

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



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**2013 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 6
Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fishing Restrictions**

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

Mouth of the Kuskokwim River to Tuluksak

Effective 1:00 a.m., Friday, June 28, 2013 until 11:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 3, 2013 subsistence salmon fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh size, not exceeding 50-fathoms in length and 45 meshes deep. Hook and line fishing for king salmon is also closed.

This area is defined as, that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: those portions of Kinak, Kialik, and Tagayarak rivers more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these restrictions.

Tuluksak to Chuathbaluk

Effective 1:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 3, 2013 until 11:00 p.m., Saturday, July 6, 2013 subsistence salmon fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh size, not exceeding 50-fathoms in length and 45 meshes deep. Hook and line fishing for king salmon is also closed.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream edge of Chuathbaluk. This section does NOT include the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: the Whitefish Lake drainage near Aniak and those portions of Discovery, Birch, and Swift creeks more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these restrictions.

Kuskokwim River Tributaries

Subsistence king salmon fishing with hook and line gear is closed and gillnets are restricted to 4-inch or less mesh size not to exceed 60-feet in length and 45 meshes deep until 6:00 p.m., Thursday, July 25, 2013, in the following waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage:

- The Kwethluk River drainage including where it meets with Kuskokuak Slough and downstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream mouth of the slough.
- The Kasigluk and Kisaralik river drainages including Old Kuskokuak Slough to ADF&G regulatory markers where the Old Kuskokuak Slough meets with Kuskokuak Slough.
- The Tuluksak River drainage including where it meets with the Kuskokwim River and downstream approximately 1-mile to ADF&G regulatory markers.
- The Aniak River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers where it meets with the Kuskokwim River.

The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) met on Wednesday, June 26, to hear subsistence salmon fishing reports and discuss salmon run assessment. Many subsistence fishermen from the lower Kuskokwim River reported that people are slowing down on targeting king salmon and shifting to targeting chum salmon as they have met or are close to meeting their king salmon harvest goals. Reports from middle river subsistence fishermen indicate that the king salmon run is beginning to build in that section of river, however catch rates are still fairly low. Current data from the Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) project indicates that king salmon escapement goals will likely be met; however projections are near the lower end of the Drainagewide Sustainable Escapement Goal (65,000–120,000). BTF indicates high abundances of sockeye and chum salmon at this time. Given the uncertainty of inseason run assessment, it is warranted to restrict gillnet mesh size to 6-inch or less to conserve king salmon and provide harvest opportunity on more abundant sockeye and chum salmon. Restrictions to 6-inch or less mesh in the lower and middle river are consistent with harvest trends and variability in abundance of king salmon available for harvest as the run progresses

upstream. ADF&G and USFWS recommended to restrict gillnet mesh size and close hook and line king salmon fishing from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to Tuluksak for a six-day period and from Tuluksak to Chuathbaluk for a four-day period. ADF&G and USFWS also recommended maintaining subsistence salmon fishing restrictions on Kuskokwim River tributaries that have been in place since June 1, 2013. The Working Group voted unanimously to support the recommendation.

The next Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 3 at the Bethel Fish and Game office.

Working Group meetings are open to the public and may be attended in person or by teleconference. The teleconference number is 1-800-315-6338 and the conference code is 58756#.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office and through local radio stations. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies.

Summary of Kuskokwim River Mainstem Restrictions

	June					July							
	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Kuskokwim River Section	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Eek Island (Kuskokwim R. mouth) to Tuluksak	≤ 6 in		≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in					
Tuluksak to Chuathbaluk								≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in	≤ 6 in		
Chuathbaluk to Headwaters													

Key

≤ 6 in	Open to subsistence fishing with gillnet mesh size restricted to 6-inch or
	Unrestricted gillnet mesh size.

For additional information concerning this news release:
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