124 individuals did not report and are ineligible to receive a permit for the 2020 - 2021 season. The Kachemak Bay Tanner crab trawl survey was not conducted in 2020 due to budget reductions. The 2020 - 2021 sport and subsistence limited fisheries are scheduled to open on October 1, 2020. Permits are only available through ADF&Gs online store.

Management Actions

- On September 1, 2020, a preseason emergency order was issued to close the standard fishery in the month of September in Kachemak Bay to stay within the guideline harvest level during the 2019 - 2020 tanner crab fishery season.



Table 1 – Select Southcentral Region Salmon Escapement Goals and Escapements for king salmon, 2011 to 2020 (preliminary).

System	2020 Goal Range		Type	Initial Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Preliminary
	Lower	Upper												2020
KING SALMON														
<i>Bristol Bay</i>														
Nushagak River	55,000	120,000	SEG	2013	102,258	167,618	107,602	70,482	98,019	125,368	56,961	97,239	47,882	43,032
Alagnak River	2,700		LB SEG	2007	NS	NS	NS	NS	917	1,283	435	NS	NS	NS
<i>Kodiak/Alaska Peninsula</i>														
Karluk River	3,000	6,000	BEG	2011	3,420	3,197	1,824	1,182	2,777	3,434	2,600	3,155	3,898	3,344
Ayakulik River	4,800	8,400	BEG	2017	4,251	4,556	2,304	789	2,392	4,594	3,712	2,149	1,948	2,402
Chignik River	1,300	2,700	BEG	2002	2,490	1,404	1,185	2,895	2,041	1,843	1,137	825	1,517	1,278
Nelson River	2,400	4,400	BEG	2004	1,704	1,192	1,421	3,801	2,440	4,618	1,502	5,022	11,653	2,298
<i>Upper Cook Inlet</i>														
Alexander Creek	1,900	3,700	SEG	2020	343	181	588	911	1,117	754	170	296	1,297	596
Campbell Creek	380		LB SEG	2011	260	NS	NS	274	654	544	475	287	393	154
Chuitna River	1,000	1,500	SEG	2002	719	502	1,690	1,398	1,965	1,372	235	939	2,115	869
Chulitna River	1,200	2,900	SEG	2020	1,875	667	1,262	1,011	3,137	1,151	NC	1125	2,765	845
Clear (Chunilna) Creek	eliminated (see Talkeetna Stock)			2020	512	1,177	1,471	1,390	1,205	NS	780	940	1,511	
Crooked Creek	700	1,400	SEG	2002	654	631	1,103	1,411	1,456	1,747	911	714	1,444	830
Deshka River	eliminated (see Deshka Stock)			2020	19,026	14,010	18,531	16,335	24,316	22,874	11,383	8,544	9,711	
Deshka Stock	9,000	18,000	BEG	2020										10,638
Eastside Susitna Stock	13,000	25,000	SEG	2020										14,995
Goose Creek	eliminated (see Eastside Susitna Stock)			2020	80	57	62	232	NC	NC	148	90	NC	
Kenai River - Early Run (all fish)	eliminated ^a			2017	8,448	5,044	2,148	5,311	6,190	9,177				
Kenai River - Early Run (large fish)	3,900	6,600	OEG	2017							6,553	3,000	4,173	2,427
	2,800	5,600	SEG	2017										
Kenai River - Late Run (all fish)	eliminated			2017	19,680	27,710	15,395	16,263	22,626	18,790				
Kenai River - Late Run (large fish)	13,500	27,000	SEG	2017							20,731	16,957	11,671	11,908
Lake Creek	eliminated (see Yetna Stock)			2020	2,563	2,366	3,655	3,506	4,686	3,588	1,601	1,767	2,692	
Lewis River	eliminated			2020	92	107	61	61	5 ^b	0	0 ^b	0	0 ^b	
Little Susitna River (Aerial) ^c	700	1,500	SEG	2020	887	1,154	1,651	1,759	1,507	1,622	1,192	530	NC	NC
Little Susitna River (weir)	2,100	4,300	SEG	2017							2,531	549 ^c	3,666	2,445 ^d
Little Willow Creek	eliminated (see Eastside Susitna Stock)			2020	713	494	858	684	788	675	840	280	631	
Montana Creek	eliminated (see Eastside Susitna Stock)			2020	494	416	1,304	953	1,416	692	603	473	789	
Peters Creek	eliminated (see Yetna Stock)			2020	1,103	459	1,643	1,443	1,514	1,122	307	1674	1,209	
Prairie Creek	eliminated (see Talkeetna Stock)			2020	2,038	1,185	3,304	2,812	3,290	1,853	1,930	1194	2,371	
Sheep Creek	eliminated (see Eastside Susitna Stock)			2020	350	363	NC	262	NC	NC	NC	334	NC	
Talachulitna River	eliminated (see Yetna Stock)			2020	1,368	847	2,285	2,256	2,582	4,295	1,087	1483	3,225	
Talkeetna Stock	9,000	17,500	SEG	2020										7,283
Theodore River	500	1,000	SEG	2020	327	179	476	312	426	68	21	18	201	111
Willow Creek	eliminated (see Eastside Susitna Stock)			2020	1,061	756	1,752	1,335	2,046	1,814	1,329	411	897	
Yetna Stock	16,000	22,000	OEG	2020										14,709
<i>Lower Cook Inlet</i>														
Anchor River	3,800	7,600	SEG	2017	3,545	4,509	4,388	2,497	10,241	7,146	5,796	3,162	5,691	3,558
Deep Creek	350		LB SEG	2017	696	447	475	601	535	NS	753	182	751	327
Ninilchik River	750	1,300	SEG	2017	668	555	571	891	874	572	855	979	1,185	833
<i>Note: NA = data not available; NC = no count; NS = no survey; LB SEG = lower-bound SEG.</i>														
^a Kenai River early-run Chinook salmon (all fish) SEG was eliminated and OEG was revised by BOF.														
^b Lewis River mouth naturally obstructed.														
^c Little Susitna River Chinook salmon aerial survey goal is only used to assess escapement if weir count is not available.														

Table 2 – Select Southcentral Region Salmon Escapement Goals and Escapements for sockeye and coho salmon, 2011 to 2020 (preliminary).

System	2020 Goal Range		Type	Initial Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Preliminary
	Lower	Upper												2020
COHO SALMON														
<i>Kodiak/Alaska Peninsula</i>														
Buskin River	4,700	9,600	BEG	2014	5,298	4,906	4,401	7,345	3,363	2,513	5,559	1,066	NA	540
Olds River	1,000		LB SEG	2011	1,003	624	2,145	1,320	1,357	1,634	10,54	1,000	NA	NA
American River	400		LB SEG	2011	1,061	427	841	1,595	530	500	410	300	NA	NA
Pasagshak River	1,200		LB SEG	2011	1,083	3,132	1,648	4,934	1,790	667	701	1,200	NA	NA
<i>Upper Cook Inlet</i>														
Fish Creek (Knik)	1,200	6,000	SEG	2020	1,428 ^d	1,237	7,593 ^d	10,283	7,912	2,484	8,966	5,022	3,025	4,555 ^d
Jim Creek	250	700	SEG	2020	229	213	663	122	571	106	5,646	758	162	735
Little Susitna River	9,200	17,700	SEG	2020	4,826 ^d	6,779	13,583	24,211	12,756	10,049	17,781	7,583	4,229	9,931 ^e
Deshka River	10,200	24,100	SEG	2017							36,869	12,962	10,445	5,368 ^d
SOCKEYE SALMON														
<i>Bristol Bay</i>														
Kvichak River ^f	2,000,000	10,000,000	SEG	2010	2,264,352	4,164,444	2,088,576	4,458,540	7,341,612	4,462,728	3,163,404	4,398,708	2,371,242	4,030,968
Alagnak River (Tower) ^g	320,000		LB SEG	2007	883,794	861,747	1,095,950	200,524	5,770,650	NA	2,041,825	1,581,426	820,458	2,386,518
Alagnak River (Aerial) ^h	125,000		LB SEG	2016						696,400	629,200			
Naknek River	800,000	2,000,000	SEG ⁱ	2015	1,177,074	900,312	938,160	1,474,428	1,920,954	1,691,910	1,899,972	2,221,152	2,911,470	4,112,160
Egegik River	800,000	2,000,000	SEG	2015	961,200	1,233,900	1,113,630	1,382,466	2,160,792	1,837,260	2,600,982	1,608,354	2,340,210	2,389,728
Ugashik River	500,000	1,400,000	SEG	2015	1,029,853	670,578	898,110	640,158	1,564,638	1,635,270	1,186,446	1,167,792	1,547,748	1,745,940
Wood River	700,000	1,800,000	SEG	2015	1,098,006	764,202	1,183,348	2,764,614	1,941,474	1,309,707	4,274,224	7,507,254	2,073,276	2,243,886
Igushik River	150,000	400,000	SEG	2015	421,380	193,770	387,036	340,590	651,172	469,230	578,700	1,581,426	256,074	323,814
Nushagak River	260,000	760,000	OEG	2012	428,191	432,438	894,172	618,477	796,684	680,513	2,852,308	1,164,701	709,349	1,228,059
<i>Kodiak/Alaska Peninsula</i>														
Buskin River	5,000	8,000	BEG	2011	11,982	8,565	16,189	13,976	8,719	11,584	7,214	4,281	12,297	7,739
Afognak River	20,000	50,000	BEG	2005	49,193	41,553	42,153	36,345	38,151	33,167	22,151	17,601	26,817	24,284
Saltery River	15,000	35,000	BEG	2011	27,803	25,155	35,939	29,047	42,468	57,867	39,315	22,845	22,183	24,987
Pasagshak River	3,000		lower-bound SEG	2011	8,100	2,600	9,750	1,582	2,077	7,053	11,021	2,019	4,537	3,522
Karluk River Early Run	150,000	250,000	BEG	2014	87,049	188,085	234,880	252,097	260,097	164,760	242,599	205,054	186,510	157,441
Ayakulik River	140,000	280,000	SEG	2011	177,480	213,501	214,969	210,040	218,178	182,589	204,497	266,333	279,639	220,935
Fraser River	75,000	170,000	BEG	2008	134,642	148,884	136,059	200,296	219,093	122,585	129,227	201,161	169,627	137,570
<i>Upper Cook Inlet</i>														
Fish Creek (Knik)	15,000	45,000	SEG	2017	66,678	18,813	18,912	43,915	102,309	46,202	61,469	71,556	76,031	64,234
Kasilof River	160,000	390,000	OEG	2011	245,727	374,523	490	439,977	470,679	239,981	358,724	394,309	378,416	545,651
	160,000	340,000	BEG	2011										
Kenai River ^j	OEG eliminated			2017	1,280,733	1,212,835	980,208	1,218,342	1,400,047	1,120,710				
	700,000	1,200,000	SEG	2011							1,073,290	888,268	1,459,290	1,516,386
Russian River - Early Run	22,000	42,000	BEG	2011	29,129	24,115	35,776	44,920	50,226	38,739	37,123	44,110	125,942	27,103
Russian River - Late Run	30,000	110,000	SEG	2005	41,529	54,911	31,364	52,277	46,223	37,837	45,012	71,052	64,585 ^k	78,832
Chelatna Lake	20,000	45,000	SEG	2017	70,353	36,577	70,555	26,212	69,750	60,792	26,986	20,438	26,303 ^l	NA
Judd Lake	15,000	40,000	SEG	2017	39,997	18,303	14,088	22,416	47,684	NA	35,731	30,844	44,145	31,220
Larson Lake	15,000	35,000	SEG	2017	12,413	16,708	21,821	12,040	23,214	14,333	31,866	23,444	9,699	12,018
<i>Lower Cook Inlet</i>														
English Bay	6,000	13,500	SEG	2002	9,920	3,444	10,891	7,832	6,290	7,673	20,751	18,083	24,044	31,486
Delight Lake	5,100	10,600	SEG	2017	20,190	10,887	5,961	22,289	3,220	5,110	5,380	13,428	17,410	12,299
Desire Lake	4,800	11,900	SEG	2017	9,630	8,840	8,400	11,480	2,830	6,740	9,450	9,840	9,040	2,260
Bear Lake	700	8,300	SEG	2002	9,608	8,031	8,999	9,090	9,560	9,011	9,207	10,568	9,185	8,212

Note : NA = data not available; NC = no count; NS = no survey; LB SEG = lower-bound SEG.

^d Incomplete counts for coho salmon because weir was pulled before end of run.

^e Preliminary escapement estimate uses weir count minus five year average harvest above the weir.

^f Prior to 2010 Kvichak River had a pre-peak/peak-cycle escapement goal of 6-10 million sockeye and an off-peak escapement goal of 2-10 million fish.

^g 2009 to 2015 Alagnak River sockeye salmon escapements for Alagnak River (Tower) escapement goal are expanded aerial surveys.

^h Alagnak River sockeye salmon aerial survey-based escapement goal will be used in years that the Alagnak River tower is not operated.

ⁱ Naknek River has an OEG of 800,000-2,000,000 sockeye salmon when the Naknek River Special Harvest Area is open to fishing.

^j Kenai River sockeye salmon uses the best estimate of sport harvest upstream of sonar.

^k Weir evacuated August 18 (2 weeks early) due to Swan Lake Fire, incomplete count

^l Weir not operational in 2020.