

# 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: **November 18, 2020** Time: **9:00am**

Place: **Teleconference**

Time Called to Order:

Chair:

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:

KRITFC:

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:** *Non-Working Group Members*

### CONTINUING BUSINESS

- **End of Season Subsistence Reports: Lowest River, Lower River, Middle River, Upper River, Headwaters**
- **Kuskokwim River Sonar (ONC/ADF&G)**
- **2020 Preliminary Kuskokwim River Season Summary (ADF&G)**
  - **Assessment Overview**
  - **Subsistence Overview**
- **Overview of the three-system index (Kuskokwim, Yukon, Unalakleet) of inriver adult Chinook salmon run sizes and how it applies to Bering Sea bycatch**
- **Update on 2020 Chinook salmon run reconstruction and 2021 preseason forecast**
- **2021 Board of Fish update**
- **2021 Chum salmon management**

### WORKING GROUP BUSINESS:

- **Letters of Support for OSM projects**
- **Meeting attendance and vacant seats**

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

**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.**
- **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.

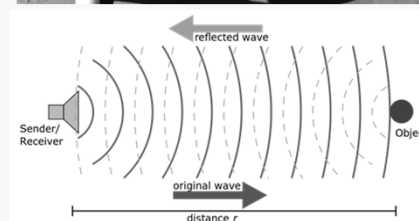
**Thank you,  
Nick Smith and Ben Gray  
Working Group Coordinators**

# KUSKOKWIM RIVER SONAR

Avery Hoffman

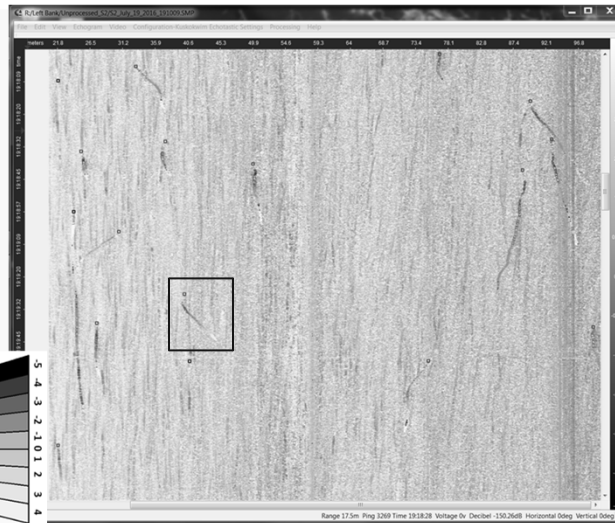
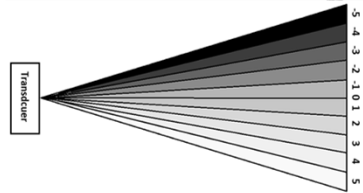
## HOW SONAR WORKS

- Sonar emits sound waves
- Sound waves reflect off objects
  - Fish
  - The bottom
  - Sticks
  - Boats
- The sonar receives reflected waves



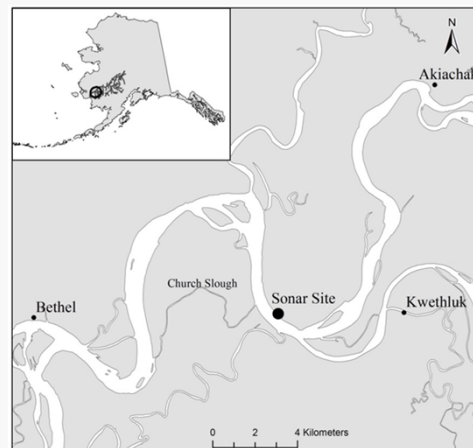
## HOW DO WE COUNT FISH?

- Distance
- Direction
  - Upriver
  - Downriver



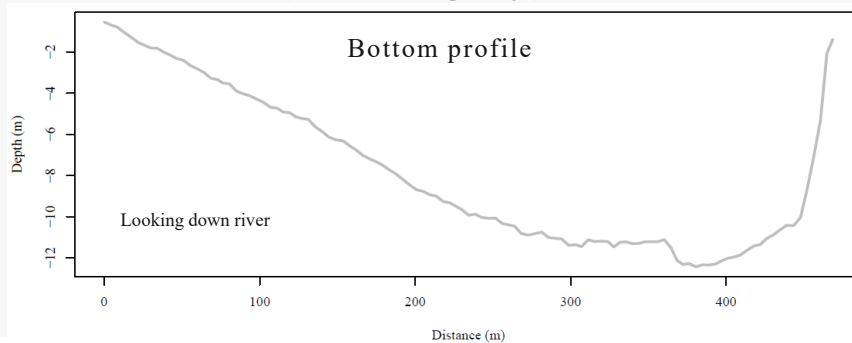
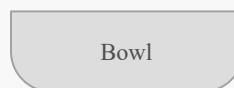
## SITE SELECTION METHODS PART I

- Satellite imagery
  - Single channel
  - Lower river
  - No sandbars
- Consistent between years
  - Avoid areas of quickly changing bottom

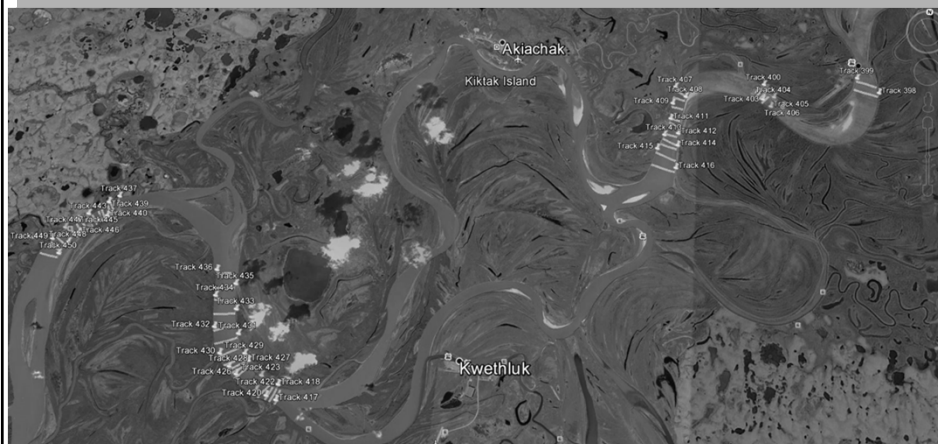


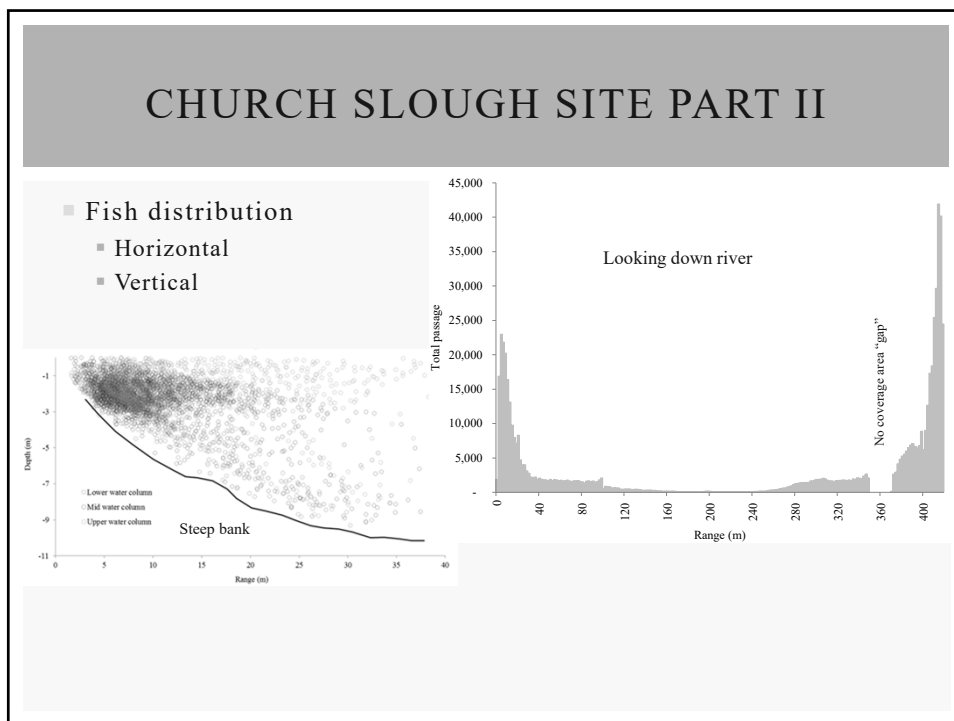
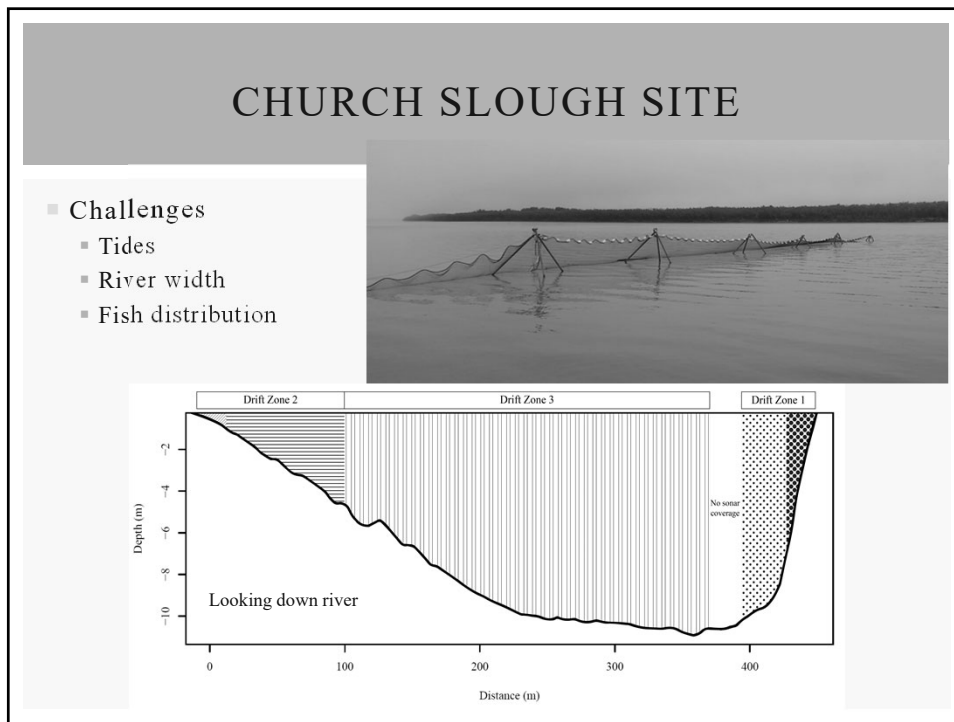
## SITE SELECTION METHODS PART II

- Bottom profiles
  - Concave
    - Reduces “shadows”
  - Asymmetrical (avoid even bowls)
    - Fish distribution (bank-oriented passage)



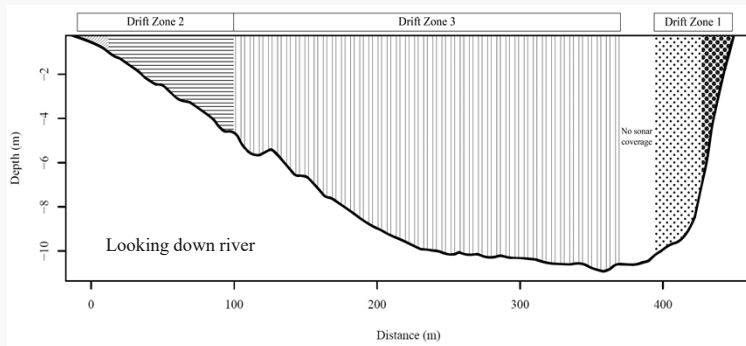
## SITE SURVEYS (2014 & 2015)



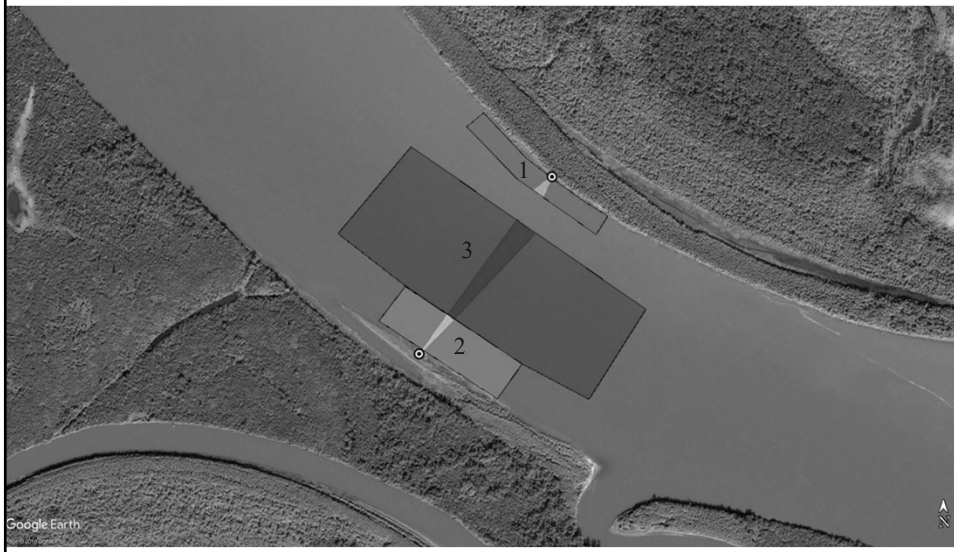


## FISH COUNTING

- 5 areas (horizontal ranges of sonar)
  - LS1, LS2, LS3, RS2, and RS1
- Counting 30-minute files
- Total daily passage by area



## FISHING ZONES

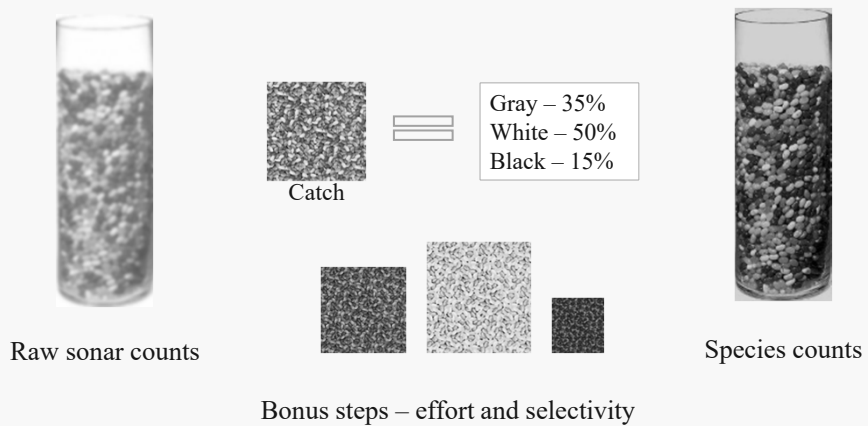


## DRIFT GILLNETS

- Mesh size
  - 2.75"
  - 4"
  - 5.25"
  - 6.5"
  - 7.5"
  - 8.5"
- Depth
  - ~13 feet
  - ~27 feet



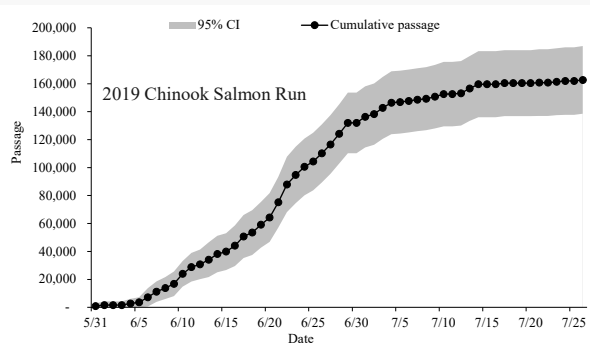
## APPLYING FISHING CATCH TO COUNTS





## DAILY AND CUMULATIVE ESTIMATES

- Daily passage
  - Sum of all species estimates by area
  - Cumulative passage
- 95% confidence intervals



## QUESTIONS?

Cooperatively created by the  
 Orutsararmiut Native Council  
 &  
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game

## **Advisory Announcement**

*For Immediate Release: October 15, 2020*

**Time: 11:59 a.m.**

**CONTACT: Nick Smith and Ben Gray**

**Kuskokwim Area Management Biologists**

**(907) 267-2379**

## **Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #15**

### **2020 Preliminary Kuskokwim Area Salmon Season Summary**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

#### **Kuskokwim Area Management**

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 and 5 Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.367).

#### **Kuskokwim River**

##### **Preseason Forecast**

The 2020 Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon forecast was for a range of 193,000–261,000 fish. A run of this magnitude was anticipated to support a full subsistence harvest and achieve the drainage-wide sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 65,000–120,000 fish. However, since this was the first encouraging Chinook salmon forecast in a decade, the Department’s intent was to take a precautionary management approach during the early part of the 2020 season, with short duration fishing periods, based on input from the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group).

##### **Inseason Subsistence Management**

Preseason management actions that were intended to achieve escapement goals included early season subsistence fishing closures, tributary closures, time and area restrictions, gillnet mesh size and length restrictions, and live release requirements. The Working Group voted to support these management actions.

An early season gillnet subsistence fishing closure (i.e., “front-end closure”) began on June 1, 2020 from the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River up to the Tuluksak River; June 3 from Tuluksak River up to the Yukon Delta Refuge Boundary at Aniak; June 9 from the Yukon Delta boundary at Aniak up to the Holitna River mouth; and upstream of Holitna River mouth beginning June 11. With the closure came additional restrictions, including tributary closures and required live release of Chinook salmon captured in selective gears. During the front-end closure there were three 24-hr set gillnet opportunities with 6-inch or less mesh to allow subsistence fishers time to harvest non-salmon species. These openings occurred on June 3, 6, and 9.

Between June 1 and July 1, a Federal Special Action closed the Kuskokwim Chinook salmon fishery to non-Federally qualified users within the boundary of the YDNWR. During the Special Action, USFWS offered 6-inch setnet opportunities running concurrently to the 6-inch opportunities offered by the Department on June 3, 6, and 9. Additionally, USFWS offered four 12-hour gillnet fishing periods on June 12, 15, 18, and 24 with 6-inch or less mesh, 25 fathoms in length above the Johnson River mouth and 50 fathoms in length below the Johnson

River mouth. On June 18, USFWS opened those waters between the Kalskag Bluff to the YDNWR boundary at Aniak to subsistence fishing until further notice with 6-inch or less mesh, 25 fathoms in length, gill nets. In coordination with the USFWS inseason manager, the Department concurrently offered the same management actions within waters of the YDNWR to provide Alaska Wildlife Troopers with enforceable regulations. The three setnet and four drift gillnet opportunities offered by USFWS resulted in an estimated harvest of 23,210 Chinook salmon, 6,710 sockeye salmon, and 5,590 chum salmon by Federally qualified users within the YDNWR, excluding the section between Akiak and Aniak (Decossas 2020).

On June 12, ADF&G opened Section 4 (from the refuge boundary at Aniak to the Holitna River mouth) and Section 5 (Holitna River mouth to headwaters) to subsistence fishing until further notice with 6-inch or less mesh, 25 fathoms in length, gill nets. These sections are located outside the YDNWR boundary and not subject to the Federal Special Action.

Inriver abundance of chum and sockeye salmon began to outnumber Chinook salmon abundance in the lower Kuskokwim River on June 27. However, inseason assessment indicated that the Chinook and chum salmon runs were materializing below expectations, and with late run timing. On July 7, after chum and sockeye became the clear dominate species and inseason projections indicated that the drainage-wide Chinook salmon escapement goal and the chum salmon escapement goal on the Kogrukuk River would be achieved, ADF&G opened sections 1–3 of the Kuskokwim River (YDNWR boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River upstream to the boundary at Aniak) to 6-inch or less mesh, 25 fathoms in length, gillnets above the Johnson River mouth, with 50 fathom in length gillnets being allowed downstream of the Johnson River mouth. With the issuance of the July 7 Emergency Order, the entirety of the mainstem Kuskokwim River was open to subsistence fishing. The Working Group voted to support these management actions.

Mainstem gear restrictions were rescinded on August 1. Tributary restrictions were rescinded August 31. The tributary restrictions were kept in place beyond the mainstem restrictions for the purpose of conservation while Chinook salmon were on their spawning grounds.

Postseason subsistence harvest surveys are presently being conducted. An assessment of subsistence salmon harvest in 2020 will not be available until after postseason harvest surveys have been completed, data have been analyzed, and preliminary harvest estimates are produced. Final subsistence harvest estimates will be available in Spring 2021.

### **2020 District 1 Commercial Fishery**

There were no commercial buyers or processors in the Kuskokwim River. Therefore, commercial fishing opportunities were limited to individuals registered with the Department as catcher/sellers who had secured their own markets. A total of 14 commercial openers (directed at sockeye, chum, and coho salmon) were provided in District 1 of the Kuskokwim River between July 19 and August 21. Due to the small number of participants in these openers, salmon harvest was well below the historical average and State of Alaska confidentiality requirements prohibits release of the harvest data.

### **Inseason Assessment Overview**

In addition to recommendations and input from the Working Group, ADF&G mainly utilized two lower Kuskokwim River assessment projects to inform inseason management decisions: the Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) and Kuskokwim River Sonar. The BTF provided information about salmon species catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) and run timing, while the sonar provided daily passage estimates for salmon and other species.

### **Bethel Test Fishery**

BTF operated May 26–31 (early season) and June 1–August 24 (regular season). An hour after each posted high tide, a series of drifts were conducted to determine daily CPUE of salmon species. The area fished has not changed since its inception in 1984; however, gillnet mesh material changed beginning 2008. From the start of the early season to July 15, BTF used 8” and 5 3/8” mesh gillnets (each 50 fathoms in length) for assessment purposes.

After July 15, only the 5 3/8" mesh gillnet was used because most of the Chinook salmon run had migrated upriver past the project site and the primary focus of assessment shifted to sockeye, chum, and coho salmon.

### **Kuskokwim River Sonar**

Kuskokwim River Sonar operated from June 1–August 25. The sonar provides timely information about the abundance of salmon and whitefish species as they migrate up the Kuskokwim River. The Kuskokwim River Sonar program also operates a test fishery and uses a series of six gillnets (8 1/2", 7 1/2", 6 1/2", 5 1/4", 4", and 2 3/4" mesh) for species apportionment; i.e., the proportion of each species captured in the test fishery each day. The sonar program generates daily species-specific abundance estimates using species apportionment and sonar counts. The sonar does not provide total abundance or escapement estimates since some escapement occurs below the sonar and harvest occurs both downriver and upriver from the sonar.

### **CPUE, Run Timing, and Passage Estimates**

#### **Chinook Salmon**

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE at the BTF was 487, which was similar to the 2008–2019 average of 575. The estimated midpoint of the Chinook salmon run was June 26 (4 days later than average).

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage estimate at the sonar was 106,152 fish (95% CI = 90,231–122,073 fish).

#### **Sockeye Salmon**

The cumulative sockeye salmon CPUE at the BTF was 1,052, which was below the 2008–2019 average of 1,839. The estimated midpoint of the sockeye salmon run was July 4 (5 days later than average).

The cumulative sockeye salmon passage estimate at the sonar was 575,334 fish (95% CI = 509,693–640,975).

#### **Chum Salmon**

The cumulative chum salmon CPUE at the BTF was 1,440, which was below the 2008–2019 average of 6,657. The estimated midpoint of the chum salmon run was July 9 (4 days later than average).

The cumulative chum salmon passage estimate at the sonar was 76,323 fish (95% CI = 55,945–96,701).

#### **Coho Salmon**

The coho salmon run was still progressing after BTF and Kuskokwim River Sonar ceased operations on August 24 and August 25, respectively. Therefore, cumulative CPUE and passage estimates are incomplete. Coho escapement at the weir projects is a better indicator of the 2020 run than BTF or Kuskokwim River Sonar. That in mind, as of August 24, the cumulative CPUE for coho salmon at BTF was 1,820, which was below the 2008–2019 average of 3,116. Cumulative passage for coho salmon at the sonar on August 25 was 165,546 fish (95% CI = 129,349–201,743). This was the first year that the Kuskokwim River Sonar operated into late August. Prior year operations ended in late July.

#### **Whitefish**

Five species of whitefish were captured by the sonar's test fishery nets (least and Bering cisco, broad and humpback whitefish, and sheefish). The cumulative cisco (least and Bering) passage estimate at the Kuskokwim River Sonar was 1,212,338 fish (95% CI = 1,109,057–1,315,619). The cumulative broad whitefish passage estimate at the sonar was 8,690 fish (95% CI = 1,970–15,410). The cumulative humpback whitefish passage estimate at the sonar was 632,383 fish (95% CI 540,788–721,978). The cumulative sheefish passage estimate at the sonar was 8,207 fish (95% CI = 3,093–13,321).

### **Salmon Escapement – Kuskokwim River Drainage**

#### **Chinook Salmon**

The preliminary Kuskokwim River total run estimate is 116,000 Chinook salmon (95% CI = 95,000–143,000) and an estimated 88,000 Chinook salmon (95% CI = 66,000–114,000) escaped Kuskokwim River fisheries, which met the drainage-wide SEG of 65,000–120,000 fish. Preliminary data suggests that all weir-based escapement goals for Chinook salmon assessed in 2020 were met within the Kuskokwim River drainage (Table 1). The established SEG range of 4,800–8,800 fish at Kogruklu River weir was met (5,645 fish), as was the SEG range

of 1,800–3,300 fish at George River (2,418 fish). Five of the six tributaries with aerial survey SEGs were assessed in 2020. Three of the five aerial survey SEGs were met (Table 2). All aerial surveys were flown under optimal or good survey conditions.

### **Sockeye Salmon**

Overall, sockeye salmon escapement was mixed throughout the drainage with above average lake-type sockeye escapement and below average river-type sockeye salmon escapement (Table 3). The preliminary Kogruklu River weir escapement of 9,923 sockeye salmon met the established SEG range of 4,400–17,000 fish. The Telaquana weir observed the third highest escapement of sockeye salmon since the project was established in 2010 with a count of 177,509 fish (Table 3).

### **Chum Salmon**

Chum salmon escapement at all weir projects was weak but adequate to meet escapement needs (Table 4). The preliminary escapement count of 19,032 fish at the Kogruklu River weir met the established SEG range of 15,000–49,000 fish. Preliminary data indicate that the low escapements at Kuskokwim River assessment projects are due to poor returns of age-4 (2016 spawning event) chum salmon.

### **Coho Salmon**

Coho salmon escapement was evaluated at two middle Kuskokwim River weirs in 2020. The George River weir coho salmon escapement of 21,426 fish was near the most recent 10-year average (2010–2019) of 21,511 fish (Table 5). The Kogruklu River weir experience numerous out of operation events in early September, during the peak of the run, and at this time the escapement goal cannot be assessed. The weir was removed early due to high water in mid-September. Research staff are still determining if estimates of missed passage can be calculated during the out-of-operation periods. Observed escapement at the weir was 9,856 fish and this number is a minimum escapement count since estimates of missed passage are not included.

## **Kuskokwim Bay**

### **District 4 (Quinhagak)**

This year marked the first commercial salmon fishery in District 4 since 2015. The District 4 commercial fishing season began on June 29 and ended on September 2. There were 28 commercial fishing periods (Table 6). The commercial fishing season was delayed from the normal start of June 15 and subsistence mesh size was restricted to 6-inch or less between June 1 and July 15 to allow for Chinook salmon escapement.

The 2020 season saw the fewest permits fished in District 4 on record. Since 1980, an average of 229 permit holders (range 114–409) fished per year in District 4. During the 2020 season, a total of 67 individual permit holders made at least one recorded landing in the commercial fishery (Table 7). On average, 35 permit holders participated per period (range 18–49; Table 6).

A total of 4,345 Chinook, 113,849 sockeye, 29,374 coho, and 6,531 chum salmon were commercially harvested in District 4 (Table 7). Catch rates during the 2020 season for sockeye salmon were the highest on record (compared to available standardized catch rate data; 1981 to 2015), while Chinook, chum, and coho salmon catch rates were below average. Sockeye salmon harvest was the second highest since 1960 and approximately 56% above the most recent 10-year average (2006–2015; Table 7). Chinook, chum, and coho salmon harvests were below the most recent 10-year averages (2006–2015). Chinook salmon harvest ranked third lowest since 1967, while chum salmon harvest was the lowest observed since 1967. Coho salmon harvest was the lowest observed since 2013.

Chinook, sockeye, chum, and coho salmon were purchased for \$0.55, \$0.55, \$0.45, and \$0.15 per pound, respectively. Total exvessel value of the fishery was \$468,074, approximately 45% below the most recent 10-year (2006–2015) average value (Table 7).

## **District 4 Salmon Escapement**

An aerial survey was flown for the Kanektok River on August 13, which was outside of the standardized peak spawning abundance date range of July 17 to August 5. Therefore, counts are underestimates of spawning escapement. The Chinook salmon aerial survey SEG (range 3,900–12,000 fish) was achieved with a count of 4,405 fish, while the sockeye salmon aerial survey SEG (range 15,300–41,000 fish) was exceeded with a count of 52,886 fish (Table 8).

## **District 5 (Goodnews Bay)**

This year marked the first commercial salmon fishery in District 5 since 2015. The District 5 commercial fishing season began on June 29 and ended on September 2. There were 38 commercial fishing periods (Table 9). The commercial fishing season was delayed from the normal start of June 15 to allow for Chinook salmon escapement.

The 2020 season saw the fewest permits fished in District 5 on record. Since 1980, an average of 62 permit holders (range 24–125) fished per year in District 5. During the 2020 season, a total of 17 individual permit holders made at least one recorded landing in the commercial fishery. On average, five permit holders participated per period (range 1–11; Table 9).

A total of 442 Chinook, 28,859 sockeye, 10,928 coho, and 3,037 chum salmon were commercially harvested in District 5 (Table 10). Catch rates during the 2020 season were the second highest for sockeye salmon and the fourth highest for coho salmon. Chinook and chum salmon catch rates were below historical average. Numbers of salmon harvested were below the most recent 10-year averages (2006–2015) for each species. Chinook and chum salmon harvests were the third and fourth lowest on record since 1968, respectively. Sockeye salmon harvest in District 5 was ranked thirtieth out of the 48-year data set and coho salmon harvest was ranked fifteenth.

Chinook, sockeye, coho, and chum salmon were purchased for \$0.55, \$0.55, \$0.45, and \$0.15 per pound, respectively. Total exvessel value of the fishery was \$128,196, which was approximately 62% below the most recent 10-year (2006–2015) average value (Table 10).

## **District 5 Salmon Escapement**

The North Fork Goodnews River aerial survey was flown on August 3. The Chinook salmon aerial SEG of 640–3,300 fish was met with a count of 1,098 fish. The sockeye salmon SEG of 9,600–18,000 was exceeded with 55,110 fish counted (Table 11).

## **Literature Cited:**

Decossas, G. 2020. In-season Harvest and Effort Estimates for the 2020 Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fisheries During Block Openers. U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Bethel, AK.

**For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:**  
ADF&G: Nicholas Smith in Anchorage 907-267-2379 or Ben Gray 907-267-2303

Table 1.—Chinook salmon spawning weir escapement, Kuskokwim River drainage, Kuskokwim Management Area 2010–2020.

Year	Chinook Salmon Escapement					
	Kwethluk	George	Kogrukruk	Salmon (Aniak)	Takotna	Salmon (Pitka)
2010	1,716	1,500	5,160	a	183	a
2011	4,056	1,605	6,926	a	149	a
2012	b	2,362	b	b	238	a
2013	b	1,267	1,919	711	104	a
2014	3,191	2,988	3,726	1,722	a	a
2015	8,163	2,301	8,333	2,401	a	7,156
2016	b	2,218	7,034	b	a	6,371
2017	7,207	3,669	7,787	2,611	318	8,298
2018	b	3,322	6,292	2,252	205	5,354
2019	8,505	3,828	10,301	a	554	4,823
2020	<sup>c</sup> a	2,418	5,645	1,228	357	4,854
SEG	4,100– 7,500	1,800– 3,300	4,800– 8,800			
Average 2010–2019	5,473	2,506	6,386	1,939	250	6,400

<sup>a</sup> Weir did not operate.

<sup>b</sup> Historical run timing indicates that more than 40% of the run was missed; annual escapement was not determined.

<sup>c</sup> Preliminary numbers subject to change.

Table 2.—Chinook salmon spawning aerial survey index estimates, Kuskokwim River Drainage, Kuskokwim Management Area, 2010–2020.

Year	Kuskokwim River <sup>a</sup>												
	Lower		Middle						Upper				
	Kwethluk	Kisaralik	Aniak	Kipchuk	Salmon (Aniak)	Holokuk	Oskawalik	Holitna	Gagarayah	Cheeneetnuk	Bear (Pitka)	Salmon (Pitka)	Upper Pitka Fork
2010	b	235	b	b	b	108	b	587	62	b	75	135	67
2011	b	534	b	116	79	20	26	b	96	249	145	767	85
2012	b	610	b	193	49	9	51	b	178	229	b	670	b
2013	1,165	597	754	261	154	29	38	670	74	138	64	475	b
2014	b	622	3,201	1,220	497	80	200	1,785	359	340	b	1,865	b
2015	b	709	b	917	810	77	b	662	19	b	1,381	2,016	b
2016	b	622	718	898	b	100	47	1,157	135	217	580	1,578	b
2017	b	b	1,781	889	423	140	136	676	453	660	492	687	234
2018	b	584	1,534	1,123	441	162	b	980	438	565	550	1,399	471
2019	b	1,063	3,160	1,344	950	719	638	1,377	760	1,345	542	1,918	330
2020	721	350	1,264	723	269	99	169	854	b	419	321	1,150	160
Escapement Goal Range:		400– 1,200	1,200– 2,300		330– 1,200				300– 830	340– 1,300		470– 1,600	
Average 2010–2019		620	1,858	773	425	144	162	987	257	468	479	1,151	237

<sup>a</sup> Estimates are from aerial surveys conducted during peak spawning periods under 'good' or 'fair' survey conditions.

<sup>b</sup> Survey was either not flown or did not meet acceptable survey criteria.



Table 3.–Sockeye salmon spawning weir escapement, Kuskokwim River drainage, Kuskokwim Management Area 2010–2020.

Year	Sockeye Salmon Escapement				
	Kwethluk	Salmon (Aniak)	George	Kogrukuk	Telaquana
2010	4,336	a	113	13,306	71,932
2011	1,541	a	43	8,079	35,099
2012	a	950	79	a	23,002
2013	a	966	150	7,793	28,058
2014	3,880	934	156	6,479	24,292
2015	8,998	1,504	159	6,647	95,570
2016	20,495	310	2,807	20,108	82,710
2017	28,806	a	912	24,696	145,281
2018	a	2,537	1,615	21,343	197,368
2019	42,212	a	3,973	32,116	198,485
2020	<sup>b</sup> a	234	281	9,923	177,509
SEG				4,400–17,000	
Average 2010–2019	15,753	1,200	1,001	15,619	90,180

<sup>a</sup> Weir did not operate, or counts were incomplete.

<sup>b</sup> Preliminary numbers subject to change.

Table 4.—Chum salmon spawning weir escapement, Kuskokwim River drainage, Kuskokwim Management Area 2010–2020.

Year	Chum Salmon Escapement				
	Kwethluk	Salmon (Aniak)	George	Kogrukuk	Takotna
2010	18,919	a	26,187	63,612	3,995
2011	17,498	a	45,257	76,649	8,562
2012	a	a	33,277	a	6,039
2013	a	7,685	37,945	65,648	6,516
2014	17,942	2,777	17,183	30,697	a
2015	23,071	5,511	17,554	33,091	a
2016	22,914	1,691	19,469	45,234	a
2017	52,202	9,754	39,971	85,793	6,557
2018	a	18,770	48,915	52,937	6,007
2019	32,130	a	43,072	71,006	5,618
2020	<sup>b</sup> a	1,995	8,943	19,032	a
SEG				15,000– 49,000	
Average 2010–2019	26,382	7,698	32,883	58,296	6,185

<sup>a</sup> Project did not operate, or counts were incomplete.

<sup>b</sup> Preliminary numbers subject to change.

Table 5.—Coho salmon spawning weir escapement, Kuskokwim River drainage, Kuskokwim Management Area, 2010–2020.

Year	Coho Salmon Escapement		
	Kwethluk	George	Kogrukluk
2010	a	12,866	14,558
2011	a	31,900	21,950
2012	20,627	14,844	13,462
2013	a	14,823	23,800
2014	48,478	35,771	54,001
2015	32,124	35,790	32,900
2016	28,852	a	a
2017	55,722	25,338	a
2018	a	8,993	8,169
2019	34,561	13,277	16,470
2020	<sup>b</sup> a	21,426	9,856 <sup>c</sup>
SEG	>19,000		13,000– 28,000
Average 2010–2019	36,727	21,511	23,164

<sup>a</sup> Weir did not operate, or counts were incomplete.

<sup>b</sup> Preliminary numbers subject to change.

<sup>c</sup> Observed escapement only. No estimate of missed passed included; therefore, number presented is to be considered a minimum.

Table 6.—Commercial harvest by period in the District 4, Kuskokwim Bay, 2020.

Date	Permits Fished	Hours Fished	Permit Hours	Chinook		Sockeye		Coho		Chum	
				Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE
Jun 29	35	12	420	613	1.46	1,364	3.25	0	0	350	0.83
Jul 3	39	12	468	1125	2.4	2,618	5.59	0	0	424	0.91
Jul 8	39	12	468	568	1.21	5,822	12.4	0	0	569	1.22
Jul 10	46	12	552	530	0.96	7,286	13.2	0	0	625	1.13
Jul 13	44	12	528	329	0.62	10,613	20.1	0	0	1,021	1.93
Jul 15	46	12	552	274	0.5	11,908	21.6	0	0	593	1.07
Jul 17	47	12	564	258	0.46	12,217	21.7	0	0	478	0.85
Jul 19	33	12	396	151	0.38	9,111	23	0	0	441	1.11
Jul 21	48	12	576	144	0.25	10,928	19	0	0	433	0.75
Jul 23	49	12	588	144	0.24	11,849	20.2	7	0.01	367	0.62
Jul 25	47	12	564	90	0.16	9,777	17.3	18	0.03	368	0.65
Jul 27	32	12	384	29	0.08	5,834	15.2	17	0.04	158	0.41
Jul 29	26	12	312	28	0.09	4,278	13.7	42	0.13	147	0.47
Jul 31	25	12	300	26	0.09	4,146	13.8	109	0.36	154	0.51
Aug 6	33	12	396	12	0.03	1,678	4.24	586	1.48	103	0.26
Aug 8	25	12	300	4	0.01	1,062	3.54	682	2.27	65	0.22
Aug 10	30	12	360	3	0.01	822	2.28	1,025	2.85	55	0.15
Aug 12	27	12	324	5	0.02	688	2.12	1,077	3.32	46	0.14
Aug 14	28	12	336	4	0.01	432	1.29	2,268	6.75	29	0.09
Aug 17	40	12	480	6	0.01	546	1.14	3,838	8	34	0.07
Aug 19	41	12	492	1	0	358	0.73	3,197	6.5	26	0.05
Aug 21	31	12	372	1	0	149	0.4	3,097	8.33	14	0.04
Aug 23	27	12	324	0	0	95	0.29	2,469	7.62	7	0.02
Aug 25	36	12	432	0	0	124	0.29	2,684	6.21	3	0.01
Aug 27	31	12	372	0	0	51	0.14	1,618	4.35	1	0.01
Aug 29	28	12	336	0	0	39	0.12	2,582	7.68	9	0.03
Sept 1	26	12	312	0	0	37	0.12	2,655	8.51	9	0.03
Sept 2	18	12	216	0	0	17	0.08	1,403	6.5	2	0.01

Table 7.—Commercial salmon harvest District 4, Quinhagak, Kuskokwim Bay, 2006–2020.

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Chum	Value	Permits <sup>a</sup>
2006	19,184	106,308	26,831	39,151	\$551,182	132
2007	19,573	109,343	34,710	61,228	\$660,865	125
2008	13,812	69,743	94,257	57,033	\$750,731	146
2009	13,920	112,153	48,115	91,158	\$747,325	179
2010	14,230	138,362	13,690	106,610	\$1,655,321	241
2011	15,387	38,543	30,457	104,959	\$1,176,436	219
2012	6,675	37,688	31,214	61,140	\$824,435	179
2013	2,054	26,393	58,079	21,126	\$761,537	197
2014	2,265	58,879	52,317	14,563	\$858,638	194
2015	7,547	30,269	76,285	16,051	\$489,564	189
2020	4,345	113,849	29,374	6,531	\$468,074	67
Average 2006–2015	11,465	72,768	46,596	57,302	\$847,603	180

Note: No commercial buyer in Kuskokwim Area 2016 to 2019.

<sup>a</sup> Number of permits that made at least one delivery.

Table 8.—Kanektok River salmon spawning escapement estimates, 2010–2020.

Year	Aerial Survey Escapement	
	Chinook	Sockeye
2010	1,228	16,950
2011	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2012	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2013	2,346	64,802
2014	1,871	148,800
2015	4,919	39,970
2016	5,631	80,160
2017	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2018	4,246	326,200
2019	7,212	349,073
2020	4,405 <sup>b</sup>	52,886 <sup>b</sup>
SEG	3,900– 12,000	15,300– 41,000
Average 2010– 2019	3,922	146,565

<sup>a</sup> Survey was either not flown or did not meet acceptable survey criteria.

<sup>b</sup> Survey was flown outside (August 13) of the standardized peak spawning abundance date range of July 17 to August 5. Therefore, counts are underestimates of spawning escapement.

Table 9.—Commercial harvest by period in the District 5, Kuskokwim Bay, 2020.

Date	Permits Fished	Hours Fished	Permit Hours	Chinook		Sockeye		Coho		Chum	
				Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE
Jun 29	7	12	84	60	0.71	615	7.32	0	0	194	2.31
Jul 3	9	12	108	93	0.86	1,778	16.5	0	0	403	3.73
Jul 8	10	12	120	63	0.53	2,564	21.4	0	0	325	2.71
Jul 10	8	12	96	44	0.46	3,031	31.6	0	0	250	2.6
Jul 12	7	12	84	28	0.33	2,795	33.3	0	0	309	3.68
Jul 13	9	16	144	51	0.35	3,598	25	0	0	408	2.83
Jul 15	7	16	112	41	0.37	3,681	32.9	0	0	224	2
Jul 17	7	16	112	16	0.14	2,577	23	0	0	179	1.6
Jul 19	11	16	176	19	0.11	2,372	13.5	1	0.01	237	1.35
Jul 20	7	16	112	8	0.07	1,153	10.3	0	0	148	1.32
Jul 21	7	16	112	7	0.06	890	7.95	0	0	133	1.19
Jul 22	4	16	64	3	0.05	547	8.55	0	0	67	1.05
Jul 25	3	16	48	2	0.04	369	7.69	0	0	51	1.06
Jul 27	5	16	80	1	0.01	379	4.74	0	0	23	0.29
Jul 28	3	16	48	1	0.02	292	6.08	0	0	33	0.69
Jul 29 <sup>a</sup>	0	16	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Jul 30 <sup>a</sup>	0	16	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Jul 31 <sup>a</sup>	0	16	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Aug 8	4	16	64	1	0.02	195	3.05	86	1.34	11	0.17
Aug 10	3	16	48	0	0	205	4.27	125	2.6	8	0.17
Aug 11	2	12	24	0	0	105	4.38	75	3.13	1	0.04
Aug 12	3	12	36	0	0	234	6.5	202	5.61	6	0.17
Aug 13	3	12	36	0	0	243	6.75	169	4.69	5	0.14
Aug 14	1	12	12	0	0	83	6.92	144	12	0	0
Aug 17	8	12	96	1	0.01	207	2.16	672	7	2	0.02
Aug 18	4	12	48	1	0.02	151	3.15	634	13.2	6	0.13
Aug 19	7	12	84	1	0.01	178	2.12	965	11.5	1	0.01
Aug 20	6	12	72	0	0	121	1.68	841	11.7	3	0.04
Aug 21	8	12	96	0	0	113	1.18	1129	11.8	3	0.03
Aug 23	7	12	84	0	0	80	0.95	602	7.17	6	0.07
Aug 24	3	12	36	0	0	19	0.53	236	6.56	0	0
Aug 25	5	12	60	0	0	51	0.85	625	10.4	0	0
Aug 26	5	12	60	0	0	61	1.02	795	13.3	0	0
Aug 27	8	12	96	0	0	77	0.8	1521	15.8	1	0.01
Aug 28	5	12	60	1	0.02	35	0.58	767	12.8	0	0
Aug 29 <sup>a</sup>	0	12	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Sep 1	4	12	48	0	0	35	0.73	742	15.5	0	0
Sep 2	3	12	36	0	0	25	0.69	597	16.6	0	0

<sup>a</sup> No permit holders participated in this period.

Table 10.—Commercial salmon harvests, District 5 Goodnews Bay, Kuskokwim Bay, 2006–2020.

Year	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Chum	Value	Permits <sup>a</sup>
2006	2,899	29,858	12,438	11,678	\$141,265	24
2007	3,126	43,766	13,697	7,853	\$222,330	28
2008	1,281	27,237	22,547	10,408	\$198,070	25
2009	1,509	32,544	8,406	16,985	\$192,031	39
2010	1,759	41,074	4,900	26,914	\$470,661	48
2011	2,092	24,573	15,358	13,191	\$346,022	48
2012	1,536	50,647	25,515	24,487	\$617,765	58
2013	495	24,521	21,582	12,651	\$452,651	71
2014	205	20,515	52,158	3,403	\$584,654	61
2015	705	25,861	7,030	4,510	\$131,616	61
2020	442	28,859	10,928	3,037	\$128,196	17
Average 2006–2015	1,561	32,060	18,363	13,208	\$335,707	46

Note: No commercial buyer in Kuskokwim Area 2016 to 2019.

<sup>a</sup> Number of permits that made at least one delivery.

Table 11.—Salmon spawning escapement estimates, Goodnews River, Kuskokwim Bay, 2010–2020.

Year	Middle Fork Goodnews R. Weir Escapement				North Fork Goodnews R. Aerial Escapement	
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Chum	Chinook	Sockeye
2010	2,176	36,574	26,287	24,789	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2011	2,045	19,643	24,668	19,974	853	14,140
2012	524	29,531	11,371	9,065	378	16,710
2013	1,187	23,545	1,189	27,682	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2014	<sup>b</sup> 750	41,473	7,594	11,518	630	<sup>a</sup>
2015	<sup>b</sup> 1,494	57,809	15,084	11,517	991	38,390
2016	<sup>c</sup> 3,767	170,574		41,815	1,120	90,060
2017	<sup>c</sup> 6,881	179,897		54,799	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2018	<sup>d</sup>				<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>
2019	<sup>c</sup> 6,421	167,105		38,177	2,462	162,930
2020	<sup>d</sup>				1,098	55,110
SEG	1,500– 2,900	18,000– 40,000	>12,000	>12,000	640–3,300	9,600–18,000
Average 2010–2019	2,805	80,683	14,366	26,593	1,072	64,446

<sup>a</sup> Survey was either not flown or did not meet acceptable survey criteria.

<sup>b</sup> Weir operations ended Aug 31

<sup>c</sup> Weir operation ended July 31.

<sup>d</sup> Weir did not operate, or counts were incomplete

-end-

## **ADF&G Division of Subsistence**

### **Project update for the 2020 post-season Working Group meeting**

**November 18, 2020**

#### **Subsistence Chinook Harvest in Lower Kuskokwim Tributaries**

**Overview:** This 2-year project is funded by the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund (AKSSF). We intend to document subsistence salmon fishing in non-spawning tributaries of the lower Kuskokwim River. We will conduct brief salmon harvest surveys with fishers in the Gweek, Johnson, and other river mouths during closures in the mainstem river. Information from surveys will be used to understand more about harvest patterns and subsistence salmon catches in the mouths of non-spawning tributaries.

#### *COVID-19 Contingency Planning*

At the request of community leadership, our first year of fieldwork has been postponed from summer 2020 to summer 2021. We will work closely with tribal councils in several communities to develop research procedures that ensure safety of all participants.

#### **Proposed Research: North Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Ethnography**

We are currently writing a research proposal to collaborate with communities in north Kuskokwim Bay to learn more about their customary and traditional uses of salmon. ADF&G has very limited information about salmon fishing practices in the area. We would like to learn more about which species people target, where they fish for them, and their methods of harvesting salmon. This information will be very helpful for the department to ensure that fishers are provided reasonable opportunities to harvest the salmon that their households need. We also hope to help north Kuskokwim Bay communities become more involved in the management and regulatory process in a way that they feel supports their subsistence activities. The research will include public outreach and education, collaborative meetings with community leaders and fishing households, key respondent interviews, and participant observation activities. This project does not plan to conduct salmon harvest surveys.

#### **Kuskokwim Post-Season Survey Project**

##### **Overview:**

- Funding for the project provided by USFWS Office of Subsistence Management
- Annual survey project to collect subsistence salmon harvest data
  - ADF&G has been collecting subsistence salmon harvest data in the Kuskokwim area since 1960
- 28 communities
  - In a typical year, we survey 28 Kuskokwim area communities from S. Kuskokwim Bay to headwaters
- Methodology
  - Door to door harvest surveys
- ADF&G, ONC, local research assistants
  - Survey work conducted by ADF&G and ONC staff along with the help of local community research assistants
- Project management staff based in Bethel
  - ADF&G staff are based out the Bethel office for the duration of fieldwork



**2020 Outlying Communities:**

- 2 ADF&G staff
  - A total of 2 ADF&G conduct surveys in outlying communities, along with the help of local research assistants
- Revised methodology
  - In order to remain in compliance with community health and safety guidelines, ADF&G staff are contacting households by telephone.
- Surveying began mid-September
  - ADF&G surveyors began contacting lower river households in mid-September
- 1,027 completed surveys
  - As of this report, over 1,000 surveys have been completed among 26 communities, 50 households have declined to participate. Approximately 450 households remain to be contacted

**2020 Bethel:**

- Partners with ONC in Bethel
  - ADF&G and ONC have partnered for the Bethel portion of the project since 1999
- 8 ONC Fisheries Technicians
  - This year ONC hired 8 Fisheries Technicians to conduct the survey work in Bethel
- Revised methodology
  - In order to remain in compliance with community health and safety guidelines, we have substantially revised project methods. No ADF&G staff have deployed to the field. ONC technicians contacted households door-to-door while wearing masks and gloves, and at safe social distances.
- Surveying began mid-October
  - ONC technicians conducted surveys in October and November.
- 532 completed surveys
  - ONC technicians completed over 530 surveys, over 25% of Bethel households

Seat	Member	5/5/2020	6/8/2020	6/15/2020	6/22/2020	6/26/2020	6/29/2020	7/6/2020	7/13/2020
DOWNRIVER ELDER	<b>JAMES CHARLES</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	JOHN W. ANDREW								
UPRIVER ELDER	<b>Mishka Andreanoff / VACANT</b>								
LOWER RIVER SUBSISTENCE	<b>MIKE WILLIAMS</b>	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	ALISSA ROGERS	X	X			X	X	X	
	MARY PELTOLA	X	X	X	EXC	X	X	X	X
MIDDLE RIVER SUBSISTENCE	<b>Mike Savage / VACANT</b>								
	LISA FEYEREISEN	X	X	EXC	X		X	X	
	DARREN DEACON								
UPRIVER SUBSISTENCE	<b>Mark Leary / VACANT</b>								
	BARBARA CARLSON	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
HEADWATERS SUBSISTENCE	<b>DANIEL ESAI*</b>								
MEMBER AT LARGE	<b>FRITZ CHARLES</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	CHARLES GUEST		X				X	X	
	ALBERT KAWAGLEY		X						
	BARBARA CARLSON								
WESTERN INTERIOR RAC	<b>VACANT</b>								
YK DELTA RAC	<b>BOB ALOYSIUS</b>								
	JOHN W. ANDREW	X	X		X		X	X	
PROCESSOR	<b>VACANT</b>								
COMMERCIAL FISHING	<b>CHARLIE BROWN</b>				X	X			
	<b>Gregg Hoffman Jr / VACANT</b>	X		EXC					
SPORT FISHING	<b>LAMONT ALBERTSON</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
KRITFC	<b>JAMES NICORI</b>	RL - X					X	X	
	Jacki Cleveland								
ADF&G <i>not a full voting member</i>	<b>NICK SMITH</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ben Gray	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Barb/Alissa</b>	<b>LaMont</b>	<b>Barb</b>	<b>LaMont</b>	<b>Barb</b>	<b>Fritz</b>	<b>Alissa</b>	<b>LaMont</b>
	<b>Full voting seats represented</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Quorum</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<b>Total members attending (including ADF&amp;G)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>

Co-Chairs: LaMont Albertson, Fritz Charles, Barb Carlson, Alissa Rogers, Mary Peltola

\*Expressed interest in remaining a member (11/20)

**BOLD** type denotes primary member

Red denotes serving as two alternates

Black fill denotes a known or apparent vacancy

<b>*Resignations/ Seat Changes</b>	Resignations	
	<b>Mark Leary</b>	Upriver Subsistence
	<b>Mike Savage</b>	Middle River Subsistence
	<b>Miskha Andreanoff</b>	Upriver Elder
	<b>Greg Hoffman, JR</b>	Commercial Fishing Alt.

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**(KRSMWG)**

**Nominations are currently being accepted  
for KRSMWG seats:**

## **Upriver Elder**

Open to Elders that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage above Chuathbaluk and below McGrath.

*The Working Group meets 1-2 times per week during the salmon season and periodically during the remainder of the year. Access to a phone, email and/or a FAX machine is very important for members who cannot meet in person in Bethel*

**Local knowledge and stakeholder participation is an important part of the fishery management process. The KRSMWG works with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to cooperatively manage the Kuskokwim River subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries. The purpose is for all parties to work together for the sustainable management of these fisheries.**

**Contact Ben Gray at ADF&G if interested in getting involved  
907-267-2303 phone or  
907-444-8310  
[ben.gray@alaska.gov](mailto:ben.gray@alaska.gov)**



# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**(KRSMWG)**

**Nominations are currently being accepted  
for KRSMWG seats:**

## **Commercial Fishing**

Open Kuskokwim commercial fishing permit holders or crew members who fish primarily within Districts W-1 and W-2.

*The Working Group meets 1-2 times per week during the salmon season and periodically during the remainder of the year. Access to a phone, email and/or a FAX machine is very important for members who cannot meet in person in Bethel*

**Local knowledge and stakeholder participation is an important part of the fishery management process. The KRSMWG works with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to cooperatively manage the Kuskokwim River subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries. The purpose is for all parties to work together for the sustainable management of these fisheries.**

**Contact Ben Gray at ADF&G if interested in getting involved  
907-267-2303 phone or  
907-444-8310  
ben.gray@alaska.gov**



# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**(KRSMWG)**

**Nominations are currently being accepted  
for KRSMWG seats:**

## **Upriver Subsistence**

Open to active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage above Chuathbaluk and below McGrath.

*The Working Group meets 1-2 times per week during the salmon season and periodically during the remainder of the year. Access to a phone, email and/or a FAX machine is very important for members who cannot meet in person in Bethel*

**Local knowledge and stakeholder participation is an important part of the fishery management process. The KRSMWG works with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to cooperatively manage the Kuskokwim River subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries. The purpose is for all parties to work together for the sustainable management of these fisheries.**

**Contact Ben Gray at ADF&G if interested in getting involved  
907-267-2303 phone or  
907-444-8310  
ben.gray@alaska.gov**



BY-LAWS OF THE  
KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

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**PURPOSE**

To provide local fishers and other users with an avenue for direct involvement in the management of their fishery. The goal is for all parties to work together to reach a consensus on management of the fishery. Final emergency order authority continues to rest with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

**RULES OF CONDUCT**

Meetings will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order. The sequence of meetings is as follows:

- I. Call to order (by chair)
- II. Roll Call (by chair)
- III. Invocation
- IV. Meeting Minutes
- V. Approval of Agenda: *Optional*
- VI. People to be heard
- VII. Continuing Business
  1. Subsistence Reports/Traditional Native Fisheries Knowledge
    - a. Lower River:
    - b. ONC Inseason Subsistence:
    - c. Middle River Subsistence:
    - d. Upper River:
    - e. Headwaters:
  2. Overview of Kuskokwim River Salmon Run Assessment Projects
    - a. Test Fish (Bethel and Aniak)
    - b. Weir/Mark-Recapture/Aerial Surveys/Other:
  3. Commercial Catch Report:
  4. Processor Report:
  5. Sport Fish Report:
  6. Intercept Fishery Report: *Optional*
  7. Weather Forecast:
  8. Recommendation:
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. Meeting Action Announcement
- XI. Date, Time, and Place of next meeting
- XII. Adjournment

(This sequence may be changed at the discretion of the Group)

People to Be Heard and Continuing Business reports may not exceed 3 minutes in length, excluding questions and answers.

Under the 'People to be heard' agenda item the public would be provided an opportunity to discuss only topics or items which are **not** already listed as specific agenda items. A member of the public may also ask the Group to place an issue on the agenda.

Unlike other institutions or committees, the Working Group operates on a consensus basis. When discussing fisheries management issues, a simple majority vote of the members is not sufficient to pass a motion. For the purposes of the Group all fisheries management related motions must pass by a consensus of the members present at the meeting. If 7 (seven) or fewer of the members are present, then consensus is defined as a situation wherein either all voting members vote "yea" or all voting members vote "yea" except for one "nay" vote. If 8 (eight) or more of the members are present, then consensus is defined as a situation wherein either all voting members vote "yea" or all voting members vote "yea" except for two "nay" votes.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game does not have voting status on motions concerning the setting of commercial openings.

When voting on motions not related to fisheries management or seat elections, a consensus vote is not required.

## **ARTICLE I, OFFICE**

The principal office of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) shall be located in the City of Bethel, Alaska 99559.

The current address of the principal office is, P.O. Box 1467, Bethel, Alaska 99559. The physical address is 570 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **ARTICLE II, MEMBERS**

**Section 1. Members:** The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall have 14 member organizations or constituencies. These members represent: Elders (Upriver, Downriver) (2), Subsistence Fishermen (Lower River, Middle River, Upriver, and Headwaters) (4), Processors (1), Commercial Fishermen (1), Sport Fishers (1), Member at Large (1), Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Committees (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior) (2), Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (1) and the Department of Fish and Game (1). Each member of the Working Group will designate a representative and an alternate or alternates in the event the representative is unable to attend a meeting. In the case where more than one person is nominated to represent a member organization or constituency, the Working Group will appoint one of the nominees to represent the member organization or constituency.

### **Section 2. Annual Meeting:**

An annual meeting of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group may be held in Bethel or Anchorage during the month of March to coincide with the Kuskokwim Salmon Interagency Meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to conduct any

unfinished administrative functions that the Working Group needs to complete for the following year.

**Section 3. Special Meetings:**

Special meetings of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group may be called by the Co-Chairs.

**Section 4. Notice of Meetings:**

The Department of Fish and Game will be responsible for informing the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group members of the time, place and date of any meetings. Notification of meetings to the Working Group will be not less than 48 hours (when possible) or more than 45 days in advance.

**Section 5. Quorum:**

In order for a meeting of the Working Group to be held and for actions taken at a meeting to be legitimate, it is necessary for there to be a quorum at a meeting, that is at least 7 of the 14 member constituencies must be represented.

For Fisheries management meetings, there must be 7 members plus the department representative.

For executive sessions, the quorum may be 7 members including the department representative; however, this meeting cannot entertain motions regarding fishery decisions.

If a quorum of the full committee is not present, business may be conducted in executive session. The executive committee is composed of at least 5 representatives: one Co-Chair, any two representatives of the following member groups; Member at Large, Processors, Commercial Fisherman, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and any two representatives of the following member groups; Lower, Middle, Upriver and Headwaters Subsistence, Federal RAC, Sport Fisher.

**Section 6. Quorum:**

During the regular meeting season (May – August), all materials that will be disseminated on behalf of the Working Group shall be added to and voted upon as a new business agenda topic. A special meeting (Article II; Section 3) of all working group members shall be scheduled to discuss and vote upon all material that will be disseminated on behalf of the Working group during the non-meeting season (Sept – April).

**ARTICLE III. REPRESENTATIVES**

**Section 1. Working Group:**

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall be comprised of 14 representatives from the areas described in Article II, Section 1.

**Section 2. General Powers:**

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall make recommendations



to the Department of Fish and Game for the purposes of managing the salmon fisheries on the Kuskokwim River after subsistence and commercial catch, test fishery, weir, tower and sonar reports and other information are provided to the group.

**Section 3. Voting Membership:**

Each Working Group member shall be entitled to one vote. One alternate designated by the member shall be entitled to one vote in the absence of that member. Members may abstain from voting on any motion. The Department of Fish and Game may vote on motions unrelated to fisheries management decisions only.

Working Group members must hear all the Continuing Business reports to vote on a motion to set commercial openings.

**Section 4. Resignation:**

Any member or representative may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to a Co-Chair of the Working Group. The resignation must give the Working Group at least 4 weeks notification so that a new member or representative may be appointed.

**Section 5. Vacancies:**

A vacancy on the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, forfeiture or otherwise, may be filled by the Working Group from nominations by member groups for the remainder of the term.

**Section 6. Forfeit, participation, or removal:**

- A. FORFEIT. The Working Group will give written notification, by certified mail, to any member organization, their representative and alternate whose seat has not been represented for 2 consecutive meetings that their membership in the Working Group will be forfeited if the seat is not represented by the following meeting. Whereas, a member's failure to be represented at a meeting is excused by the Working Group, as appropriate, such failure shall not be considered an absence within this section.
- B. PARTICIPATION. No representative will be allowed to participate in a Working Group meeting who is deemed to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- C. REMOVAL. A representative may be removed from their seat on the Working Group for cause and must be provided the opportunity appeal this removal at a subsequent meeting of the Working Group. A representative may be removed for cause for any reason allowed, including but not limited to, conviction of a felony, gross misconduct, violation of their trust to the Working Group as a representative, or harassment of any kind to the other representatives of the Working Group.

**ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS OF THE WORKING GROUP**

**Section 1. Officers:**

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall elect Co-Chairs for the purpose of conducting meetings. The Co-Chairs will be elected annually at the first

meeting occurring after March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Working Group shall elect or appoint other officers as deemed necessary. An officer of the Working Group may not hold more than one position. The Co-Chairs must be official representatives of the Working Group.

**Section 2. Terms of Office:**

Each representative of the Working Group shall be elected or appointed. A representative shall hold their position until their successor has been duly elected or appointed and has been qualified

**Section 3. Co-Chair:**

A Co-Chair of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group shall preside at all meetings of the Working Group. If a pre-designated co-chair is not present, those present may elect a temporary chair to preside for that meeting.

**Section 4. Other Committees:**

The Co-Chairs shall have the authority to appoint representatives to serve on committees as deemed necessary. Any representative appointed to a committee may be removed in the best interest of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group.

**ARTICLE V. DEFINITIONS**

- 1. Member.** The member organizations or constituencies of the Working Group as listed in Article II, Section 1.
- 2. Alternate.** An individual designated to act in the place of a member or representative unable to attend a meeting.
- 3. Representative.** Person designated by a Working Group member organization or constituency to represent that member organization or constituency at Working Group meetings.
- 4. District W-1.** The Lower Kuskokwim River consists of the Kuskokwim River from a line between Apokak Slough and Popokamiut, upstream to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located about eight miles above the Tuluksak River.
- 5. District W-2.** The middle Kuskokwim River consists of the Kuskokwim River from ADF&G regulatory markers located at the upstream entrance to the second slough on the west bank downstream from Kalskag to the regulatory markers at Chuathbaluk.
- 6. Elder.** Any respected Elder that resides within the Kuskokwim Area.
- 7. Headwaters Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage from McGrath upstream to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

- 8. Upriver Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage above Chuathbaluk and below McGrath.
- 9. Middle River Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage from Lower Kalskag to Chuathbaluk within District W-2.
- 10. Lower River Subsistence.** Representatives that are active subsistence users in the Kuskokwim River drainage from Eek to Tuluksak within District W-1. Appendix A1.– Page 7 of 8.
- 11. Processor.** Representatives that own or operate commercial salmon buying and/or processing businesses within District W-1 and W-2.
- 12. Member at Large.** Representatives that are Area residents selected by the Working Group for their knowledge of, appreciation for, and experience with Kuskokwim River fisheries.
- 13. Federal Regional Advisory Council.** Representatives that are current members of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Advisory Councils and reside in the Kuskokwim Area.
- 14. Commercial Fishermen.** Kuskokwim commercial fishing permit holder or crew member, supported by commercial fishing permit holders who fish primarily within Districts W-1 and W-2.
- 15. Sport Fisher.** Representatives that actively participate in sports fishing within the Kuskokwim River drainage.
- 16. Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.** Representatives who are current members of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and reside in the Kuskokwim Area.
- 17. Alaska Department of Fish and Game.** Representatives that are presently employed with ADF&G in Bethel. This position is an associate member and may only vote on decisions not directly related to fisheries management. Final emergency order authority continues to rest with the ADF&G.

## **ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENT TO BY-LAWS**

These by-laws may be altered, amended or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted by consensus of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group representatives present at any regular or special meeting, if at least thirty (30) days written notice is given by certified mail, phone call, or intention to alter, amend or appeal or to adopt new by-laws at such meeting.

# **Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group**

**P.O. Box 1467 • Bethel, AK 99559 • 907-543-2433 • 907-543-2021 fax**

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**To:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management

**Subject:** Support for ADF&G and ONC proposal to continue collection of Chinook salmon age, sex, length data from lower river subsistence harvest.

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) was formed in 1988 by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in response to requests from stakeholders in the Kuskokwim Area who sought a more active role in the management of salmon fishery resources. The Working Group is made up of 13 member seats representing elders, subsistence fishermen, processors, commercial fishermen, sport fishermen, member at large, federal subsistence regional advisory committees, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Agency members participate on a voluntary basis and receive no compensation. The Working Group serves as an advisory committee to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on salmon fisheries management decisions within the Kuskokwim River. In addition, the Working Group has a long history of collaboration with fishery research planners and project leaders to ensure that adequate data are collected to inform sustainable management of Kuskokwim River salmon. This relationship ensures that Working Group participants remain up-to-date on data collection plans and new information which will help them to continue providing sound advice to State fisheries managers.

The Working Group would like to express our support for collection of age, sex, and length (ASL) information from Chinook salmon harvested in the Kuskokwim River subsistence fishery. Since, 2001, ADF&G and Orutsarmiut Native Council (ONC) have worked together to recruit Kuskokwim Area residents to collect ASL data from subsistence caught Chinook salmon. The Working Group was notified that funding for this project will end following the 2015 season, and that ADF&G and ONC is seeking continuation funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) through the 2017 field season. The Working Group supports ADF&G's and ONC's proposal and encourages OSM to fund this project.

Collection of ASL data is critical for sustainable management of Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries. Each year, ADF&G and the Working Group review ASL data collected from Kuskokwim River salmon assessment projects and consider those results when making management decisions. The data collected from the subsistence fishery is used in conjunction with ASL data collected from commercial and escapement projects to estimate the composition of the total annual return. Additionally, these data help us evaluate the effects of harvest on escapement quality and make recommendations to State fisheries managers. This project is the only source of ASL information from the very large and culturally important subsistence fishery – most of which occurs within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

The Working Group recognizes the value this project has regarding outreach and community involvement. The Working Group is pleased that ADF&G and ONC are continuing their partnership. Over the past years that this project has operated, more than 200 individuals from 9 lower river communities have participated – many of whom are contacted weekly by local ONC technicians. This project provides an important opportunity for information and knowledge sharing between subsistence users, ADF&G, and ONC staff. The Working Group understands that participation in this project has declined in recent years concurrent with declining Chinook salmon runs and unprecedented subsistence fishing restrictions. However, this project continues to provide an avenue for outreach and collaboration, which is often just as important during times of conservation.

Thank you for consideration of this proposal.

On behalf of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group,

LaMont Albertson (co-chair)