

# **FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 11-76**

## **LOWER KUSKOKWIM RIVER INSEASON SUBSISTENCE SALMON CATCH MONITORING, 2006 TO 2009**

by

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this project were: to assess if the harvest goals of subsistence fishermen primarily from Bethel were being met for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon; to characterize run timing and relative abundance for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon via harvest patterns; to determine if subsistence fishermen were selectively harvesting specific salmon species using particular mesh sizes or harvest methods; and to determine if there were factors other than fish abundance affecting the relative success of subsistence fishermen in achieving their harvest goals. A weekly survey of subsistence users in each fish camp in the primary fishing area of Bethel residents was attempted from June 1 to July 12, 2009. Survey results were reported immediately to members of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group. In 2009, the majority of fishermen reported that catches were very good or normal compared to past years. Fishermen predominantly used drift nets of greater than 6 inch mesh size for targeting Chinook salmon, although some used set nets and a mix of other mesh sizes for capture of Chinook and other salmon species. Fishermen reported that the run timing for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon was normal and only a few people commented that the run was late at various times in the season. Some commented specifically that the Chinook salmon run got off to a slow start but was very strong in the middle of the run which allowed families to easily meet their harvest goals. A few felt the sockeye run was early. Overall, in 2009 fishing families reported that they were satisfied with their catches, the fish were in good condition, and drying conditions were sufficient for preserving fish for the year. The results for 2009 were compared findings from 2006 to 2008.

Key words: Bethel, Kuskokwim River, Chinook, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, sockeye, *O. nerka*, chum, *O. keta*, coho, *O. kisutch*, salmon, subsistence, Orutsararmiut Native Council, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group.