



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

PO Box 346

Bethel, AK 99559



Emergency Special Action No.: 3-KS-02-22

Issued at: Bethel, Alaska June 18, 2022

Effective Date:

June 20, 2022

6:00 a.m.

Federal Public Waters of the Kuskokwim River Fishing Announcement

Pursuant to authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager, as In-Season Manager, hereby announces additional gillnet fishing opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users. These additional openings reflect revisions to Emergency Special Action (ESA) 3-KS-01-22, issued May 02, 2022, which closed certain waters within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) to the harvest of salmon and certain fishing methods in order to ensure the continued viability of, and subsistence use of Chinook Salmon. ESA 3-KS-01-22 further provided several Chinook and Chum Salmon harvest opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users, the latest of which occurred on June 16, 2022. Since that time, the In-Season manager has continued to review data and information reported by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), The Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), and other parties, and has engaged in numerous discussions with stakeholders concerning the prospect of providing additional harvest opportunities.

Subsistence Fishing Opportunities:

- Downstream of Kalskag at the south edge of Uknavik Slough and then due east to the edge of the Kalskag bluff line and upstream to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge to the downstream boundary of the Aniak Box (as described in ESA 3-KS-01-22). This portion is opening to the use of gillnets, by Federally qualified subsistence users effective:

June 20, 2022 beginning at 6:00 am, until further notice.

- In the Kuskokwim River main stem from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to the Refuge boundary at the edge of Uknavik Slough and due east to the Kalskag Bluff line, drift or set gillnets will be allowed effective June 22, 2022 from 6:00 am through 6:00 pm for Federally qualified subsistence users residing along the Kuskokwim River. When this harvest opportunity expires, Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River, Downstream of Kalskag Bluffs and to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River will return to closed to the use of gillnets by all users for the protection of Chinook and Chum Salmon.

These actions are in effect until superseded by subsequent emergency special action(s).

In both above-mentioned actions, subsistence users will be allowed to use gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh which may not exceed 45 meshes in depth; 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River; and may not exceed 50 fathoms (300 feet) in length below the Johnson River.



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The opening of the Kalskag line between the Kalskag bluffs to Aniak is unlikely to compromise attaining the established escapement goal range by using Chinook Salmon conservation gear (6-inch or less stretched mesh gillnets). The in season manager does not expect Chinook Salmon harvest from this area of the river to be any more than 2,000 to 5,000 Chinook Salmon based on historical harvest estimates during times of restrictions. This action is inherently a conservative management action that protects the viability of the Chinook Salmon population while allowing the continuation of subsistence uses.

The data indicates that this season's Chinook Salmon run is similar to 2021, which had a total run of 129,751 Chinook Salmon and an escapement of 101,000 fish. This indicates that a conservation concern continues to exist. However, the data also indicates, and ADF&G and the KRITFC agree, that limited openings can be provided without jeopardizing the viability of future Chinook salmon runs. Based on historical information, the drift gillnet opportunity announced is expected to generate a harvest of between 5,000 to 7,000 Chinook Salmon. In addition, ADF&G data indicates that the Chum Salmon run is in its early stages and a harvest opportunity on the 22nd will result in minimal Chum harvest. Pursuant to Section 804 of ANILCA, these limited re-openings will be afforded only to Federally qualified subsistence users.

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by calling 907-543-1008 or 907-543-3151 or visit the Refuge [Facebook](#) page or www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon_delta/.

By delegation from the Federal Subsistence Board:

Boyd Blihovde, Refuge Manager
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

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