

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2014 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release #2
Emergency Order #3-S-WR-01-14**

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

Federal Special Action

Management of the king salmon fishery from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim rivers (defined as the Federal Conservation Unit) is under authority of the Federal Inseason Manager. For information regarding subsistence fishing within this area please contact Brian McCaffery at 907-543-1014.

State Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fishing Management

Subsistence salmon fishing on the Kuskokwim River will be closed early in the season for the conservation of king salmon. Closures will be based on the migratory timing of king salmon. During salmon fishing closures the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less size mesh, not exceeding 60 feet in length, and 45 meshes in depth are allowed for the harvest of non-salmon species such as whitefish. No targeting of king salmon with this gear type will be allowed. This opportunity to harvest non-salmon will be limited if this gear is used to target king salmon.

Currently, subsistence fishing above Aniak is open 7 days per week with no gear restrictions.

From the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim rivers to the Holitna River mouth:

Effective 12:01 a.m., Sunday, June 1, 2014 subsistence fishing for non-salmon species with gillnets is restricted to gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length and 45 meshes in depth.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim Rivers to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth.

The Holitna River Mouth to the Headwaters of the Kuskokwim River: Section 5

Effective 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, June 4, 2014 subsistence fishing for non-salmon species with gillnets is restricted to gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length and 45 meshes in depth.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth upstream to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

The department intends to provide subsistence fishing periods to harvest chum and sockeye salmon with dip nets, fish wheels with live boxes, and gillnets restricted to 6-inch or less mesh size. These fishing periods will be based on king, chum, and sockeye salmon abundance. Period scheduling and duration for these gear types will be based on inseason run assessment and may be limited in time to reduce incidental harvest of king salmon. These fishing periods will be announced at a later date.

Board of Fish Action

The Board of Fish adopted a regulation allowing for the use of dip nets to harvest salmon other than king salmon during periods specified by the department. The department may provide dip net harvest opportunity based on the abundance of chum and sockeye salmon. When fishing periods are open to dip nets all king salmon must be immediately returned to the water, unharmed.

The specifications of a legal dip net (5 AAC 39.105) is a bag-shaped net supported on all sides by a rigid frame; the maximum distance between any two points on the net frame may not exceed 5 feet; the bag of the frame must be at least one-half the distance of the maximum frame opening; the webbing of the net may not exceed 4.5-inches stretch mesh.

An emergency petition to provide the department the ability to restrict the length of subsistence gillnets from 50-fathoms to 25-fathoms (150 feet) during times of king salmon conservation was submitted. The board found that this petition met the criteria for the finding of an emergency and adopted it as an emergency regulation. This gives the department more flexibility to open subsistence fishing periods during times of king salmon conservation. Gillnets may be over 25-fathoms in total length, but must be tied and/or bagged in such a way that only 25-fathoms can be used to fish.

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. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies. 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.