



DRAFT MEMORANDUM

TO: Members
Alaska Board of Fisheries

DATE: October 1, 2026

FROM: Forrest R. Bowers, Director *FRB*
Division of Commercial Fisheries

SUBJECT: Kodiak Management Area
Stock of Concern
Recommendations

and

Israel Payton, Director *IP*
Division of Sport Fish

This memorandum summarizes the results of the stock of concern evaluation for Kodiak Management Area (Registration Area K) salmon stocks for the 2026 Board of Fisheries (board) regulatory cycle. The Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries (SSFP; 5 AAC 39.222) directs the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) to report to the board on the status of salmon stocks and identify any stocks that present a concern related to yield, management, or conservation during regular board meetings.

Currently there are 21 escapement goals in Registration Area K (2 king, 11 sockeye, 4 coho, 3 pink and 1 chum salmon (Table 1; Foster et al. 2023). Escapement is monitored using weirs, aerial surveys, and foot surveys in these areas, and in general, escapement goals have been achieved during the recent cycle. Ayakulik River and Karluk River king salmon are the only stocks currently listed as stocks of concern (management) in the Kodiak area.

CURRENT STOCKS OF CONCERN

Ayakulik River King Salmon

In January 2020, the board designated Ayakulik River king salmon a stock of management concern. During that meeting, an action plan was created and approved by the board (ADF&G 2020).

The Ayakulik River king salmon run did not meet the Biological Escapement Goal (BEG; 4,800–8,400 fish) in the last 10 years (Table 1). Ayakulik River king salmon have seen a marked downward trend in escapement, with only 354 fish in 2024, 444 in 2025 and 807 in 2026 which are the lowest king salmon weir counts recorded since the weir has been in its current location at the lagoon in 1970.

The department recommends maintaining the Ayakulik River king salmon designation as a stock of management concern.

Karluk River King Salmon

In January 2011, the board designated Karluk River king salmon a stock of management concern. During that meeting, an action plan was created and approved by the board (ADF&G 2011).

The Karluk River king salmon run did not meet the Biological Escapement Goal (BEG; 3,000–6,000 fish) in 6 out of the last 10 years and has not met the goal since 2020 (Table 1). Karluk River king salmon have seen a marked downward trend in escapement since the late 2000s, with only 93 fish in 2024, 76 in 2025, and 308 in 2026, which are the lowest king salmon weir counts recorded since the weir has been operated in its current location at the lagoon beginning in 1976.

Prior to 2023 Karluk River king salmon were generally maintaining escapements of 2-3,000 fish per year. Lower escapements after 2022 are likely due to poor survival brought on by high river water temperatures and low water levels in the Karluk River drainage in 2019 and 2020, rather than increased fishery removals. The department recommends maintaining Karluk River king salmon as a stock of management concern.

In 2025–2026, Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association (KRAA) and Koniag in collaboration with the department initiated a rehabilitation¹ plan and in August 2026 began field work and brood collection of adult spawners on Karluk River with plans of an additional egg take in 2027 and backstocking juveniles within Karluk River in the spring of 2028.

OTHER STOCKS WARRANTING CONSIDERATION

Karluk River Early-Run Sockeye Salmon

Karluk River early-run sockeye salmon have not reached the escapement goal in 3 out of the last 5 years. The department largely attributes the poor escapement with high river water temperatures and low water levels in the Karluk Lake spawning tributaries in 2019 and 2020 (ACOR 2024). With those brood years largely failing.

The 2026 escapement was roughly double that enumerated in 2024 and 2025, signaling an increase back toward more typical production and the department is projecting that the run should meet the goal in 2027. The department is not recommending Karluk early-run sockeye salmon for stock of concern status.

STOCK OF CONCERN RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the department is recommending the following stock of concern designations:

- Maintain Ayakulik River king salmon as stock of management concern.
- Maintain Karluk River king salmon as stock of management concern.
- No other systems in Kodiak Management Area stocks are recommended for stock of concern designation

REFERENCES CITED

ACOR (Alaska Coastal Observations and Research) with Larsen Bay Tribal Council. 2024 (monitoring document), Karluk River Water Temperature Monitoring Report January 2019 through October 2023. Kodiak.

ADF&G (Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game). 2011. Karluk River King Salmon Action Plan, January 11, 2011. Kodiak Finfish Board of Fisheries Meeting, RC 006, Anchorage.

ADF&G (Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game). 2020. Ayakulik River King Salmon Action Plan, January 11, 2020. Kodiak Finfish Board of Fisheries Meeting, RC 17, Anchorage.

Foster, M. B., T. B. Polum, M. L. Wattum, E. K. C. Fox, T. R. McKinley, K. L. Schaberg, and H. Finkle. 2023. Review of salmon escapement goals in the Kodiak Management Area, 2022. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fishery Manuscript No. 23-03, Anchorage.

Table 1.–Escapements from 2017 to 2026 for salmon stocks with escapement goals in Kodiak Management Area (Area K).

	Goal Range			Initial										
System	Lower	Upper	Type	Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 ^a
KING SALMON														
Ayakulik River ^b	4,800	8,400	BEG	2017	3,712	2,149	1,948	2,402	2,961	2,845	590	354	444	807
Karluk River	3,000	6,000	BEG	2011	2,600	3,155	3,898	3,344	2,796	2,629	379	76	93	308
SOCKEYE SALMON														
Afognak (Litnik) River ^c	20,000	50,000	SEG	2020	22,151	17,601	26,817	25,383	31,997	29,509	35,559	32,218	22,195	38,233
Ayakulik River Early Run	140,000	280,000	SEG	2011	204,497	189,008	162,430	220,935	265,756	251,690	200,143	221,701	355,800	494,776
Ayakulik River Late Run	60,000	120,000	SEG	2011	120,361	77,325	117,209	81,660	118,418	100,772	117,956	96,293	85,186	165,000
Buskin Lake	5,000	8,000	BEG	2011	7,222	4,284	12,297	7,741	2,330	8,121	1,761	9,704	10,584	NC
Frazer Lake	75,000	170,000	BEG	2008	129,227	201,161	169,627	137,570	186,632	137,565	100,447	78,504	92,875	79,120
Karluk River Early Run	150,000	250,000	BEG	2017	242,599	205,054	190,168	158,846	131,775	177,008	182,172	67,743	64,469	112,144
Karluk River Late Run	200,000	450,000	BEG	2017	385,896	428,225	317,381	293,147	376,209	326,801	605,468	430,829	203,202	225,072
Pasagshak River (weir) ^d	2,000	8,000	SEG	2024	11,021	2,019	4,537	3,922	8,551	4,377	4,495	7,641	5,366	3,484
Saltery Lake ^e	15,000	35,000	BEG	2011	35,218	19,299	20,783	22,637	61,824	22,228	47,936	63,259	48,550	23,034
Upper Station River Early Run	43,000	93,000	BEG	2011	83,614	61,732	49,517	56,190	108,225	82,824	63,129	30,252	81,806	110,414
Upper Station River Late Run ^f	120,000	265,000	SEG	2020	209,298	235,669	165,146	195,147	355,507	168,880	181,290	222,131	162,325	150,000
COHO SALMON														
American River	400		LB SEG	2011	410	78	NC	279	297	360	434	440	104	
Buskin River ^g	4,700	9,600	SEG	2020	5,092	4,164	5,350	NC	7,427	NC	NC	NC	5,015	
Olds River ^h	500		LB SEG	2020	1,054	878	NC	794	923	1,129	857	201	913	
Pasagshak River	1,200		LB SEG	2011	701	3,186	488	2,031	4,721	618	2,297	1,289	1,824	
PINK SALMON														
Kodiak Archipelago (odd year)	2,000,000	5,000,000	SEG	2011	5,079,016		4,688,688		4,562,998		5,170,013		5,676,124	
Kodiak Archipelago (even year)	3,000,000	7,000,000	SEG	2011		4,874,342		9,429,396		5,153,824		3,383,009		3,750,000
Mainland District	250,000	1,000,000	SEG	2011	1,010,100	280,400	904,400	1,484,000	478,250	579,900	729,600	158,000	918,700	120,000
CHUM SALMON														
Kodiak Archipelago ⁱ	101,000		LB SEG	2017	184,500	115,100	99,400	64,200	113,300	102,300	133,100	75,350	117,100	106,000

-continued-

Table 1.–Page 2 of 2.

Note: Shaded cells indicate escapement below the goal that existed at the time. Grayed numbers indicate the aggregate goal lacks the complete set of survey streams (not applicable in this time series). BEG = biological escapement goal; SEG = sustainable escapement goal; LB SEG = lower bound SEG; NC = no survey or weir.

^a Escapement numbers are preliminary for 2026.

^b Final escapements include estimated weir counts due to flooding at weir during king run. King salmon escapement estimated for Ayakulik River includes an estimated 20 kings harvested above the weir when a fishery has occurred as harvest estimates are typically not available for Ayakulik River sport harvest. King salmon sport harvest since 2011 is assumed to be zero as the fishery was closed to retention. All years include fish counts from post-weir aerial surveys. From 2011-2016 the BEG 4,000–7,000 fish.

^c Afognak (Litnik) River sockeye salmon escapement does not incorporate egg take removals but are typically nominal.

^d Pasagshak River sockeye salmon escapement goal was changed from LB SEG (3,000) to a weir-based SEG (2,000–8,000) in 2024.

^e Saltery Lake sockeye salmon escapements are weir counts minus fish removed for egg-takes.

^f Upper Station Late Run sockeye salmon escapement goal was modified from a BEG (120,000–265,000) to an SEG in 2020.

^g Buskin River coho salmon escapement estimates from 2022 to 2024 are incomplete due to flooding at the weir. The goal was modified from a BEG (4,700–9,600) to an SEG in 2020.

^h Olds River coho salmon escapement goal was changed from an SEG (1,000–2,200) to LB SEG (500) in 2020

ⁱ The Kodiak Archipelago aggregate chum salmon goal comprises 17 index streams