



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 Part 100.10 and .19
36 CFR Part 242.10 and .19

Special Action No.: 3-KS-02-15 Issued at: Bethel, Alaska
May 18, 2015

Effective Date: May 21, 2015 6:00 a.m.

Expiration Date: May 28, 2015 5:59 am. Unless superseded by subsequent Special Action

EXPLANATION:

Kuskokwim River Mouth to Tuluksak

This Emergency Special Action closes Chinook salmon fishing to all users from the Kuskokwim River mouth to Tuluksak in all salmon tributaries. This action follows the conservation strategy discussed with the members of local Tribes, the public, the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) over the previous 10 months.

REGULATION

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

Unless superseded by subsequent Special Action

Effective 6:00 a.m., Thursday, May 21, 2015, Chinook salmon fishing is closed to all user groups. Gill nets must be set, and are restricted to four-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length and 45 meshes deep; this gill net opportunity is only allowed for 72 hours each week from 6:00 a.m. Thursday through 6:00 a.m. Sunday. This area is closed to all gill nets from 6:01 a.m. Sunday through 5:59 a.m. Thursday weekly. This area is defined as, that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its salmon tributaries upstream from the mouth of the Kuskokwim from a line from the West bank of the Kuskokwim at N59.999231°, W162.507352° and the East bank of the Kuskokwim at N59.999238°, W162.187927° to the ADF&G regulatory markers on the main stem of the Kuskokwim approximately half a mile upstream from the confluence of the mouth of the Tuluksak and the Kuskokwim. Salmon

tributaries are the Eek, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, and Tuluksak Rivers and their salmon tributaries.

JUSTIFICATION

Biological

Due to the low Chinook salmon returns for the last several years and escapement goals not met at two of three weir projects in 2014, conservation measures are warranted in 2015. The 2014 State of Alaska Chinook salmon drainage-wide return was estimated at 136,000 fish, well below the annual average of 243,000 fish over the last 25 years. The subsistence harvest in 2014 was estimated to be 12,000 Chinook salmon, a historically low harvest. The escapement for 2014 was estimated at 124,000 Chinook salmon drainage-wide. The State of Alaska drainage-wide escapement goal is 65,000–120,000 Chinook salmon, and the 2015 return is forecasted to be between 96,000 and 163,000 Chinook salmon. At the upper end of that range, there would be enough fish to meet escapement goals and provide for a moderate Chinook salmon subsistence harvest. At the lower end of the projected run, however, even a very limited subsistence harvest could impact the likelihood of achieving escapement goals. Given several consecutive years of low Chinook salmon returns and that escapement goals were not met at two of three weir projects in 2014, conservation measures are warranted in 2015.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

By delegation to:



Neil Lalonde, Refuge Manager
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

DISTRIBUTION:

Tim Towarak, Chair, Federal Subsistence Board
Members, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council
Gene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Subsistence Division, USFWS
Jim Hjelmgren, Chief of Refuge Law Enforcement
Ryan Noel, Special Agent in Charge, LE Division, USFWS
Myron Naneng, President, Association of Village Council Presidents
Sam Cotten, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Sgt. Mark Cloward, Alaska Bureau of Wildlife Investigation
Delta Discovery
Tundra Drums
KYUK Radio
KYKD Radio
KSKO Radio