ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE

Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner
Sam Rabung, Director

Contact: Brian Marston, Area Mgmt. Biologist; Alyssa Frothingham, Asst. Area Mgmt. Biologist
43961 Kalifornsky Beach Rd, Suite B
Soldotna, AK 99669
Phone: (907) 262-9368
Fax: (907) 262-4709
Date Issued: August 13, 2019
Time: 2:00 p.m.

UPPER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL FISHING ANNOUNCEMENT No. 32
EMERGENCY ORDER NUMBER 2S-32-19

Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 32 closes commercial salmon fishing with set gillnets in the Upper Subdistrict of Upper Cook Inlet from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2019. With this announcement, set gillnetting in the Upper Subdistrict is now closed for the 2019 season.

This commercial fishing announcement also reduces the open fishing time for set gillnets from twelve hours to six hours per day, or from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., in that portion of the General Subdistrict of the Northern District east of the Susitna River, including Fire Island, on Thursday, August 15, 2019 (see Figure 1).

Commercial fishing with drift gillnets will be restricted to Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4 of the Central District from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2019. By regulation, all drift gillnet regular Monday and Thursday fishing periods beginning on Monday, August 19, are open in Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4 only.

5 AAC 21.359(d)(1) Kenai River Late-Run King Management Plan states that if the projected late-run large king salmon escapement is less than 13,500 fish, the department shall close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict. As of August 12, 2019, Kenai River late-run large king salmon passage was estimated to be 11,013 fish and projected a final escapement of less than 13,500 fish. Based on this escapement projection, which is below the minimum Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) of 13,500 fish, closure of the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery for the remainder of the season is warranted.

On August 12, the Division of Sport Fish released Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-48-19, prohibiting the use of bait in the Little Susitna River effective 12:01 a.m., August 14. The Little Susitna River coho salmon SEG is 10,100–17,700 fish. Current weir counts are well below average, with only 3,644 coho salmon having passed upstream of the weir through August 12, projecting a final escapement of 8,653 fish. The reduction in commercial fishing hours in this announcement is intended to reduce the harvest of coho salmon returning to the Little Susitna River.
According to 5 AAC 21.353(e), if the department determines that less than one percent of the season’s total drift gillnet sockeye salmon harvest has been taken per fishing period for two consecutive fishing periods, regular fishing periods will be restricted to Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4. In the drift gillnet fishery, daily sockeye salmon harvest estimates on August 10 and 11 were both less than 1% of the season total sockeye salmon harvest. Therefore, the drift gillnet restriction in this announcement is in compliance with the Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.