

Rain Would Help Salmon Get Upstream

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

A couple of weeks ago the pink salmon run started showing its numerical superiority around Kodiak Island and surpassed the sockeye salmon catch. And over the weekend, pinks more than doubled reds in number harvested. The humpy catch on Sunday alone was 723,621, bringing the season total to 4.1-million.

Kodiak commercial fisheries management biologist James Jackson said pinks are running stronger than predicted, though individually, they're on the small side this year.

"So right now we're in our fourth general pink salmon opening. And the catches and the escapement and look great around town and down the east side in Alitak. And they're okay on the west side and Afognak, but they're pretty slow on the mainland. And the hatchery up Kitoi is just starting to percolate, so as of right now, the pink salmon run is coming in better than forecasted, which was about 17-million."

He says the early sockeye salmon run met pre-season forecast numbers.

"We're still waiting for the late run to kick in at Karluk. There are a fair number of fish in the lagoon, which is good. And it looks like the late run is starting to show up at Upper Station. But all-in-all the early Karluk was great. Dog Salmon was average to below average, so Alitak was okay. Yeah, we're doing pretty good right now — we're just waiting for the late run to start after the pinks are done."

And while the sunny, warm and dry summer has done wonders for the mood of Kodiak Islanders, Jackson says a little rain would go a long way in helping the salmon return home to spawn.

"The island desperately needs some rain. We've kind of exhausted almost all of snow pack. Some of the bigger streams obviously have water, but a lot of the small streams — especially down the east side, they run off of just rain water. The fish are there, at the mouths, waiting to go up, and there's no streams for them to go up, they can't do that. So we just need a few days; a good deluge would be really nice. I hate to be the guy to actually asks for rain, but it would be nice to have some around here. I've been enjoying the summer just like everyone else has."

At 30.6-inches, precipitation for the year so far is running one inch ahead of last year, but is still almost a foot below historical averages. Rainfall this summer since June 1st has totaled five-inches, which is half of the 10.4-inches that usually falls by this date.

