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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: July 13, 2026

Time: 10:30 a.m.

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Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #4

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-04-26

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in Bethel for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim River.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has issued a bulletin rescinding TSA 04-KSCS-26-01 and the fisheries management of Sections 1-3 of the mainstem Kuskokwim River has returned to ADF&G effective Monday, July 13, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. The tributaries of Sections 1-3 will remain under the management of USFWS under TSA 04-KSCS-26-02.

Throughout the season ADF&G has monitored the salmon runs in the Kuskokwim Area. Assessment projects operated by the ADF&G, Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC), Native Village of Napaimute, USFWS, and Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission have all contributed to a better understanding of the 2026 salmon runs. Management strategies are discussed at weekly meetings with the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group), where data and local and traditional knowledge are shared.

As of July 12th, cumulative Chinook salmon passage at the Kuskokwim River sonar is 88,590 fish. While passage at the sonar is below average, the drainagewide escapement goal is expected to be met. Additionally, approximately 90% of the Chinook salmon run has passed by the Bethel area based on run timing at the sonar. As of July 12th, 202,854 chum salmon have been counted at the sonar, which is well above the average of 117,361 fish for this date. As of July 12th, 421,461 sockeye salmon have been counted at the sonar. While sockeye passage is below average for this date, the sockeye salmon escapement goal at the Kogruklu River weir is expected to be met.

At this time, many fishers in the lower river are reporting satisfaction with their salmon harvest and are turning to other subsistence activities such as berry picking. Therefore, fishing effort is expected to decline through the end of July.

Due to most of the Chinook salmon run having passed through the lower river, the higher-than-expected chum salmon run, the relatively strong sockeye run, and the decrease in fishing effort in the lower river, opening the river to fishing is warranted.

Assessment projects will continue operating and ADF&G will evaluate the salmon runs through the rest of the season and seek consultation from the Working Group each Wednesday.

In Subsistence Sections 1-5, not including the tributaries in Sections 1-3:

- Effective noon **12:00 p.m. Monday, July 13th**, subsistence fishing will remain open **until further notice**.
- **As a reminder to fishers:**

- All Subsistence gears are currently allowed; gillnets, fish wheels, dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line.
- All salmon and non-salmon may be retained.
- Gillnets may be up to 50 fathoms in length in aggregate.
- Gillnets may not obstruct more than one-half of the width of any stream, channel, or side-channel.
- Gear must be marked with a red buoy with the fisher's first initial, last name and address.
- Gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh size have a maximum depth of 45 meshes.
- Gillnets with greater than 6-inch mesh size have a maximum depth of 35 meshes.
- Set gillnets located within a tributary from Eek Island to Kolmakoff River, must be separated by 75 feet minimum.

The Aniak River: In state waters from the confluence of the Aniak River with the Kuskokwim River upstream to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge boundary and from the Refuge boundary near the Buckstock River upstream to the headwaters:

The following subsistence management actions will remain in effect until further notice:

- **Subsistence gillnet fishing (drift and set) is closed.**
- **Subsistence fishing with hook and line for Chinook salmon is closed.** Any Chinook salmon caught must be returned alive to the water. All other fish species may be retained.
- **Subsistence fishing with fish wheels for all fish species except Chinook salmon will be allowed until further notice.** Fish wheels are required to have a live box with no less than 45 cubic feet of water, must be checked at least every 6 hours. Fish wheels may be equipped with a chute and must be closely attended while in operation. All Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive and all other fish species may be retained.
- **Subsistence fishing with beach seines and dipnets will be allowed until further notice.** All Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive and all other fish species may be retained.

ADF&G manages Kuskokwim River salmon fisheries as directed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries under 5 AAC 07.365 Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan. The plan provides management direction to achieve salmon run abundance large enough to meet escapement goals and provide for sustainable fishing in the long-term. ADF&G uses the best available data, including preseason run projections, test fishing indices, age and sex composition, harvest reports, sonar estimates, and recognized data uncertainty, to assess run abundance for the purpose of implementing the plan. Kuskokwim River salmon stocks shall be managed in a conservative manner consistent with the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries under 5 AAC 39.222 to meet escapement goals and the subsistence harvest priority on the identified surplus.

Kuskokwim River Salmon Working Group:

The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for **July 15, 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 1-888-788-0099, meeting ID 816 6267 8969, passcode: 849016, 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>), and local radio stations. 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 the Bethel at 543-2433 or toll free at 1-855-933-2433.

For questions regarding the Tributaries in Sections 1-3 of the Kuskokwim River, please contact the USFWS or YDNWR at 907-302-5144.

For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:

ADF&G: Sam Decker 907-459-7295 or 907-543-2433

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