



KUSKOKWIM RIVER

INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION



ANNUAL REPORT

2021





CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| From the Chair | 2 |
| Who We Are | 3 |
| From the Executive Director | 5 |
| 2021 Season Report | 6 |
| 2021 Financial Report | 15 |
| Next Steps | 16 |

MISSION

To develop a meaningful role for Tribes and rural residents to engage in Kuskokwim fisheries management by rebuilding and sustainably managing healthy salmon and other fish populations within the Kuskokwim River watershed and the traditional territories of our 33 Member Tribes.

VISION

A bountiful Kuskokwim River watershed which provides for present and future customary and traditional subsistence harvests and uses of fish.

VALUES

Unity | Sharing in abundance and scarcity
 Respect for all life | Stewardship for our ancestors and our future generations



Cover photos: Tyler Samuelson, Megan Leary,
 Jonathan Samuelson, Terese Schomogyi.



FROM THE CHAIR

Mike Williams Sr.

It was a good summer for the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. For the seventh year, our Chinook salmon fishery between the mouth of the Kuskokwim and Aniak was federalized, and we collaboratively managed the fishery with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. In these seven years, we have grown to be able to manage our fishery using both Indigenous Knowledge and western science.

Management this summer was a little different because, for the very first time, the Kuskokwim Tribes did not initiate the special action request to the Federal Subsistence Board to federalize the lower river Chinook salmon fishery. In 2021, this was done by the Refuge Manager. There is a huge difference between the Tribes and the USFWS in-season manager making this request and showing concern for the conservation of our Chinook salmon. It is good to have a federal manager who listens to our Commission and takes leadership to protect our fish. We thank the Refuge Manager for taking on this responsibility with our support, and we hope this continues into the future.

Additionally, this year, the State of Alaska's Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group members voted in full support of our conservation plan and concerns at every one of their meetings. This shows widespread support for us – for the 33 Tribes – as managers of the Kuskokwim salmon fishery.

While it was a good year for us, it was not so good for our salmon. Our Chinook salmon are still in decline, and we are really concerned about our chum salmon. I fished every subsistence opportunity this season and caught only 2 chums. That is unreal. Harvests for Chinook and chum salmon were low for everyone along the river this year, and spawner escapement numbers for chums were the lowest on record. Our conservation concerns for these fish continue, and our work to protect these fish and our subsistence way of life goes on.

The last 11 years have been very difficult for our people with low fish returns and huge restrictions on our fishing. It was a wonderful time when we were able to live our lives in a good way before state and federal management and the recent fish crashes. We would regulate ourselves and take what we needed, gathering our greens and putting up our fish at the same time to prepare for winter.

This does not happen in the same way anymore, but we hope that, with our management, research, and monitoring, we can remove fishing restrictions, harvest our needs, meet our escapement goals, unite our river, and restore our salmon runs to abundance. These have been our goals since we organized KRITFC in 2015, and we will work toward them for as long as it takes.

WHO WE ARE

2021 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Executive Council is composed of seven Fish Commissioners, one elected from each of the seven river units. The Council Chair position rotates every two years between the upper, middle, and lower river communities. The Council also includes at least one Elder Advisor.

2021 IN-SEASON MANAGERS

Each year, four In-Season Managers representing communities across the Kuskokwim River watershed are elected by the entire Commission body. These In-Season Managers spend each salmon season at the federal management table negotiating and advocating for conservation-minded management and continued subsistence fishing priorities.



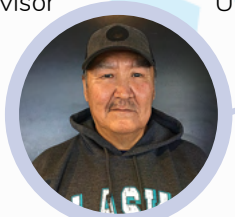
ROBERT LEKANDER
Bethel
Elder Advisor



AVERY HOFFMAN
Bethel
Unit 5 Seat | In-Season Manager



MIKE WILLIAMS SR.
Akiak
Unit 4 Seat | Chair



RALPH NELSON
Napakiak
Unit 6 Seat



JAMES NICORI
Kwethluk
In-Season Manager



JAMES CHARLES
Tuntutuliak
Elder Advisor



JACQUELINE CLEVELAND
Quinhagak
Unit 7 Seat | Secretary/Treasurer In-Season Manager

KRITFC is a 638 Compact inter-Tribal agency that unites the 33 federally recognized Tribes of the Kuskokwim River drainage area as active managers of Kuskokwim River fisheries.



JONATHAN SAMUELSON
Georgetown
Unit 2 Seat | Vice-Chair



BETTY MAGNUSON
McGrath
Unit 1 Seat



MEGAN LEARY
Napaimute
Unit 3 Seat | In-Season Manager

2021 FISH COMMISSIONERS

UNIT 1

Jimmy Nikolai | Telida
Claude "Joe" Petruska | Nikolai
Betty Magnuson | McGrath
Robert Perkins | Takotna

UNIT 2

Thomas Willis | Stony River
Evan Bobby Jr. | Lime Village*
Ellen Yako | Sleetmute
Rebecca Wilmarth | Red Devil*
Jonathan Samuelson | Georgetown
Tim Zakaur | Crooked Creek

UNIT 3

Megan Leary | Napaimute
Tracy Simeon | Chuathbaluk
Wayne Morgan | Aniak
Gerald Kameroff | Upper Kalskag
Walter Morgan Sr. | Lower Kalskag

UNIT 4

Noah Alexie | Tuluksak
Mike Williams Sr. | Akiak
Phillip Peter Sr. | Akiachak
James Nicori | Kwethluk

UNIT 5

Avery Hoffman | Bethel

UNIT 6

Nicholai Steven | Oscarville*
Chris Larson | Napaskiak
Ralph Nelson | Napakiak
Melvin Egoak | Atmautluak*
Natalia Brink | Kasigluk
Golga Frederick | Nunapitchuk

UNIT 7

Adolph Lupie | Tuntutuliak
Stella Alexie | Eek
Charlene Erik | Chefornak
Jimmy Paul | Kipnuk*
Edward David | Kongiganak*
Fred Phillip | Kwigillingok*
Jacqueline Cleveland | Quinhagak

2021 STAFF & CONSULTANTS

Mary Peltola | Executive Director
Kevin Whitworth | Fisheries Biologist
Casey Rangel | Executive Administrator
Terese Schomogyi | Jesuit/AmeriCorps Volunteer,
Communications & Outreach Coordinator
Jim Simon, PhD | Anthropologist
Joseph Spaeder, PhD | Fisheries Biologist
LaMont Albertson | CBHM Program Manager
Bill Bechtol, PhD | Salmon Biometrician

*These communities do not currently have authorizing resolutions or voting Fish Commissioners. Although KRITFC does not officially represent these Tribes, we remain hopeful they will become a part of our compact.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mary Sattler Peltola

The 2021 season was a season filled with severe failures and great successes.

Our chum salmon failed to return, and our king salmon failed to rebound, leaving our smokehouses empty and our tributary banks barren. The State of Alaska failed to respect federal management and held an illegal fishing opener on June 28. Federal and state agencies repeat that the Bering Sea ecosystem contains the most sustainably managed fisheries in the world, yet our salmon, halibut, seals, birds, and other subsistence species linked to this ecosystem are failing to appear.

It seems as though management and ecological systems are failing our subsistence-dependent communities.

Despite such failures, KRITFC achieved many successes this year. Our early preparation and strong partnership with USFWS at the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge allowed us to anticipate low king and chum salmon returns and create joint management and harvest strategies to guide us during the season. Furthermore, Kuskokwim fishermen widely supported federal management throughout the season. Prompt communication from us and the Refuge about harvest opportunities and management decisions prevented many fishermen from participating in the State's illegal opener, showing how attuned local fishermen are to federal jurisdiction and their rights under ANILCA. We successfully ran the Takotna River weir for the fifth season, and our harvest monitors with the CBHM program collected over 500 in-season harvest interviews from Kuskokwim fishermen to supply data for our In-Season Managers. Furthermore, we have expanded our stewardship of our fish into the marine environment by advocating for an end to salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea, protections for in-river subsistence fishermen, and climate-forward action.

Our 33 Kuskokwim Tribes have stewarded our salmon for thousands of years, and since colonization we have not been better positioned to pursue Tribal sovereignty and co-management of this resource. This is a success in my eyes.

No fisherman I know wants the Kuskokwim to become salmon-less like other rivers in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. Conserving these fish – and protecting and passing on our fishing traditions – is how we will prevent this. It is our best form of Yup'ik and Athabascan social security and life insurance. And this is why our work continues.

Mary Peltola



2021 SEASON REPORT



2021 KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON MANAGEMENT & HARVEST STRATEGIES

KRITFC staff, Executive Council members, and In-Season Managers began updating our Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Strategy and Kuskokwim River Salmon Harvest Strategy early in the fall of 2020. During the salmon season, these strategies provide guidelines for conservation-based management and harvests.

For the first time in 2021, USFWS signed onto these strategies, and our teams collaborated before and during the season to implement our joint management objectives for all Kuskokwim salmon species. Our 2021 KRITFC-USFWS Joint Salmon Management Strategy included goals to:

- Rebuild salmon populations and avoid collective overharvest despite the many risk factors involved in fisheries management.
- Integrate local and Indigenous Knowledge into our fisheries management decisions.
- Provide for as much subsistence harvest as possible, given in-season indicators and assessment data.
- Aim for a drainage-wide escapement target of 110,000 Chinook salmon, which is at the upper end of the existing ADF&G escapement goal range (65,000 to 120,000 fish).
- Monitor Kuskokwim chum salmon populations, which suddenly declined in 2020 and 2021.



Our 2021 KRITFC-USFWS Joint Harvest Strategy provided guidelines for early, middle, and late season harvest opportunities informed by the overarching objectives of the Management Strategy. Our collaborative in-season management decisions and recommendations were based on data from the Community-Based Harvest Monitoring program, Bethel Test Fish, Bethel sonar, and Indigenous Knowledge and local observations.



IN-SEASON MANAGEMENT

The 2021 salmon season was KRITFC's seventh season of co-management with USFWS. Our In-Season Managers this year were James Nicori (Kwethluk), Jacki Cleveland (Quinhagak), Megan Leary (Napaimute), and Avery Hoffman (Bethel). We welcomed Avery to the team this year after Elder Advisor and former Executive Council member Robert Lekander retired and recommended Avery

take his place. The ONC board then selected Avery to represent Unit 5 on the KRITFC Executive Council. During the virtual 2021 KRITFC Annual Meeting, the full board of KRITFC Commissioners elected Avery Hoffman to be an In-Season Manager. Quyana, Tsen'ahn, Thank you to each of these hard-working ISMs for their perseverance throughout the long and challenging 2021 management season.

Due to prolonged Chinook salmon conservation concerns, beginning before the season started, our in-season management team partnered closely with the fisheries management team at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge to federalize and collaboratively manage the Kuskokwim salmon fishery. Our efforts to further develop and formalize our partnership with USFWS at the Refuge resulted in many milestones, all of which advanced the goals of cooperative federal fisheries management in the Kuskokwim watershed envisioned in our 2016 Memorandum of Understanding with USFWS.

Together, KRITFC and USFWS:

- Produced cooperative management and harvest strategies to guide federal management decisions.
- Hosted a public listening session on April 22 and a public hearing on May 6 for feedback on the USFWS emergency special action requests.
- For the first time, locally federalized the Kuskokwim River fishery through the delegated authority of the Refuge Manager, rather than through a special action request submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board. This step forward in our management partnership reduced the time we spent in front of FSB, allowing us more time for collaborative action with USFWS.
- Continued our federal collaborative management into July because of our ongoing conservation concerns for Chinook and chum salmon.
- Announced 11 set and drift gillnet opportunities (total of 165 hours) throughout the Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon seasons. We provided more subsistence harvest opportunities in 2021 compared to recent years because federal management extended for two months, whereas previous federal management has typically lasted about one month and ended in early July.
- Received strong support for our management actions from the public and members of ADF&G's Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group throughout the season, including during and after ADF&G's illegal harvest opportunity on June 28.
- Managed the Chinook salmon fishery to a preliminarily estimated escapement of 101,203 fish, successfully reaching the upper end of the ADF&G escapement goal range and nearing our spawner target of 110,000 fish.

PRELIMINARY 2021 ESTIMATES

129,005

Chinook salmon total run return

27,802

Chinook salmon harvested river-wide

21,630

Chinook salmon harvested in the lower river

101,203

Chinook salmon escaped river-wide

23,600

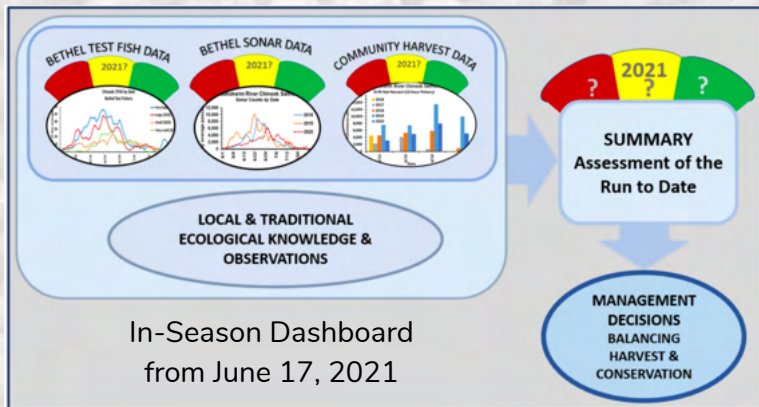
Sockeye salmon harvested in the lower river

4,220

Chum salmon harvested in the lower river

Note: Actual 2021 harvest amounts may differ following the completion of the post-season household surveys conducted by ADF&G Subsistence, which will not be available until spring 2022.

KRITFC biologists also created our own "in-season dashboard" assessment packages with in-season data from Bethel Test Fishery, Bethel sonar, subsistence fishermen's harvests, and Indigenous Knowledge and local observations. These assessment packages portrayed in-season data in an approachable way and paint a better picture of the Chinook salmon run by incorporating different ways of knowing into management decisions.



WHY DO KRITFC AND USFWS HAVE AN ESCAPEMENT TARGET?

In 2021, like the previous four years, KRITFC and USFWS adopted a shared precautionary escapement target at the upper end of the existing escapement goal range of 65,000 to 120,000 Chinook salmon. The specific target number of 110,000 fish reflects our management aim to provide a conservation-focused approach to Kuskokwim River salmon management when faced with cumulative key risk factors and sources of uncertainty, including:

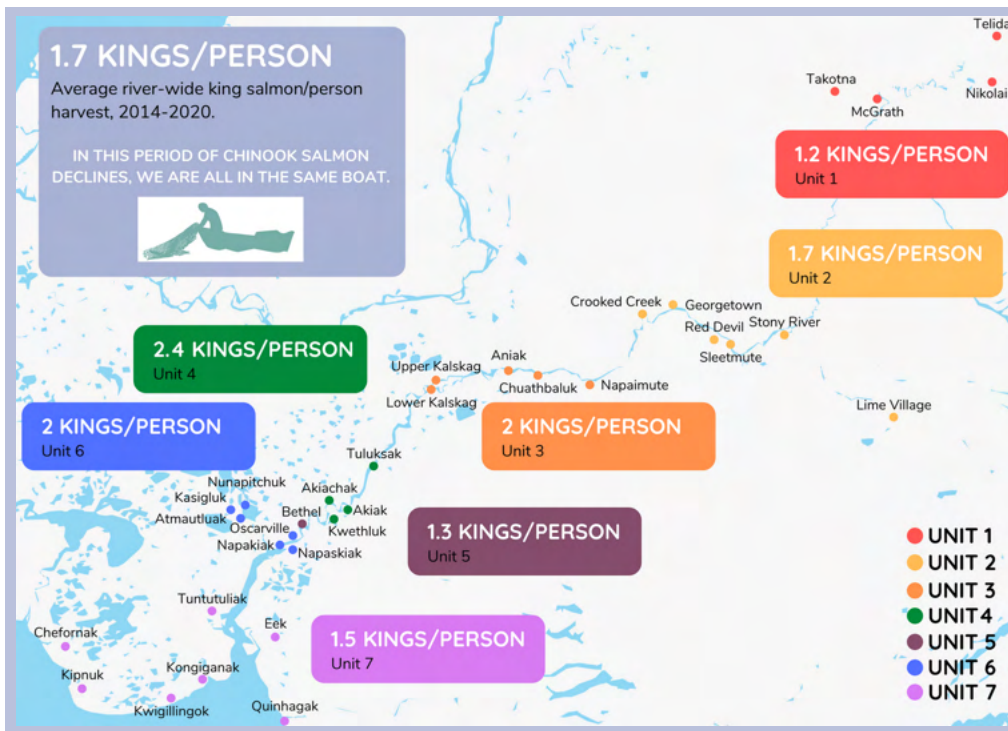
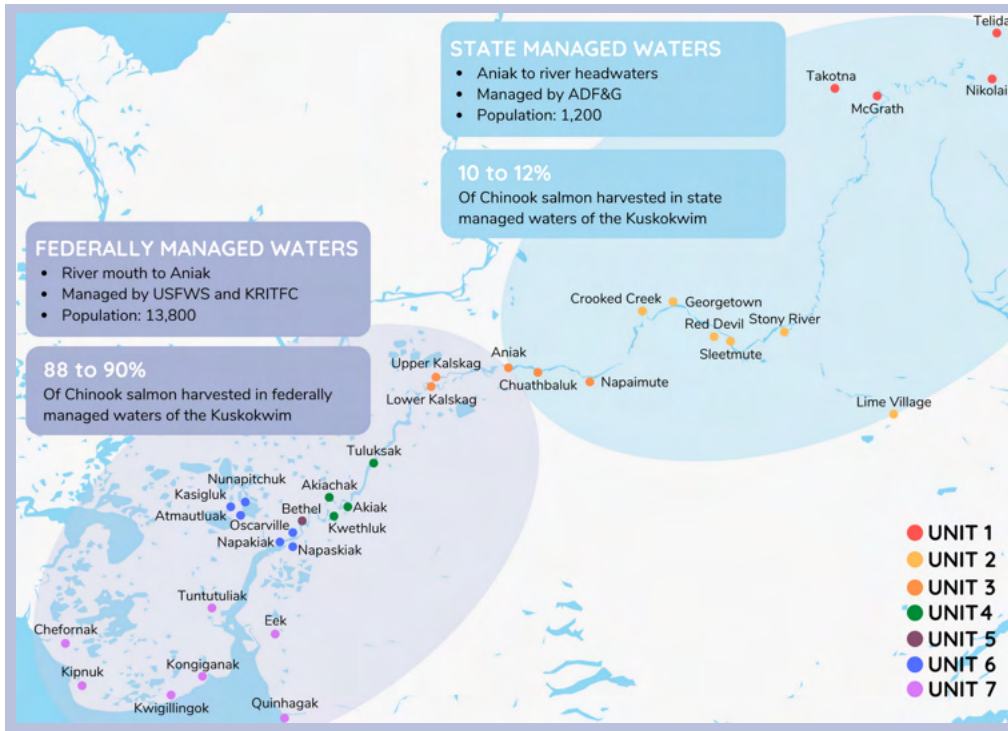
- Significant long-term declines in the sizes of returning adult salmon.
- Threats to stock diversity through the loss of smaller populations.
- Climate-driven heat stress.
- Highly uncertain in-season data.
- A need for multi-stock management.
- Uncertainty in results of management actions.

In addition, salmon management on the Kuskokwim is made difficult and risky by the months-long lag between when harvest decisions are made (May – July) and when we have an estimate of the number of fish that reached their spawning grounds (end of September). This time lag, combined with the risk factors and sources of uncertainty listed above, necessitates a precautionary approach to avoid collective overharvest of Chinook salmon.

Due to uncertainties in the amount of harvest resulting from management actions and in the spawner return number, it will never be possible to precisely achieve any specific escapement number. Our collaborative management actions and salmon counting methods are not precise enough to result in a specific number of fish on the spawning grounds. However, by aiming for the upper end of the escapement goal range, we are doing our part to help ensure that there are enough eggs in the gravel to try to rebuild our Chinook salmon runs for the future.

UPPER & LOWER RIVER HARVEST

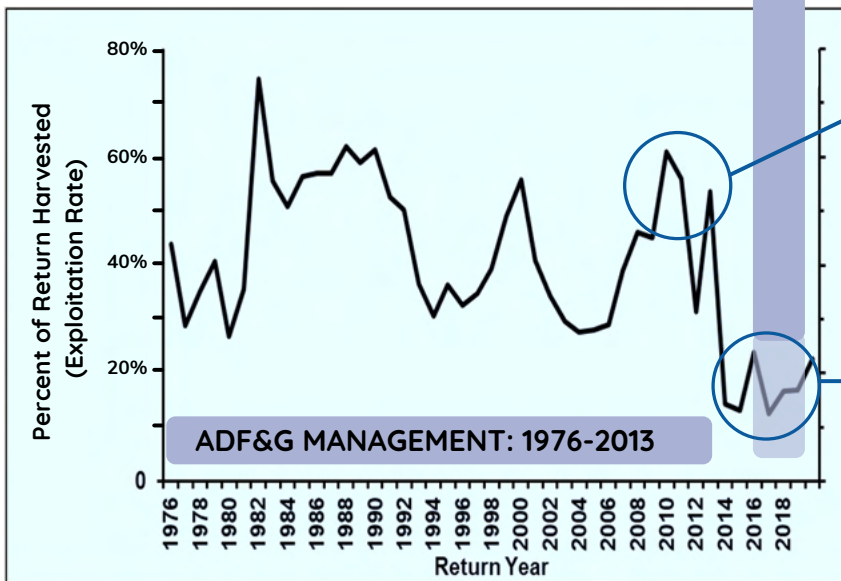
In 2021, a preliminarily estimated 27,802 Chinook salmon were harvested river-wide. Approximately 21,630 fish, or about 78% of the total harvest, were taken by lower river subsistence fishermen (between Tuntutuliak and Akiak). This is on par with average harvest distributions throughout the Kuskokwim drainage, in which up to 90% of the total salmon harvest occurs in the lower river, even when lower river conservation closures are in effect (see figure, below bottom).



Note: Harvest data comes from ADF&G post-season subsistence surveys and population data comes from Alaska Department of Labor. There are no subsistence data for the communities of Kwigillingok, Kipnuk, and Cheformak.



FEDERAL CO-MANAGEMENT: 2016-PRESENT



OVERHARVEST

ADF&G management resulted in extremely high harvest rates – over 50% of the total run! – on the lowest runs on record: 2010, 2011 and 2013.

CONSERVATION-BASED CO-MANAGEMENT

KRITFC-USFWS collaborative management results in low harvest rates in order to meet escapement goals, protect early run stocks, and help rebuild Chinook salmon stocks.

Since the Kuskokwim Chinook salmon runs began to decline around 2010, the average harvest of fish per person dropped throughout the drainage (see figure, bottom left). Pre-2010 per capita Chinook salmon harvests ranged from about 2 fish per person in the headwaters to 13 fish per person in the lower river. However, in the current state of Chinook salmon declines and lower river conservation closures, the average annual per capita harvest is 1.7 fish across the river drainage. These conservation closures, advocated for by the KRITFC in-season management team, are essential to meeting critical spawning goals and promoting equitable harvests throughout the watershed in this time of decline.

Moreover, lower river conservation closures are a part of KRITFC and USFWS' precautionary management approach. In the face of uncertainty, delayed or limited escapement data, and a need to restore diminished fish stocks, managers must apply a significant amount of precaution to their management. This means balancing conservation with opportunities for harvest, which is a challenge on any river, including on the Kuskokwim.

The KRITFC-USFWS escapement goal of 110,000 Chinook salmon – at the upper end of the escapement goal range – is a response to our need for a precautionary approach to managing the fishery. This is a change from ADF&G's approach to Kuskokwim salmon management before federal management began in 2014 and KRITFC collaborative management started in 2016 (see figure above). Because ADF&G did not manage the Chinook salmon fishery with precaution, even after fishery showed signs of population collapse, they allowed for unsustainably high harvests (exploitation rates). 2010, 2011, and 2014 – three of the last four years of state management and after in-season and post-season data pointed towards population declines – showed the lowest Chinook salmon returns on record, yet non-precautionary ADF&G opens allowed for exploitation rates of over 50% of the run. KRITFC and USFWS understand that it is critical that this collective overharvest does not occur while we work to rebuild the Chinook salmon fishery; this is the basis of our conservation-based management.

COMMUNITY-BASED HARVEST MONITORING PROGRAM

The Community-Based Harvest Monitoring (CBHM) program employs Tribal citizens to work as harvest monitors and collect in-season harvest data from their communities used to develop in-season harvest estimates for the lower river, from Tuntutuliak to Akiak. CBHM data provides fisheries managers with the only timely information to assess the subsistence harvest efforts, catches, and the progress of the subsistence salmon runs.

In 2021, the CBHM program was entirely funded and coordinated by KRITFC. Quyanana to the following harvest monitors and communities for their work this season:

- Alfred Epchook, William Egoak, Colleen Andrews, and all subsistence fishermen in Kwethluk.
- Wesley Nicholai, Dezmin Johnson, and all subsistence fishermen in Napaskiak.
- Emmitt Nicori and all subsistence fishermen in Napakiak.
- Brianna Pavila, Isaiah Pavila, and all subsistence fishermen in Tuntutuliak.
- James Heakin and all subsistence fishermen in Eek.

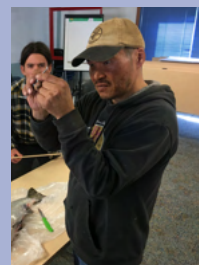
9
Harvest monitors



12
Harvest opportunities surveyed



540
In-season interviews collected



Photos: KRITFC

SUBSISTENCE HARVEST ESTIMATES

In 2021, KRITFC and ONC Fisheries, in collaboration with USFWS and independent contractors, received and processed data from the CBHM program, ONC Bethel area surveys, and USFWS aerial surveys to produce in-season subsistence salmon harvest and effort estimates from a lower river portion of the mainstem Kuskokwim River. These in-season estimates, previously produced solely by USFWS, are critical for the KRITFC and USFWS in-season management teams as they provide timely information about salmon run timing and abundance from harvest opportunities almost immediately after the harvests occur.

Eleven of 12 subsistence harvest opportunities (including ADF&G's illegal fishing opener on June 28) were included in the harvest estimate. An estimated 49,440 salmon were harvested in the lower river from Tuntutuliak to Akiak during these opportunities:

- 23,600 (48%) sockeye salmon.
- 21,630 (44%) Chinook salmon.
- 4,220 (8%) chum salmon.

Chinook and chum salmon harvests decreased by about 7% and 25%, respectively, from 2020 record lows. Fortunately, relatively abundant sockeye (red) salmon returns helped many Kuskokwim River fishing families meet some of their needs while also conserving and rebuilding Chinook and chum salmon runs.

TAKOTNA RIVER WEIR

For the fifth season, KRITFC partnered with the Takotna Tribal Council and ADF&G to operate the Takotna River weir. This weir is located 2 miles upstream of Takotna and provides the only long-term data set for upper Kuskokwim Chinook and chum salmon spawning and escapement. Each year, Takotna Tribal citizens and community members are hired to operate the weir, helping to develop the local seasonal economy and build capacity for Tribal involvement in fisheries research.

This year, the Takotna River weir was operated from July 4 through August 10 during the bulk of the Chinook and chum salmon runs. The project ran successfully despite high waters in the early season that delayed its installation and prevented fish counts for about 10 days during the season. Preliminary escapement estimates released in November 2021 show that 233 Chinook salmon and 151 chum salmon (minimum number, as an estimate was not produced) reached their spawning grounds. This is the lowest chum salmon escapement in the 19-year history of this weir – in normal years, upwards of 6,000 fish go on to spawn – giving KRITFC and our partners serious concerns for the ongoing and future health of this species. Additionally, the number of Chinook salmon was below the previous 10-year (2011 through 2020) average passage of 270 fish. There were no heat stress samples collected in 2021.



233

Chinook salmon passed

151

Chum salmon passed

BOTH SPECIES

Below long-term spawner averages

KRITFC would like to thank the 2021 weir crew members for their work throughout the season: Robert Perkins (crew leader), Manuel Martinez (assistant crew leader), Joe Martinez, Richard Watcher, Mike Dopler, and Shawn Gover. We would also like to thank ADF&G for signing an agreement for KRITFC to use equipment in Takotna through the 2025 season. We give a special congratulations to Robert Perkins for completing his tenth year of work at the Takotna River weir. Thank you, Robert, for your dedication and hard work leading the Takotna weir crew!



Photos: Robert Perkins

KWETHLUK RIVER WEIR

KRITFC, in partnership with the Organized Village of Kwethluk and USFWS, operates a weir on the Kwethluk River, located about 35 miles upstream of Kwethluk. The Kwethluk River weir monitors Chinook salmon passage on the second most productive tributary of the watershed and provides an important opportunity for Tribal capacity building within the community of Kwethluk.

For the second year in a row, the Kwethluk River weir did not operate because of concerns regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and flood conditions, which prevented installation of the weir. Because this project is critical in monitoring Chinook salmon abundance, KRITFC sincerely hopes the Kwethluk River weir will operate in the 2022 season.

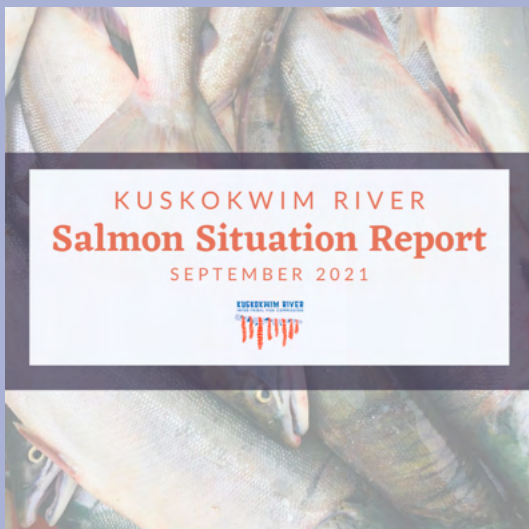
KUSKOKWIM RIVER SALMON SITUATION REPORT

In September 2021, KRITFC released our Kuskokwim River Salmon Situation Report, which documents the current Chinook and chum salmon disasters on the Kuskokwim River and their impacts on the 33 subsistence-dependent communities in our watershed.

Through testimony and data, this situation report communicates the devastation that multi-species declines of Kuskokwim salmon have caused to our physical, cultural, spiritual, and economic wellbeing, as well as the critical need for new conservation- and ecosystem-based management regimes, particularly in the Bering Sea.

The first iteration of our report was sent to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in advance of their October 2021 meeting, and it included an analysis of salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea commercial pollock fishery. Read our report at kuskosalmon.org/policy.

QUOTED



"[In terms of chums,] there were none this year. That was different. I like to get chums for dryfish and for my half-dried. There just weren't any."

MEGAN LEARY | NAPAIMUTE

"I honestly have no idea what's up with the chum. It was such a rapid decline. They were coming in the hundreds of thousands, millions, to the river to almost nothing."

JONATHAN SAMUELSON | GEORGETOWN

"Without my subsistence life, I don't know how I'd get through it. It's my therapy, being outdoors on the land and on the water. I'd hate to lose that, but we could possibly lose the fishery part, which is the most important part, if we're not proactive about this."

JACQUELINE CLEVELAND | QUINHAGAK

"Our fishery management system and our fisheries are at a crossroads as we face the crisis of climate change with an inequitable system of management. We are heartened by the forward-thinking solutions presented in the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act which will give us the tools we need to restore abundant oceans and continue practicing our way of life."

MARY PELTOLA | BETHEL



MARINE FISHERIES ENGAGEMENT

In 2021, KRITFC expanded our efforts to restore our salmon populations by engaging with marine fisheries agencies, particularly the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which is responsible for managing Alaskan marine fisheries and setting bycatch limits.

KRITFC testified before the Council in April and October 2021 about the impacts of salmon bycatch on our subsistence communities and ways of life, urging them to limit salmon bycatch limits to zero in the 2022 commercial pollock fishery and collect new genetic stock assessment data for Alaska Chinook and chum salmon populations. While bycatch is only one of many stressors linked with our Chinook and chum salmon declines, it is one over which our governments have control.

Additionally, KRITFC advocated for two voting Tribal seats to be included on the Council through the reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Act. Currently, there are no specifically designated Alaska

QUOTED

"[We ask for the Council to:] One, rebuild and maintain abundance of Chinook [and chum] salmon returns to our river and provide subsistence users with healthy escapements on coastal Alaska rivers. It is critical that the Council engage in this effort. Two, the Council should take emergency action to limit Chinook and chum salmon bycatch to zero in 2022 in the Bering Sea pollock fishery... Three, sustainable management is ecosystem-wide, meaning it includes subsistence users on our river."

MIKE WILLIAMS SR. | AKIAK

"If [trawlers] think their bycatch is nothing, one fish that they bycatch that's coming into the Kuskokwim River has 2,000 eggs, and when it goes up to the spawning areas, it'll spawn... Please help us find a way to stop the bycatch to zero."

ADOLPH LUPIE | TUNTUTULIAK



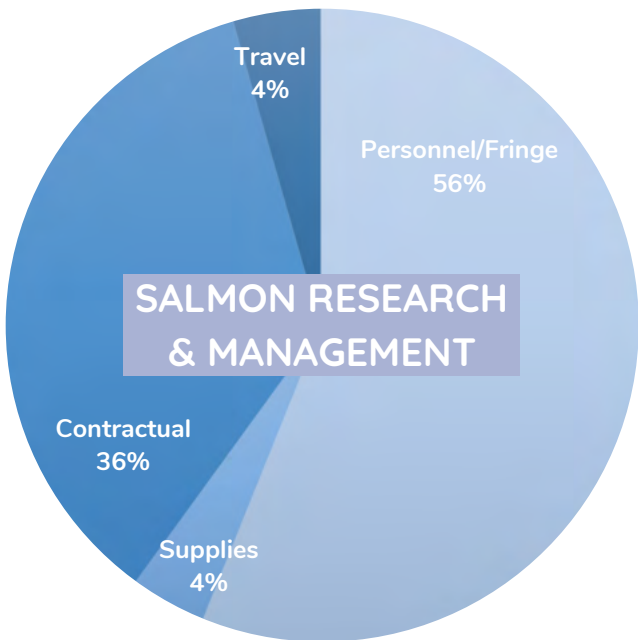
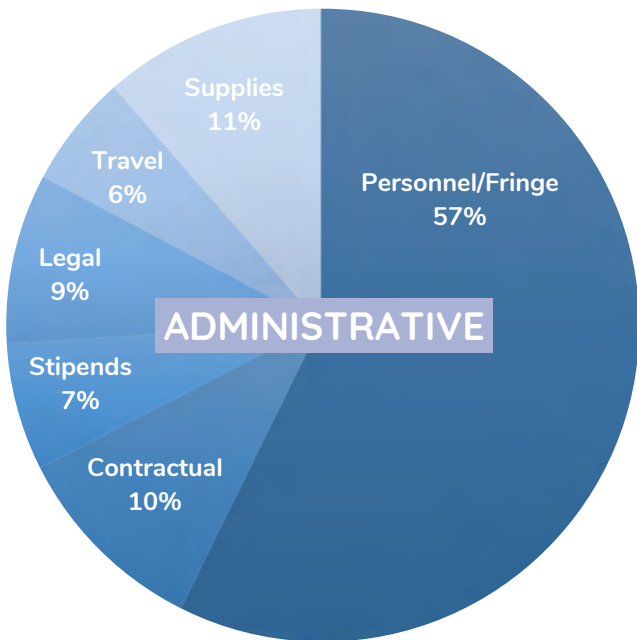
Native seats on the Council, preventing our voices and votes from being included in decisions that affect our ways of life. In June 2021, our Executive Council passed Resolution 2021-01 supporting the inclusion of two voting Tribal seats.

In November, our executive director provided an expert witness statement (see left) in a U.S. Congressional hearing in support of H.R. 4690: Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act, which would include these Tribal seats on the Council through a reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Act.

2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2021, KRITFC solely funded the CBHM program and Takotna River weir project from our base budget and grant award funding. This is a significant financial and capacity-building milestone for our organization. We thank our partners at the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association for providing financial and administrative support for these projects in past years, and we look forward to partnering with other agencies and organizations to coordinate and fund these projects in the future.

\$711,872.35
2021 Total Annual Expenditures



NEXT STEPS

In 2022, KRITFC hopes to:

- Continue our productive partnership with USFWS, which includes creating a joint 2022 Salmon Management and Harvest Strategy.
- Begin our Kwethluk River freshwater productivity/smolt outmigration project with USFWS and OVK. This will study the Chinook salmon life stage from the time the young hatched fish leave the spawning beds and move downriver towards the ocean where they will grown into adults, and will build upon previous research that documented a concerning decline in the numbers of juvenile salmon leaving the drainage. KRITFC received an award from the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative to fund this project.
- Operate the CBHM program and expand into new lower, middle, and upper river communities, and use this data to produce in-season harvest estimates.
- Operate the Kwethluk and Takotna River weirs.
- Explore the use of drones and eDNA to help assess salmon runs.
- Further our partnership with and capacity-building through the JVC Northwest/AmeriCorps program.
- Engage with regional and national organizations to restore collapsed Western Alaska salmon populations.
- Continue to advocate for Tribal co-management and protections of our lands, waters, resources, and traditional ways of life.





OUR P
OUR P
OUR

RIVER
PEOPLE
FISH



KUSKOKWIM RIVER
INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION



PO Box 190, Bethel, AK 99559
821 N Street, Suite 103, Anchorage, AK 99501
info@kritfc.org
(907) 545-6206



kuskosalmon.org



[@kuskosalmon](https://www.facebook.com/kuskosalmon)



[@kuskosalmon](https://www.instagram.com/kuskosalmon)