

## George River Salmon Studies, 2006

The George River is a tributary of the Kuskokwim River, and produces Chinook salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, chum salmon *O. keta*, and coho salmon *O. kisutch* that contribute to intensive subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries downstream of its confluence. The George River weir is one of several projects operated in the Kuskokwim Area that form an integrated geographic array of escapement monitoring projects. Collectively, and in accordance with the State of Alaska Sustainable Fishery Policy (5 AAC 39.222), this array of projects is a tool to assure appropriate geographic and temporal distribution of spawning salmon, and provide a means to assess trends in escapement that should be monitored and considered in harvest management decisions. Towards this end, George River weir has been operated annually since 1996 to determine daily and total salmon escapements for the target operational period of 15 June through 20 September; to estimate age, sex, and length compositions of Chinook, chum, and coho salmon escapement; to monitor environmental variables that influence salmon productivity; and to provide part of an integrated platform in support of other Kuskokwim Area fisheries projects.

In 2006, a resistance board weir was operated on the George River from 15 June through 20 September. Escapements for the target operational period were estimated as 4,357 Chinook, 41,467 chum, and 11,296 coho salmon. Escapement goals have not been set for the George River. Chinook, chum, and coho salmon escapements were near average in 2006. Age, sex, and length data indicated a relatively strong return of age-1.4 Chinook salmon and age-0.3 chum salmon, similar to what was seen throughout the Kuskokwim River drainage in 2006. Information collected at the weir from fish tagged in the mainstem Kuskokwim River suggest George River salmon are a later component of runs migrating past the tagging site, located near the village of Kalskag.

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