



Whitefish Trends on the Upper Kuskokwim River

Project to update subsistence whitefish harvest and use information for the communities of Lime Village and Nikolai

WHY CONDUCT THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of this project is to document trends in the subsistence harvest of whitefish on the Upper Kuskokwim River. This project aims to answer the following three key research questions:

1. What are the contemporary harvest and use patterns of each whitefish species used by Lime Village and Nikolai?
2. What factors have shaped the harvest efforts of each whitefish species over time and why are whitefish harvests declining?
3. What factors are influencing the ability of residents to harvest the varied species of whitefish?

The Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game is charged with quantifying subsistence harvests by conducting studies, including collecting data from subsistence users. The Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game apply this information to define nonsubsistence areas, identify fish stocks and game populations with customary and traditional subsistence uses, and establish the amounts reasonably necessary to provide opportunities for Alaskans to participate in these subsistence activities.

This research is funded by the federal Office of Subsistence Management. It will allow the Division of Subsistence, the National Park Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to fill in gaps in our database by producing up-to-date whitefish harvest estimates and by providing local knowledge

for use in further understanding whitefish conservation issues in the Kuskokwim River Basin. This project as shown on the map is to occur in communities the communities of Lime Village and Nikolai in the Upper Kuskokwim River Basin during 2013. A second year of studies is planned these two communities for 2014.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to providing comprehensive subsistence harvest data on a regular basis, the program will include training of local researchers in each study community and partnerships with local governments and regional organizations to support implementation and maintenance of the project. Communities will also have the opportunity to review the data collected before it becomes final and comment.

HOW WE USE THIS DATA

The resulting information will assist state and federal managers in their subsistence management responsibilities, will be of use to local and regional advisory councils in making recommendations for regulatory changes, and will assist the State of Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game and the Federal Subsistence Board in the informed management of fish and wildlife in the region. Final results will be summarized in a technical report as well as included in the Division of Subsistence Community Subsistence Information System (CSIS). Both are available online from the Division of Subsistence, ADF&G.

TIMELINE

December 2012 – January 2013

Community Scoping Meetings

February – March 2013

Household Surveys and Local Traditional Knowledge Interviews

May – September 2013

Spring, Summer, and Fall Whitefish Participant Observation

December 2012 – January 2013

Household Surveys and Follow-Up Interviews

PROPOSED STUDY COMMUNITIES



ADF&G Contact

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DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE

For a copy of our OEO statement, see www.adfg.alaska.gov