



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Land Management  
National Park Service  
Bureau of Indian Affairs

## Federal Subsistence Board

1101 E Tudor Rd, MS 121  
Anchorage Alaska 99503



Forest Service

# SUBSISTENCE FISHING

## SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of **50 CFR 100.10 and .19**  
**36 CFR 242.10 and .19**

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Special Action No.:	3-KS-07-14	Issued at:	Bethel, Alaska June 22, 2014
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Effective Date: June 24, 2014 8:00 a.m.

Expiration Date: July 14, 2014 11:59 p.m. Unless superseded by subsequent Special Action

### EXPLANATION:

### **KUSKOKWIM RIVER GILLNET OPENINGS ARE CALLED UNDER PERMANENT REGULATIONS (STATE EO AND JOINT NEWS RELEASES)**

The Kuskokwim fishery is in the process of transitioning to a chum and sockeye fishery to be managed by the State of Alaska. A complete transition is expected to take place in the near future. During this transition period, Special Action 3-KS-01-14 (limiting the fishery to Federally Qualified Users) and 3-KS-04-14 (allowing for a directed Chinook harvest by Federal permit only), remain in effect. The subsistence salmon fishery, however, will now be managed by the State of Alaska through their Emergency Orders.

### REGULATION

50 CFR 100.27(e)(4)(ii) is amended to read:

**For the Kuskokwim area, Federal subsistence fishing schedules, openings, closings, and fishing methods are the same as those issued for the subsistence taking of fish under Alaska Statutes (AS 16.05.060). Two Special Actions remain in effect, 3KS-01-14 and 3-KS-04-14, unless superseded by a Federal Special Action.**

### JUSTIFICATION

The transition to a State Managed fishery is in process with the arrival and increase of abundance of chum and sockeye salmon in the Kuskokwim River. During this short transition period, Federal permits issued for a directed Chinook harvest will remain valid through the effective ending date of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The Kuskokwim fishery will also remain limited to Federally

Qualified Users at least until residents in conservation section 3 within the refuge boundary have their first salmon fishing opportunity.

The 2014 State of Alaska Chinook salmon forecast is for a return of approximately 94,000 fish (range of 71,000-117,000). Given consecutive years of low Chinook salmon escapements, and the inability to achieve escapement goals, conservation regulations have been in place since May 20. The current Bethel Test Fishery data suggest that the conservation actions taken to date have allowed substantial numbers of Chinook salmon to pass the BTF. We expect at a minimum that the lower management objective for Chinook salmon will be reached if we continue conservative management actions to limit harvests of Chinook salmon while allowing for some harvest of chum and sockeye salmon. The run timing for Chinook salmon appears to have been early and the majority of the Chinook salmon will have moved past the BTF in the next week. The current Bethel Test Fish data indicate that the ratio of chum and sockeye to Chinook continues to increase and is projected to be above 10:1 at the BTF by Tuesday. Chum and sockeye ratios generally increase dramatically while Chinook continue to decline after the third week in June.

The 4 hour opening downriver of the Johnson River on Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, included approximately 198 boats. There was a range of total harvest with an observation of 4 to 124 total fish per boat. We have estimated an average harvest of about 50 salmon per boat, with an average ratio of chum and sockeye to Chinook salmon of about 16:1. This estimate was derived from a sample of approximately 60 vessels. This brings the total estimated harvest of Chinook from the subsistence fishery that took place on Friday to approximately 670 Chinook salmon from a total harvest of over 11,000 salmon. These ratios suggest that we are at a transition point for a chum and sockeye fishery that the State of Alaska will manage.

This management action is in line with the conservation plan discussed with ADF&G, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, public, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, and the tribes of the Kuskokwim River in the previous 9 months.

#### FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

By delegation to:

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 Brian J. McCaffery, Acting Refuge Manager  
 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

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