

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: July 21, 2021

Time: 2:30 p.m.

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**Kuskokwim Area Management Biologists
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Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #11

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-11-21

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

As of July 20, the Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE for chum salmon was 264 and the total chum salmon passage past the sonar was 17,602 fish. On average, approximately 94% of the chum salmon run has passed through the Bethel test fishery. The Bethel test fishery CPUE and sonar passage are the lowest on record. The Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE on July 20 for king salmon was 530 and the total king salmon passage past the sonar was 100,200 fish. On average, approximately 98% of the king salmon run has passed through the Bethel test fishery. As of July 20, the Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE for sockeye salmon was 1,603 and the total sockeye salmon passage past the sonar was 716,861 fish. Sockeye salmon run strength is average to above average and there is a harvestable surplus of sockeye. The Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE on July 20 for coho salmon was 24 and the total coho salmon passage past the sonar was 279 fish. On average, approximately 1% of the coho salmon run has passed through the Bethel test fishery. The following management actions are intended to conserve chum salmon while providing subsistence harvest opportunity for other species.

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

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) on **Friday, July 23, 2021, from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

Gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or less mesh and may not exceed 45 meshes in depth and 50 fathoms (300 feet) in length below the Johnson River and 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River.

Subsistence fishing with set gillnets will open in the Kuskokwim River mainstem during the following time:

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 set gillnets from 10:00 p.m. Friday, July 23, 2021, until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 25, 2021.**

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.

As previously announced:

Any chum salmon caught in a fish wheel or beach seine must be returned immediately to the water alive.

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, 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 28, 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

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