

Kodiak Sockeye Run Late and/or Weak

Thursday, 18 June 2009

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Erik Wander/KMXT

One week into the Kodiak area commercial salmon season the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is reporting late and weak sockeye salmon runs, as it had expected. And while it's still too early to determine whether escapement goals for the season will be reached, there remains at least a glimmer of hope that the disappointing numbers will pick up as the season progresses and the beginning of the pink salmon run approaches.

Check the recorded Fish and Game hotline for the latest fisheries announcements at 486-4559.

KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

While Fish and Game said last week that its preliminary forecast for pink salmon harvest in the area was well above last year's total harvest and also better than the 10-year average, sockeye salmon numbers were expected to be about the same as last year, when they came in well below the 10-year average.

Area Management Biologist Jeff Wadle said that based on information gathered so far, sockeye salmon runs are late this year, continuing a trend of the past couple of years. He added that this year's run is even slightly behind that of last year. Wadle said however that there may yet be at least some cause for optimism.

-- (Wadle
1 25 sec. "Basically our main systems ... better
than it has been.")

Wadle
said Fish and Game was able to gather significant information during a
33-hour fishing period last week. He said it provided a good indicator of run
strength on the west side, particularly for the Karluk River.

-- (Wadle
2 22 sec. "The harvests weren't ... to get our escapement goals.")

He
said the possibility of reaching those goals remains, but the likelihood isn't particularly
good. According
to Wadle, the early run continues through July 15th,
and Fish and Game expects a total Karluk escapement of between 110 and
250-thousand sockeye. He said that
typically by this point in the season, 60 to 70 percent of the run has occurred,
and that so far the count is just 22,600. He said possible explanations for this
year's late and weak runs are based on speculation.

-- (Wadle
3 16 sec. "I think the spring was ... hard to
tell right now.")

Wadle said he has
high hopes for the south side, which he called a "bright spot." Fish and Game
opened or will open several areas in the Alitak district today (Thursday) and
Friday for a temporary commercial salmon period, including the Olga Bay, Moser
Bay, Alitak Bay, Cape Alitak and Humpy-Deadman sections. There will also be
another 33-hour commercial salmon period beginning Sunday in the Eastside
Kodiak district and portions of the Afognak and Mainland districts.

I'm
Erik Wander.

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