

ABSTRACT

The George River is a major 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. A weir has been operated annually on the George River since 1996, and is part of an array of projects used to monitor salmon escapement in the Kuskokwim River drainage in accordance with the State of Alaska Sustainable Fishery Policy (5 AAC 39.222). Salmon were enumerated by species as they migrated upstream through the weir to determine daily and annual escapements. Samples were collected from fish as they migrated upstream through the weir to estimate the age, sex, and length composition of escapements.

Operations were successful in 2008 and escapements of 2,698 Chinook, 29,978 chum, 94 sockeye *O. nerka*, and 21,931 coho salmon were determined at George River weir. Chinook salmon escapement was below the historical average in 2008, while chum and coho salmon escapements were well above their historical averages. Age, sex, and length sampling in 2008 indicated the Chinook salmon escapement consisted of 49% age-1.3, 27% age-1.4, and 20% age-1.2 fish, with 28% females. The chum escapement consisted of 79% age-0.4 and 17% age-0.3 fish. The coho salmon escapement consisted of 63% age-2.1 and 36% age-3.1 fish. Relative to previous years determined at George River weir, the abundances of age-1.2 and -1.4 Chinook salmon were below average in 2008, and the abundance of age-1.3 Chinook salmon was near average. The number of female Chinook salmon was low. The abundance of age-0.3 chum salmon was below average, while the abundance of age-0.4 chum salmon was record high. The abundance of age-1.2 coho salmon was above average while the abundance of age 3.1 coho salmon was also record high in 2008.

Key words: Escapement, George River, Kuskokwim River, Chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, chum salmon, *O. keta*, coho salmon, *O. kisutch*, longnose suckers, *Catostomus catostomus*, ASL, age-sex-length, salmon age composition, salmon sex composition, salmon length composition, resistance board weir.