

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

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2021 UCI COMMERCIAL SMELT (HOOLIGAN) AND HERRING FISHING SEASONS EMERGENCY ORDER 2H-01-21

The *Central District Herring Management Plan* (5 AAC 27.409) states that a commercial herring fishery may occur by emergency order in the Central District of Upper Cook Inlet, but only in the waters of the Kalgin Island, Upper, Western, and Chinitna Bay subdistricts, as described in 5 AAC 21.200(b)(2), (b)(3), (b)(5), and (b)(6). The legal gillnet mesh size can be no smaller than 2.0 inches or no greater than 2.5 inches. In 2021, commercial herring fishing season will open at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, April 20, and close at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 31, unless closed earlier by emergency order in any area where the guideline harvest range is projected to be met. The management plan allows for one fishing period per week that runs from 6:00 a.m. on Mondays until 6:00 p.m. on Fridays. In the Upper Subdistrict, the guideline harvest range is 0–40 tons and fishing for herring is not allowed any closer than 600 feet of the mean high tide mark on the Kenai Peninsula. In the Chinitna Bay Subdistrict, the department is to manage for a guideline harvest range of 0–40 tons; in the Western Subdistrict, the guideline harvest range is 0–50 tons, and in the Kalgin Island Subdistrict, the guideline harvest range is 0–20 tons.

In the Central District, herring may be taken only by gillnet, as defined in 5 AAC 27.431, except that in the Chinitna Bay and Kalgin Island subdistricts, herring may only be taken by set gillnets (5 AAC 27.430 (b)). Prior to fishing, all participants are required to register at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Soldotna office. Fishermen are also required to report fishing time and the amount of smelt and herring harvested, whether sold or retained for personal use, to the Soldotna office by 12:00 noon of the next day for each day fished. Fishermen are also reminded that fish tickets are to be filled out and either mailed or dropped off at the Soldotna ADF&G office within seven days of the time of landing (5 AAC 39.130 (c)). If you intend to sell your catch to members of the public, you must first obtain a catcher-seller permit from ADF&G: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.sellers>.

The *Cook Inlet Smelt Fishery Management Plan* (5AAC 21.505.) allows for a small commercial fishery for smelt to be harvested under the conditions of a commissioner's permit. This fishery occurs in the marine waters of Cook Inlet in that portion of the General Subdistrict, of the Northern District, northeast of the Chuit River and southwest of the Little Susitna River. In 2021, the season will open at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, May 1, and close no later than 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, June 30. The total harvest of smelt may not exceed 200 tons; the season will close immediately by emergency order if this level of harvest is projected to be reached. Legal gear for the fishery is a hand-operated dip net, as defined in 5 AAC 39.105. Any salmon caught must be released immediately and returned to the water unharmed, and any northern pike that are caught should be retained, kept cool but not frozen, and be given to ADF&G office in Soldotna. To participate in

this fishery, a miscellaneous finfish permit (M99B) from the Commercial Fishery Entry Commission is required, as well as a commissioner's permit, which can be obtained from the ADF&G office in Soldotna. The commissioner's permit must be obtained prior to applying for the miscellaneous finfish permit. You may download the commercial fishing permit application form from this site: (https://www.cfec.state.ak.us/forms2/Commercial_Fishing_Permit_Application.pdf).

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.

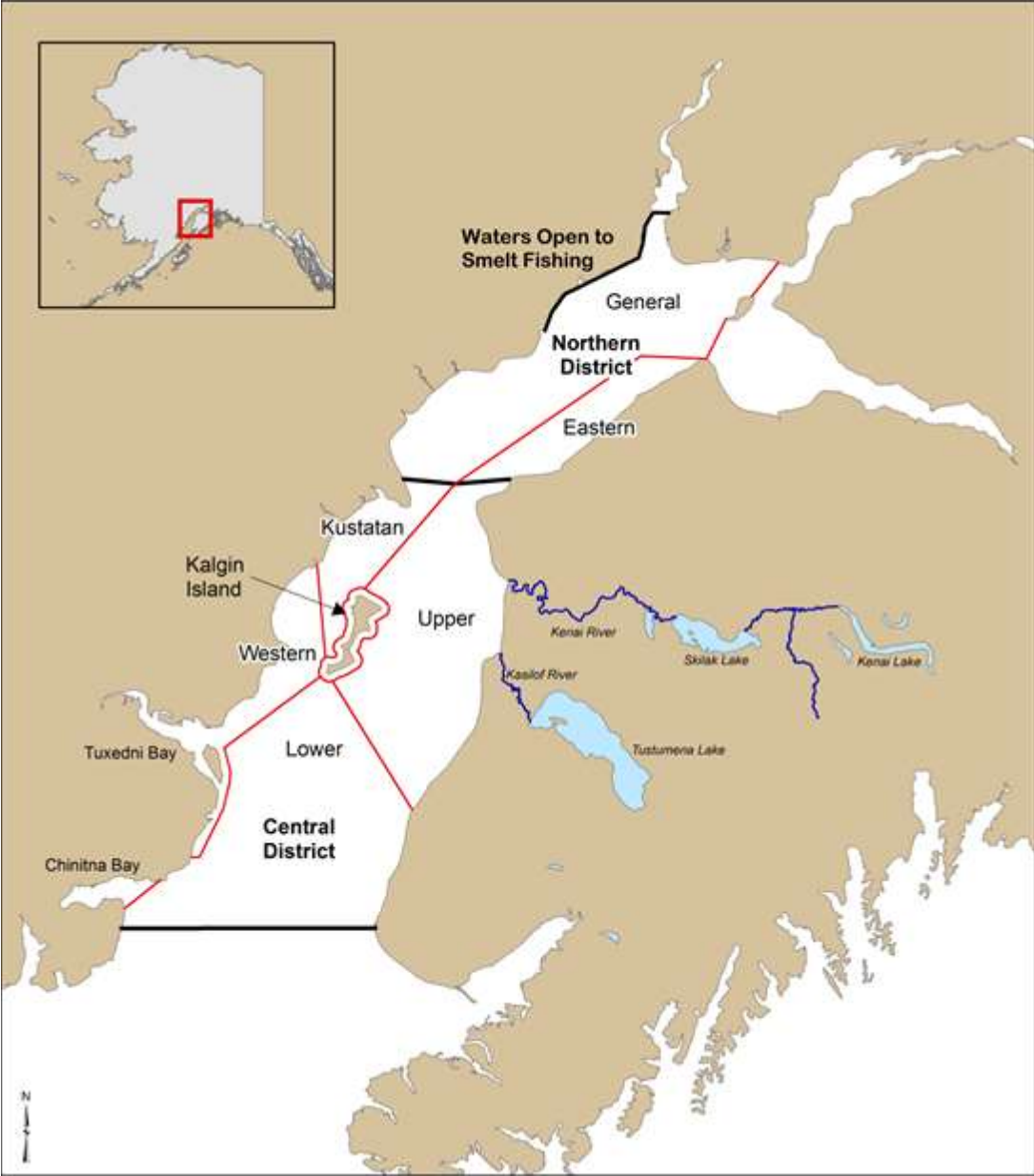


Figure 1.—Upper Cook Inlet commercial fisheries Subdistrict fishing boundaries.