

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



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
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**EASTERN NORTON SOUND CHINOOK SALMON MANAGEMENT
OUTREACH MEETINGS BEGIN MAY 16**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be holding community meetings in the villages of Koyuk, Shaktoolik, and Unalakleet next week to discuss the upcoming salmon season. The primary purpose of these meetings is to inform residents about the 2016 Chinook salmon run forecast and potential restrictions. The department will discuss management options for the 2016 season with village residents to gather input on preferred management options. The department has developed several management options to allow for limited Chinook salmon subsistence harvest opportunities while still ensuring Chinook salmon escapement needs will be achieved. Affected communities provided valuable input to fishery managers the previous two seasons that ultimately led to achievement of escapement goals. The Shaktoolik community meeting will be held at the corporation annex building at 1:00 p.m. Monday, May 16. The Koyuk Community meeting will be held at the city office building at 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 18. The last meeting will be held in Unalakleet at 6:00 p.m. Monday, May 23 at the IRA memorial hall.

Eleven years have passed since the last Chinook salmon directed commercial fishing periods occurred in southern Norton Sound. Chinook salmon runs continue to be weak compared to historical levels. However, runs of Chinook salmon in 2014 and 2015 showed considerable improvement from the exceptionally weak runs observed from 2010–2013. Additionally, juvenile Chinook salmon abundance and size condition indices from the 2013–2014 Northern Bering Sea surveys were some of the largest ever. This suggests good ocean survival for at least the 2011–2012 brood years and the possibility of improved adult Chinook salmon returns beginning this season.

Another early arrival of Chinook salmon is expected this season and the department is planning to implement restrictions to subsistence fishing as early as June 6 in eastern Norton Sound. Like the previous two seasons, restrictions may include a combination of temporary closures to marine and freshwater areas, mesh-size restrictions, and fishing time reductions. If you have any questions regarding these upcoming meetings please contact Fish and Game at 1-800-560-2271 or 443-5167.