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Advisory Announcement

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LOWER KUZITRIN RIVER AND PILGRIM RIVER CLOSES TO ALL NET FISHING

Sockeye salmon escapement past the Pilgrim River weir is at the average historical midpoint of the run and through July 21, only 2,970 sockeye salmon have passed upstream of the weir. The last three days have had declining numbers of sockeyes passing the weir with only 67 sockeyes passing the weir yesterday. Run projections show the escapement will likely not be reached unless there is a closure to subsistence net fishing to allow more fish to pass upstream to spawn in Salmon Lake.

Effective Thursday, July 22, at midnight all net fishing is closed in the lower Kuzitrin River from 300 yards upstream of the outlet of the Pilgrim River to the Kuzitrin River mouth and in the entire Pilgrim River and its tributaries until further notice.

Subsistence salmon permits have been required at Pilgrim River since 1964. Since 2003, when sockeye numbers increased by tens of thousands, there have been hundreds of permits issued every year. Net fishing was last closed on the Pilgrim River in 2014 and after a two-week closure was reopened when sockeye escapement improved. Therefore, if sockeye salmon passage improves to ensure the Pilgrim River weir escapement goal range of 6,800 to 36,000 sockeye salmon will be reached, the department will reopen the subsistence fishery to net fishing.

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, subsistence 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/>