

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

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Toll free fishing schedule and counts: (866) 479-7387

In Fairbanks fishing schedule hotline: 459-7387

2021 Yukon River Whitefish Commercial Fishery Announcement #1

Whitefish Commercial Fishery Schedule

Districts Affected: Lower Yukon Area

Whitefish Commercial Fishery, Lower Yukon River

This commercial fishery targets Bering cisco and has been operating since 2005 on an experimental basis and usually operates independently of the fall salmon fishery. However, this year the Yukon River fall chum and coho salmon runs are projected to be the lowest on record. The State of Alaska mandates that escapement and subsistence fishing take priority over commercial opportunity, therefore managers must take the fall salmon runs into account while operating the commercial whitefish fishery.

In order to allow commercial whitefish opportunity while reducing the number of salmon incidentally harvested, additional restrictions will be implemented this year. These restrictions affect the fishing time and gear allowed in the whitefish commercial fishery and it will require extra effort on the part of the fishers and buyer to stay aware of the current openings. Commercial openings will be concurrent with the subsistence openings for 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Fishing times will be announced on the toll-free schedule recording (1-866-479-7387).

Fishers who would like to participate in this commercial fishery should contact their buyer for information about buying times, locations and permits. Participating fishers must have a 2021 F04B (Fresh Water Fish Set gillnet) permit which can be purchased through CFEC (1-855-789-6150). Individuals who possess a valid 2021 limited entry commercial fishing permit or a valid 2021 Crewmember's License may assist a fisher holding the F04B permit with fishing activities such as operating the gear or picking up and transporting fish. Fishers who are registered as catcher/sellers and whose catch freezes naturally are permitted to sell their catch without becoming a licensed catcher/processor. Contact the department at 907-459-7309 for catcher/seller details and registration.

The 2021 harvest quota for whitefish (Bering and least cisco) is 35,000 fish. Commercial fishers must contact their processor to ensure they have a market before fishing and to find out when and where the processor is buying whitefish. Salmon and other species such as sheefish or burbot caught incidentally in commercial whitefish gear may only be retained for personal use and must be recorded on a fish ticket as caught but not sold. If fishermen targeting whitefish are catching salmon incidentally, they should move their nets to avoid the harvest of salmon.

Whitefish commercial fishery

District 1 (including the Black River and communities of Emmonak, Nunam Iqua, Alakanuk, and Kotlik):

Commercial fishing for whitefish (Bering cisco and least cisco) will open effective 8 p.m. Saturday, September 11 for two 36-hour periods per week from:

8 p.m. Saturdays to 8 a.m. Mondays

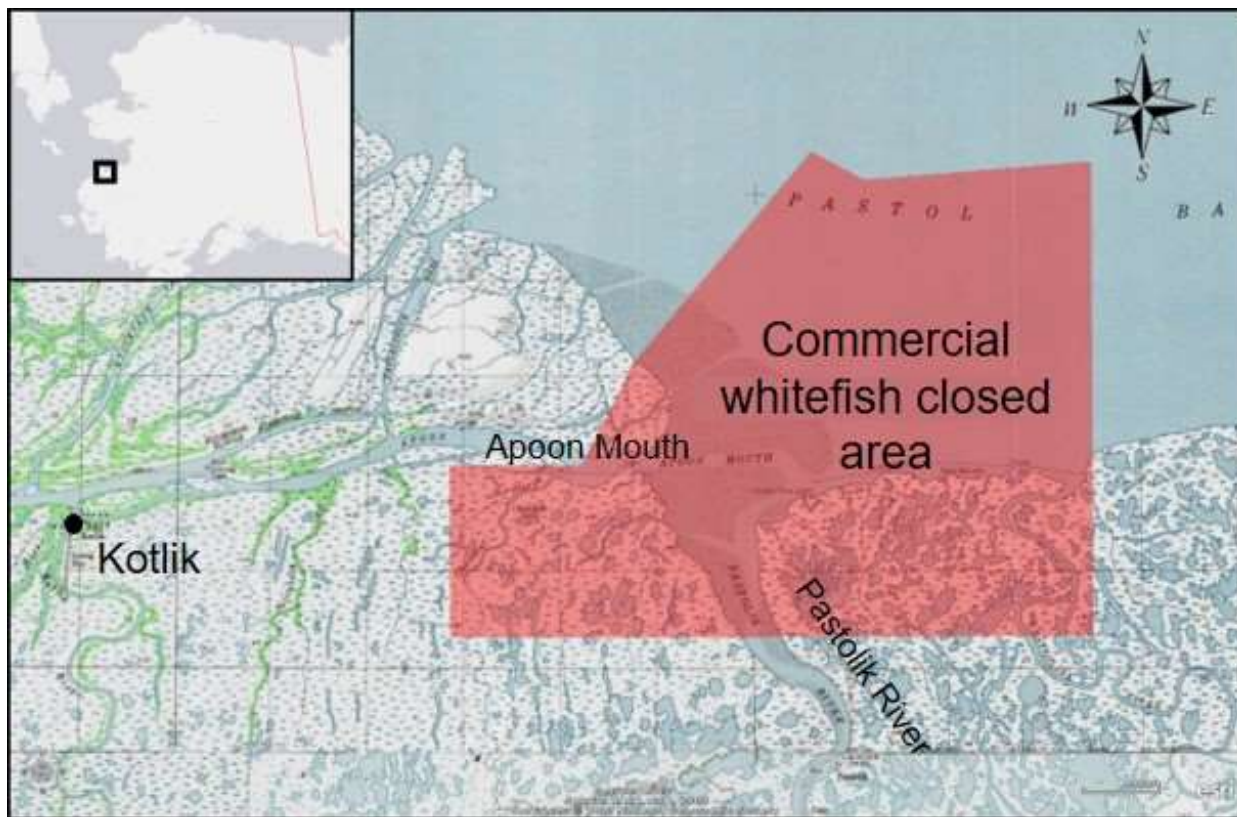
8 p.m. Wednesdays to 8 a.m. Fridays

Fishing gear may include hook and line, or 4-inch or smaller mesh gillnets restricted to 60 feet or shorter length. All gillnets must be removed from the water between these fishing periods.

Closed waters include Apoon Mouth and Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers:

Designated waters near Kotlik are closed to commercial whitefish fishing to protect traditional subsistence harvests. Waters of Apoon Pass, from its confluence with Chaniliut Slough extending to the northern shoreline of the Apoon Mouth, are closed to commercial whitefish fishing. This area includes Chaniliut Slough and waters draining the northern shoreline of the Apoon Mouth, including the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers (see attached map).

The Pastolik and Pastoliak rivers, including 500 yards around their mouths, are closed to all commercial fishing.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Yukon River Subsistence Fishery Manager: 907-351-3029.

Announcements will be shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG



COVID-19

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/>.