



Federal Subsistence Board News Release



For Immediate Release
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Under the Authority of:

36 CFR Part 242.10 and .19
43 CFR Part 51.10 and .19

Eulachon harvest closed in federal waters of District 1, except for federally qualified harvesters in the Unuk River

KETCHIKAN, Alaska – Ketchikan Misty Fjords District Ranger Cathy Tighe, under authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, is closing the Federal public waters that flow into District 1, except to Federally-qualified subsistence users in the Unuk River drainage, to the taking of Eulachon from 12:01 a.m. on March 1, until 11:59 p.m. on April 15. This action closes the Federal fisheries within the Federal public waters of District 1, except the Federal subsistence fishery on the Unuk River.

Harvest within waters of the Unuk River drainage shall be limited to one 5-gallon bucket of whole eulachon per household, and gear is restricted to dip net and/or cast nets. All Eulachon incidentally caught outside of the Unuk River in Federal public waters draining into District 1 must be immediately released into the water unharmed. A Federal Subsistence fishing permit is required, and harvesters must abide by the terms of that permit.

Federal subsistence fishing permits are available at the Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District Office, 3031 Tongass Avenue, Ketchikan, AK, 99901. Requirements to obtain a Federal Subsistence permit differ from those for State Subsistence. You must have a primary, permanent place of residence in a rural area (as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board) to qualify to hunt, trap, or fish under Federal subsistence regulations. Please bring your identification as well as proof of rural residency, such as a piece of mail with a physical address.

Background: District 1 historically supported subsistence, personal use, and commercial fisheries for Eulachon or Ooligan, *Thaleichthys pacificus*, primarily in the Unuk River system. In 2005 the Ooligan population collapsed, resulting in State and Federal closures to fishing. Annual monitoring has documented variable return levels since 2011, with good returns in 2024 and 2025. The 2025 Unuk River eulachon monitoring report is available on the website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r10/tongass/planning/monitoring-evaluation-program>

A Federal subsistence fishery has been open on the Unuk River since 2021, to a limited harvest with gear restrictions to Federally-qualified subsistence users. A limited harvest in 2026 will continue to aid efforts to obtain biological data and better assess run sizes, as well as provide Federally-qualified subsistence users an opportunity to harvest. The in-season manager will be monitoring run size and if concerns are noted action will be taken to restrict harvest or close season early to protect population.

Data collected during monitoring efforts will help managers determine if the Eulachon population can support sustained harvest and inform future harvest limits.

For additional information, please contact Ketchikan District Ranger Cathy Tighe at 907-228-4100, or District Program Manager Jon Hyde at 907-228-4137. Maps and additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program can be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

For interviews and information to be used for publication, contact Tongass Public Affairs Officer Paul Robbins Jr. at 907-228-6201.

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