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Advisory Announcement
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Kuskokwim River Fishery Announcement #1

Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fishery Outlook and Preliminary Management Strategy

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

2026 Run and Harvest Outlook for Kuskokwim River Salmon:

	Chinook	Chum	Sockeye	Coho
Projection:	Recent Average	Near Average	Above Average	Average
Escapement:	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goal	Expect to meet goal	Expect to meet goals
Subsistence:	Limited to Normal Harvest	Normal Harvest	Normal Harvest	Normal Harvest
Commercial:	None	None	None	Limited Harvest

Chinook Salmon Forecast

The 2026 Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon forecast is for a range of 123,000–200,000 fish. The drainagewide Chinook salmon escapement goal is 65,000–120,000 fish and the amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS) for Chinook salmon is 67,200–109,800 fish for the Kuskokwim River drainage.

If the run returns as projected, it is likely that escapement goals will be achieved and subsistence harvest opportunity will be offered. However, to account for uncertainty with preseason forecasts, ADF&G plans to begin the season with a conservative approach until inseason assessment information becomes available. The 2026 season will be managed in accordance with the *Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 07.365). ADF&G will receive input from the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group) on management strategies and inseason management actions over the course of the 2026 fishing season. ADF&G anticipates regular announcements of subsistence openings for Chinook, chum, and sockeye salmon. It is the intent of ADF&G that Kuskokwim River salmon stocks shall be managed in a conservative manner consistent with the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries under 5 AAC 39.222 to meet escapement goals and the subsistence priority.

It is anticipated that a Federal Special Action (FSA) will be issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prior to the salmon fishing season. While these are in place, the State of Alaska cannot issue subsistence salmon management actions within the boundaries of the Yukon Delta Refuge (Subsistence Sections 1–3). This encompasses the waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage from the mouth up to the community of Aniak. Please contact the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge at (907) 302-5144, for further details.

Based on the *Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 07.365) and the 2026 Chinook salmon forecast, the following preliminary management strategies will advise fishers on inseason management expectations and objectives for the 2026 salmon season.

The Working Group held a public meeting on April 29th in Bethel to hold elections and discuss research projects for the 2026 season, the 2025 run reconstruction and the 2026 forecast and preseason management strategies. The meeting records are available on the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group website.

ADF&G's preliminary management strategy for the state waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage, which includes management in Sections 4 & 5:

- Front end closure will be considered with the start date announced following the next Working Group meeting.
- Beginning June 12, ADF&G will provide at least one 6-inch mesh drift gillnet opportunity per week, additional harvest opportunities will be provided based on inseason run assessment.
- Tributary closures and restrictions will be similar to previous seasons.
- Subsistence harvest opportunities with selective gear types such as hook and line, fishwheels, dipnets and beach seines will be similar to previous seasons, Chinook retention will not be allowed. Retention could be warranted later in the season based on inseason run assessment

Kuskokwim River Salmon Working Group:

Management strategy options are discussed during the salmon season at Working Group meetings on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. Management strategy options discussed at the meeting will be subject to all department regulations as determined through the public process of the Board of Fisheries.

The public and stakeholders are invited to attend the meetings in person, at the Bethel ADF&G office or via teleconference. To attend by telephone: call 1-888-788-0099, meeting passcode: 849016 or join with Zoom through Zoom.us: meeting 816-6267-8969 code 849016.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office, on the State of Alaska website (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>), local radio stations, and Kuskokwim River Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/KuskoRiverFishingADFG/>). Advisory Announcements will be faxed to area villages.

For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:

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