

# Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

1 (800) 315-6338 (MEET) Code: 58756# (KUSKO)

ADF&G Bethel toll free: 1 (855) 933-2433

## Meeting Agenda

Date: 6/17/2014

Time: 1:30pm

Place: Bethel

Time Called to Order:

Chair: Bev Hoffman

Time Adjourned:

### ROLL CALL TO ESTABLISH QUORUM:

Upriver Elder:

Downriver Elder:

Commercial Fisher:

Lower River Subsistence:

Middle River Subsistence:

Upper River Subsistence:

Headwaters Subsistence:

### QUORUM MET? Yes / No

Processor:

Member at Large:

Sport Fisher:

Western Interior RAC:

Y-K Delta RAC:

ADF&G:

### INTRODUCTIONS:

### INVOCATION:

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *the agenda may be amended at this time.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *Optional. ADF&G does not prepare official meeting minutes.*

### PEOPLE TO BE HEARD:

### CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Subsistence Reports:
  - a. Lowest River
  - b. ONC Inseason Subsistence
  - c. Lower River
  - d. Middle River
  - e. KNA Inseason Subsistence
  - f. Upper River
  - g. Headwaters
2. Overview of Kuskokwim River salmon run assessment projects:
  - a. Bethel Test Fish:
  - b. Weirs/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:
3. Commercial Catch Report:
4. Processor Report:
5. Sport Fish Report:
6. Intercept Fishery Report: *requested*
7. Weather Forecast:
8. Recommendation:
9. Motion for Discussion and Action

### OLD BUSINESS:

1. Recommendation from a Working Group member to not open any commercial salmon fishing until 1 August 2014.
2. Outreach, public announcements

### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Update from Mike Williams on the Yupiit Nation meeting June 12-13
2. Update on law enforcement activities from ADFG and USFWS
3. Update on radio talk show with ADFG, USFWS and Working Group members
4. Update on PSA's regarding fishing restrictions and Chinook salmon conservation
5. Update on dipnet fishery

### COMMENTS FROM WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Informational Packet

### Information Packets *ARE*:

- Intended to help inform Working Group discussions.
- To be viewed and used in context with Working Group meetings only.

### Packets *ARE NOT*:

- To be viewed as standalone documents.
- As a final say on fisheries management decisions.

### **Please use this information responsibly:**

Packet information is an incomplete snapshot of an ongoing discussion and changing conditions. Packet information should not be reproduced for any purpose other than to describe Working Group meeting discussions.

**Misuse** of Packet information can contribute to misunderstandings that can **cause harm to salmon users** and potentially **damage salmon resources**.

**Ask Questions:** ADF&G staff will be happy to answer biology and management questions. Please call **1-855-933-2433** to reach ADF&G Kuskokwim Area staff.

**Attend Meetings:** Each Working Group meeting is announced at least 48 hours prior to time and date of meeting. In addition, each meeting is recorded. Recordings can be found here:  
[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarea\\_kuskokwim.kswg](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarea_kuskokwim.kswg)

Viewing the information packet while listening to meetings/recordings will provide a better understanding of the information presented in this packet.

**Thank you.**

**Jennifer Peeks**

**Chris Shelden**

**Working Group coordinators**

**LOWER KUSKOKWIM RIVER INSEASON CATCH MONITORING REPORT:  
Orutsararmut Native Council (ONC)**

June 9, 2014

**Fishing reports from June 2-9, 2014**

Families Surveyed	Families Fishing	Driftnets	Setnets	Both Nets	Larger than 6" mesh	6" mesh and smaller	Both Sizes	Rod & Reel
22	<b>9</b>	0	8	0	0	8	0	1
		0%	89%	0%	0%	89%	0%	11%

Percentages are based on the number of families fishing each week.

**Compared with this time in a normal year, how are catch rates for salmon this week?**

CHINOOK			CHUM			SOCKEYE		
Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
1	4	2	0	5	2	0	5	2
11%	44%	22%	0%	56%	22%	0%	56%	22%

Percentages are based on the number of families fishing each week.

**Does the salmon run timing appear to be early, late, or normal?**

CHINOOK			CHUM			SOCKEYE		
Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late
3	2	2	1	5	1	1	5	1
33%	22%	22%	11%	56%	11%	11%	56%	11%

Percentages are based on the number of families fishing each week.

**Harvest Goal Summary:**

Seven families reported Chum salmon harvest goals to range from 50 to over 100 this season. Seven families are expecting to harvest a range of 30-200 Sockeye salmon.

A few families set a goal of 400 salmon (all species) to be harvested this year to meet their needs. Two families declined to report harvest goals this year.

Eight families are harvesting more whitefish this week than previous years at this time. One family reported a whitefish harvest goal of 50 or more this season. Five families are expecting to harvest 50-100 Coho salmon this season.

**Chinook:**

One family reported the catch rate for Chinook salmon to be very good. Four families reported the run timing to be normal for early June. Two families reported the Chinook salmon run timing as late. Three families reported the run timing as normal.

**Chum:**

Five families reported the chum salmon catch rate to be normal, and two families reported it to be poor. One family reported the run timing as early, five families reported it as normal, and one family reported it to be late.

**Sockeye:**

Five families reported the catch rate as normal and two families reported it to be poor. One family reported the run timing as early, five families reported it as normal, and one family reported it to be late.

**Comments:**

Families reported waiting until restrictions are lifted to harvest salmon.

Four families suggested a Chinook salmon moratorium (similar to the moose moratorium). One family suggested a seven year Chinook salmon moratorium. Two families suggested closing international and high-seas fishing; and stronger enforcement of by-catch restrictions. One family suggested an international Chinook salmon conservation act or agreement.

**Surveyor comments:**

For the week ending of June 9<sup>th</sup>, ONC surveyed 22 families from the mouth of Church Slough downriver to Napaskiak Slough.

Some families were unable to comment on the catch rate or the run timing this week.

So far there are two ASL subsistence samplers for this season, but we have yet to receive any samples.

No families reported using gillnets with mesh size bigger than 4" or directly targeting Chinook salmon. From the mouth of the Gweek River down to Napaskiak Slough, we observed a total of 129 set nets.

ONC, USFWS, and ADFG distributed 150 fish this week to Tuluksak, Napaskiak, Tuntutuliak, Akiachak, Kwethluk and Bethel.

**LOWER KUSKOKWIM RIVER INSEASON CATCH MONITORING REPORT:  
Orutsararmut Native Council (ONC)**

June 15, 2014

**Fishing reports from June 2-9, 2014**

Families Surveyed	Families Fishing	Driftnets	Setnets	Both Nets	Larger than 6" mesh	6" mesh and smaller	Both Sizes	Rod & Reel	Dipnet
24	11	0	9	0	0	9	0	1	2
		0%	82%	0%	0%	82%	0%	11%	18%

Percentages are based on the number of families fishing each week.

**Compared with this time in a normal year, how are catch rates for salmon this week?**

CHINOOK			CHUM			SOCKEYE		
Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor	Very Good	Normal	Poor
2	0	4	0	5	1	3	2	1
18%	0%	36%	0%	45%	9%	27%	18%	9%

Percentages are based on the number of families fishing each week.

**Does the salmon run timing appear to be early, late, or normal?**

CHINOOK			CHUM			SOCKEYE		
Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late	Early	Normal	Late
1	3	1	1	4	1	2	3	1
9%	27%	9%	9%	36%	9%	18%	27%	9%

Percentages are based on the number of families fishing each week.

**Harvest Goal Summary:**

Three families set harvest goals of mixed salmon ranging from 20-100 with no direct target on a specific salmon species. Two families had not set harvest goals, because they have not started fishing yet.

Two families planned to harvest 15-200 whitefish this season. One family reported a plan to harvest 50 or more whitefish.

One family reported to have met their Chum and Sockeye harvest goals this week and are done fishing. Three families reported being half-way done to meeting their harvest goals and plan on being done in the next couple of days.

**Chinook:**

Five families commented on their Chinook harvest goals this week. Three families were undecided about whether they would directly target Chinook, but planned to keep incidental harvest of that species. Two families expressed strong belief in conservation of Chinook and planned to delay fishing until July.

Families have reported that the incidental catches of Chinook are healthy and showed no signs of disease or parasites. One family reported catching spawning Chinook.

**Chum:**

Seven families reported Chum harvest goals this week. Three families reported a harvest goal of 20, two families reported 30, one family reported 100, and one family reported over 200 needed to reach their subsistence harvest goals this year.

Two families reported catching more chum than reds at the beginning of the week.

**Sockeye:**

Seven families reported Sockeye harvest goals this week. One family reported a harvest goal of 20, two families reported 30, two families reported 40, one family reported 150, and one family reported over 200 needed to reach their subsistence harvest goals this year.

This week families were catching big, healthy, and bright sockeye. One family reported catching a red that had pus under the skin. There was no trace of an open wound. Four families reported catching more reds at the end of the week.

**Coho:**

Two families planned to target 20-30 Coho salmon instead of targeting Chinook salmon.

**Comments:**

Two families that had not started fishing this week were getting salmon from Bethel Test Fish.

Two families commented on sharing nets with other families to reach harvest goals. One family reported a push of salmon on the 13<sup>th</sup> of this week. Respondents indicated that they had caught 20 salmon in a 24 hour period, checking the net twice in that time. Another family reported catching 5 salmon daily in 24 hour sets in Steamboat Slough.

One family reported dip netting for 3-5 hours above Bethel and didn't catch anything.

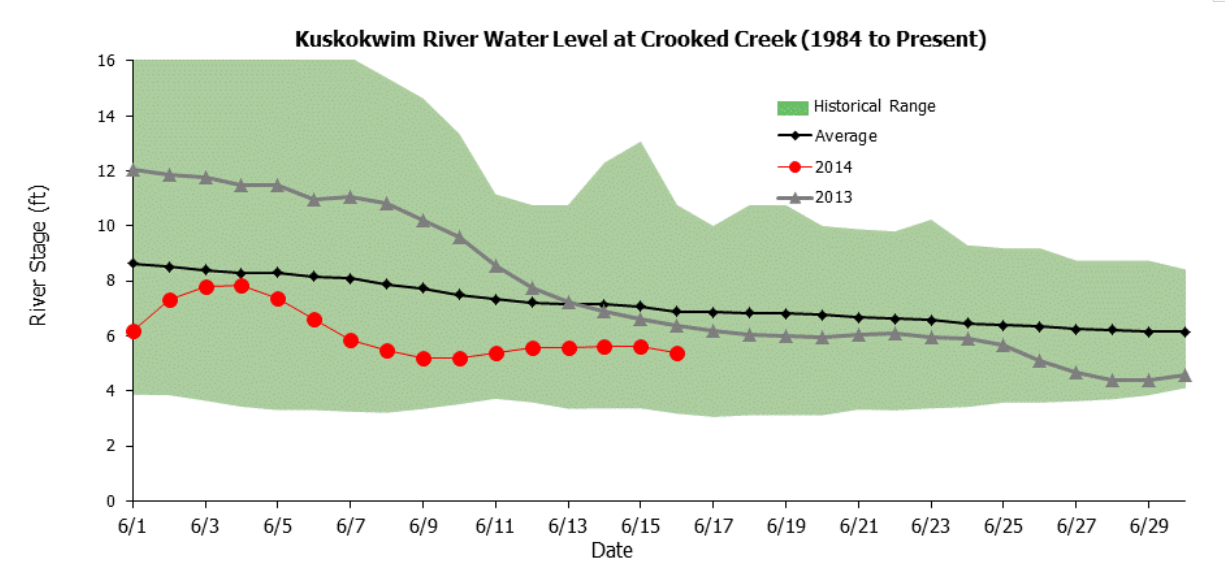
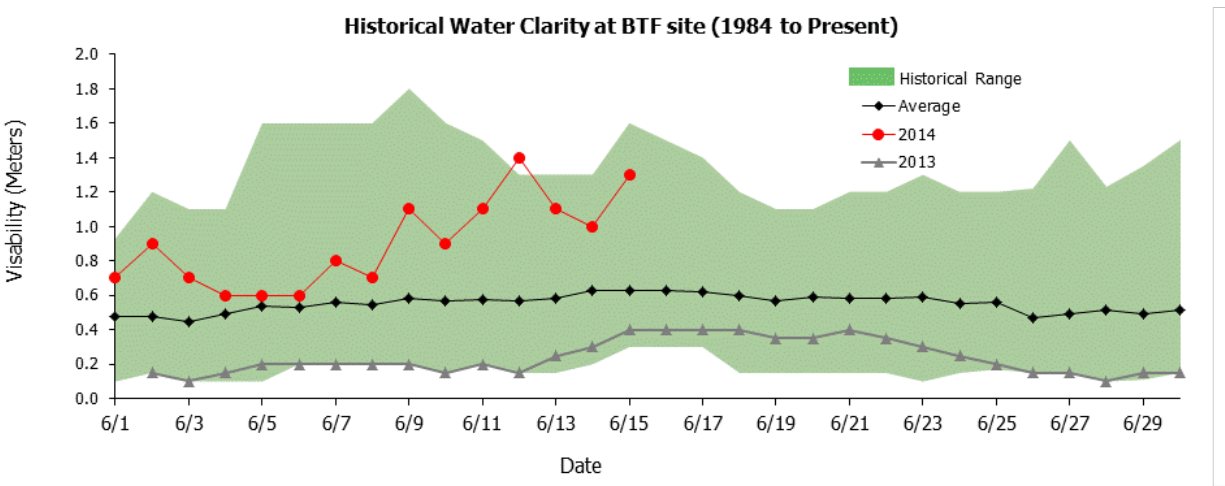
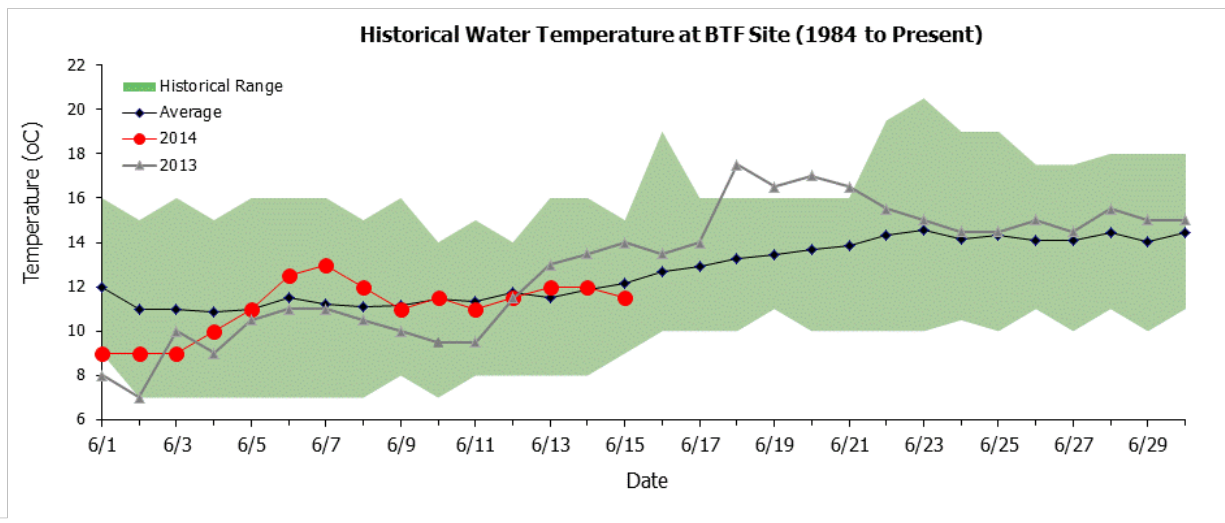
One family reported while cutting fish that the brains of the salmon were getting smaller.

**Surveyor comments:**

For the week ending in June 15<sup>th</sup>, ONC surveyed 24 families from the mouth of Church Slough to Napaskiak Slough. The number of families that are supported per fish camps ranged from one to ten families.

Surveyors observed 132 setnets from Church Slough to Napaskiak this week. On the first dip net opening, a total of three boats were counted from Bethel on down river.

Surveyors have distributed 3 ASL kits to date this year.



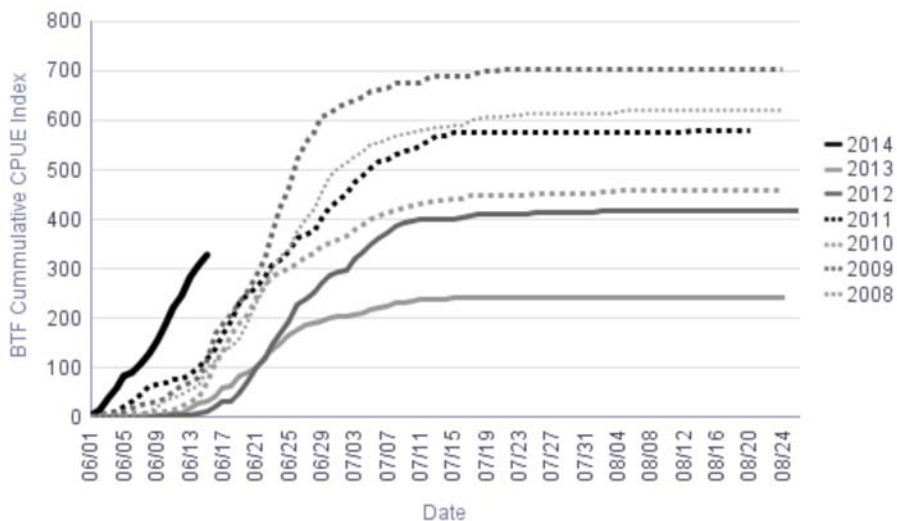
## Chinook Salmon Cumulative CPUE Index, Bethel Test Fishery

### Bethel Test Fishery Chinook Salmon Cumulative CPUE Index

**\*\*2014 data are PRELIMINARY and not comparable to previous years due to subsistence fishing restrictions. \*\***

Date	CPUE						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
06/07	4	24	9	47	1	0	106
06/08	10	28	9	63	1	2	129
06/09	20	33	10	67	2	3	157
06/10	36	40	11	70	4	5	190
06/11	40	52	15	75	5	6	220
06/12	46	62	21	78	5	7	245
06/13	56	70	32	88	5	18	282
06/14	63	80	40	102	6	27	306
06/15	96	113	71	117	10	31	328
06/16	115	170	110	137	23	43	
06/17	135	188	128	166	32	60	
06/18	142	208	166	193	33	64	
06/19	160	232	191	230	49	82	
06/20	195	255	208	248	73	92	
06/21	231	285	242	263	102	102	
06/22	263	320	265	283	118	123	
06/23	299	370	283	309	147	135	
06/24	324	426	294	317	168	149	
06/25	340	463	299	335	192	167	
06/26	375	522	311	363	228	177	

Bethel Test Fishery, Chinook Salmon Cumulative CPUE



#### Resulting escapement relative to New Kuskokwim River SEG (65,000 - 120,000)

2008 - Achieved (+) no restrictions

2009 - Achieved (+) no restrictions

2010 - Not Achieved (-) late tributary restrictions

2011 - Achieved (+) 15 days restrictions, minor reduction to subsistence harvest

2012 - Achieved (+) 35 days restrictions, significant reduction to subsistence harvest

2013 - Not Achieved (-) tributary restrictions and late main stem restrictions, significant reduction to subsistence harvest



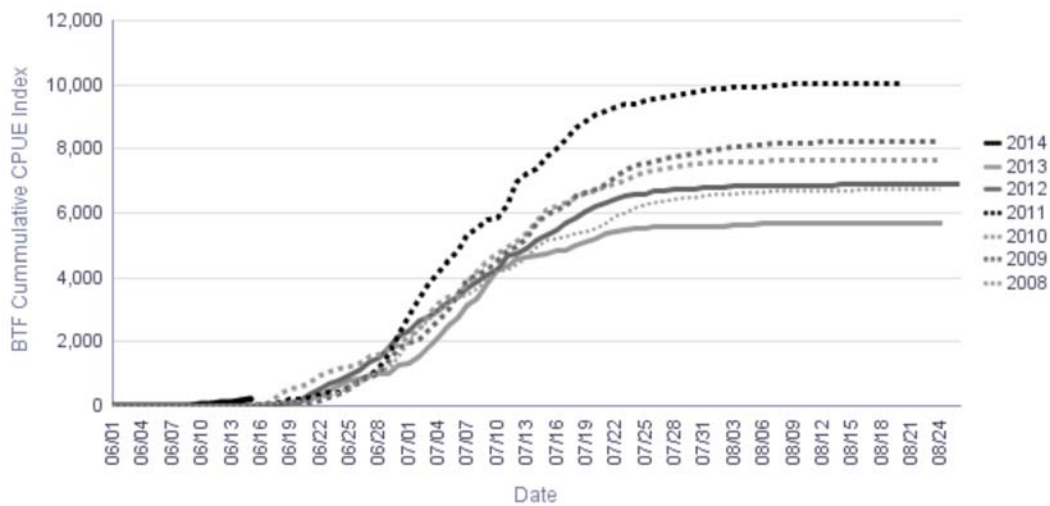
## Chum Salmon Cumulative CPUE Index, Bethel Test Fishery

### Bethel Test Fishery Chum Salmon Cumulative CPUE Index

**\*\*2014 data are PRELIMINARY and not comparable to previous years due to subsistence fishing restrictions. \*\***

Date	CPUE						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
06/07	0	4	7	3	3	0	19
06/08	6	5	7	6	3	0	24
06/09	9	8	7	12	3	0	36
06/10	9	8	10	18	8	0	57
06/11	12	8	10	23	8	0	72
06/12	18	11	16	23	8	0	101
06/13	18	14	27	31	16	4	121
06/14	21	20	33	40	24	4	164
06/15	42	41	52	61	24	13	231
06/16	67	69	87	64	27	36	
06/17	81	74	134	86	42	47	
06/18	95	90	387	136	57	68	
06/19	106	98	543	200	99	113	
06/20	161	104	589	242	171	136	
06/21	190	134	765	277	387	231	
06/22	264	148	955	372	553	309	
06/23	337	300	1,050	415	705	506	
06/24	437	396	1,164	434	798	664	
06/25	598	531	1,225	598	989	799	
06/26	754	782	1,340	770	1,110	875	

Bethel Test Fishery, Chum Salmon Cumulative CPUE



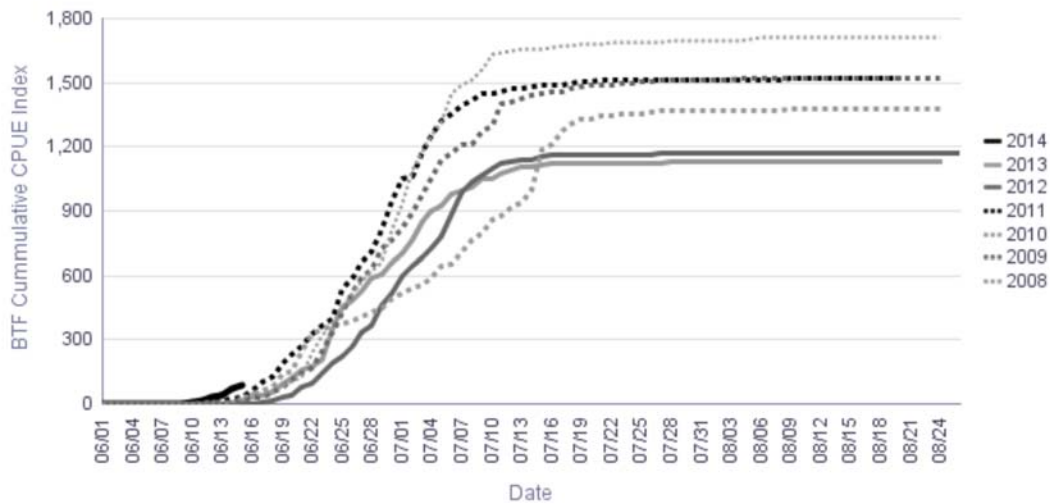
# Sockeye Salmon Cumulative CPUE Index, Bethel Test Fishery

## Bethel Test Fishery Sockeye Salmon Cumulative CPUE Index

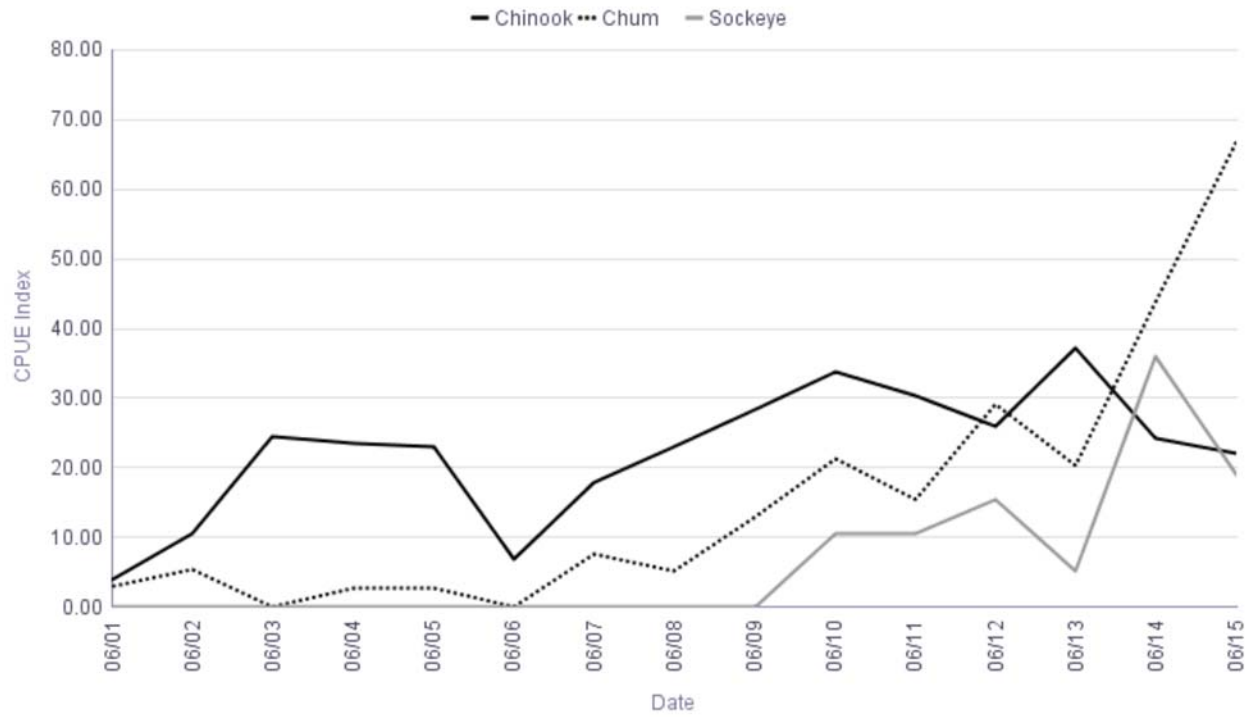
**\*\*2014 data are PRELIMINARY and not comparable to previous years due to subsistence fishing restrictions. \*\***

Date	CPUE						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
06/07	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
06/08	0	1	0	4	0	0	0
06/09	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
06/10	0	4	0	7	0	0	10
06/11	0	7	0	10	0	0	20
06/12	0	10	3	13	0	0	35
06/13	3	13	6	16	0	2	40
06/14	6	13	6	25	0	5	75
06/15	35	15	21	34	0	14	93
06/16	46	30	47	63	3	36	
06/17	49	33	66	103	12	44	
06/18	63	61	85	127	15	54	
06/19	88	85	143	192	32	99	
06/20	103	112	150	233	45	120	
06/21	129	145	252	275	83	158	
06/22	238	170	324	327	94	175	
06/23	322	250	348	366	146	208	
06/24	382	339	367	401	194	352	
06/25	456	428	375	544	225	455	
06/26	519	527	394	587	269	485	

Bethel Test Fishery, Sockeye Salmon Cumulative CPUE



Bethel Test Fishery  
Daily CPUE  
2014  
All Species



## Lower River Tagging

**Chinook      Chum      Sockeye      Coho**

Caught Tagged

year to date	32	30	0	1	0
6/3	4	4	0	0	0
6/4	1	1	0	0	0
6/5	0	0	0	0	0
6/6	2	1	0	0	0
6/7	Weather Day				
6/8	3	3	0	0	0
6/9	7	6	0	0	0
6/10	1	1	0	0	0
6/11	2	2	0	1	0
6/12	7	7	0	0	0
6/13	2	2	0	0	0
6/14	3	3	0	0	0
6/15	5	5	0	0	0
6/16					
6/17					

## Kalskag Tagging

**Chinook      Chum      Sockeye      Coho**

Caught Tagged

year to date	24	23	8	0	0
6/5	4	4	2	0	0
6/6	1	1	1	0	0
6/7	4	4	1	0	0
6/8	1	1	0	0	0
6/9	3	3	2	0	0
6/10	3	3	1	0	0
6/11	3	2	0	0	0
6/12	4	4	0	0	0
6/13	Day Off				
6/14	1	1	1	0	0
6/15					
6/16					
6/17					

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



*Cora J. Campbell, Commissioner  
Jeff Regnart, Director*



Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
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Aaron Tiernan, Assistant Area Management Biologist  
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U.S. Department of Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Federal Subsistence Board  
Geoffrey L. Haskett, Regional Director  
Gene Peltola Jr., Asst.  
Regional Director Subsistence  
Brian McCaffery, Kuskokwim Area Inseason  
Manager  
Phone: (907) 543-3151  
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Date Issued: June 16, 2014

**Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Update #1  
Kuskokwim River Inseason Assessment and Run Status**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Bethel for subsistence salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

**Kuskokwim River King Salmon Forecast**

Recent low returns of Chinook salmon to the Kuskokwim River have resulted in failure to achieve escapement goals, and includes the lowest return on record in 2013. The 2014 forecast of 71,000–117,000 Chinook salmon means there would not be enough fish to meet the average annual subsistence harvest of approximately 84,000 Chinook salmon normally taken on the Kuskokwim River. This normal subsistence harvest would severely deplete the run and the drainage-wide escapement goal (65,000–120,000) would not be met again in 2014. Given consecutive years of low king salmon returns and non-achievement of escapement goals conservation measures are warranted.

**2014 Kuskokwim River Inseason Assessment**

The 2014 Chinook salmon run timing in the Kuskokwim River is earlier than recent years. The early break up along the river, warm temperatures, and reports from other areas of Alaska (Yukon River, and others) all agree that the salmon run is likely coming in earlier. Early run timing, the forecast of a poor Chinook salmon run, and the fact that subsistence fishing is being restricted at the beginning of the run for the first time, means that managers must be cautious when interpreting inseason information to assure achievement of escapement goals.

The main source of information used to manage the fishery inseason is the Bethel Test Fishery (BTF). This test fishery takes place in the Kuskokwim River just upstream of Bethel, and has been operated there using the same methods since 1984. This project produces an index of the total run passing Bethel, and has been shown to have a relationship with the total run of Chinook salmon that has passed through the Bethel area annually. In a year with typical subsistence harvest (~40,000 Chinook salmon below BTF) the BTF value on each day is comparable with other years on the same day. This is because BTF operation and harvest have been relatively stable in past years, and this consistency allows managers to tell if the run is higher or lower than other years based on the BTF value on a particular day. However because of the changes in harvest this year, evaluation of run timing and total run size is much more difficult.

This year, BTF started operations on May 27<sup>th</sup>, which is five days earlier than other years. This was done because of the expectation of the early run, and we wanted to be able to verify that Chinook salmon were passing at that point. These test fishing values prior to June 1, were used to help confirm that run timing was early, but the numbers are not included in the total season BTF CPUE. Adding the early information would make comparisons with other years impossible, because all the other years start on June 1, so for meaningful comparison, we must compare the same timeframe.

The reduction of harvest below Bethel has resulted in more fish passing Bethel at this point in time than any other year on record. As of June 16, 2014, the cumulative BTF Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) for Chinook salmon is 335. This is much higher than the 2008-2013 average of 74 for the same date. This is a positive result, so far; however it is difficult to evaluate what the total run size might be. To interpret this we need to know how much of the run is left to come. Our best approximation is that the midpoint of the run this year was around June 13, which is several days earlier than the average. This uncertainty in where we are in the run causes some hesitation, because in other years where the run timing has been extremely early, the run also ends early and very quickly. Again, our preseason planning with fishermen and the Kuskokwim River Working Group, is to manage conservatively this year to ensure achieving escapement goals.

Chum and sockeye salmon are starting to show up in greater numbers, which is also identified with the BTF. Currently cumulative CPUE for chum salmon is 237, which is much higher than the recent average of 38, and for sockeye salmon the cumulative to date is 97, which is also higher than the recent average of 17. The reduction of harvest is likely resulting in an increase in these values relative to previous years as well, so interpretation of how large these runs are is also a difficult to evaluate.

One thing that remains consistent at BTF is the numbers of each species relative to one another. This doesn't change because of the reduction of harvest. If the Chinook number is larger than the chum number on a given day it means there are more Chinook than chum salmon. The most recent daily CPUE for June 15<sup>th</sup> was 22-Chinook; 19-sockeye; 67-chum. Therefore, we are observing an increase in chum and sockeye, which is allowing managers to consider fishing opportunity for chum and sockeye, while remaining conservative on Chinook salmon harvest.

All Bethel Test Fishery numbers can be found online at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareakuskokwim.salmon#/fishcounts>

### Summary

- Bethel Test Fishery numbers in 2014 are not directly comparable to previous years.
- The Chinook salmon run is early, but we do not yet know how strong the run is.
- In past years, early runs ended early and quickly.

- Because our primary goal is to meet escapement, fishery managers are being cautious in drawing conclusions about the overall strength of this year's Chinook salmon run.
- Given the fishing power of the Kuskokwim River subsistence fleet, even a short opening with 6" gear during the peak of the Chinook salmon run could prevent tens of thousands of fish from reaching the spawning grounds and undo all the hard work and sacrifice subsistence users have endured this year to ensure escapements are met.
- Increasing numbers of chum and sockeye relative to Chinook salmon in recent days indicate that restrictions on salmon harvests *may* be able to be relaxed in the near future.

## **Assessment Projects**

### **Lower Kuskokwim River Chinook Salmon Tagging**

In an effort to understand the migration speed of Chinook salmon through the lower Kuskokwim River, ADF&G is conducting a new pilot project below Johnson River. This project uses 7.5" & 8" drift gillnets to capture and live release Chinook salmon with tags attached to monitor their migration upriver. As of June 13<sup>th</sup>, the crew has tagged 22 Chinook salmon.

These fish are identifiable by a plastic tag attached to their back, and a metal antennae coming out of their mouth. If you find one of these tagged fish, please call the number on the plastic tag, and you will be entered into a monthly cash drawing of \$200, and a seasonal cash drawing of \$500.

### **Kalskag Area Fishwheel /Drift Gillnet Tagging; ADF&G, KNA**

Similar to other years this project has operated, we cooperating with Kuskokwim Native Association to tag Chinook salmon using fish wheels and drift gillnets near Kalskag. Tagged fish that are later recovered at weir projects, allow for ADF&G to estimate the total abundance of Chinook salmon in the middle and upper Kuskokwim River. Currently the crew has tagged 18 Chinook salmon.

These fish are identifiable by a plastic tag attached to their back, and a metal antennae coming out of their mouth. If you find one of these tagged fish, please call the number on the plastic tag, and you will be entered into a monthly cash drawing of \$200, and a seasonal cash drawing of \$500.

### **Kuskokwim River Sonar Investigation**

In early July, ADF&G staff will survey the lower Kuskokwim River from the Kwethluk "Y" to Johnson River looking for potential sites for a main stem sonar site. We will identify possible sites, and briefly test sonar systems in these locations to see if the technology is able to work.

### **Kwethluk River Weir; USFWS**

This weir is located on the Kwethluk River and monitors salmon passage to spawning areas, as well as serving as a recapture site for tagged Chinook salmon. This weir is currently being installed. High Waters have delayed installation, and operations are expected to start once water levels receded.

### **Tuluksak River Weir; USFWS**

This weir is located in the Tuluksak River drainage and monitors salmon passage to spawning areas, as well as serving as a recapture site for tagged Chinook salmon. This project will be installed towards the end of June.

Salmon River Weir; ADF&G, KNA

This weir is located in the Aniak River drainage and monitors salmon passage to spawning areas, as well as serving as a recapture site for tagged Chinook salmon. This project is planned for installation starting June 18<sup>th</sup>.

George River Weir; ADF&G, KNA

This weir is located in the George River drainage and monitors salmon passage to spawning areas, as well as serving as a recapture site for tagged Chinook salmon. This project is currently being installed, and operations are expected to start this week.

Tatlawiksuk River Weir; ADF&G, KNA

This weir is located in the Tatlawiksuk River drainage and monitors salmon passage to spawning areas, as well as serving as a recapture site for tagged Chinook salmon. This project has been installed and the first day of operations was June 14<sup>th</sup>.

Kogruklu River Weir; ADF&G

This weir is located in the Holitna River drainage and monitors salmon passage to spawning areas, as well as serving as a recapture site for tagged Chinook salmon. The crew is set for departure to this site on June 16<sup>th</sup>, and operations are planned to start June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**For additional information concerning this news release:**

**ADF&G:** Aaron Poetter in Bethel 907-543-2709 or Aaron Tiernan 907-543-2331

**USFWS:** Brian McCaffery in Bethel 907-543-1014



**Amended Short Term Strategy  
Summary  
June 13, 2014**

***Background:***

For the record, after the recent meeting of Yupiit Nation Tribal Forum on Subsistence Fisheries on April 30, May 1, 2014 meeting, the Yupiit Nation adopted a short term strategy with its constituents of harvesting 5,000 Chinook salmon to obviate this possibility of civil disobedience before it happens.

***Revised Proposed Solution:***

The current run-strength estimate for the Chinook salmon is 90,000 plus or minus 20,000. The key to resolving any potential conflict such as fishermen exercising civil disobedience, as determined by Yupiit Nation rest with the “plus or minus 20,000” fish in the forecast. Accordingly, it is now the position of Yupiit Nation to demand the Federal Government U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management set aside right off the top 8,000 Chinook salmon to be allocated to the Federally Qualified Users determined eligible under the recent 804 analysis performed by the Office of Subsistence Management and adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board. Yupiit Nation proposes this agreement to be executed through an “Umbrella Agreement” between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Yupiit Nation representing the Federally Recognized Users determined eligible under the 804 analysis. This agreement will result in the following positive outcome:

1. First it will reduce the likely-hood, if not obviate, protest fishing or Civil Disobedient for harvesting Chinook salmon for subsistence purposes.
2. It will be a “win, win” situation for the USFWS and Federally recognized Tribes whereby execution of the cooperative agreement for the co-management of the allocated fish will work for the benefit of the government, in that it will keep the government from getting involved in direct conflict with Federally Recognized Tribes
3. It will be a “win, win” situation for the Federally Recognized Tribes, where the harvesting, distribution of fish by elders in each village and the rules for harvesting, distribution will be performed by tribal enforcement officers.
4. Harvesting of Chinook salmon under this allocation system will also be considered as part and partial to “Tribal Test Fishery” where the essential biological data will be gathered and made available to USFWS in-season manager. This will augment the anticipated only one (1) test fishery in Bethel which too many tribal members is considered inadequate to test the run-strength of the Chinook Salmon for 2014 for fishing season.

***Justification:***

The following is the justification for this proposal:

1. The Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission is the federally recognized competent authority in the State of Washington to manage the harvest of salmon species under the Boldt Decision. The Commission performed all of the management functions that include in part: research of stock status and trends, allocation, promulgation of regulation and enforcement in the harvest of salmon in their jurisdiction for subsistence uses. The Commission have adopted a minimum of 10 per cent rule harvest guideline for subsistence uses and they do not exceed that in any manner in their harvest of the particular salmon species. This harvest guideline has worked and has not led to a “point of diminishing returned” of salmon species they harvest. This pales in comparison to the initial harvest guideline of 65 per cent of salmon species adopted by the State of Alaska fisheries managers when the state started commercial fishing in the Kuskokwim River some 40 years ago.

2. Ten (10) percent of 90,000 is 9,000 Chinooks and our proposal of 8,000 is below the 10 percent of the harvest guideline that is used by the Commission in the State of Washington
3. The test fishery data as reported by the two competent authorities, the State and Federal in-season managers looks promising and we submit to you that harvesting 8,000 will not lead to a complete crash of the Chinook salmon in the Kuskokwim River.
4. Last, we have ears that can hear. What we are hearing from the streets and villages is: They are ready to fish. We may not be able to stop them. We do believe that the approval of our proposal will go a long way to: 1) avert any civil disobedience activities on the river. 2) Most important it will keep peace and 3) will lead to a first step in trusting atmosphere between the Government and its constituents who are the trustees under the special relationship between the United States Government and members of the federally recognized tribes in Yukon Kuskokwim Delta.

We also recommend to the AVCP Convention to hold a Special Convention of the 56 Tribes to discuss the Yukon and Kuskokwim Inter Tribal Commission resolution that was submitted to individual tribes for their consideration. It will address some long term solutions in a governance structure of the region. Most importantly, it will unite our region once and for all.

We also recommend that we start internship between the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to prepare the management of our fisheries in our region. We need to prepare our young people. We not only want to help manage our fisheries, we want to help in managing our water fowl and wild life resources.

We will accept the offer by the NWIFC to collaborate fisheries with their scientists, biologists, and other staff to analyze data from our rivers and to share resources to help protect our way of life and resources.

We recommend that we mitigate the existing beaver dams and help recover our habitat in our head waters. We need to get funding to remove these dams and also to start making beaver hats, mittens and for possible sale of beaver meat.

Yupiiit Nation demand on going Government to Government consultation with the Department of the Interior on Fish and Wildlife Resources.

We want to have one management system for the entire river so all will have one set of rules to eliminate confusion and disunity among our users of the resources. Example, cannot drift in Federal waters with 4" nets but can drift net on state waters.

Again, co management between Tribal, Federal, and State is the key under a formal negotiated agreement.

Traditional knowledge and community engagement on ongoing basis is essential to a working in cooperation and not in confrontation mode for all in management of our natural resources. Addressing impacts of climate change is the key.

We will continue the Yupiiit Nation Tribal Forums for ongoing conversations on matters of great importance.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Williams, Chief, Yupiiit Nation

*\*\*Letter received by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG) on June 5, 2014.  
Mary Sattler was appointed to the KRSMWG Lower River Subsistence alternate seat on June 5, 2014*

Mary Sattler

P.O. Box 1129

Bethel, AK 99559

(907) 543-2479 or 545-4954

May 20, 2014

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Lamont Albertson, Beverly Hoffman co-chairmen of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group

P.O. Box 1467

Bethel, AK 99559

Dear Lamont and Beverly,

I am expressing my interest in serving as a Kuskokwim salmon subsistence harvester on the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group for the 2014 season.

I began commercial fishing on the Kuskokwim River in 1979 as a helper. I held a helpers permit from 1979-1985. From 1986-1988 I had a commercial permit, which I sold in 1989. From 1986 until 1990 I also either helped or captained a commercial fishing tendering boat on the Kuskokwim.

I worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game from 1992-1996 as a fisheries technician working on the Bethel Test Fish under Doug Molyneaux.

In 1999 I worked for the Orutsararmuit Native Council on the first year of their in season subsistence harvest surveys.

I have spent numerous summers subsistence harvesting and processing salmon, most recently on Steamboat Slough, but before that on the Kwethluk River.

Thank you for your consideration of my expression of interest,



Mary Sattler

ONC Tribal