Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group 1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO) ADE & C. Bethel tell free: 1 (855) 033-2433

ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

Meeting Agenda

Date: 07/10/2019

Time: **10:00am**

Place: ADF&G Office, Bethel

Time Called to Order:

Chair: Alissa N. Rogers

<u>ROLL CALL TO ESTABLISH QUORUM</u>: <u>QUORUM MET? Yes / No</u>

Upriver Elder: Downriver Elder: Commercial Fisher: Lower River Subsistence: Middle River Subsistence: Upper River Subsistence: Headwaters Subsistence: Processor: Member at Large: Sport Fisher: Western Interior RAC: Y-K Delta RAC: KRITFC: ADF&G:

INTRODUCTIONS:

INVOCATION: APPROVAL OF AGENDA: the agenda may be amended at this time. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Optional. ADF&G does not prepare official meeting minutes. USFWS/KRITFC UPDATE: ADF&G MANAGEMENT ACTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: PEOPLE TO BE HEARD: Non-Working Group Members CONTINUING BUSINESS:

- Subsistence Reports: Lowest River, ONC Inseason Subsistence Report, Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, Headwaters
- Overview of Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment:
 - a. Test Fisheries (Bethel and Aniak):
 - b. Sonar/Weirs/Aerial Surveys/Other:
 - c. Subsistence Division Project Update:
- Commercial Catch Report: N/A
- Processor Report: N/A
- Sport Fish Report:
- Intercept Fishery Report: optional
- Weather Forecast:
- Discussion of ADF&G Management considerations and discussion of possible alternatives (recommendations from the Working Group):
- Motion for Discussion and Action:

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

Informational Packet

Information Packets ARE:

- Intended to help inform Working Group discussions.
- To be viewed and used in context with Working Group meetings only.

Packets ARE NOT:

- To be viewed as standalone documents.
- A final say on fisheries management decisions.

Please use this information responsibly:

Packet information is an incomplete snapshot of an ongoing discussion and changing conditions. Packet information should not be reproduced for any purpose other than to describe Working Group meeting discussions.

Misuse of Packet information can contribute to misunderstandings that can **cause harm to salmon users** and potentially **damage salmon resources**.

Ask Questions: ADF&G staff will be happy to answer biology and management questions. Please call **1-855-933-2433** to reach ADF&G Kuskokwim Area staff.

<u>Attend Meetings</u>: Each Working Group meeting is announced at least 48 hours prior to time and date of meeting. In addition, each meeting is recorded. Recordings can be found here: **http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarea kuskokwim.kswg**

Viewing the information packet while listening to meetings/recordings will provide a better understanding of the information presented in this packet.

Thank you. Lily Reichard Working Group Coordinator

Review of Bethel Test Fishery King CPUE, catchability change, and relationship to total run abundance. KRSMWG 7/10/2019 Nicholas Smith ADF&G Kuskokwim Area Research Biologist

At the July 3rd meeting of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG), several members expressed interest in reviewing all Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) CPUE data and their relationship to the total annual run of Kuskokwim River King salmon. A concern was raised that the large 2019 BTF CPUE could be misinterpreted as a large King salmon run. The ADF&G research biologists agree with that concern. ADF&G has reminded users of BTF data that the project provides very limited information about the run size of King salmon, and recent year CPUE should not be compared to data prior to 2008. This document attempts to clarify the relationship between BTF end-of-season CPUE and total run and explain why ADF&G does not include all years of BTF data in the KRSMWG packet.

Figure 1 shows the historical cumulative BTF CPUE for King salmon with all years highlighted using a different color. This figure is very hard to read, because many of the lines are on top of each other. Figure 1 shows that the current 2019 cumulative BTF CPUE (thick red line) is the third largest CPUE in the 1984–2018 data set. Taken at face value and with no context, this may lead to the incorrect conclusion that the 2019 King salmon run is very large. <u>However, the 2019 run is not a large run, and BTF CPUE appears</u> large compared to historical catches because of a change in mesh twine type which began in 2008.

Beginning 2008, BTF gillnets were manufactured with a different twine type compared to all previous years, and King salmon catchability increased as a result. Catchability is a measure of how well a fishing gear catches fish. A gillnet with higher catchability will capture more King salmon and have a higher CPUE than a gill net with lower catchability, given the same size run. The effect of changing twine type can be observed in Figure 2, where the black lines are BTF CPUE since 2008 after the change to new twine, and the grey lines are earlier years with the old twine. All the black line are years with below average (including record low) run sizes, but they appear similar to many of the gray lines which were from total runs ranging from 123,000 to 400,000 fish. Figure 3 further demonstrates the change in catchability. The black dots represent end-of-season BTF CPUE for years since 2008 and grey dots represent years prior to the change in twine type. Regardless of twine type there is a moderate positive relationship between end-of-season BTF CPUE and total run. However, intermediate CPUEs observed since 2008 were associated with below average and record low runs. The change in catchability is the reason why ADF&G staff have not been presenting any daily or cumulative CPUE data prior to 2008.

After accounting for the change in catchability since 2008, there is still a positive relationship between total run of King salmon and BTF end of season cumulative CPUE (Figure 3). However, that relationship is quite variable. and leads to large confidence intervals when total run size predictions are made (Figure 4). Predictions can be made at any point during the King salmon run, but the predictions only become credible after the 50% point, and the relationship to total run is strongest at the end of the salmon run after all management decisions have been made (Staton and Catalano 2018).

Kuskokwim River King salmon assessment does not rely solely on BTF CPUE. In recent years, the Kuskokwim River has benefited from an accurate pre-season forecast, in-season harvest estimates, and the newly established sonar project. The sonar project was specifically designed to provide inseason estimates of total run passing the sonar site. When taken in aggregate, the preseason forecast, BTF run size projection (note wide confidence interval), and sonar all point the same general conclusion about the 2019 King salmon run. The run is likely to be near the upper end of the pre-season forecast, but still well below average (Figure 4).

The primary utility of the BTF CPUE data is inseason run timing and salmon species composition. These data are highly valued and regularly discussed at KRSMWG meetings and used to guide inseason management. BTF CPUE is also used as part of a probability-based tool, cooperatively developed by USFWS, Auburn University, and ADF&G, that properly incorporates BTF uncertainty.

Literature Cited:

Staton, B. A. and M. J. Catalano. 2018. Bayesian information updating procedures for Pacific salmon run size indicators: evaluation in the presence and absence of auxiliary migration timing information. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.



Figure 1. Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) Chinook (King) salmon cumulative mean tidal CPUE indices for years 1984–2018. Daily and historic test fishery information can be customized and viewed online at the ADF&G Kuskokwim Management Area Fish Counts webpage: <u>http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.btf</u>



Figure 2. Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) Chinook (King) salmon cumulative mean tidal CPUE indices for years from 1984–2007 (gray) and 2008–2018 (black). The two time periods identify when different mesh types were used at the the BTF. The 2019 CPUE is red.



Figure 3. Relationship between total abundance of King salmon and end-of-season BTF cumulative CPUE from 1984–2007 (gray) and 2008–2018 (black). The two time periods identify when different mesh types were used at the the BTF. The vertical black bar shows the 2019 end-of-season BTF CPUE.



Figure 4. Annual end-of-season cumulative BTF CPUE (top pane) and total abundance of King salmon (bottom pane), 1984–2018. 1984–2007 (gray) and 2008–2018 (black). The gray (1984–2007) and black (2008–2018) colors signify different mesh types used at the BTF. Error bars represent 95% CI. The sqare in the top pane shows the projected 2019 end-of-season BTF CPUE. Right side of bottom pain show projected run size from BTF, preseason forecast, and current sonar passage.

Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) Inseason Harvest Monitoring Weekly Report

July 10, 2019

Summary of Interview Activities

From July 6-8, our fisheries team contacted a total of 39 fish camps from Oscarville slough up to the bluffs to conduct the end of the season survey.

Fishing Progress Information

The majority of respondents (n=32) met their Chinook salmon harvest goals, sockeye salmon harvest goals (n=31) and chum salmon harvest goals (n=27). Reasons provided for not meeting Chinook or sockeye salmon harvest goals included not having a dependable boat, needing to support several families and hot weather. The majority of respondents who did not meet their chum salmon harvest goals attributed it to a weak chum salmon run. There were only two fish camps who were still actively fishing for sockeye salmon and chum salmon.

End of the Season Community Feedback

At the end of the season, we asked fish camp users, "Have you or the Bethel community benefited from being involved with the ONC inseason harvest monitoring program?" We then followed up with asking them to identify how they have benefited or if they have not benefited, what are ways our program can be more beneficial/helpful to them in the future. This season, the majority of respondents (n=35) benefited from being involved with the ONC inseason harvest monitoring program. People listed several program components they have benefited from including the Chinook salmon age-sex-length sampling program as a way to earn money, receiving fish caught by ADFG Bethel Test Fishery, keeping track of their harvest numbers, having their information reported to fisheries management meetings, being more informed about any fishing opportunities and many were glad to see local youth involved in the work. Those who did not benefit (n=4) wanted more fishery openers and no restrictions during the Chinook salmon run.

Chinook Salmon Age-Sex-Length (ASL) Sampling Recruitment

During the 2019 fisheries season, we received ASL samples from 26 samplers all from Bethel, with exception to one sampler from Tuntutuliak. We also exceeded our sample size goal of 1500 Chinook salmon samples. All samples will be sent to the ADFG office in Anchorage to be analyzed.

Fish Distribution

From July 1-July 8, we distributed 44 Chinook salmon to 19 Bethel area Elders, disabled and widows. These fish were caught by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game Bethel Test Fishery.



7/1 7/3 7/5 7/7 7/9 7/11 7/13 7/15 7/17 7/19 7/21 7/23 7/25 7/27 7/29 7/31 Date

0

Kuskokwim River Salmon Assessment Update7/8/2019





This document presents the key assessment information considered by managers in-season. The production of this document is a collaborative effort between USFWS and ADF&G. All data and analyses contained are preliminary and are subject to change, so please make interpretations carefully.

If you have any questions about the content, please contact Gary Decossas (USFWS; gary_decossas@fws.gov) or Nick Smith (ADF&G; nick.smith@alaska.gov). Major credit for the development of this data packet belongs to Ben Staton.

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Bethel Test Fishery Summaries

- Page 2: Chinook Salmon
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- Page 4: Sockeye Salmon

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- Page 8: In-Season Harvest Estimates
- Page 9: Chinook Salmon
- Page 10: Chum Salmon
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Abbreviations:

- BTF: Bethel Test Fishery
- ATF: Aniak Test Fishery
- CPUE: Catch-per-unit-effort
- EOS: End-of-Season
- ADF&G: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- KRITFC: Kuskokwim River Inter-tribal Fisheries Commission
- OTNC: Orutsaramiut Traditional Native Council
- USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- YDNWR: Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

To view escapement information, please visit the ADF&G Kuskokwim River Fish Counts page:

• http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#fishcounts

For the most up-to-date information regarding fishing opportunities please visit:

- USFWS: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon_delta/wildlife_and_habitat/dailyupdate.html
- ADF&G: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main

Chinook Salmon BTF Summary (7/8)

- The BTF daily CPUE was 7.
- The BTF cumulative CPUE is now 777.
- 100% years since 2008 fell below this cumulative CPUE on this date.
- 92% of the run is complete based on historical average run timing.
- 88% 95% of the run is complete based the central 50% of all historical run timing scenarios.
- 2% 5% of the run is expected to pass Bethel in the next 5 days.
- Over the last 3 days, Chinook salmon made up 6% of the BTF catches, compared to 3% on average.

Chinook Salmon Figure 1. *Left*: predicted cumulative EOS BTF CPUE according to various run timing scenarios: central 80% (light grey band), central 50% (dark grey band), and the historical median (circles). The grey box shows the range of EOS values from 2010 - 2013, which indexed run sizes past Bethel ranging from 60,000 to 82,000. The dashed horizontal line shows the EOS value from 2018. *Right*: The cumulative BTF CPUE from 2019 plotted along with four previous years intended to represent a range of early/late and small/large index values.



For more detailed information, see the *Chinook salmon appendix* at the end of this document. **Return to Table of Contents**

Chum Salmon BTF Summary (7/8)

- The BTF daily CPUE was 41.
- The BTF cumulative CPUE is now **1,007**.
- 0% years since 2008 fell below this cumulative CPUE on this date.
- 64% of the run is complete based on historical average run timing.
- 53% 74% of the run is complete based the central 50% of all historical run timing scenarios.
- 11% 16% of the run is expected to pass Bethel in the next 5 days.
- Over the last 3 days, chum salmon made up 42% of the BTF catches, compared to 74% on average.

Chum Salmon Figure 1. *Left:* predicted cumulative EOS BTF CPUE according to various run timing scenarios: central 80% (light grey band), central 50% (dark grey band), and the historical median (circles). The dashed horizontal line shows the EOS value from 2018. *Right*: The cumulative BTF CPUE from 2019 plotted along with four previous years intended to represent a range of early/late and small/large index values.



For more detailed information, see the **chum salmon appendix** at the end of this document. **Return to Table of Contents**

Sockeye Salmon BTF Summary (7/8)

- The BTF daily CPUE was 26.
- The BTF cumulative CPUE is now **857**.
- 9% years since 2008 fell below this cumulative CPUE on this date.
- 91% of the run is complete based on historical average run timing.
- 80% 97% of the run is complete based the central 50% of all historical run timing scenarios.
- 3% 9% of the run is expected to pass Bethel in the next 5 days.
- Over the last 3 days, sockeye salmon made up 52% of the BTF catches, compared to 23% on average.

Sockeye Salmon Figure 1. *Left*: predicted cumulative EOS BTF CPUE according to various run timing scenarios: central 80% (light grey band), central 50% (dark grey band), and the historical median (circles). The dashed horizontal line shows the EOS value from 2018. *Right*: The cumulative BTF CPUE from 2019 plotted along with four previous years intended to represent a range of early/late and small/large index values.



For more detailed information, see the **sockeye salmon appendix** at the end of this document. **Return to Table of Contents**

Chum/Sockeye:Chinook Salmon Ratio

This ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of chum and sockeye salmon counted by the number of Chinook salmon counted by a project each day. A value of zero indicates Chinook salmon were counted that day, but not chum or sockeye salmon. A missing value on a day the project operated indicates no Chinook salmon were counted that day.

Species Ratio Figure 1. Time series of the species ratio in the BTF with historical quantiles shown as grey regions and the ratio time series for 2019 shown with points connected by lines.



Ratio Table 1. A subset of the species ratios displayed in Ratio Figure 1, including the ratios from the ATF.

Date	2019 BTF	BTF Median	BTF Lower 10%	BTF Upper 10%
7/5	119	37.43	14.05	75.25
7/6	28.71	30.75	10.87	116.2
7/7	13.45	41.7	17.73	102.6
7/8	9.57	42.83	13.03	103.2
7/9		45.73	12.01	198.1
7/10		32.86	9.53	106
7/11		33.53	10.42	125

Ratio Table 2. The percent of previous years in which a given species ratio was exceeded at least once before a certain day in the BTF.

Date	Ratio > 3	Ratio > 5	Ratio > 7	Ratio > 10	Ratio > 20
7/5	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%
7/6	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%
7/7	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%
7/8	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
7/9	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
7/10	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
7/11	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percent Composition by Salmon Species

Percent Composition Figure 1. Species percent composition in the BTF from 2019 and based on the historical average. The composition presented on each day represents the average composition over the past 3 days.



Species Composition Figure 2. Species percent composition from the sonar estimates from 2019 (salmon species only, excluding pink salmon). The composition presented on each day represents the average composition over the past 3 days.



Sonar Passage Estimates

Sonar Figure 1. Cumulative estimates of salmon passage from the 2019 sonar operation through the last complete reporting day. Grey bands show the 95% confidence intervals on each complete reporting day.



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In-Season Harvest Estimates

In-season harvest estimates are produced by combining counts of total fishing effort (usually obtained via aerial survey) and on-the-ground fisher interview information using statistically-rigorous methodology. The data collection efforts to produce these estimates is a highly collaborative effort, involving staff from ADF&G, KRITFC, OTNC, and USFWS. Although USFWS performs the data analysis and harvest estimation, all estimates undergo technical review by a panel comprised of representatives from each of these entities.

Much more detailed information can be found on the YDNWR website (https://www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon_delta/wildlife_and_habitat/dailyupdate.html).

In the tables below, CV stands for coefficient of variation, which is a commonly-used measure of uncertainty in the estimate (larger CV values are more uncertain).

Harvest Table 1. Estimated total Chinook salmon harvest within the YDNWR, excluding the section between Akiak and Aniak.

Date	Daily Harvest	Cumulative Harvest	Daily CV	Cumulative CV
6/1	70	70	0.22	0.22
6/8	740	810	0.15	0.14
6/12	8,040	8,850	0.12	0.11
6/15	$7,\!480$	$16,\!330$	0.09	0.07
6/19	$13,\!630$	29,960	0.09	0.06
6/22	$10,\!130$	40,090	0.12	0.05

Harvest Table 2. Estimated total chum salmon harvest within the YDNWR, excluding the section between Akiak and Aniak.

Date	Daily Harvest	Cumulative Harvest	Daily CV	Cumulative CV
6/1	0	0	0	0
6/8	30	30	0.35	0.35
6/12	310	340	0.14	0.13
6/15	350	690	0.23	0.13
6/19	2,340	3,030	0.2	0.16
6/22	4,120	$7,\!150$	0.17	0.12

Harvest Table 3. Estimated total sockeye salmon harvest within the YDNWR, excluding the section between Akiak and Aniak.

Date	Daily Harvest	Cumulative Harvest	Daily CV	Cumulative CV
6/1	0	0	0	0
6/8	10	10	0.49	0.49
6/12	290	300	0.2	0.19
6/15	$1,\!140$	$1,\!440$	0.17	0.14
6/19	2,900	$4,\!340$	0.14	0.1
6/22	9,060	13,400	0.1	0.08

Chinook Salmon Appendix

Date	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	5-Yr Avg.	2008 - 2018 Avg.
7/5	752	582	284	564	493	509	477
7/6	759	590	289	578	504	518	484
7/7	770	597	296	596	513	526	492
7/8	777	602	304	601	518	531	499
7/9		606	311	610	523	536	504
7/10		619	312	624	527	542	508
7/11		624	321	634	535	550	513
EOS		667	374	687	625	601	550

Chinook Salmon Table A1. Cumulative CPUE from the BTF.

The ATF ended operations on 7/5 with an EOS cumulative CPUE value of 1,691 for Chinook salmon.

Chinook Salmon Table A2. Percent of run complete according to various historical run timing scenarios from the BTF.

Timing	Midpoint	7/8 Cumulative $%$
Earliest	6/14	98%
Early 10%	6/17	97%
Early 25%	6/21	95%
Median	6/22	92%
Late 25%	6/25	88%
Late 10%	6/27	84%
Latest	7/3	79%

Chum Salmon Appendix

Date	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	5-Yr Avg.	2008 - 2018 Avg.
7/5	821	2,578	3,030	1,166	944	2,342	2,866
7/6	891	$2,\!627$	$3,\!346$	$1,\!290$	1,041	2,522	3,092
7/7	966	2,746	$3,\!691$	$1,\!410$	1,261	$2,\!688$	3,346
7/8	$1,\!007$	$3,\!270$	4,088	$1,\!618$	$1,\!342$	$2,\!956$	$3,\!589$
7/9		$3,\!937$	$4,\!597$	1,733	1,368	3,233	3,868
7/10		$4,\!492$	4,942	$1,\!892$	$1,\!392$	$3,\!496$	$4,\!115$
7/11		$4,\!854$	$5,\!187$	2,111	$1,\!425$	$3,\!697$	$4,\!350$
EOS		8,212	6,785	$3,\!894$	$2,\!943$	$5,\!636$	$6,\!678$

Chum Salmon Table A1. Cumulative CPUE from the BTF.

The ATF ended operations on 7/5 with an EOS cumulative CPUE value of 1,051 for chum salmon.

Chum Salmon Table A2. Percent of run complete according to various historical run timing scenarios from the BTF.

Timing	Midpoint	7/8 Cumulative $%$
Earliest	6/23	89%
Early 10%	7/1	82%
Early 25%	7/3	74%
Median	7/6	64%
Late 25%	7/7	53%
Late 10%	7/11	42%
Latest	7/14	31%

Sockeye Salmon Appendix

Date	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	5-Yr Avg.	2008 - 2018 Avg.
7/5	627	1,006	1,100	879	1,296	1,082	1,049
7/6	758	$1,\!055$	$1,\!308$	932	$1,\!351$	1,161	$1,\!119$
7/7	831	$1,\!193$	1,363	$1,\!142$	1,505	1,277	$1,\!198$
7/8	857	$1,\!270$	$1,\!593$	1,206	$1,\!565$	$1,\!371$	$1,\!256$
7/9		$1,\!347$	$1,\!676$	$1,\!242$	$1,\!651$	$1,\!433$	1,307
7/10		$1,\!423$	1,712	$1,\!417$	$1,\!688$	1,501	$1,\!356$
7/11		$1,\!491$	1,784	$1,\!470$	1,739	1,553	$1,\!395$
EOS		$2,\!275$	$2,\!690$	2,463	$2,\!157$	$2,\!190$	1,762

Sockeye Salmon Table A1. Cumulative CPUE from the BTF.

The ATF ended operations on 7/5 with an EOS cumulative CPUE value of **33** for sockeye salmon.

Sockeye Salmon Table A2. Percent of run complete according to various historical run timing scenarios from the BTF.

Timing	Midpoint	7/8 Cumulative $%$
Earliest	6/22	100%
Early 10%	6/24	99%
Early 25%	6/26	97%
Median	6/29	91%
Late 25%	7/1	79%
Late 10%	7/7	66%
Latest	7/10	50%

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Chinook (7/9/2019 8:01:02 PM)1
Chum (7/9/2019 8:03:21 PM)	





Kogrukluk River Salmon Monitoring Project Cumulative Daily Passage of Chinook Salmon

Date	Lowest daily cumulative (all years)	Average (all years)	5 year average	10 year average	Highest daily cumulative (all years)	2019
07/02	0	579	122	81	2,969	225
07/03	0	852	205	133	3,848	312
07/04	0	1,152	247	162	4,588	506
07/05	4	1,538	302	219	5,589	896
07/06	21	1,971	367	269	7,343	1,332
07/07	56	2,431	551	399	8,649	1,577
07/08	83	2,872	675	521	9,782	1,900
07/09	104	3,329	787	625	10,461	
07/10	116	3,826	970	782	12,287	
07/11	167	4,251	1,272	1,053	13,084	
07/12	191	4,741	1,597	1,342	14,798	
07/13	484	5,145	1,823	1,567	15,562	
07/14	574	5,566	2,090	1,820	15,937	
07/15	618	5,921	2,331	2,039	16,183	
07/16	678	6,329	2,583	2,303	16,957	

Escapement Goal Range: 4,800 to 8,800

Lowest CountAverage Count5 Year Average10 Year AverageHighest CountSeason Total1,81910,0026,9296,50421,819

Focused Two-Week Data View























