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Weekly Copper River Salmon In-Season Teleconferences
Thursday, July 25, 2024, 11 AM

Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87998112979?pwd=aulvIcrVOfaBiS4W24MQrwlZQhcAxM.1>

Meeting ID: 879 9811 2979 **Passcode:** 380518

Call in at 1-719-358-4580

About:

These calls aim to share and learn from others' observations about Copper River salmon harvests and returns during the fishing season, river conditions, and other factors that may affect harvests and returns.

Participants Identified (9 total):

- *AITRC Staff:* Deanna Kosbruk, Jim Simon, Hannah Bengtson
- *WRST Staff:* Mark Miller, Dave Sarafin, Jonathan Shafer, Benjamin Pister
- *ADFG In-Season Managers:* Jeremy Botz (Prince William Sound Area Office)
- *CRNA:*
- *CRWP:*
- *Public:* Becky Schwanke

Introduction and Ground rules:

- Deanna Kosbruk welcomed everyone to the teleconference and thanked them for calling in and attending. She introduced herself and the staff that were in attendance.
- Deanna Kosbruk stated the purpose is to provide a venue for Copper River subsistence fishers to share and learn from others' observations about Copper River salmon harvests and returns during the fishing season, river conditions, and other factors that may affect harvests and returns.
- Mark Miller WRST introduced himself and the staff in attendance and reviewed the "ground rules" for the conversation. He introduced Jonathan Shafer, a new member of the WRST staff working in the Kennicott area.
 - Be polite, respectful, and considerate of others
 - Wait for your turn to speak
 - Introduce yourself with your name and where you fish as you start speaking
 - Be patient and don't interrupt even if you strongly disagree with what's being said.
 - Put your phone or computer on mute when you are not speaking
 - Everyone who wishes to speak will be allowed to do so before someone speaks for a second time.

Agency Updates:

Jeremy Botz, ADF&G Gillnet Area Management Biologist: Harvest is declining rapidly in the commercial fishery. We are nearing the end of the season for the sonar operation; pull camp will start next week. Counts are starting to drop off there at the sonar, too. We are seeing water rising a little bit, so counts may come up later in the week. We are near our upper target for the upriver escapement plus the high end of the Sockeye escapement goal. That's about all I have.

Dave Sarafin, Fisheries Biologist- Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve: The Tanada Wier has had 2532 fish pass so far this year through last Sunday. The water level is going down, but fish can still make it through. The little bit of rain we got has helped and continues to help with the water levels. With the water going down and the fish being bright we are installing a bear fence and hope to have that completed today. Thank you

Deanna Kosbruk, AITRC: This is Deanna. Thank you, Mark, and thank you, Jeremy, for your updates. Pete Rand isn't on today, so I would like to remind you that if you catch any fish with a tracker on it, call Fish and Game and let them know. Give them the tracking number for his research and project.

Participant updates (subsistence users):

Batzulnetas, Nebesna, Salana, Chistochina to Gulkana subsistence use area.

No updates

Gulkana to Tonsina to subsistence use area.

Hannah Bengtson, Kluti Kaah subsistence area user: I was able to go out on a friend's wheel this weekend. On Saturday, we got 30 reds and one jack king. Sunday, we kept around 30 reds and two jack kings. We had over 100 in the live box and put the ones we didn't keep back in the river. Most were small; I think the largest was 15 lbs. But the freezer is full, and I have been able to get fish for my family and some community members.

Tonsina to Chitina and Cordova subsistence use area.

No updates

Closing remarks, follow-up, and concerns:

Deanna Kosbruk: Thank you, everyone. Any other discussion, questions, concerns, or comments? Our Techs here at AITRC have said sample collecting has been a little slow in Chisto and Slana. They are still out there looking for samples. They reported that one person in Gulkana shut off their wheel because the water was too high. Another couple of wheels in the Gulkana and Gakona area were running but only getting 5-7 fish a day.

This is a reminder that next Thursday, August 1st, we'll have our next weekly Copper River salmon in-season call. Please join us every Thursday until the end of August.

The next meeting is on August 1st over Zoom or in the AITRC building.

Thanks all around, and the call ended.