

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner*  
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P.O. Box 1467  
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#### **2015 Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Fishery News Release 1** **Emergency Order #3-S-WB-01-15, #3-S-WB-02-15**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for subsistence and commercial salmon fisherman in the Kuskokwim Area.

#### **Chinook Salmon Conservation**

Since 2012, the Kanektok and Goodnews River drainages have experienced poor Chinook salmon returns and have not met their respective escapement goals of 1,500–8,000 (Middle Fork Goodnews) fish and 3,500–8,000 (Kanektok River aerial) fish. In 2014, the escapement of Chinook salmon in the Goodnews River (750 fish) was the second lowest on record and the second lowest aerial survey count (1,871 fish) on record for the Kanektok River. The Chinook salmon returns in the Kanektok and Goodnews River drainages are expected to be poor again in 2015. With poor run performance in recent years, Chinook salmon conservation is warranted in the District 4 (Quinhagak) and District 5 (Goodnews Bay) subsistence and commercial fisheries. The department held meetings in the villages of Quinhagak and Goodnews Bay on June 28, to discuss these Chinook salmon conservation measures.

#### **2015 KUSKOKWIM BAY SUBSITENCE SALMON FISHING MANAGEMENT**

##### **District 4 (Quinhagak)**

**Effective 12:01 a.m., Sunday, June 7, 2015 subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets will close and subsistence salmon fishing in the marine waters of District 4 will be restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 50-fathoms in length and 45 meshes deep during the following dates and times:**

- 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 10 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 13;
- 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 17 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 20;
- 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 27.

This schedule may be amended as the season progresses.

**Effective 12:01 a.m., Sunday, June 7, 2015 the Kanektok River drainage will be closed to the use of all gillnets.** All other legal subsistence fishing gear types will be allowed.

#### **District 5 (Goodnews Bay)**

**Effective 12:01 a.m., Sunday, June 7, 2015 subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets will close and subsistence salmon fishing in the marine waters of District 5 will be restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 50-fathoms in length and 45 meshes deep during the following dates and times:**

- 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 10 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 13;
- 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 17 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 20;
- 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 24 until 11:59 p.m. Saturday, June 27.

This schedule may be amended as the season progresses.

**Effective 12:01 a.m., Sunday, June 7, 2015 the Goodnews River drainage will be closed to the use of all gillnets.** All other legal subsistence fishing gear types will be allowed.

ADF&G will be in close contact with subsistence fisherman in the Kuskokwim Bay area to determine if subsistence needs will be met. Once the commercial fishing season begins, subsistence fishery closures will be 16 hours before, during, and six hours after each commercial fishing period.

#### **2015 KUSKOKWIM BAY COMMERCIAL OUTLOOK**

The Kuskokwim Bay has no formal forecast for salmon returns. Broad expectations are developed based on parent-year escapements and recent year trends. It is expected that Chinook and sockeye salmon harvest in 2015 will be similar to 2014 due to Chinook salmon conservation measures. Anticipated available surpluses for commercial harvest are expected to range from 0 to 2,000 Chinook; 40,000 to 100,000 sockeye; 60,000 to 130,000 chum; and 50,000 to 100,000 coho salmon. Harvest may be affected by salmon abundance, participation, market conditions, and processor capacity.

#### **District 4**

The District 4 commercial fishery will be managed in accordance with the *District 4 Salmon Management Plan 5 ACC 07.367*. It is anticipated the District 4 commercial fishery will likely open in late-June to early-July. ADF&G will closely monitor subsistence harvest in Quinhagak to assess relative run abundance and run timing. Based on this information, the first commercial opening may be earlier or later than anticipated. A coho salmon directed fishery is anticipated to occur, late July through August given adequate run strength.

#### **District 5**

It is anticipated the District 5 commercial fishery will likely open in late-June to early-July. ADF&G intends to reduce waters open to commercial salmon fishing for the early part of the commercial fishing season. This will be the same management action as the one implemented in the early part of the 2013 season for the conservation of Chinook salmon. ADF&G will closely

monitor subsistence harvest in Goodnews Bay and Platinum to assess relative run abundance and run timing. Based on this information, the first commercial opening may be earlier or later than anticipated. A coho salmon directed fishery is anticipated to occur, late July through August given adequate run strength.

### **Sport Fishery**

Sport fishing for Chinook salmon closed on April 1, 2015, by Emergency Order 3-KS-01-15, in all waters draining into Kuskokwim Bay south of the south bank of Warehouse Creek and north of Cape Newenham. In addition anglers may use only one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure.

### **Inseason Assessment and Research**

Inseason indicators of salmon run strength include weir escapements, verbal subsistence catch reports, commercial catch statistics, and aerial escapement surveys. Weirs will be operated on the Kanektok and the Middle Fork Goodnews rivers to monitor salmon escapements and collect biological data. The Kanektok River weir will cease operations in mid-August to address operational concerns caused by high water events common in August and September.

For more information contact:

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#### **ADF&G, Sport Fish Division:**

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