

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: May 24, 2017
Time: 11:00 a.m.

UPCOMING SOUTHERN NORTON SOUND SUBSISTENCE FISHING CLOSURES

The department expects a weak king salmon run in Norton Sound in 2017. No king salmon escapement goals were reached last year despite subsistence fishing restrictions and closures. Because of the expected poor run of king salmon the department will close the Unalakleet River to net fishing beginning June 1. Further subsistence fishing restrictions and closures in other marine and fresh waters of Subdistricts 4, 5 and 6, the Norton Bay, Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts will occur the second week of June to ensure adequate numbers of king salmon reach spawning areas.

Effective June 1 the Unalakleet River drainage from downstream of the North River and the North River will close to all subsistence net fishing, except for dip nets and cast nets. Any king salmon caught in a dip net or cast net must be immediately returned to the water. The subsistence net fishing closure will extend out to the marine waters within 500 yards of the Unalakleet River mouth. Set gillnets with a mesh size of 4 inches or less are allowed to be fished in the Unalakleet River drainage upstream of the North River only.

Effective June 9, the marine waters of southern Norton Sound from Bald Head (near Elim) south to Wood Point (near St. Michael) will close to subsistence salmon fishing. And except the Koyuk River, subsistence salmon fishing in all fresh waters from Bald Head to Black Point will close on June 9. A limited fishing schedule beginning the second week of June will be set for Subdistrict 4, the Norton Bay Subdistrict, and Inglutalik River for the remainder of June and early July. For Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, the department will set one 36-hour subsistence fishing period each week in the marine waters with gillnets restricted to a mesh size 6 inches or less during favorable weather conditions. If the king salmon run is stronger than expected the department will increase fishing time as warranted and specific strategies will vary for each subdistrict depending on expected fishing effort and recent harvest patterns.

For any questions regarding this news release please call Fish & Game in Nome at 443-5167 or 1-800-560-2271.