

will be established for the Copper River system. The BEG committee recommended aerial survey escapement objectives for five tributaries in the Copper River. There was no formal consensus as to whether the objectives should be considered individually, or combined. These objectives are expressed as peak aerial survey counts conducted within a fixed survey time:

Drainage	Stream Segment(s)	Peak Survey Timing	Objective
Chistochina	East Fork Chistochina Indian	17-31 July	500
Gulkana	West Fork-Middle Fork West Fork Middle Fork East Fork Lower Mainstem	22 July-5 August	1,250
Tazlina	Kiana Mendeltna	17 July-2 August	350
Klutina	Manker Saint Anne	17 July-2 August	250
Tonsina	Little Tonsina Greyling	25 July-8 August	350

These escapement objectives were derived from the median of several three year aerial survey peak count data series obtained at peak survey times (ranging from July 17- August 8). Presently there is no information that would allow ADF&G to convert the aerial survey peak counts into actual numbers of spawners, as no calibration studies have been performed.

Management Strategy

Commercial Management

The traditional fishing schedule for the Copper River District is two 24-hour periods per week. Periods begin at 7:00 a.m. on Mondays and 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays. The lengths of fishing periods are adjusted by emergency order as needed. After August 7, coho salmon management begins with two 24-hour periods per week, which is adjusted as needed, based on run strength.

Early in the season, management of the Copper River District is based on the actual harvest as compared to the anticipated harvest. This is the most reliable method of evaluating early run strength prior to the installation of the inriver sonar at Miles Lake. In late May, sonar counts and commercial harvest information become the primary factors governing management of the fishery. The inriver goal for the upper Copper River was increased in 1998 to 617,000 salmon. This increase occurred at the Board of Fisheries (BOF) meeting in December 1996, which provided an increase in the personal use fishery from 60,000 to 100,000 salmon and also authorized ADF&G to set the subsistence harvest annually based on past performance. However, if the commercial fishery is closed for 13 consecutive days due to poor run strength, the personal use allocation drops to 50,000 salmon.

By mid-June, aerial estimates of sockeye salmon escapement in the Copper River Delta systems become an additional consideration when scheduling commercial fishing periods. Due to the many spawning systems in the lower Copper River Delta, an actual weekly escapement index of