

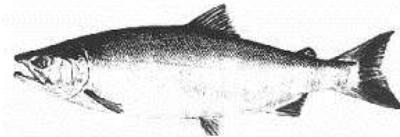
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



*Douglas Vincent-Lang, Commissioner
Sam Rabung, Director*



Travis Elison, Naknek-Kvichak Manager
Paul Salomone, Egegik and Ugashik Manager
Tim Sands, Nushagak and Togiak Manager
Date Issued: April 9, 2019
Time: 11:00 a.m.

King Salmon Office P.O. Box 37
King Salmon, AK 99613
Phone: 246-3341 Fax: 246-3309
Dillingham Office P.O. Box 230
Dillingham, AK 99576
Phone: 842-5227 Fax: 842-5937

BRISTOL BAY 2019 OUTLOOK FOR COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING

INTRODUCTION

This document provides general information to fishermen, processors, and the public concerning the upcoming Bristol Bay salmon season. Included is the general framework for management of each of the five major districts and the 2019 salmon forecast.

During the season, Bristol Bay salmon fishing announcements are broadcast on marine VHF Channel 07A. Current fishing announcements are aired on local radio stations – KAKN and KDLG. As conditions in the fishery change, for the most current information, fishermen should stand by at regular announcement times: 9:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated. Information is also available via telephone; for east-side fisheries (Naknek-Kvichak, Egegik, and Ugashik), dial 246-INFO (4636), for west-side fisheries (Nushagak and Togiak) dial 842-5226. Fishermen are asked to note that regular office hours at the Dillingham ADF&G office will be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. In addition to the regular office hours, from June 15 to July 14 the Dillingham office will be open on weekends from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. In King Salmon the office hours are as follows: June 1 to June 14 and after July 17: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed for lunch and weekends. From June 15 to July 17: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days per week.

Regarding district registration cards: set gillnet permit holders are only required to fill out and return set gillnet registration cards if they fish in the Nushagak District. Drift gillnet permit holders must fill out and return district registration cards prior to commercial fishing in any district in Bristol Bay. District registration cards will be available at the Anchorage, King Salmon, and Dillingham offices beginning May 1. In addition, PDF files of district registration cards are posted on the ADF&G Bristol Bay homepage and can be printed, completed, mailed to the address on the printout, or submitted to Anchorage, King Salmon, or Dillingham office personnel. District registration for drift gillnet permit holders can also be accomplished online at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareabristolbay.salmon#management>

Fishery updates, announcements, catch and escapement information, and Port Moller Test Fishery genetic stock composition estimates will be available at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareabristolbay.salmon>

The Port Moller Test Fishery daily catch updates and interpretations of the data will be posted at the following web site once the project becomes operational on June 10:

<https://www.bbsri.org/port-moller-test-fishery>

Fishermen and processors should be aware of the reporting requirements in 5 AAC 06.377(b) that state:

“Each commercial fisherman shall report, on an ADF&G fish ticket, at the time of landing, the number of king and coho salmon taken but not sold.”

Alaska Wildlife Troopers – Summer 2019 Outlook – Bristol Bay

Enforcement Priorities:

- Continued strong focus on fishing district lines and open/closed fishing periods in all districts using all available assets.
- Routine boarding of drift gillnet and processor vessels to verify licensing and permitting regulations are met. Fishermen and processors are reminded that at the time of delivery of fish, a fish ticket must be generated and must include the signature of a company representative and the full name and signature of the CFEC permit holder (BOTH permit holders if dual operation). The permit holder must be present at the time of delivery in order to sign the fish ticket. Crew members cannot sign fish tickets for permit holders.
- Continued enforcement of state boating safety laws in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Continued enforcement and educational outreach regarding potential conflicts between resource users and marine mammals in cooperation with National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Increased checks for compliance with legal gear length and depths as well as continued focus on basic vessel and gear ID such as boat, buoy, and cork markings.
- AWT has noted an increase in violations for grounding and failure to report lost gillnets. Fisherman are reminded to review gillnet specifications and operations regulations and be aware that fishing a drift gillnet when the net, or vessel to which it is attached, is grounded is prohibited by regulation and the loss of a gillnet, or portion of the gillnet, is required to be reported to a local department office in Dillingham or King Salmon within 15 hours.

Captain of the Port, Western Alaska Navigation Safety Advisory

In January 2018 and 2019, the US Coast Guard participated in industry-led navigation safety workshops composed of Bristol Bay commercial fishermen and tug/barge industry members who developed safety measures and reminders on the International Navigation Rules. This navigation advisory addresses the requirements for operating a vessel upon the navigable waters of Bristol Bay.

Additionally, it outlines specific navigational safety concerns and risk mitigation measures for vessels operating in the Naknek River. Please refer to the attached Navigation Safety Advisory for details.

SALMON OUTLOOK

BAYWIDE

The 2019 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run is forecasted to be approximately 40.2 million fish. Based on the forecast and using the mid-points of the lower or upper portion of escapement goal ranges, depending on forecasted run size, 26.1 million fish are potentially available for commercial inshore harvest (Table 1). The department manages fisheries based on inseason information regarding abundance. The inseason management approach uses a suite of tools to provide information on abundance in each district as each run develops and that information is used by the department to determine fishing opportunity.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opens June 1 by regulation. Fishing in eastside districts and Togiak will be allowed using a weekly schedule that will vary by district. The schedules are in place to balance fishing opportunity with escapement in the early part of the season, particularly for king salmon. As each run develops and sockeye salmon run characteristics become defined within individual districts, fishing time will be adjusted accordingly. In the Nushagak District, management will focus on king salmon in the early part of the season, and switch to sockeye salmon management as abundance dictates.

2019 Regulatory Changes

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) met in Dillingham in November 2018 to review proposals regarding the Bristol Bay Salmon fishery. Action taken at that meeting resulted in the following regulatory changes for the Bristol Bay fishery:

- A mesh size restriction of 5.5 inches or less has been established in the Ugashik and Naknek-Kvichak districts from June 1 through July 22, to help in the conservation of king salmon. Fishermen are reminded that the Egegik District has the same restriction by regulation.
- The late-season fishing schedule for Naknek-Kvichak, Egegik, and Ugashik districts was changed to allow fishing from 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Sunday, beginning 9:00 a.m. July 17, or as established by emergency order.
- The Kvichak Section boundary line (north line) was moved slightly north near Graveyard Point to the newly defined coordinate of 58° 52.10' N lat., 157° 00.80' W. long.
- The Alagnak River Sockeye Salmon Special Harvest Area Management Plan was amended to provide opportunity while conserving Kvichak River sockeye salmon, repealed the condition that was tied to the king salmon escapement goal, and provided direction to minimize harvest of king salmon.
- Increase minimum distance between set gillnets in the Wood River Special Harvest Area to 250 feet.
- Clarified the definition of districts to include special harvest areas and further clarified gillnet specifications and operations within special harvest areas.

NAKNEK-KVICHAK DISTRICT

An inshore run of approximately 15.5 million sockeye salmon is expected for the Naknek-Kvichak

District in 2019. Based on the forecast, the projected harvest in the Naknek-Kvichak District is approximately 7.8 million sockeye salmon: 2.7 million from the Kvichak River, 1.5 million from the Alagnak River, and 3.6 million from the Naknek River (Table 1). Sockeye salmon returning to the Naknek-Kvichak District are predicted to be 43% age-1.2, 42% age-1.3, 11% age-2.2, and 3% age-2.3 fish.

The Naknek River escapement goal range is 800,000 to 2.0 million sockeye salmon. The Kvichak River escapement goal range is 2.0 million to 10.0 million sockeye salmon. The Alagnak River escapement goal was changed to a minimum of 210,000 sockeye salmon. Escapements will be managed within the lower or upper portions of the escapement goals proportional to the run size based on the preseason forecast and inseason assessment of run size.

Fishing in the Naknek-Kvichak District will be open four days per week from 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Friday, beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 3 and ending 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 21. Drift gillnets will be restricted to fishing in the Naknek Section only, while set gillnets will be allowed to fish in the entire Naknek-Kvichak District. From June 21 until July 17 fishing periods will be based on sockeye salmon escapements, abundance in the district, and gear group harvest percentages. District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. As in previous years, some openings could occur on short notice.

EGEGIK DISTRICT

A forecasted inshore run of approximately 8.7 million sockeye salmon is expected for the Egegik River in 2019. The escapement goal range is 800,000 to 2.0 million sockeye salmon. Based on the forecast, the expected surplus potentially available for harvest is 7.0 million fish (Table 1). Approximately 34% of the run is expected to be age-2.2 fish, followed by age-1.2 (28%), age-1.3 (20%), and age 2.3 (19%).

In 2019, separate gear openings and extensions will be used to adjust harvest in an attempt to achieve allocation percentages. Fishermen are reminded that regulations direct the department to avoid “to the extent practicable,” continuous fishing with set gillnet gear in the Egegik District, therefore Egegik set gillnet fishermen should expect breaks in fishing.

Based on the Kvichak River sockeye salmon forecast, fishing will begin in the full Egegik District. The season will start with a three day per week schedule that will be in effect through June 14. The primary reason for the three day per week schedule is to provide for king salmon escapement. Commercial fishing will be allowed in the Egegik District from 9:00 a.m. Monday, until 9:00 a.m. Wednesday and from 9:00 a.m. Thursday until 9:00 a.m. Friday. This schedule will begin at 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 3 and run through 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 14 for drift and set gillnet gear. After June 14, additional fishing time for both gear groups will be scheduled according to sockeye salmon run strength. As in previous years, some openings could occur on short notice. Periods will be adjusted to allocate harvest between drift and set gillnet gear groups.

In addition, subsistence fishing will be permitted in the waters of the Egegik commercial district from 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 1 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 16. The department will consider additional directed subsistence openings but will wait until inseason to announce the timing of those openings.

UGASHIK DISTRICT

The forecasted Ugashik River sockeye salmon inshore run in 2019 is 3.3 million fish. The escapement goal range is 500,000 to 1.4 million sockeye salmon. Based on the forecast, 2.4 million fish are potentially available for harvest. Approximately 50% of the run is expected to be age-1.3, 38% age-1.2, 10% age-2.2, and 3% age-2.3 fish.

The Ugashik District allocation plan specifies 10% for set gillnet and 90% for the drift gillnet group. As in previous years, separate gear openings and adjusting length of commercial periods will be used to address allocation between gear groups in 2019.

Beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 3, commercial fishing in the Ugashik District will be allowed on a 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Friday schedule through 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 14. With an expected run to the Kvichak River that exceeds the minimum escapement goal stipulated in regulation, fishing will begin in the full Ugashik District. Additional fishing time after June 14 will depend on fishery performance and run strength indicators. Permit holders should note that the regulation restricting opportunity to no more than 48 hours between June 16 and June 23 will not be in effect in 2019.

In addition, subsistence fishing will be permitted in the waters of the Ugashik commercial district from 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 1 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 16.

WALRUS

It is unknown at this time whether walrus will return to the Cape Greig area. If they do, then the department will use the adjusted line from 2016. If they do not, the district boundaries will revert to those in regulation at 5 AAC 06.200(d). The first announcement of the 2019 season will clarify which boundary will be in place for the summer.

At the March 2013 meeting, the board made changes to when Area T permit holders may fish in the inner portion of the Cinder River Section (river and lagoon) and the Inner Port Heiden Section. The board adopted proposals that would allow Area T permit holders to fish within the inner portion of the Cinder River Section and Inner Port Heiden Section during all months when open by regulation. For further information contact ADF&G in Port Moller at 907-375-2716. Area T permit holders who fish the Cinder River and Port Heiden sections and deliver their catch in the Ugashik District are reminded to report the section of catch on the appropriate fish tickets and note that transporting fish from the sections mentioned above to deliver in the Ugashik District is not permitted during July.

NUSHAGAK DISTRICT

Nushagak River king salmon are managed according to the *Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.361). This plan directs the commercial fishery to be managed for an inriver goal of 95,000 king salmon. The department will closely monitor king salmon escapement to evaluate the potential for any directed king salmon openings in 2019.

The Nushagak District sockeye salmon inshore run forecast is approximately 10.0 million fish; 2.0 million for escapement and 8.0 million potentially available for harvest in the Nushagak District commercial salmon fishery (Table 1). The total inshore run by river system is: Wood River 4.5 million (escapement goal range 700,000 to 1.8 million), Igushik River 1.5 million (escapement goal range 150,000 to 400,000), and Nushagak River 4.0 million (escapement goal range of 370,000 to 900,000). Approximately 40% of the forecasted run is expected to be age-1.2 sockeye salmon, < 3% age-2.2, 56% age-1.3, and < 1% age-2.3 fish.

The strategy for 2019 is to start directed sockeye salmon openings around June 20 once we have 30,000 sockeye salmon escapement past the Wood River tower. This is contingent upon the Nushagak River king salmon escapement projecting to be at least 95,000. If Nushagak River king salmon escapement is projecting below 95,000 fish, directed sockeye salmon openings will wait until 100,000 sockeye salmon are projected to pass Wood River tower.

Openings will be scheduled based on sockeye salmon escapement levels in the Nushagak and Wood rivers. Mesh size will be limited to 5.5 inches or smaller unless king salmon escapement is above expectations. If the Nushagak River sockeye salmon escapement decreases relative to expected escapements, the department may first warn and then impose the 4.75-inch mesh restriction in the Nushagak District. Based on changes made by the board in December 2015, the department would also open the Wood River Special Harvest Area (WRSHA) at this time. Subsequently, if Nushagak River sockeye salmon escapement falls below the expected 370,000 fish curve, then the department may limit fishing to only the WRSHA to protect Nushagak River sockeye salmon. Commercial openings in the district may follow as allowed by escapement levels in the Nushagak River.

Igushik River sockeye salmon will be managed independently of the Nushagak-Wood River sockeye salmon stocks. Set gillnet fishing will begin in the Igushik Section when there is a market available. Initial openings will be 8-hours per day and additional time will be added if large harvests or escapement information indicate more time is warranted. Drift gillnet openings in the Igushik Section will be added as needed to control sockeye salmon escapement. Igushik River sockeye salmon returns can be quite variable relative to forecasted run strength. Management will incorporate a readiness to respond with increasing early set gillnet openings, and an attempt to maintain the 6% sockeye salmon harvest allocation to the Igushik Section set gillnet group by only adding drift gillnet openings as needed.

The department will switch to coho salmon management around July 23, when sockeye salmon harvest decreases. Sonar counts will be used to make management decisions regarding coho salmon fishing opportunity.

District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. Permit holders interested in test fishing in the Nushagak District should contact Tim Sands in Dillingham at (907) 842-5227.

TOGIAK DISTRICT

The 2019 inshore run of Togiak River sockeye salmon is forecast to be approximately 1.1 million fish. Based on the forecast, approximately 870,000 sockeye salmon will potentially be available for commercial harvest. The escapement goal range is 120,000 to 270,000 sockeye salmon. Approximately 16% of the run is expected to be age 1.2, < 1% of the run is expected to be age 2.2, 83% is expected to be age 1.3 and < 1% is expected to be age 2.3.

Unlike other fishing districts in Bristol Bay that require emergency orders to announce fishing periods, Togiak District follows a regular weekly schedule that allows fishing in: Togiak Bay Section four days per week, fishing in Kulukak Section two and a half days per week, and fishing in Matogak, Osviak, and Cape Peirce Sections five days per week. Following the *Registration and Reregistration* regulations, permit holders are restricted from fishing in the Togiak District until 9:00 a.m. July 27 if they have fished in any other district in Bristol Bay, and conversely, restricts permit holders from fishing in any other district until 9:00 a.m. July 27 if

they have fished in the Togiak District. A 2015 board action now requires vessel transfers to be restricted in Togiak District similarly to the restriction of permit transfers. Other recent regulation changes prevent drift gillnet fishing effort near the Togiak River mouth through July 15 and restricts mesh size to 5.5 inches or smaller between June 15 and July 15 for the conservation of king salmon.

King salmon run strength in the Togiak River has been considered below average for several years. The department is anticipating another poor king salmon run, and permit holders can expect emergency orders to reduce the weekly fishing schedule in the last two weeks of June.

Harvest of coho and pink salmon will be dependent on market presence. If a market for coho salmon is present, the department will continue to follow the regular weekly schedule unless it is determined that more conservative action is needed.

Acknowledgement

The department would like to thank the Bristol Bay Fisheries Collaborative (BBFC) for funding assistance in 2018. The BBFC began in 2016 and is an agreement between ADF&G and the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute to work together with stakeholders to restore a world-class fishery management system and raise funds to support and maintain it. This agreement is supported by ADF&G, BBSRI, drift and set net fishermen, processors, municipalities, villages, support industries and other stakeholders. A list of organizations that committed financial support to the BBFC in 2018, as well as additional information about this agreement can be found at <https://www.bbsri.org/bbfc>.

Table 1.—Forecast of total run, escapement, and harvest of major age classes of sockeye salmon returning to Bristol Bay river systems in 2019.

DISTRICT River	Millions of Sockeye Salmon							
	Forecasted Production by Age Class				Total	Forecasted		South Peninsula
	1.2	2.2	1.3	2.3		Escapement	Harvest	
NAKNEK-KVICHAK								
Kvichak	2.95	1.08	2.87	0.05	6.95	4.00	2.69	0.26
Alagnak	1.88	0.19	1.88	0.02	3.97	2.28	1.54	0.15
Naknek	2.18	0.58	2.00	0.45	5.21	1.40	3.61	0.19
Total	7.01	1.84	6.74	0.53	16.12	7.68	7.84	0.60
EGEGIK	2.51	3.04	1.81	1.72	9.07	1.70	7.04	0.34
UGASHIK	1.31	0.33	1.72	0.10	3.46	0.95	2.38	0.13
NUSHAGAK								
Wood	2.41	0.23	1.94	0.04	4.62	0.98	3.47	0.17
Igushik	0.62	0.01	0.94	0.01	1.58	0.28	1.25	0.06
Nushagak	1.12	0.02	2.95	0.02	4.18 ^b	0.77	3.26	0.15
Total	4.14	0.26	5.83	0.07	10.38	2.02	7.97	0.38
TOGIAK	0.18	0.01	0.95	0.01	1.15	0.23	0.87 ^c	0.04
BRISTOL BAY	15.16	5.49	17.05	2.42	40.18	12.58	26.11	1.49
	38%	14%	42%	6%	100%			38.70

Note: This table is a summary. Slight differences may appear due to rounding.

^a Projected harvest is based on the current 5 year running average exploitation rate of 3.7%.

^b Nushagak River forecast total includes age-0.3 and age-1.4 fish.

^c Forecasts for Kulukak, Kanik, Osviak, and Matogak river systems are not included. These systems contribute approximately 50,000 sockeye salmon to Togiak District harvest each year.



16670
March 1, 2018

CAPTAIN OF THE PORT, WESTERN ALASKA
NAVIGATION SAFETY ADVISORY

1. **PURPOSE:** This navigation advisory addresses the requirements for operating a vessel upon the navigable waters of Bristol Bay. Additionally, it outlines specific navigational safety concerns and risk mitigation measures for vessels operating in the Naknek River.
2. **DISCUSSION:** In January 2018 the Coast Guard participated in an industry-led navigation safety workshop composed of Bristol Bay commercial fishermen and tug/barge industry members who developed the following safety measures and reminders on the International Navigation Rules:

a. Responsibilities Between Vessels:

- i. All vessels shall adhere to Rule 18 of the International Navigation Rules, which outlines the navigational responsibilities between vessels underway.
- ii. Any vessel less than 20 meters, or 65 feet, shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway, per Rule 9 of the International Navigation Rules.
- iii. Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision, per Rule 5 of the International Navigation Rules.

b. Anchoring:

- i. Fishing vessels shall anchor away from the deep draft navigable channel in the Naknek River, as illustrated by the Naknek River Chartlet in Enclosure (1).
- ii. Per Rule 9 of the International Navigation Rules, anchoring within the narrow channel impedes safe navigation, increases the risk of collision, and is a violation of federal regulation.

c. Tug/Barge Pre-Arrival Notifications:

- i. Tug/barge operators should provide a pre-arrival notice to vessels in the Naknek River by all available means per the Pre-Arrival Communication Flowchart in Enclosure (2), and publish transit windows based on a minimum 17 foot Nushagak tide.
- ii. All vessel operators and crew should register to receive tug/barge pre-arrival notices via text message by texting “AML” to 74121.

d. Navigation Lights:

- i. Vessels shall display proper navigation lights at all times whether underway, anchored, or engaged in fishing, and use appropriate sound signals as required by the International Navigation Rules.
- ii. Vessels shall not use any unauthorized lights, such as sodium or LED lights, that impair the visibility of other mariners or interfere with the keeping of a proper lookout per Rule 20 of the International Navigation Rules.
- iii. Fishing vessels shall pay particular attention to Rule 26 and Annex II of the International Navigation Rules, which prescribe the proper lights and shapes that shall be displayed for vessels fishing in close proximity to one another.

e. **Communication:**

- i. Tug/barge operators shall make “sécurité” calls on local working VHF frequencies, and alert fishing vessels as necessary when transiting.
- ii. All vessels shall monitor VHF channels 13/16 as required by the International Navigation Rules and relay information to fishing vessels as necessary.
- iii. Tug/barge operators shall use appropriate sound signals when departing a berth and while underway as required by the International Navigation Rules.

f. **Violation of the International Navigation Rules:**

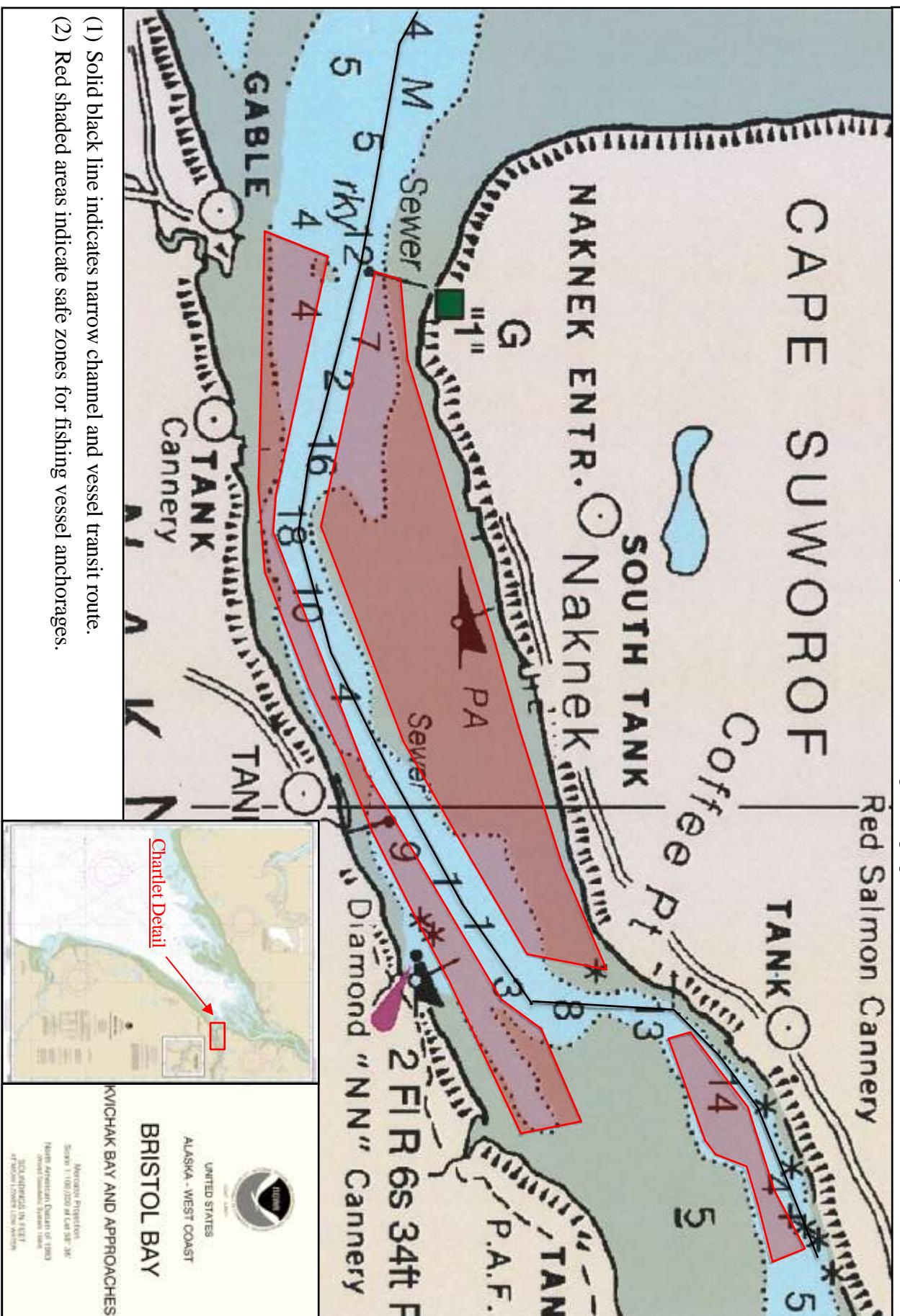
- i. In addition to the specific rules referenced in this advisory, vessels must comply with all International Navigation Rules appropriate to their operations.
- ii. Any vessel found in violation of these or any of the International Navigation Rules is subject to enforcement action by the Coast Guard and can result in civil penalties and monetary fines.



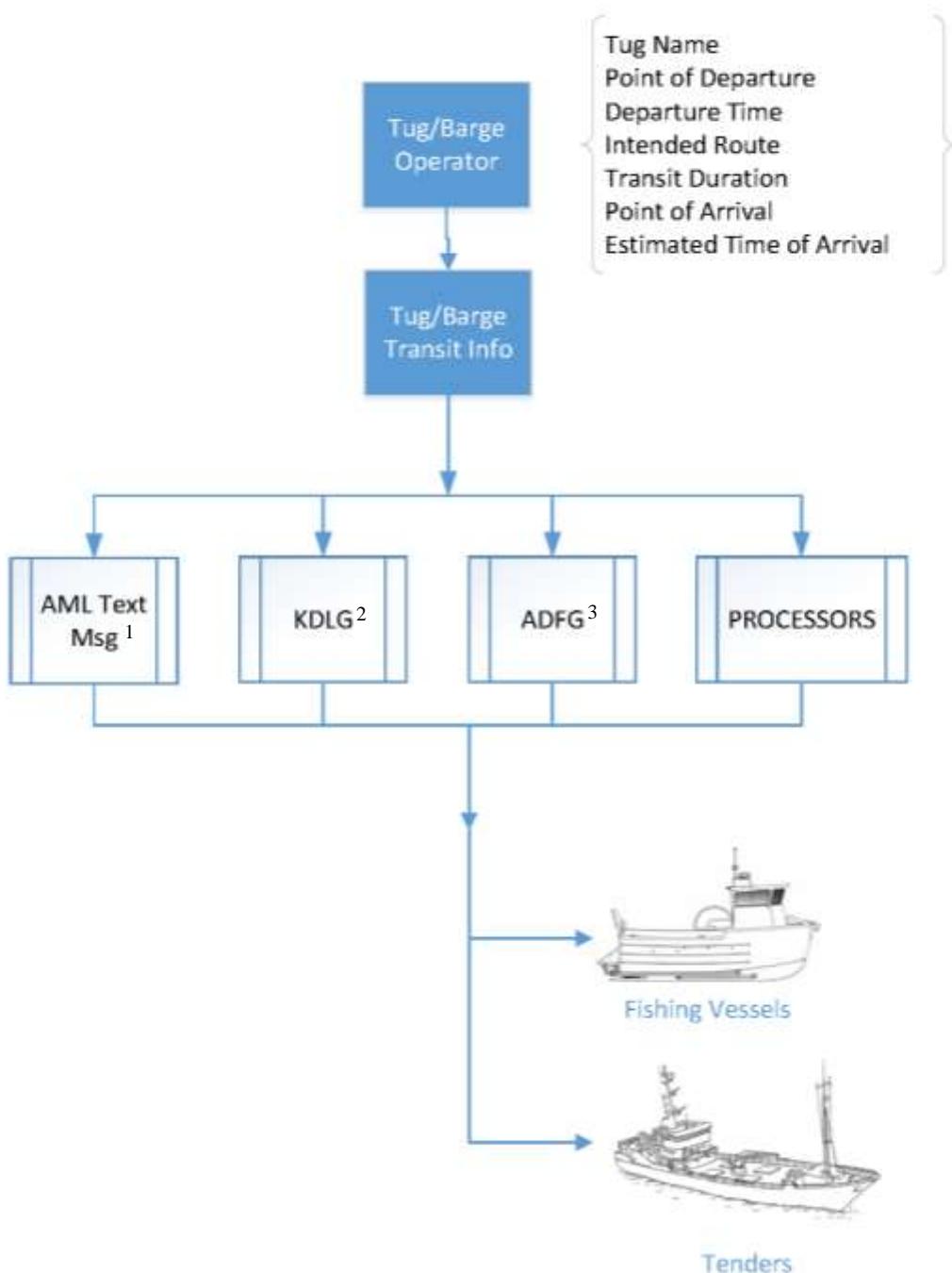
S. C. MACKENZIE
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska

Naknek River Chartlet

*This chartlet is for reference only and not intended for navigational purposes.



Pre-Arrival Communication Flowchart



¹ Alaska Marine Lines Pre-Arrival Text Message Alert System

² KDLG Public Radio Station (670 AM, 89.9 FM)

³ Alaska Dept of Fish and Game