



Advisory Announcement
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CONTACT: Colton Lipka, Area Management Biologist
Lucas Stumpf, Assistant Area Management Biologist
(907) 262-9368

UPPER COOK INLET 2025 OUTLOOK FOR COMMERCIAL DRIFT GILLNET SALMON FISHING

Sockeye Salmon Forecast

In 2025, a run of approximately 6.9 million sockeye salmon is forecast to return to Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) with an estimate of 4.9 million available for harvest (commercial, sport, personal use, and subsistence).

The Kenai River sockeye salmon forecast is approximately 4.2 million fish. The 2025 Kenai River forecast is 302,000 (7.5%) fish more than the historical (1986–2024) average run of 3.88 million fish and 968,000 (26%) fish more than the recent 10-year (2015–2024) average run of 3.2 million fish. For sockeye salmon runs 2.3–4.6 million fish, the *Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan* (KRLSSMP) stipulates ADF&G manage to the SEG range of 750,000–1,300,000 and achieve an inriver goal of 1.1 to 1.4 million fish. The department will formally reassess the UCI sockeye salmon run after July 20.

The Kasilof River sockeye salmon run forecast is approximately 1.2 million fish. The 2025 forecast is 311,000 fish (29%) greater than the historical (1986–2024) average run of 930,000 fish and 261,000 fish (24%) greater than the recent 10-year (2015–2024) average run of approximately 978,000.

Approximately 404,000 and 105,000 sockeye salmon are forecast to return to the Susitna River and Fish Creek respectively in 2025. The 2025 Susitna River sockeye salmon forecast is approximately 22,000 fish (6%) below the historical (2002–2024) average run of 430,000 fish but approximately 29,500 fish (7.5%) greater the recent 10-year (2015–2024) average run of 380,000 fish. The 2025 Fish Creek sockeye salmon forecast is approximately 2,600 fish greater than the recent 10-year average run size (2.5%) of 102,400.

2025 Sockeye Salmon Forecasts and Escapement Goals

System	Forecast	Goals ^a
Kenai River ^{b,c}	4,186,000	1,100,000–1,400,000
Kasilof River ^{b,d}	1,238,000	140,000–320,000
Susitna River	404,000	
Larson Lake	N/A	15,000–35,000
Chelatna Lake	N/A	20,000–45,000
Judd Lake	N/A	15,000–40,000
Fish Creek	105,000	15,000–45,000
Unmonitored Systems ^e	1,008,000	N/A
Total	6,941,000	

^a Goals listed here are as follows: Kenai River: Inriver; Kasilof River: Biological Escapement Goal (BEG); Susitna River: SEG (weir goals); and Fish Creek: Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG).

^b Kenai River goal is DIDSON-based; Kasilof river is Aris-based.

^c Kenai River SEG is 750,000–1,300,000 sockeye salmon.

^d Kasilof River optimal escapement goal (OEG) is 140,000–370,000 sockeye salmon.

^e Unmonitored systems are estimated to be ~15% of monitored systems.

General Information for the UCI State of Alaska waters Drift Gillnet Fishery:

- All descriptions in this document will be for State of Alaska (SOA) waters only (Figure 1).
- For more information on commercial drift gillnet salmon fishing regulations in the Federal waters of Upper Cook Inlet see the link below:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/salmon-management-federal-waters-cook-inlet-cook-inlet-eez>

Upper Cook Inlet Statistical and Drift Areas

- Openings that include Drift Areas 1 and 4 will be in State of Alaska (SOA) waters only (Figure 2). It is the responsibility of fishery participants to ensure they are fishing in legal areas.
- Drift gillnet statistical areas were updated in 2024 to reflect the new jurisdictional boundaries and management strategies in UCI (Figure 1).
 - Statistical Area 244-60 will not be used.
 - UCI Federal waters (EEZ) will be identified under statistical code 244-64.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable-fisheries/cook-inlet-eez-area-maps>

- During the State of Alaska fisheries, drift gillnet permit holders will be required to declare which specific statistical area fish were caught in. If while fishing, a set crosses statistical area boundaries, then record harvest in the statistical area that the set ends in or where the majority of fishing time is spent for that set. If drift corridors are open, then use the correct code for the corridor representing the statistical areas that were fished.

Central District Drift Gillnet fisheries Overview

- The department manages the UCI drift gillnet fleet primarily under the guidance of the *Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan (CDDGFMP)*. The purpose of this management plan is to ensure adequate escapement of salmon into Northern Cook Inlet drainages and to provide the department with management guidelines. All the following regarding the drift gillnet fishery is applicable to the waters of the SOA only (Figure 1).
- The drift gillnet fishery opens the third Monday in June or June 19, whichever is later.
- The 2025 drift gillnet fishery may open June 19 by regulatory period.
- Drift gillnet openings follow regulatory Monday/Thursday fishing periods; 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Drift gillnet fishing is closed within 2 miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline per stipulations in the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan (5 AAC 21.382)* until the stock is delisted.
- Drift gillnet fishery openings are stipulated in the CDDGFMP by date and sockeye salmon abundance.
- Additional fishing time may be added based on sockeye salmon abundance considering Chinook and coho salmon abundance.
- Beginning August 1, if the department determines that less than one-percent of the season total drift gillnet sockeye salmon harvest has been taken per fishing period, for two consecutive fishing periods by drift gillnets, then regulatory fishing periods will be restricted to SOA waters of Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4 (Figure 2).

Inseason Management

- **Prior to July 8,**
 - Regulations specify 12-hour SOA waters District Wide Monday/Thursday fishing periods. These periods will coincide with the established federal periods in federal waters. Under federal rules, drift gillnet vessels who participate in the federal fishery cannot participate in any SOA fisheries on the same day. This means that if a permit holder chooses to fish the federal waters they cannot move into state waters on the same day.
 - Additional time may be allowed in SOA waters district wide or restricted as needed.
- **From July 9 through July 15,**
 - Drift gillnet fishing is restricted for both regulatory fishing periods to the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections (Figure 1), and SOA waters of Drift Gillnet Area 1 (Figure 2). For Kenai River sockeye salmon runs greater than 2.3 million fish, one additional

fishing period may be opened in the Expanded Sections and Area 1. Any additional fishing time is allowed only in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections.

- **From July 16 through July 31,**
 - For runs of 2.3–4.6 million Kenai River sockeye salmon, fishing during one regulatory period per week will be opened in one or more of the following areas: the Expanded Kenai, Expanded Kasilof, the Anchor Point Section, and SOA waters of Drift Gillnet Area 1. The remaining regulatory period will be restricted to one or more of the following: Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections and Anchor Point section of the Upper Subdistrict. Any additional time shall be restricted to the Expanded Kenai Section, the Expanded Kasilof Section, and the Anchor Point Section.
- **From August 1 through August 15,**
 - Regular Mon/Thurs fishing periods will be restricted to one or more of the following: Expanded Kenai Section, Expanded Kasilof Section, Anchor Point Section, SOA waters of Drift Gillnet Area 3, or SOA waters of Drift Gillnet Area 1. Any additional fishing time will be dependent upon meeting sockeye and coho salmon escapement objectives but is limited to the Expanded Kenai or Kasilof and Anchor Point Sections.
 - Two one-percent rules apply to drift gillnet fishing in August. If the entire ESSN fishery is closed per its own one-percent rule, or if the department determines that less than one-percent of the season total drift gillnet sockeye salmon harvest has been taken per fishing period, for two consecutive fishing periods by drift gillnets, then regulatory fishing periods will be restricted to SOA waters of Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4 (Figure 2).
 - The department uses harvest from all (state and federal) open drift gillnet periods, regardless of the area(s) open to fishing, to calculate the drift gillnet one-percent rule per stipulations in *Fishing seasons* (5 AAC 21.310).
- **From August 16 until closed by EO,**
 - SOA waters of Drift Areas 3 and 4 are open for regulatory periods.
 - Chinitna Bay may be opened by EO only, based upon chum salmon escapement objectives being met or when the chum salmon run is complete.
- State of Alaska waters drift fisheries close for the season by EO, when effort ceases, which is generally mid- to late-September.

General information and Contact Numbers

The UCI commercial fisheries information line will again be available by calling 907-262-9611. The most recent EO announcement is always available on the recorded message line and catch, escapement information is included whenever possible. The same recording may be accessed at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareauci.main> and clicking on the UCI Commercial Fisheries Information Recording player.

All EO announcements are also faxed or emailed to processors as quickly as possible and posted at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareauci.salmon#fishery>. If you would like all EOs and News Releases emailed to you as soon as they are released, you can subscribe at this website for that service. For very general information, the Commercial Fisheries web page is found at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercial.main>.

If, during the summer, permit holders have information or questions concerning the commercial fishery, the Soldotna Division of Commercial Fisheries staff can be reached by phone at 262-9368, by fax at 262-4709, or by mail at 43961 Kalifornsky Beach Road, Suite B, Soldotna, 99669.

UCI Commercial Fisheries Area Management Biologist
Colton Lipka office 907-260-2907 Colton.Lipka@alaska.gov

UCI Commercial Fisheries Assistant Area Management Biologist
Lucas Stumpf office 907-260-2916 Lucas.Stumpf@alaska.gov

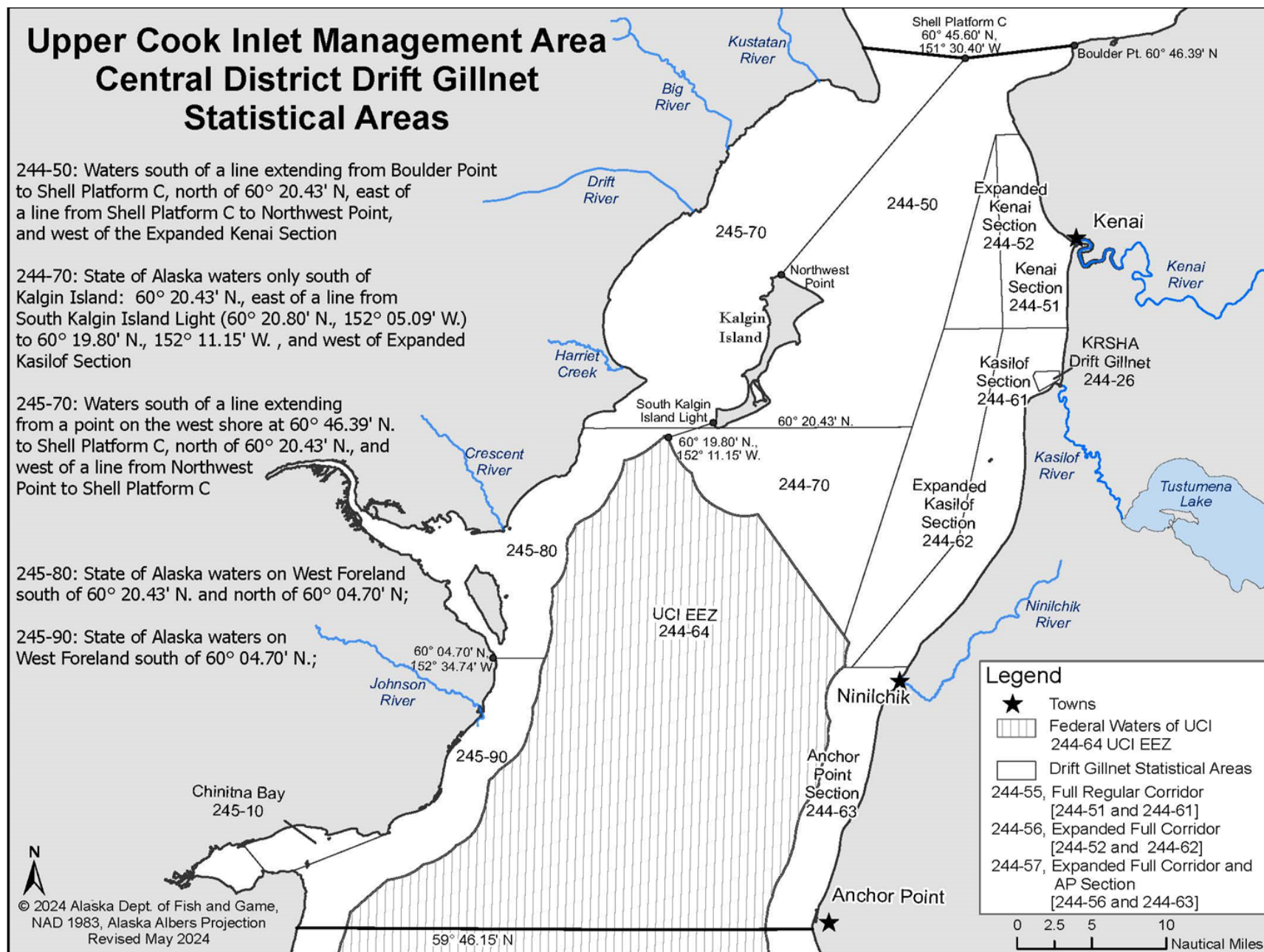


Figure 1.— Map of Upper Cook Inlet Drift Gillnet Statistical Areas. Updated May 2024.

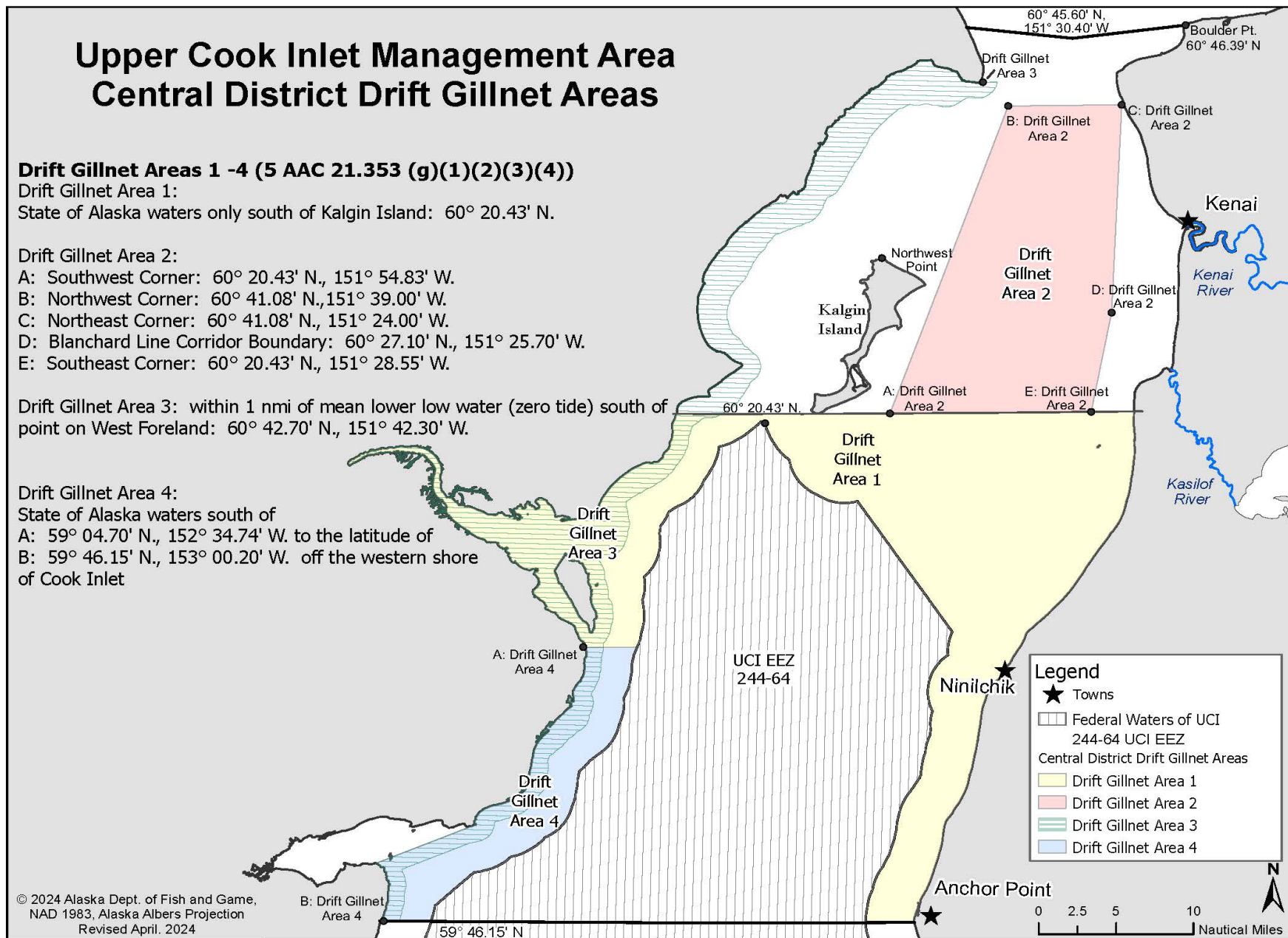


Figure 2.— Map of Upper Cook Inlet Drift Gillnet Areas. Updated May 2024.