

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



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
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2017 UCI COMMERCIAL SMELT (HOOLIGAN) AND HERRING FISHING SEASONS
EMERGENCY ORDER 2G-01-17 and 2H-01-17

5AAC 21.505. *Cook Inlet Smelt Fishery Management Plan* allows for a small commercial fishery for smelt in the Northern District of Upper Cook Inlet (Figure 1). This fishery occurs in those waters located between the Chuit River and the Little Susitna River (in salt water only). In 2017, the season will open at 12:01 a.m. on Monday, May, 1 and close no later than 11:59 p.m. on Friday, June 30. At the 2017 Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting, the harvest limit for the commercial smelt fishery was increased from 100 tons to 200 tons; the season will close immediately by emergency order if this level of harvest is reached. Legal gear for the fishery is a hand-operated dip net, as defined in 5 AAC 39.105. Any salmon caught must be released immediately and returned to the water unharmed. To participate in this fishery, a miscellaneous finfish permit (M99B) is required, as well as a commissioner's permit, which can be obtained from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office in Soldotna. The commissioner's permit must be obtained prior to applying for the miscellaneous finfish permit.

The *Central District Herring Management Plan* (5 AAC 27.409) provides for a commercial herring fishery in the Central District of Upper Cook Inlet, including the Kalgin Island, Upper, Western, and Chinitna Bay subdistricts, as described in 5 AAC 21.200(b)(2), (b)(3), (b)(5), and (b)(6). The legal gillnet mesh size can be no smaller than 2.0 inches or no greater than 2.5 inches. The season is open from April 20 to May 31, with one fishing period per week that runs from 6:00 a.m. on Mondays until 6:00 p.m. on Fridays. A fishing period may extend beyond May 31 if the fishing period began before May 31. In 2017, commercial fishing for herring will open at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, April 20, and close at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, June 2, unless closed earlier by emergency order in any area where the guideline harvest level is met. In the Upper Subdistrict, the guideline harvest range is 0–40 tons and fishing for herring is not allowed any closer than 600 feet of the mean high tide mark on the Kenai Peninsula. In the Chinitna Bay Subdistrict, the department is to manage for a guideline harvest of 0–40 tons; in the Western Subdistrict, the guideline harvest range is 0–50 tons, and in the Kalgin Island Subdistrict, the guideline harvest range is 0–20 tons.

In the Central District, herring may be taken only by gillnet, as defined in 5 AAC 27.431, except that in the Chinitna Bay and Kalgin Island Subdistricts, herring may only be taken by set gillnets (5 AAC 27.430 (b)). Prior to fishing, all participants are required to register at the department's Soldotna office. Fishermen are also required to report fishing time and the amount of smelt and herring harvested, whether sold or retained for personal use, to the Soldotna office by 12:00 noon of the next day for each day fished. Fishermen are also reminded that fish tickets are to be filled out and either mailed or dropped off at the Soldotna ADF&G office within seven days of the time of landing (5 AAC 39.130 (c)). If you intend to sell your catch to members of the public, you must first obtain a catcher-seller permit from ADF&G <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.sellers>.

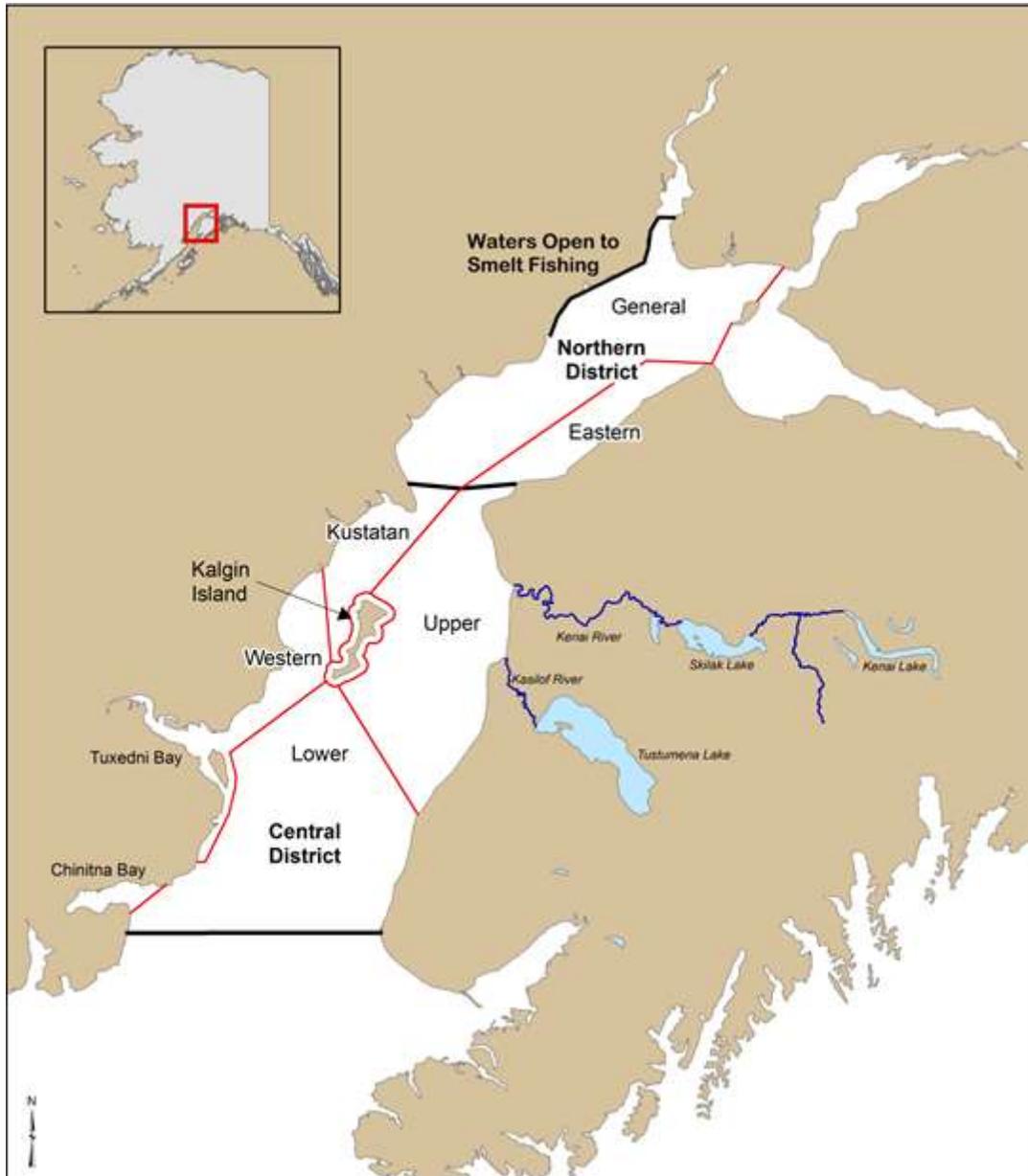


Figure 1.—Upper Cook Inlet commercial fisheries Subdistrict fishing boundaries.