

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner
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SUBSISTENCE FISHING TIME INCREASED IN SUBDISTRICTS 5 AND 6

Chum and pink salmon passage estimates at southern Norton Sound escapement projects are well above average for early July. Escapement goals of chum and pink salmon to the Unalakleet River drainage have already been achieved. Additionally, it appears that the severe conservation measures taken this summer have led to much improved escapement of Chinook salmon from recent years. Chinook salmon counts at the Shaktoolik tower, North River tower, and Unalakleet River weir are 1,300, 894, and 229 fish, respectively. Current projections at the North River tower indicate the escapement goal range of 1,200–2,600 Chinook salmon will be achieved for the first time since 2010. The Unalakleet River weir count is also the best for July 5 since the project began in 2010. Subsistence fishing opportunities for other species will now be increased because there are large surpluses of pink and chum salmon and Chinook salmon escapement needs are projected to be achieved.

Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, will reopen to subsistence fishing 7 days a week effective midnight, Sunday evening, July 6 with the following provisions in effect for freshwater and marine fishing areas. In freshwater areas of Subdistricts 5 and 6, beach seining will be open 7 days a week. Beach seines are required by regulation in Subdistricts 5 and 6 to have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less and Chinook salmon incidentally captured in beach seines must be immediately released alive and unharmed. In Subdistricts 5 and 6 marine waters, subsistence salmon fishing will be open 7 days a week for the remainder of season with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The department appreciates the sacrifices made and hardships incurred by subsistence salmon users in southern Norton Sound this season. These measures were necessary to conserve Chinook salmon so that they may reach the spawning grounds in sufficient numbers to provide for future returns. More importantly, it appears these measures have been successful based on preliminary estimates of escapement. If you have any questions about subsistence and salmon fishing in Norton Sound, please contact Fish and Game at 1-800-560-2271 or 443-5167, or the Unalakleet field office at 624-3921.