



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

Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199



Forest Service

YUKON AREA 6-INCH WHITEFISH OPPORTUNITY IN DISTRICT 3

TEMPORARY SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of: 36 CFR 242.10 and .19
43 CFR 51.10 and .19

Temporary Special Action No: 2-FC-08-25

Issued at: Fairbanks, Alaska, August 13, 2025

Effective Date: Sunday, August 17, 2025, 12:00 p.m. for District 3

Expiration Date: Wednesday, December 31, 2025, 8:00 a.m., unless superseded by subsequent special action

EXPLANATION:

This **Temporary Special Action** allows the use of **6-inch** (or smaller) **mesh set gillnets to target non-salmon in limited areas without migrating or spawning salmon** in Federal public waters of Yukon District 3 (see map on page 4 for specific areas). Non-salmon include sheefish, whitefish species, pike, and burbot. Fishermen should not be catching any salmon in these limited areas. These 6-inch whitefish opportunities are not allowed in the mainstem rivers or streams, or any main channels where salmon are present.

REGULATION:

In Federal public waters of District 3, subsistence salmon fishing for Chinook, chum, and coho salmon is currently closed to all users and this remains in effect throughout the Yukon River drainage. Gillnets of 4-inch and smaller mesh or manned fishwheels may only be used to target non-salmon on a weekly schedule from noon Thursdays until noon Sundays, and these restrictions remain in effect in all closed areas below.

36 CFR 242.27(e)(3) and 43 CFR 51.27(e)(3) Subsistence taking of fish—Yukon-Northern Area is further amended to read:

(ii) **In Federal public waters of the following area:**

District 3:

Effective 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 17, non-salmon subsistence fishing with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnets, limited to 60 feet in length, operated as a set net near shore is allowed, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week in all lakes without a closed drainage flowing into them, plus the rivers and sloughs listed below and named on the map.

The following drainages are open with 6-inch set gillnets for whitefish and other non-salmon **from 500-feet** upstream of a closed area. Coordinates mark the downstream end of the open area:

<i>Whitefish/Non-salmon Area</i>	<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>
Nunvotchuk Lake and Outlet Creek	61° 46.077' N	161° 19.426' W
Ocalaksuk Lake and Outlet Creek	61° 47.895' N	161° 20.912' W
Onolavik Lake and Outlet Creek	61° 48.445' N	161° 21.509' W
Talbiksok River upstream of the Portage Slough confluence	61° 41.321' N	161° 14.693' W

Fishing with other non-salmon gears, including hook and line with a rod or pole, hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, and beach seine, is open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week throughout the Yukon River drainage. Pink and sockeye salmon may be retained. Chinook, chum and coho salmon must be released alive from non-lethal gear types. If closed salmon species are caught while fishing for non-salmon with gillnets, they should be released alive when possible but may be legally retained if dead. Gillnets cannot block more than ½ width of any waterway.

JUSTIFICATION:

The areas opened to target whitefish and other non-salmon with 6-inch set gillnets are assumed to be areas without spawning or migrating salmon. These non-salmon harvest areas are a response to feedback from subsistence users asking for larger mesh gillnet opportunities to target the large whitefish and other non-salmon species known to be in these areas during the fall season. We have used databases and Indigenous and local knowledge to exclude areas that could have spawning or migrating salmon. Closure buffers (500 ft upstream from the mouth of closed streams) are necessary as migrating salmon could use these transitional areas to mill into, rest, and then travel back out. These closure buffers should limit any incidental harvest of salmon. Currently, there is no conservation concern for non-salmon species; therefore, fishing for non-salmon is not limited to federally qualified subsistence users.

CONSULTATION AND OUTREACH:

The Yukon River salmon outlooks and management strategies were discussed at a public hearing; the Eastern Interior, Western Interior, and Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council meetings; the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) annual Preseason Fisheries Meeting; at the Yukon River Panel and at the Yukon River Intertribal Fish commission meeting. The Federal manager offered formal Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation meetings with Yukon River drainage Tribal Governments upon request. The Federal fishery outlook and management strategy was sent to all Yukon Tribal and City governments on May 23. Approximately 3,500 copies of the ADF&G and USFWS Preseason Outlook flier were mailed to Yukon River fishing households in May.

This action was taken following coordination with the ADF&G fishery managers. The fishing schedules and/or restrictions announced here match those issued concurrently by the ADF&G in state waters (Fall Fishery Advisory Announcement #12). The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Chairs for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Eastern Interior, Western Interior, and Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Councils were notified as was the Chair and vice-chair of the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission. Review was provided by the Office of Subsistence Management.

Federal Subsistence Board by delegation to:

Holly C Carroll

Holly Carroll

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Yukon River Inseason Fisheries Manager

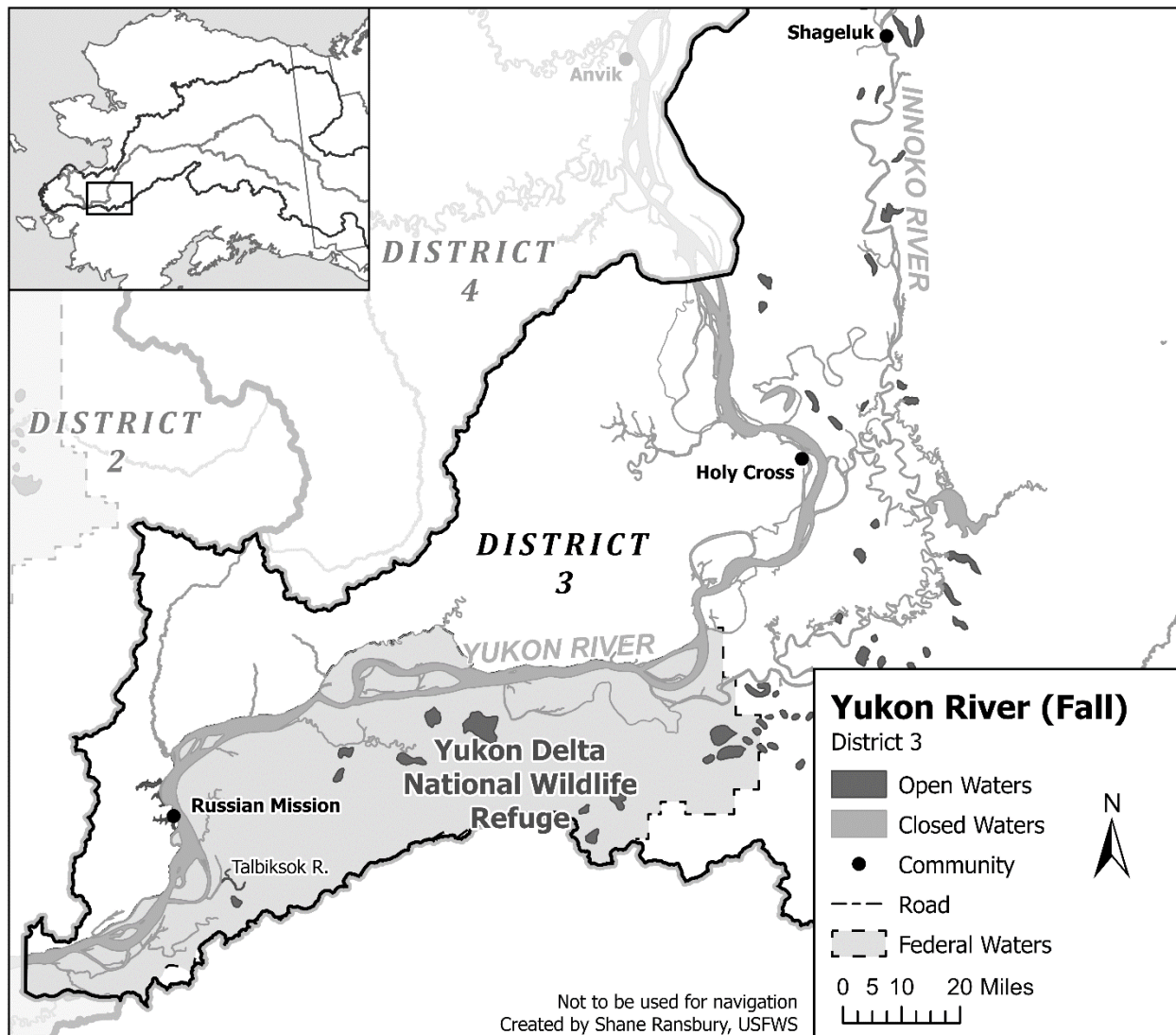
Northern Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office

For additional information concerning Yukon River Federal Special Actions contact Assistant Yukon River Federal Manager Keith Herron at (907) 334-5391, or Yukon Federal Assessment Biologist Shane Ransbury at (907) 334-5389.

For information concerning State management actions, contact Acting Yukon River Fall Season Manager, Matthew Olson, and Summer Season Manager, Deena Jallen, in Fairbanks at (907) 459-7274 or in Emmonak at (907) 949-1320. For fishing restrictions, schedules and counts for your area please call the toll-free recording: 1-866-479-7387

Information about the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

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Map showing open and closed areas for Fall whitefish harvest with 6-inch set gillnets. For District 3, all labeled non-mainstem waterways and all lakes without a closed drainage flowing into them are open to 6-inch set gillnets for non-salmon (dark gray). **The mainstems of the Yukon and Innoko rivers remain closed to 6-inch.** Rivers and sloughs that are open to 6-inch non-salmon fishing (dark grey) have a closure buffer from the mouth to 500 feet upstream of closed areas. Areas that remain closed to 6-inch set gillnets are not named but are shown in light gray.

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Also distributed to Tribal and City Governments and any interested parties. If you didn't receive this directly and want to, please reach out to Keith Herron.