

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #8 **Federal Special Actions 3-KS-05-14, 3-KS-06-14;** **Emergency Order #3-S-WR-07-14**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Bethel for subsistence salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

Johnson River to the lower boundary of Subdistrict 1-B (southern tip of Eek Island):

Subsistence fishing for chum and sockeye salmon will be allowed with gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh, 50 fathoms in length, and 45 meshes in depth from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Friday, June 20, 2014.

This area includes the waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage **between** the confluence of the Johnson and Kuskokwim rivers and a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut.

Lower boundary of Subdistrict 1-B and Marine waters near the Kuskokwim River mouth:

Subsistence fishing for chum and sockeye salmon will be allowed with gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh, 50 fathoms in length, and 45 meshes in depth from 4:00 p.m. Friday, June 20, 2014 until further notice.

This area is described as Kuskokwim River drainage waters **downstream** of a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut and those marine waters from a point east of the Ishkowik River at 59°58.928' N, 162°40.659' W to the northern boundary of District W-4 (at Weelung Creek)).

Subsistence fishing upstream of the confluence of the Johnson and Kuskokwim rivers remains restricted to gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh, 60 feet in length, 45 meshes in depth and dip nets. Hook and line fishing for Chinook salmon remains closed Kuskokwim River drainage wide.

Biological Rationale

The current Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) data suggests the lower end Chinook salmon escapement goal range will be reached with continued conservative management approach to limit harvest of Chinook salmon while allowing for harvest of chum and sockeye salmon.

The run timing for Chinook salmon appears to have been early with BTF numbers decreasing since approximately June 14. This suggests that the majority of the Chinook salmon will move past the BTF in the next week. The current BTF data indicates the ratio of chum and sockeye salmon to Chinook salmon continues to increase and is projected to be above 4:1 at the BTF by Friday. Chum and sockeye salmon ratios below Bethel are generally greater 2-4 days prior to arriving at the BTF. Past information from 2010 and 2012 indicate that subsistence catches in the lower river below the Johnson River during this stage of the run have been 25:1 and in some cases 50:1 using 6-inch mesh nets. These ratios and the use of 6-inch mesh nets during a limited 4 hour opener will provide fishing opportunity to harvest chum and sockeye salmon while protecting Chinook salmon remaining in that part of the river. Fishing pressure is not expected to exceed 200 vessels and with the large ratios of chum and sockeye to Chinook salmon the harvest of Chinook salmon will be limited. Harvest will be estimated based upon the total number of boats participating in the fishery. Harvests may be limited by the capacity of families to process the catch.

This management action is in line with the conservation plan discussed with ADF&G, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, and the tribes of the Kuskokwim River in the previous 9 months. We appreciate the efforts to conserve Chinook salmon made by everyone this season.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office, on the State of Alaska web site (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>), and local radio stations. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies. For additional information or questions regarding Kuskokwim Area fisheries, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in the Bethel at 543-2433 or toll free at 1-855-933-2433.

For additional information concerning this news release:

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