
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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YAKUTAT COMMERCIAL SET GILLNET FISHERIES UPDATE

Yakutat...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game today announced the following information concerning the **Yakutat District fisheries**.

Sockeye salmon runs to the Yakutat Management Area were expected to be average to above average in 2018. Returns to date have been poor and while there have been signs of improvement at the Situk River weir, the escapement is still the worst on record.

As of July 11, 2018, approximately 9,500 sockeye and 252 large Chinook salmon have been counted through the Situk River weir. The sockeye salmon count is well below the long-term average of 40,000 fish for the date and is the lowest count on record since 1988 when the weir was moved to its current location. Historical timing data indicates 50% of the escapement past the weir by this time and the current projection suggests Situk River sockeye salmon escapement will fall well short of the BEG range of 30,000-70,000 fish if these trends continue.

Aerial surveys have been conducted weekly on East Alsek, Doame, Akwe, and Italio rivers. Sockeye salmon escapements to these systems appear to be late and weak for this time of year. Due to inclement weather and poor visibility, surveys have not been conducted since July 3. The next aerial survey is scheduled for Friday, July 13.

Escapements to the Alsek River cannot be assessed by aerial surveys due to its glacial nature so a short, 12-hour fishing period was warranted on July 8 to gain information on run strength. The Alsek River recorded below average sockeye salmon harvest.

The waters of the Yakutat District will remain closed to commercial set gillnetting as a conservation measure. The department will continue to carefully monitor salmon abundance. Fisheries may reopen on short notice if escapement levels improve.

The Yakutat and Yakataga Districts will open for the coho season on Sunday, August 5.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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