



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



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-02-14 Issued at: Bethel, Alaska
May 16, 2014

Effective Date: May 20, 2014 12:01 a.m.

Expiration Date: July 14, 2014 11:59 p.m. unless superseded by subsequent Special Action

EXPLANATION:

Kuskokwim River Mouth to Tuluksak

This Special Action closes king salmon fishing to all users in conservation sections 1 and 2 on the Kuskokwim River drainage. This action follows the conservation strategy discussed with the members of local Tribes, the public, Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game over the previous 10 months.

REGULATION

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

Effective 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, May 20, 2014 Chinook salmon fishing in the Kuskokwim River drainage is closed to all user groups. Gillnets are restricted to set gillnets, 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length in Salmon Conservation Sections 1 and 2. Subsistence fishing with dipnet will adhere to State fishing schedules (AS 16.05.060). Chinook salmon incidentally caught in gillnets may be retained. Chinook salmon incidentally caught using all other gear types must be immediately released. The area covered by this action is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge border at the mouth of the Kuskokwim, described by a line from a point on the west shore 5.1 miles south-southwest of Popkamiut (approximately 59° 59' 57.8198 -162° 30' 24.47688) across to a point on the east shore 3.4 miles south-southeast of the mouth of Kuskokwak Creek (approximately 59° 59.57.14979 -162° 11' 14.92507), upriver on the Kuskokwim to a line between ADF&G

regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: those portions of Kinak, Kialik, Tagayarak, Johnson and Gweek rivers more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

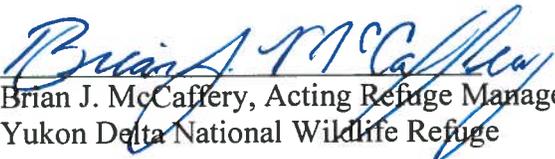
JUSTIFICATION

Biological

Since 2010, the Kuskokwim River has experienced poor king salmon returns and 2013 was the lowest return on record. The 2014 State of Alaska king salmon forecast is for a return of 94,000 fish (range of 71,000–117,000). The State of Alaska drainage-wide escapement goal is 65,000–120,000. If the 2014 return is within the forecast then there would be enough fish to meet escapement goals and provide for very limited king salmon subsistence harvest. The majority of escapement goals were not met in 2013 and all weir assessment projects had the lowest on record. Given consecutive years of low king salmon returns and non-achievement of escapement goals conservation measures are warranted. To limit incidental catch and mortality of Chinook salmon, all gear types that target or are likely to target Chinook salmon are restricted. This includes gillnets larger than 4", drift gillnets, and hook and line gear that are designed to target Chinook salmon.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

By delegation to:


 Brian J. McCaffery, Acting Refuge Manager
 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

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