

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



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner  
Jeff Regnart, Director*



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Contact:  
Chuck Brazil, Area Management Biologist  
Travis Elison, Asst. Area Management Biologist

Anchorage Area Office  
333 Raspberry Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99518

Phone: (907) 267-2100  
Fax: (907) 267-2442

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## **2011 Preliminary Kuskokwim Area Salmon Season Summary**

### **Kuskokwim Area Management**

The 2011 Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries were managed according to the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.365). The Kuskokwim Bay salmon fisheries were managed according to the District 4 Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.367).

### **Kuskokwim Area Commercial Harvest**

A total of 450,456 salmon were commercially harvested from the Kuskokwim Area in 2011 (Table 1). A total of 510 individual permit holders (making at least one recorded landing) participated in area commercial fisheries with an estimated exvessel value of \$2,287,202 (Table 2)

### **Kuskokwim River**

#### **2011 Outlook and Commercial Harvest**

	<u>Chinook</u>	<u>Sockeye</u>	<u>Chum</u>	<u>Coho</u>
2011 Outlook	0	20,000 – 30,000	200,000 – 300,000	60,000 – 150,000
2011 Harvest	49	13,482	118,256	74,108

Harvest in numbers of fish current as of October 3, 2011

#### **District W-1 Commercial Harvest**

The 2011 District W-1 commercial fishing season began on July 5 and ended on August 22. There were 19 commercial fishing periods in District W-1. A total of 49 Chinook salmon; 13,482 sockeye salmon; 118,256 chum salmon and 74,108 coho salmon were commercially harvested (Table 1). A total of 748 Chinook were harvested during the commercial fishery, but 699 of those were retained for personal use as the buyers agreed not to purchase Chinook salmon because of the poor return.

Chinook salmon catch rates were below average. Catch rates for chum salmon were above average and sockeye salmon were average. Coho salmon catch rates ranged from above average to below average. A total of 413 individual permit holders (making at least one recorded landing) participated in the District W-1 commercial fishery. Chum and sockeye salmon harvests were above the most recent 10-year average, while Chinook and coho salmon harvest was below the most recent 10-year average. The chum salmon harvest was the highest since 1998. Total exvessel value of the fishery in District W-1 was \$764,358; approximately 150% above the most recent 10-year average value (Table 2).

### Run Timing and Escapement

Salmon run timing at Bethel based on the Bethel Test Fishery indicated Chinook and sockeye salmon run timing was near average, while chum salmon were three days later than average, and coho salmon run timing was three days earlier than average. Run timing at the spawning grounds was characterized as late for Chinook and chum salmon, while sockeye salmon ranged from early to late, and coho salmon appeared to be average to late.

Based on escapements at weirs and through aerial surveys, preliminary Chinook and sockeye salmon abundance in 2011 in the Kuskokwim River was below average, chum salmon abundance was above average, and coho salmon abundance was average.

### Chinook salmon

Overall, preliminary data indicated in 2011 Chinook salmon abundance was below average. When compared to 2010 escapements three tributaries monitored by weir had higher escapements and three were similar. Seven Kuskokwim River tributaries have aerial survey escapement goals. Of the five tributaries that were assessed, two (Kisaralik and Salmon (Pitka Fork) rivers) achieved their respective goals and three (Cheeneetnuk, Gagaryah, and Salmon (Aniak) rivers) did not.

Year	Chinook Salmon Escapement					
	Kwethluk	Tuluksak	George	Kogrukluk	Tatlawiksuk	Takotna
2000	3,547	a	2,960	3,310	810	345
2001	a	997	3,309	9,298	2,010	721
2002	8,502	1,346	2,444	10,104	2,237	316
2003	14,474	1,064	4,693	11,771	1,683	378
2004	28,605	1,475	5,207	19,651	2,833	461
2005	a	2,653	3,845	22,000	2,918	499
2006	17,619	1,044	4,357	19,414	1,700	539
2007	13,267	374	4,883	13,029	2,061	418
2008	5,312	665	2,698	9,730	1,071	413
2009	5,710	404	3,663	9,702	1,071	311
2010	1,693	239	1,500	5,690	567	178
2011	4,076	286	1,571	6,891	1,012	134

a Weir did not operate or counts were incomplete

Six tributaries were monitored by weir and four have escapement goals. Only the Kogrukluk River achieved the escapement goal with a preliminary count of 6,891 Chinook salmon passing the weir.

### Sockeye salmon

Overall, preliminary 2011 sockeye salmon abundance was considered below average.

Seven tributaries were monitored by weir for sockeye salmon escapement. The Kogrukluk River escapement goal (range 5,300-14,000) was achieved with an estimated 8,132 sockeye salmon passing the weir.

#### Sockeye Salmon Escapement

Year	Kwethluk	Tuluksak	George	Kogrukluk	Tatlawiksuk	Takotna	Telaquana
2000	358	a	22	2,865	0	4	a
2001	a	137	24	8,776	3	1	a
2002	272	82	17	4,050	1	1	a
2003	2,928	288	16	9,164	a	4	a
2004	3,490	136	177	6,775	10	17	a
2005	a	642	276	37,939	77	35	a
2006	6,732	985	164	60,807	41	60	a
2007	5,262	352	74	16,525	27	14	a
2008	2,451	185	94	19,675	39	13	a
2009	4,385	708	54	23,785	39	4	a
2010	4,264	476	115	13,995	33	a	72,021
2011	2,028	123	43	8,132	23	2	35,105

a Weir did not operate or counts were incomplete

#### Chum salmon

Overall, preliminary 2011 data indicates chum salmon abundance was above average.

Seven tributaries were monitored for chum salmon escapement, six weirs and one sonar project, of which only two, Aniak and Kogrukluk rivers, have escapement goals. The Aniak River escapement goal (range 220,000-480,000) was achieved with an estimated 345,630 chum salmon passing the sonar. The Kogrukluk River escapement goal (range 15,000-49,000) was exceeded with an estimated 76,384 chum salmon passing the weir.

#### Chum Salmon Escapement

Year	Kwethluk	Tuluksak	George	Kogrukluk	Tatlawiksuk	Takotna	Aniak
2000	11,691	a	3,492	11,491	6,965	1,254	177,384
2001	a	19,321	11,601	30,570	23,718	5,414	408,830
2002	35,854	9,958	6,543	51,570	24,542	4,377	472,346
2003	41,812	11,724	33,666	23,413	a	3,393	477,544
2004	38,646	11,796	14,409	24,201	21,245	1,630	672,931
2005	a	35,696	14,828	197,723	55,720	6,467	1,151,505
2006	47,490	25,648	41,467	180,594	32,301	12,598	1,108,626
2007	57,230	17,286	55,842	49,505	83,246	8,900	696,801
2008	20,048	12,518	29,978	44,978	30,896	5,691	427,911
2009	32,028	13,658	7,941	84,940	19,975	2,487	479,531
2010	18,835	13,424	26,154	63,583	36,701	4,062	429,643
2011	18,261	9,948	44,640	76,384	84,202	8,414	345,630

a Weir did not operate or counts were incomplete

## Coho salmon

Overall, preliminary 2011 data indicates coho salmon abundance appears to be about average.

Six tributaries were monitored by weir for coho salmon escapement of which only two, Kwethluk and KogrukluK rivers, have escapement goals. The Kwethluk River escapement goal, (>19,000) was not assessed due to high water. The KogrukluK River escapement goal (range 13,000-28,000) was achieved with an estimated 24,174 coho salmon passing the weir.

Year	Coho Salmon Escapement					
	Kwethluk	Tuluksak	George	KogrukluK	Tatlawiksuk	Takotna
2000	25,610	a	11,262	33,135	a	3,957
2001	21,596	23,768	14,398	19,387	10,539	2,606
2002	23,298	11,487	6,759	14,516	11,345	3,984
2003	107,789	41,071	33,280	74,604	a	7,171
2004	64,216	20,336	12,499	27,041	16,410	3,207
2005	a	11,324	8,200	24,116	7,495	2,216
2006	25,664	5,438	11,296	17,011	9,453	5,548
2007	19,473	2,807	29,317	27,033	8,685	2,853
2008	49,973	7,457	21,931	29,661	11,065	2,817
2009	21,911	8,137	12,573	22,981	10,148	2,708
2010	a	1,478	12,961	13,971	3,520	3,217
2011	a	a	30,028	24,174	12,928	4,019

a Weir did not operate or counts were incomplete

## Subsistence

The 2011 pre-season outlook for Chinook salmon was similar to 2010 when the Kuskokwim River Drainage experienced the lowest estimated total run and spawning escapement on record and not achieving escapement goals for several years in Kuskokwim River tributaries was cause for conservation concern.

The following pre-season management actions were taken effective from June 1 until July 25, 2011 in an effort to achieve escapement goals.

Subsistence Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear was closed and subsistence fishing was restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not to exceed 60-feet in the following waters of the Kuskokwim River Drainage:

- Kuskokuak Slough between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the upstream and downstream mouth of the slough, including all waters of the Old Kuskokuak Slough, the Kisaralik, Kasigluk, and the Kwethluk river drainages to their confluence with Kuskokuak Slough,
- The Tuluksak River drainage including its confluence with the Kuskokwim River and the Kuskokwim River mainstem downstream to the upstream side of Mishevik Slough.

Subsistence fishing was closed in District 1 from June 16-19 as Bethel Test Fish abundance indices of Chinook salmon continued to indicate low abundance of Chinook salmon and escapement goals were unlikely to be met. This action was supported by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group.

Subsistence fishing was closed in District 1 from June 23-28 as Bethel Test Fish continued to indicate lower than adequate abundance of Chinook salmon and that escapement goals were unlikely to be met. This action was supported by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group.

On June 29 through July 7, 2011, ADF&G restricted subsistence salmon fishing to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River drainage. This action was taken for conservation of Chinook salmon while still providing opportunity to harvest more abundant sockeye and chum salmon. This conservation measure was unanimously supported by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group.

Federal Management special actions contained in 3-KS-01-11 and 3-KS-02-11 preempted state management emergency orders from June 30 until July 2, 2011:

- That area of the Kuskokwim River within the Federal Conservation Unit were closed to subsistence fishing using gillnets with mesh greater than 4-inches, exceeding 45 meshes in depth and longer than 60 feet from 12:01 a.m. Thursday, June 30 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 2, 2011. The area closed extended from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River upstream to the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim Rivers, including all tributary rivers in between.

Subsistence salmon fishing was also closed by emergency order adjacent to periods of commercial salmon fishing on the Kuskokwim River 6 hours before, during, and 3 hours after commercial fishing.

Post season subsistence harvest surveys are presently being conducted. Inseason reports during Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working meetings suggested that many subsistence fishermen met their harvest needs.

## **Kuskokwim Bay**

### **2011 Outlook and Commercial Harvest, Districts W-4 and W-5**

	<u>Chinook</u>	<u>Sockeye</u>	<u>Chum</u>	<u>Coho</u>
2011 Outlook	10,000 – 17,000	80,000 – 160,000	90,000 – 140,000	20,000 – 60,000
2011 Harvest	17,479	63,116	118,150	45,815

### **District W-4 (Quinhagak) Commercial Harvest**

The 2011 District W-4 commercial fishing season began on June 20 and ended on August 26. There were 26 commercial fishing periods in District W-4. A total of 15,387 Chinook salmon; 38,543 sockeye salmon; 104,959 chum salmon and 30,457 coho salmon were commercially harvested (Table 1). Chinook salmon catch rates were above average to below average. Catch rates for chum salmon were above average. Sockeye and coho salmon catch rates were below average. A total of 219 individual permit holders (making at least one recorded landing) participated in the District W-4 commercial fishery. Chum salmon harvest was the second highest on record, just below the 106,610 harvested in 2010. Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon harvests were below the most recent 10-year average. Total exvessel value of the fishery in District W-4 was \$1,176,435; approximately 195% above the most recent 10-year average value (Table 2).

## Run Timing and Escapement

Based on commercial harvests and escapements at the Kanektok River weir; Chinook, chum, and coho salmon run timing were average, while sockeye salmon run timing was about three days earlier than average.

Aerial surveys were not flown on the Kanektok River because of poor weather conditions. Chinook salmon escapement at the Kanektok River weir was 5,032 and it was the lowest recorded escapement since the weir started enumerating Chinook salmon in 2002. The sockeye salmon escapement of 84,805 was the second lowest recorded at the weir. The chum salmon escapement of 50,908 was a little below average. Coho salmon were not enumerated at the Kanektok River weir.

Kanektok River Weir Escapement

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Chum	Coho
2002	5,343	58,326	42,009	24,840
2003	8,231	127,471	40,066	72,448
2004	19,528	102,867	46,444	87,828
2005	14,331	242,208	53,580	26,343
2006	a	a	a	a
2007	14,120	307,750	133,215	30,471
2008	6,578	141,388	54,024	24,490
2009	6,841	272,483	51,652	a
2010	5,800	202,634	62,567	a
2011	5,032	84,805	50,908	a

a Weir did not operate or counts were incomplete

## Subsistence

Subsistence fishing in the Quinhagak area was allowed 7 days per week throughout the season with the exception of closed periods 8 hours before, during, and 6 hours after commercial fishing periods.

## District W-5 (Goodnews Bay) Commercial Harvest

The 2011 District W-5 commercial fishing season began on June 27 and ended on August 26. There were 21 commercial fishing periods in District W-5. A total of 2,092 Chinook salmon; 24,573 sockeye salmon; 13,191 chum salmon and 15,358 coho salmon were commercially harvested (Table 1). Chinook salmon catch rates were average. Catch rates for chum salmon were above average and sockeye salmon were below average. Coho salmon catch rates ranged from above average to below average. A total of 48 individual permit holders (making at least one recorded landing) participated in the District W-5 commercial fishery. Chinook and coho salmon harvest was above the most recent 10-year average. Sockeye and chum salmon harvest was below the most recent 10-year average. Total exvessel value of the fishery in District W-5 was \$346,022; approximately 197% above the most recent 10-year average value (Table 2).

## Run Timing and Escapement

Based on commercial harvests and escapements at the Goodnews River weir; Chinook salmon run timing was about nine days later than average and chum salmon run timing was about six days later

than average. Sockeye salmon run timing was about four days earlier than average. Coho salmon run timing was average.

Chinook salmon escapement was below average. The Goodnews River (North Fork) aerial Chinook salmon survey goal (range 640-3,300) was achieved with 853 fish observed. The Middle Fork Goodnews River weir Chinook salmon biological escapement goal (range 1,500-2,900) was achieved with an estimated escapement of 1,861 fish. Sockeye salmon escapement was below average. The Goodnews River (North Fork) sockeye salmon aerial survey goal (range 5,500-19,500) was achieved with 14,130 fish observed. The Middle Fork Goodnews River weir sockeye salmon biological escapement goal (range 18,000-40,000) was not achieved with an estimated escapement of 17,946 fish, which was the lowest in the past decade. The weir escapement goals for chum and coho salmon (greater than 12,000) were achieved with an estimated escapement of 19,974 and 23,826 fish respectively.

Middle Fork Goodnews River Weir Escapement

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Chum	Coho
2001	5,351	21,024	26,820	19,626
2002	3,085	22,101	30,300	27,364
2003	2,389	44,387	21,637	52,810
2004	4,388	55,926	31,616	47,917
2005	4,633	113,809	26,690	15,683
2006	4,559	126,772	54,699	15,969
2007	3,852	72,282	49,285	20,767
2008	2,158	51,763	44,310	36,663
2009	1,630	25,465	19,715	20,000
2010	2,244	35,762	26,687	23,839
2011	1,861	17,946	19,974	23,826

### Subsistence

Subsistence fishing in the Goodnews Bay area was allowed 7 days per week throughout the season with the exception of closed periods 8 hours before, during, and 6 hours after commercial fishing periods.

Table 1.—Commercial salmon harvest and exvessel value by District, Kuskokwim Area, 2011.

	<b>Chinook</b>	<b>Sockeye</b>	<b>Coho</b>	<b>Pink</b>	<b>Chum</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Lower Kuskokwim River, District W-1</b>						
Fish	49	13,482	74,108	1	118,256	205,896
Pounds	484	89,093	496,922	4	712,880	1,299,383
Price	\$0.85	\$0.89	\$0.67	\$0.00	\$0.49	
Value	\$411	\$79,370	\$334,452	\$0	\$350,124	\$764,357
<b>Recent 10-yr Average 2001-2010</b>						
Fish	2,863	11,365	177,034	4	35,051	226,316
Value	\$24,382	\$50,298	\$398,756	\$0	\$30,100	\$504,155
<b>Quinhagak, District W-4</b>						
Fish	15,387	38,543	30,457	0	104,959	189,346
Pounds	196,009	244,296	233,333	0	710,420	1,384,058
Price	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.00	\$0.85	
Value	\$166,606	\$207,642	\$198,333	\$0	\$603,855	\$1,176,436
<b>Recent 10-yr Average 2001-2010</b>						
Fish	16,899	72,489	44,708	2	46,996	181,093
Value	\$142,516	\$296,381	\$122,805	\$0	\$42,662	\$604,365
<b>Goodnews Bay, District W-5</b>						
Fish	2,092	24,573	15,358	0	13,191	55,214
Pounds	22,617	166,290	125,260	0	92,918	407,085
Price	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.00	\$0.85	
Value	\$19,224	\$141,347	\$106,471	\$0	\$78,980	\$346,022
<b>Recent 10-yr Average 2001-2010</b>						
Fish	1,907	28,032	12,278	1	9,507	51,724
Value	\$16,154	\$113,892	\$36,031	\$0	\$9,488	\$175,566
<b>Kuskokwim Area Total</b>						
Fish	17,528	76,598	119,923	1	236,406	450,456
Pounds	219,110	499,679	855,515	4	1,516,218	3,090,526
Price	\$0.85	\$0.86	\$0.75	\$0.00	\$0.68	
Value	\$186,241	\$428,359	\$639,256	\$0	\$1,032,959	\$2,286,815
<b>Recent 10-yr Average 2001-2010</b>						
Fish	21,677	112,064	233,789	4	91,577	459,111
Value	\$183,052	\$460,571	\$557,592	\$1	\$82,250	\$1,284,085



Table 2.– Commercial salmon fishing estimated exvessel value and permits fished by district, Kuskokwim Area, 1990–2011.

Year	District 1		District 2		District 4		District 5		Total Value	Total Permits
	Value of Catch	Permits Fished <sup>a</sup>	Value of Catch	Permits Fished <sup>a</sup>	Value of Catch	Permits Fished <sup>a</sup>	Value of Catch	Permits Fished <sup>a</sup>		
1990	\$3,385,636	742	\$121,329	22	\$1,013,472	390	\$361,203	82	\$4,881,640	823
1991	\$2,971,767	749	\$111,651	23	\$592,436	346	\$273,795	72	\$3,949,649	819
1992	\$3,764,804	741	\$147,992	22	\$993,664	349	\$439,331	111	\$5,345,791	814
1993	\$2,533,895	737	\$90,906	20	\$898,255	408	\$440,955	114	\$3,964,011	804
1994	\$3,559,114	706	\$129,555	17	\$837,157	307	\$591,903	116	\$5,117,729	793
1995	\$2,776,677	712	\$107,913	21	\$1,047,188	382	\$287,599	87	\$4,219,377	798
1996	\$2,108,418	620	\$11,015	8	\$534,726	218	\$222,388	54	\$2,876,547	714
1997	\$430,614	604	\$2,944	4	\$497,071	289	\$121,973	53	\$1,052,602	702
1998	\$982,791	615	\$617	3	\$467,843	203	\$184,060	50	\$1,635,311	707
1999	\$170,278	509	\$0	0	\$279,092	218	\$102,803	73	\$552,173	604
2000	\$509,594	532	\$3,039	4	\$466,560	230	\$212,336	46	\$1,191,529	623
2001	\$429,534	412	\$0	0	\$228,615	159	\$98,458	32	\$756,607	514
2002	\$127,208	318	\$0	0	\$167,748	114	\$28,703	30	\$323,659	407
2003	\$453,187	359	\$0	0	\$304,553	114	\$135,287	34	\$893,027	438
2004	\$943,767	390	\$0	0	\$405,344	116	\$135,246	29	\$1,484,357	467
2005	\$448,853	403	\$0	0	\$571,965	145	\$134,295	29	\$1,155,113	484
2006	\$451,390	373	\$0	0	\$551,182	132	\$141,235	24	\$1,143,807	453
2007	\$380,842	366	\$0	0	\$660,865	125	\$223,329	28	\$1,265,036	456
2008	\$538,310	374	\$0	0	\$750,731	146	\$198,070	25	\$1,487,111	462
2009	\$502,848	342	\$0	0	\$747,325	179	\$192,031	39	\$1,442,204	434
2010	\$765,606	433	\$0	0	\$1,655,321	241	\$473,661	48	\$2,894,749	530
2011	\$764,358	413	\$0	0	\$1,176,435	219	\$346,022	48	\$2,287,202	510
<b>10 Yr Ave</b>	<b>\$504,155</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$604,365</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>\$176,032</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>\$1,284,567</b>	<b>465</b>

a Number of permits that made at least one delivery