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Advisory Announcement
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UPPER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL FISHING ANNOUNCEMENT No. 14
EMERGENCY ORDER NUMBER 2S-14-20

Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 14 opens commercial salmon fishing with set gillnets in the Kenai, Kasilof, and East Foreland sections of the Upper Subdistrict from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 9, 2020.

As announced in UCI Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 4, gear restrictions are in place for all Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishermen from the beginning of the season through July 31, 2020. During the July 9 fishing period, legal gear in the entire Upper Subdistrict is restricted to no more than two set gillnets per permit that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth or no more than one set gillnet per permit that is not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth. As a reminder, any set gillnet that is not more than 29 meshes in depth as part of this restrictive provision must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter.

By regulation, drift gillnets will be allowed in Drift Gillnet Area 1 and in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof sections of the Upper Subdistrict from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 9, 2020. This announcement extends commercial fishing with drift gillnets from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 9, 2020 in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof sections of the Upper Subdistrict.

All other set gillnet fisheries in Upper Cook Inlet will fish the regularly scheduled period from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 9, 2020.

As of July 7, the Kasilof River sockeye salmon run is 33% complete based on average run timing and projects a final escapement of more than 456,000 fish. The minimum biological escapement goal (BEG) for Kasilof River sockeye salmon of 140,000 has been achieved. Both Kenai River late-run large king and late-run sockeye salmon runs are too early in the season to project final escapement with a high degree of accuracy. The additional fishing time provided in this announcement is intended to harvest sockeye salmon returning to the Kenai and Kasilof rivers while minimizing harvest of Kenai River king and sockeye salmon until the abundance of these stocks can be projected with more certainty.

5 AAC 21.359(e)(3)(B) *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* restricts the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery to no more than 36 hours per week, with a 36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday. With regularly scheduled fishing periods on Mondays and Thursdays no longer in effect in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery, any and all fishing time may occur only via EO. With this fishing announcement, 36 of 36 hours of EO time will have been used for the week of July 5–July 11.

COVID-19

Under Alaska’s Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska’s Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>