

TEK and contemporary subsistence harvest of non-salmon fish in the Koyukuk River drainage

Abstract: It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the non-salmon fish resources to the past and present human population of the Koyukuk River region. Moose were not present in the drainage until the mid-1930s and the area has limited access to other subsistence mainstays such as salmon and caribou. In order to feed themselves and their dog-teams, residents of the Koyukuk drainage developed a particularly rich body of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) pertaining to the habits, seasonal movements, and availability of resident fish species. The primary purpose of this project was to begin the process of collecting and documenting this traditional knowledge through interviews with local experts. TEK interviews were conducted with a total of 29 individuals from throughout the Koyukuk drainage. The wealth of information they provided on the behavior, harvest, and use of fish is summarized by species. In addition to this largely historical perspective, a door-to-door harvest survey was conducted to provide estimates of the contemporary (2002) annual harvest of non-salmon fish in Koyukuk River communities. These data show that fish continue to be harvested and used in significant quantities by a high percentage of area households.

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