

## **Tatlawiksuk River weir salmon studies, 2002**

**Abstract:** Tatlawiksuk River salmon escapements were monitored in 2002 using a resistance board weir. The target operational period for the project is 15 June through 20 September. Total annual escapement for the target operational period included 2,237 Chinook salmon 24,542 chum salmon 11,363 coho salmon 1 sockeye salmon and 1 pink salmon. The Chinook, chum and coho escapements were all the highest yet observed for Tatlawiksuk River. A total of 1,155 longnose suckers *Catostomus catostomus* were counted passing the weir. The Alaska Board of Fisheries classified Kuskokwim River Chinook and chum salmon as “stocks of concern” in 2000, inclusive of the Tatlawiksuk River populations. Total annual escapements of Chinook and chum salmon in 2002 were similar to 2001 when comparable conservation measures were implemented in the fisheries. Escapements in 2001 and 2002 were substantially greater than those observed in 1999 or 2000 when conservation measures were less stringent. Still, the adequacy of the Chinook, chum and coho salmon escapements is unclear because the data set for the Tatlawiksuk River spans so few years. Coho salmon have not been classified as a stock of concern, but annual run abundance appears on the decline since 1997 as evidenced by the reduced commercial harvests and variable escapement levels. Total annual escapement of coho salmon in 2002 was similar to 2001, but much higher than observed in 1999 or 2000. Assessments of coho escapements to Tatlawiksuk River have been difficult because of persistent high water conditions in late summer especially prominent in the Tatlawiksuk River drainage.

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