

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division

Review of Kuskokwim Area Subsistence Division Projects and OSM proposals



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OSM Proposals

Kuskokwim Management Area Postseason Subsistence Salmon Harvest Survey Project

- Purpose: To estimate annual subsistence salmon harvest in Kuskokwim drainage area communities
- Focus area: 28 communities, including Goodnews and South Kuskokwim Bay areas

Natural Indicators of Salmon in the Upper Kuskokwim River

- Purpose: This project seeks to understand the historical abundance, distribution, and health of salmon populations in subsistence fishing communities in the upper Kuskokwim River drainage through the documentation and incorporation of local and traditional ecological knowledge
- Communities: McGrath, Takotna, Nikolai

The Presence and Use of Salmon in the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers

- **Purpose:** Document TEK of salmon presence and ecology of salmon in these rivers as well as the historical and contemporary uses for subsistence fishing. This project will use social science and genetic sampling methods to fill a critical data gap about salmon in the lower Yukon River region
- Communities: Kotlik

Local and Traditional Knowledge of Subsistence Salmon Harvest and Use in the Lower Kuskokwim River

- Purpose: This study will focus on fisher knowledge of salmon patterns of movement through customary and traditional fishing areas and the ways in which fishers use this knowledge to effectively harvest salmon, particularly in the section of the Kuskokwim River from the Johnson River mouth downstream to Kuskokwim Bay
- Communities: Napakiak, Nunapitchuk, Kasigluk, Tuntutuliak, and Eek

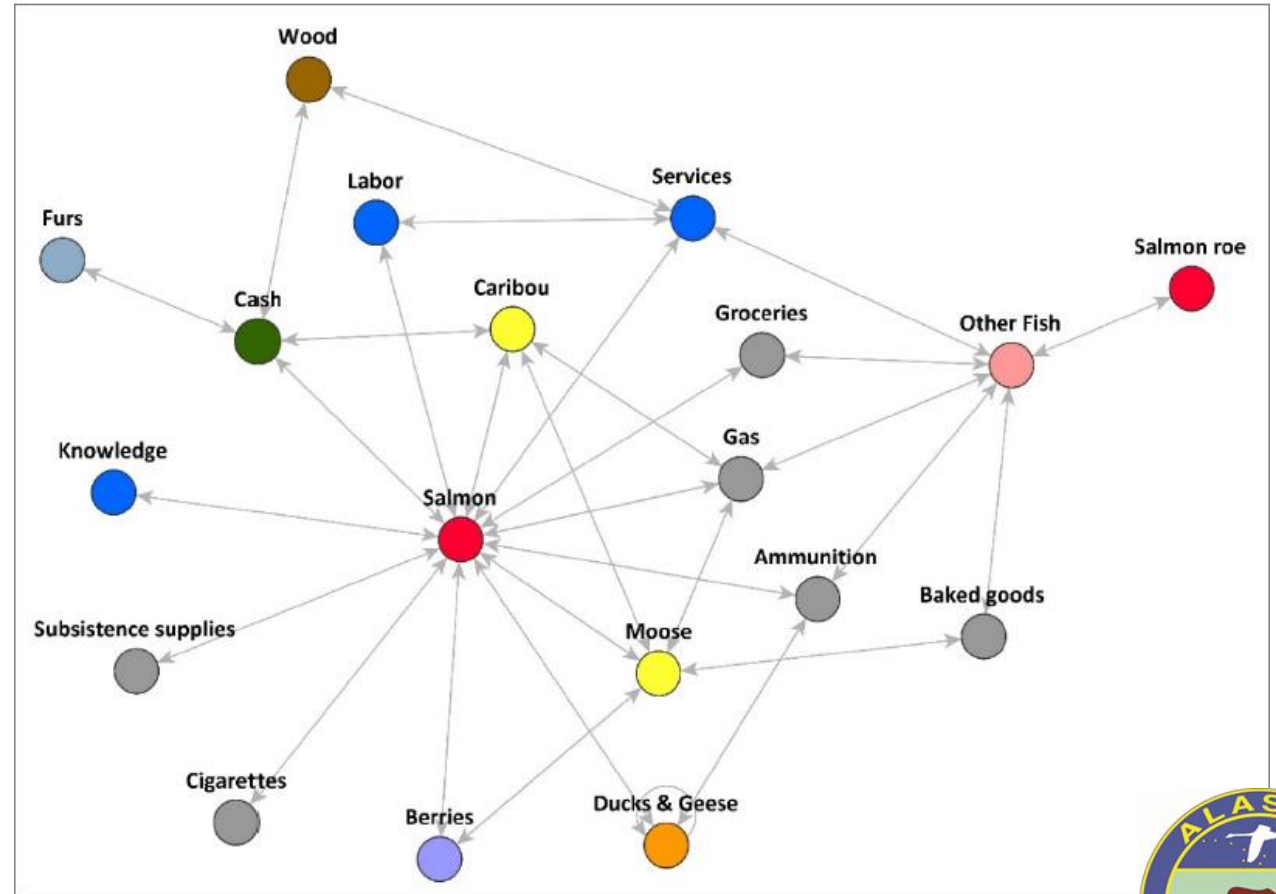
Customary Trade in the Middle and Lower Yukon River

Funding Agency: USFWS Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)

Objective: Conduct surveys and in-depth interviews to better understand the nature and importance of trade throughout the Yukon River drainage

Communities: Nunam Iqua, Mountain Village, Kaltag, Galena

Status: Tribal consultation and Covid contingency planning currently underway.





Yukon Comprehensives

Funding Agency: *NEW* annual funding associated with the recent increase to the Pacific Salmon Treaty Implementation Funds

Purpose:

- To estimate the total harvest and use of all wild foods in Yukon River communities with particular attention on changes within the salmon fishery
- To conduct TEK interviews with long time subsistence users in order to contextualize harvest information and document local changes and concerns

2022 Communities: Chevak and Hooper Bay





Kuskokwim Management Area Postseason Salmon Harvest Survey Project

Funding Agency: USFWS Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)

Background: Data collection began in 1960, Division of Commercial Fisheries (DCF) surveyed Kuskokwim area fish camps in late July

ONC has partnered with ADF&G since 1999

Purpose: To estimate annual salmon harvest in Kuskokwim area communities

28 communities- Bay areas to headwaters



Kuskokwim Management Area Postseason Salmon Harvest Survey Project, continued

- **Contingency Planning:**
 - Based on 2020 plans
 - Align w/ Community health & safety guidelines
- **Methods:**
 - Typical year: Door to door in-person
 - 2020: phone, online, mail-in, in-person (BET)
 - 2021: in-person, phone, online, mail-in
- **Sampling:**
 - Typical year: Communities w/ 40 households or less = census, Communities w/ 41 or greater households = stratified sample
 - 2020 season: All communities (outside of BET) were censused
 - 2021 season:
 - In-Person: AKI, ANI, CHU, CKD, SLQ, SRV, LVD (stratified sample)
 - Phone: All lower river villages (excluding AKI), KWN, GNU and PTU (census)
 - BET = simple random sample of 25% of households





Lower Kuskokwim Tributaries

Funding Source: AKSSF

Study Period: June-July 2021 and 2022

Study Area:

- Gweek River
- Johnson River
- Tuntutuliak River
- Paillek Slough

Objective:

- Estimate subsistence salmon fishing effort and harvest on non-spawning tributaries
- Gain a better understanding of the importance of these harvests to LK community residents





Lower Kuskokwim Big Game

Spring-Fall 2021

Funding: Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) Pittman-Robertson Fund

Background: Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) decline ~ -93%, significant dependence

Objective: To better document the harvest of big game species in Unit 18

Methods: households surveys, ethnographic interviews and participant observation during moose hunting season

Communities: Kwethluk and Akiachak

Tribal Council approved Feb 2021

Harvest data collected spring 2021

Remote project management

Local Research Assistants (LRAs)

Over 60% of households sampled





Lower Kuskokwim Tributaries Continued

2021 Season Summary:

- Field research during the 2021 season yielded 7 harvest surveys and 0 ethnographic interviews
- Strict sampling design prevented researchers from acquiring adequate harvest data.

Moving Forward:

- Sampling methods should be altered to increase salmon harvest data.
- Field research in 2022 must focus on having conversations with fishers and gathering ethnographic information.





Lower Kuskokwim Tributaries Continued

Possible Methods Redesign:

- **Option A:** Focus solely on gathering quality TEK and other ethnographic information from fishermen who traditionally harvest in the non-spawning tributaries
- **Option B:** Gather TEK and other ethnographic information while also asking residents in lower Kuskokwim communities about their harvests in these tributaries *as part of the Kuskokwim Post Season Survey*

Consultation with Stakeholders:

- **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!**
 - What are you interested in learning about harvest in these tributaries?
 - What approach would best answer those questions?



Questions?

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Thank you!