

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: June 25, 2021

Time: 10:30 a.m.

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**Kuskokwim Area Management Biologists
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Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #7 (REVISED)

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-07-21

CORRECTION: This advisory announcement, #7 (REVISED), replaces advisory announce #7 that was released on June 24, 2021. This revised advisory announcement adds the justification for the fishing period and clarifies the federal special action.

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Bethel for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim Area.

The 2021 season is managed in accordance with the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.365) as directed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. The preseason forecast of Kuskokwim River king salmon is for a range of 94,000 to 155,000 fish. As of June 23, the Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE for king salmon was 235 and the total king salmon passage past the sonar is 33,628 fish. Bethel test fishery CPUE and sonar passage are tracking between the 2018 and 2020 king salmon runs, which had total runs of 136,076 and 124,486 fish, respectively. Drainage-wide escapement in 2018 and 2020 was 113,000 and 88,000 fish, respectively. Drainage-wide harvest in 2018 and 2020 was 22,000 and 36,000 fish, respectively.

Projections from the collaboratively developed Chinook Salmon In-season Bayesian Risk Assessment Tool (<https://bstaton.shinyapps.io/BayesTool/>) were used to estimate expected run/escapement and harvestable surplus based on the manager's risk tolerance. A lower escapement limit was set to 65,000 fish and risk tolerance was set as an 80% probability of being above 65,000 fish escapement. A current total harvest of 22,000 fish was used to inform the model. This harvest included total harvest to date downstream, and including, Akiak and an estimated 5,000 fish harvest upriver from Akiak. The updated model indicates that there is an additional harvestable surplus of 6,000 fish, with an expected escapement of approximately 86,000 fish. Expected harvest during the June 28 fishing period is 5,000 or fewer king salmon based on historical fishery performance for the end of June, which is below the projected harvestable surplus of 6,000 fish.

Subsistence Sections 1-3 (Yukon Delta Refuge boundary at mouth of the Kuskokwim River to a line formed between two points lat 61° 20.333' N, long 160° 34.867' W and lat 61° 20.333' N, long 160° 41.05' W [**Kalskag Bluffs**]):

- **Subsistence fishing will open** with 6-inch or less mesh gillnets (set or drift) from **10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. on June 28.**
 - **Below the Johnson River**, gillnets are restricted to 45 meshes in depth, and 50 fathoms in length.
 - **Above the Johnson River**, gillnets are restricted to 45 meshes in depth, and 25 fathoms in length.

- Chinook salmon may be retained if caught with fish wheels, dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line from **10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. on June 28.**

Federal Special Action

Beginning June 1, 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Federal Inseason Manager has closed the Kuskokwim River drainage from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River upstream to the Yukon Delta NWR boundary at Aniak (defined as the Federal Conservation Unit) to the harvest of salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users. For information regarding Federal subsistence fishing regulations contact Yukon Delta NWR at 907-543-3151 or 907-543-1002.

As previously announced:

Subsistence fishing with gillnets will continue to be closed on the following tributaries until further notice:

- The Eek River drainage to its confluence with the Kuskokwim River.
- The Kwethluk River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers located at its confluence with Kuskokuak Slough.
- The Kasigluk and Kisaralik river drainages, including Old Kuskokuak Slough to ADF&G regulatory markers at the confluence of Old Kuskokuak Slough with Kuskokuak Slough.
- The Tuluksak River drainage, including its confluence with the Kuskokwim River and downstream approximately 1-mile to ADF&G regulatory markers.
- The Aniak River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers at its confluence with the Kuskokwim River.

The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 10:00 a.m., by teleconference or in-person, at the Bethel ADF&G office. This meeting is open to the public. Please call 1-800-365-6338, passcode: 58756#, to attend via teleconference.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office, on the State of Alaska web site (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>), local radio stations, and Kuskokwim River Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/KuskoRiverFishingADFG/>). Advisory Announcements will be faxed to area villages. For additional information or questions regarding Kuskokwim Area fisheries, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Bethel at 543-2433 or toll free at 1-855-933-2433.

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, subsistence and commercial fishing is considered essential 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/>.

For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:
ADF&G Bethel Office: Nicholas Smith 907-543-2709 or Ben Gray 907-543-2331

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