

Division of Commercial Fisheries
Sam Rabung, Director

Kuskokwim Area Office
P.O. Box 1467
Bethel, AK 99559



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: July 1, 2021

Time: 11:40 a.m.

CONTACT: Nick Smith and Ben Gray

**Kuskokwim Area Management Biologists
(907) 543-2709**

Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #8 (REVISED)

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-08-21

CORRECTION: This advisory announcement, #8 (REVISED), replaces advisory announce #8 that was released on July 1, 2021. This revised advisory announcement corrects sonar sockeye passage.

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

As of June 30, the Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE for chum salmon was 71 and the total chum salmon passage past the sonar was 2,354 fish. Bethel test fishery CPUE and sonar passage are the lowest on record. The Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE on June 30 for king salmon was 378 and the total king salmon passage past the sonar was 55,915 fish. On average, approximately 75% of the king salmon run has passed through the Bethel test fishery. As of June 30, the Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE for sockeye salmon was 479 and the total sockeye salmon passage past the sonar was 155,332 fish. Sockeye salmon run strength continues to build and inseason data indicates that there is a harvestable surplus of sockeye. The following managements actions are intended to conserve chum and king salmon while providing subsistence harvest opportunity for other species. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Federal In-Season Manager at Yukon Delta NWR, and Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission agree that these fishing periods are warranted for subsistence users.

The following subsistence fishing restrictions will go into effect for the conservation of chum salmon within the Kuskokwim River drainage beginning 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 2, 2021, until further notice:

- **Subsistence fishing with fish wheels will be allowed until further notice.** Fish wheels are required to have a live box with no less than 45 cubic feet of water and must be checked at least every 12 hours. Any chum salmon caught must be returned alive to the water.
- **Subsistence fishing with beach seines will be allowed until further notice.** Any chum salmon caught in a beach seine must be returned immediately to the water alive.

Subsistence fishing with gillnets (set or drift) in the Kuskokwim River mainstem will be open during the following times:

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 gillnets (set or drift) during the following dates and times:
Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or less mesh and may not exceed 45 meshes in depth and 50 fathom (300 feet) in length below the Johnson River and 25 fathom (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River.
 - **July 2, 2021, 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**
 - **July 9, 2021, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**
 - **July 16, 2021, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

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 with set gillnets will open in the Kuskokwim River mainstem during the following times:**
Set gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or less mesh, may not exceed 100 feet in length, and 45 meshes in depth. Set gillnets may not be operated more than 100 feet from the ordinary high-water mark.
 - **July 10 at 12:01 a.m. to July 11 at 11:59 p.m.**
 - **July 17 at 12:01 a.m. to July 18 at 11:59 p.m.**

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 and river sections 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.
- Aniak Box: The waters of the Kuskokwim River near Aniak, from a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.264' N, long 159° 33.459' W and lat 61° 35.611' N, long 159° 33.260' W upstream to a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.308' N, long 159° 29.167' W and lat 61° 34.731' N, long 159° 28.939' W (Figure 1), will remain closed to subsistence fishing with gillnets until further notice. Subsistence fishing with hook and line, fish wheels equipped with a live box or chute, beach seines and dip nets is allowed, but all Chinook salmon caught must be returned to the water alive. These closed waters are in place to help provide protection for Chinook salmon bound for the Aniak River.

The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 7, 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 1-800-315-6338, 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

-end-