



State of Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game  
Sportfish Division

Nomination Form  
Fish Distribution Database

Region SWT USGS Quad(s) Zone C 10K B-8, C-7, B-7  
 Fish Distribution Database Number of Waterway 325-30-10100-2202-3446  
 Name of Waterway Chilchitna River  USGS Name  Local Name  
 Addition  Deletion  Correction  Backup Information

For Office Use

Nomination # <u>07-123</u>	_____ ADF&G Fisheries Scientist	_____ Date
Revision Year: <u>2008</u>	_____ ADNR OHMP Operations Mgr.	_____ Date
Revision to: Atlas _____ Catalog _____ Both _____	<u>[Signature]</u> FDD Project Biologist	<u>4/16/07</u> Date
Revision Code: <u>F-1</u>	_____ Cartographer	_____ Date

OBSERVATION INFORMATION

Species	Date(s) Observed	Spawning	Rearing	Present	Anadromous
<u>Coho Salmon</u>	<u>07/21/1999</u>		<u>X</u>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>

**IMPORTANT:** Provide all supporting documentation that this water body is important for the spawning, rearing or migration of anadromous fish, including: number of fish and life stages observed; sampling methods, sampling duration and area sampled; copies of field notes; etc. Attach a copy of a map showing location of mouth and observed upper extent of each species, as well as other information such as: specific stream reaches observed as spawning or rearing habitat; locations, types, and heights of any barriers; etc.

**Comments:** Survey supports coho salmon presence in 325-30-10100-2202-3446

Name of Observer (please print): Joe Buckwalter  
 Signature: [Signature] Date: 4/16/07  
 Agency: ADF&G Div. of SF  
 Address: 333 Raspberry Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99518

This certifies that in my best professional judgment and belief the above information is evidence that this waterbody should be included in or deleted from the Fish Distribution Database.  
 Signature of Area Biologist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Revision 02/05  
 Name of Area Biologist (please print): \_\_\_\_\_



Tutna Lake, Nikadawna Creek, Chilchitna River Float Survey,

July 19-July 23, 1977

By - Richard Russell

July 19 - Bill Baechler and I flew to Tutna Lake (60° 21' N. Lat., 155° 20' W. Long.) this afternoon with Peninsula Airways in a Widgeon (pilot - Georgie Tibbets). Arrived at 1645 hours. Landed near a small creek on the northeast shore of the lake near a temporary U.S.G.S. tent camp.

Met with members of the U.S.G.S. mineral survey crew under the direction of Mr. Willis Nelson (Menlo Park, Calif.). They are mapping mineral deposits in the Upper Mulchatna area presently and will be moving camp to Lake Clark in about 10 days. I noticed bags of sediment samples drying in camp. They fly out daily in a small helicopter to collect samples. They were quite willing to discuss wildlife observations they've made with us...and hauled out maps to locate caribou herds, etc., that they'd seen recently.

We got our electrofishing gear set up and sampled the lower 100 yards of a small tributary next to their camp. In 225 seconds of shocking we caught one small northern pike, one small burbot, and several dozen sculpins. No other fish species were observed. The tributary was 3-4 feet wide with depths to 3 feet. It had gravel and sand bottom and willow, grass bank cover. A beaver dam blocked it about 100 yards above the mouth. Stream flow = an estimated 1 f.p.s.

While at the U.S.G.S. camp, I questioned them about fishing in Tutna Lake. In 2 weeks there the cook was the only one who had fished. He had 4 pike in a cold box and these I measured (331-601 mm fork length). He'd had good success fishing from shore for pike. He hadn't observed any other species.

He had just tied 3 air mattresses together in a makeshift raft so that he could paddle out into the lake further for the "big ones". He said only one other plane had been in on the lake recently (a Cessna 185 down near the outlet).

We inflated our Avon - 12 ft. raft and left the U.S.G.S. camp at 1900 hours. We paddled down the north shore of the lake to the outlet and set up camp at 2030 hours. Enroute we spotted several fairly large pike (30" plus). The lake is deep enough that it probably doesn't have winter kill problems. Weeds on the bottom and grasses in shallow water were common...esp. near the outlet.

We fished from shore with hook and line for about an hour this evening and hooked numerous pike. As we didn't have wire leaders along only 3 pike were landed (530-690 mm fork length). They were abundant near shore in grassy areas (2-3 feet of water).

Rain showers this evening. Lake temperature = 63° F. at 2030 hours.

July 20 - Sunny, light north winds at 0700 hours. We broke camp and started paddling down Nikadawna Creek at 0845.

At Tutna Lake outlet, the creek is 15-20 ft. wide with a maximum depth of 5 feet. Flow is an estimated 1/2 f.p.s. Bottom is weeds and silt. Undercut banks are common. Grasses are the main bank cover. Little Side sloughs and

marshes are numerous. The water has a slight brownish color to it but visibility was good.

We spent most of the day paddling down Nikadavna Creek. We saw 21 northern pike (150-650 mm - estimated fork lengths), and a few round whitefish. We only saw one grayling.

About 5 miles below the lake we encountered our first king salmon ... upmigrating. We saw more as we continued downstream and by the time we reached the Nikadavna-Chilchitna confluence we'd counted 53. Some were observed actively digging redds and spawning but most were still upmigrating. I did see some exposed eggs in a pool below a riffle. ~~We saw 1 sockeye upmigrating also.~~

We electroshocked a side channel just below where we observed the first kings spawning. In 45 seconds of shocking all we caught were sculpins. No other fish species were observed.

We did see, in scattered locations, several groups of salmon fingerlings (either kings or silvers).

The Nikadavna becomes more rocky and has more shallows beginning about 5 miles below Tutna Lake. The upper 5 miles reminds one of a meandering drainage canal. About 5 miles down one also encounters spruce trees along the banks and more willow cover.

Near the Nikadavna-Chilchitna confluence we observed an old totem carved in a spruce, some old cans, and evidence of an ancient trapping camp. The only other signs of human use noted today were a 5-gallon gas can and a length of polypropylene rope at Tutna Lake outlet.

We reached the Nikadavna-Chilchitna confluence at 1730 hours. We then continued down the Chilchitna for about another 1/2 mile where we set up camp.

The Chilchitna appeared to be a little larger than the Nikadavna. Below their confluence, the river was 50-60 feet wide, gravel and small boulder bottom, flow = an est. 1 1/2-2 f.p.s., depths to 8 feet. Spruce, balsam poplar, alders, willows, and grasses provided ample bank cover. Sweepers and log debris in mid-river supplemented this.

Kings and chums were abundant in the Chilchitna. We saw 52 kings in 1/2 mile... and an estimated 150 chums (paired, grouped, and spawning). Several of the kings bore fungal infections.

Fished in front of camp with no success this evening.

July 21 - Overcast and drizzling at 0700 hours. Broke camp at 0920. Found a dead pike (sculpin in gut) and two dead chums (spent) near camp. Later found one dead spent king.

We floated about 5-6 miles today. We fished a good deal enroute and counted all the kings as we went. We caught 6 grayling (fork lengths 105-353 mm) and 5 rainbow trout (fork lengths 304-470 mm) and counted 283 kings in the river.

The rainbows were again associated with log debris piles and in riffles below spawning chums. They were vividly colored. Grayling were caught in runs and deep holes. Quite a few very small grayling 100-150 mm were observed following our lures and flies but not striking.

We electroshocked a side channel 10-12 feet wide this morning about a mile below camp and caught ~~12 brook fingerlings~~, 2 burbot, 1 Arctic lamprey ammocoete, and 1 char fingerling.

We encountered several obstacles while floating today in the form of log jams and fallen trees across the river.

Quit floating at 1815 hours about 4-4 1/2 miles upstream of the Chilchitna-Mulchatna confluence. Lots of bear tracks on the gravel bars. A couple hundred dead chums were observed in the shallows and on the river bottom also.

Had a thunderstorm this evening for about an hour.

July 22 - CAVU this morning. On river at 0900 hours. Saw 3 float planes fly over (1 beaver - white, and 2 super cubs) apparently heading for the Mulchatna.

Fished and floated our way down to the Mulchatna. Arrived at the Chilchitna-Mulchatna confluence at 1430 hours. Enroute, caught 10 grayling, and one rainbow trout and counted another 104 kings. Also observed an estimated 10-12,000 chums spawning, 1-2,000 sockeye schooled in back eddies near confluence, and 1 pink salmon (male) upmigrating.

The lower river is 60-100 feet wide, with holes to 12 feet deep. There are lots of runs with deep holes and log debris on corners. There are plenty of sweepers.

After reaching the Mulchatna, we floated on down to our pickup spot with only a brief stop at a small creek that enters the river at 60° 26' N. Lat, 155° 46' W. Long. We caught one rainbow trout (male, spent, 474 mm fork length) and 3 grayling in a pool about 50 yards up the creek. Chum salmon were spawning in the creek.

The Mulchatna appears to be high and flowing quite fast today. It is definitely higher than during our mid-July B.O.R. trip in 1976. Water transparency was about 3-3 1/2 feet. The river was flowing an estimated 3-4 m.p.h. We reached our pickup point, about 9-10 miles downstream of the Mulchatna-Chilchitna confluence, at 1700 hours. This spot has a fairly long, 800-1,000 feet, straight stretch with a high cut bank on the south side. There is a slough on the north side suitable for mooring float planes and 2 super cubs were pulled in there when we arrived (Mr. Ted Olson, his partner, and two ladies, all from Anchorage).

Mr. Olson told us they'd just pulled in to try a little fishing (wanted grayling) and to rest in the sun. They fished Telaquana Lake yesterday and caught several lake trout. They left the Mulchatna about an hour after we arrived (plane #'s N6845Z and N8699D).

July 23 - Was picked up at 1600 hours today and flown back to King Salmon by Iliamna Air Taxi (206). Prior to departing we electroshocked a puddle and rescued about 100 juvenile cohos, 15-20 sockeye fry, and 15-20 char fry.

Fork Lengths by Species and Capture Method, Tutna Lake-Nikadavna River-  
Chilchitna River Float Survey - July 19-July 23, 1977

Fork Length (mm)	Rainbow Trout (H&L)	Grayling (H&L)	Pike (H&L)	Pike (E.Shock)	Burbot (E.Shock)	Coho (E.Shock)	Char (E.Shock)
25-49	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
50-74	-	-	-	-	-	11	1
75-99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
100-124	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
125-149	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
150-174	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
175-199	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
200-224	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
225-249	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
250-274	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
275-299	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
300-324	1	6	-	-	-	-	-
325-349	2	3	1	-	-	-	-
350-374	1	3	-	-	-	-	-
375-399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
400-424	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
425-449	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
450-474	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
475-499	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
500-524	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
525-549	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
550-574	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
575-599	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
600-624	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
625-649	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
650-674	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
675-699	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	6	16	8	1	3	12	1

Actual Fork Lengths of Fish Captured on Tutna Lake-Nikadauna Creek-Chilchitna  
River Float Survey - July 19-23, 1977

Rainbow Trout (hook and line)

337 mm  
455 mm  
358 mm  
304 mm  
470 mm  
341 mm

Grayling (hook and line)

353 mm	314 mm
289 mm	362 mm
345 mm	308 mm
340 mm	352 mm
105 mm	250 mm
332 mm	309 mm
278 mm	318 mm
315 mm	321 mm

Pike (hook and line)

331 mm	530 mm
601 mm	690 mm
452 mm	619 mm
472 mm	538 mm

132 mm (E.Shock)

Coho (E.Shock)

53 mm	55 mm
57 mm	50 mm
53 mm	58 mm
61 mm	66 mm
62 mm	46 mm
57 mm	53 mm

Burbot (E.Shock)

180 mm  
239 mm  
168 mm

Char (E.Shock)

57 mm

Lamprey Ammocoete (E.Shock)

149 mm

## General Comments

Present Use - The U.S.G.S. has a temporary mineral survey camp on Tutna Lake. Dick Armstrong has a gas cache there. At least one float plane has been in recently at the outlet (presumably pike fishing). One old trapping camp was run across near the Chilchitna-Nikadavna confluence. There may be another about 2 miles above the Mulchatna-Chilchitna confluence as we noted a 5-gallon can hanging in a tree along the river there.

No evidence of sport fishing was observed downstream of Tutna Lake until we reached the Mulchatna.

Potential Use - Tutna Lake appears to me to have a high potential for recreational pike fishing. Pike are abundant, the lake is large and suitable for landing all types of float planes, and it is within an hour's flight of the Iliamna-Lake Clark guiding operations. A potential for large pike exists. The remainder of the system doesn't appear to have a very large recreational fishing potential - except maybe for spawning kings.

Floatability - Nikadavna Creek is easily floatable. It just meanders along with no obstacles. Chilchitna River is a little more difficult. Spruce sweepers are common. Log jams and trees lying completely across the river are not uncommon. Otherwise, it's pretty easy. There are no rapids. The Mulchatna is large and fairly swift in the area of the Chilchitna-Mulchatna confluence so extra caution should be exercised on it. A good pickup point exists about one mile downstream of the Chilchitna-Mulchatna confluence. It's a long, straight stretch (1/2 mile or more) suitable for float planes at least to the size of a Cessna 206. Access to the system is scant with the exception of Tutna Lake. A recreational camp site should be provided for at the outlet of Tutna Lake.

Miscellaneous - Total kings observed in Nikadavna =	53
Total kings observed in Chilchitna from Nikadavna confluence on down to Mulchatna River =	439

Chilchitna River appears to be an important king, chum, coho, and perhaps sockeye spawning area. The king count does not take in to account fish upmigrating past us while we were camped each evening, so the count could probably be expanded to an estimated 500-600 for the Chilchitna below Nikadavna Creek. Peak of king spawning appears to be a week-10 days away yet at least. Only one dead king was noted.

Estimate 15,000-20,000 chums spawning in lower Chilchitna presently with some already dying off.