

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Alaska Board of Fisheries Decisions on Kuskokwim River Emergency Petitions

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) met in Anchorage from March 17–21, 2014. Two emergency petitions for Kuskokwim Area subsistence salmon fishing were submitted to the board by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group and the board heard and took action on the petitions.

An emergency petition to add dip nets as legal gear for the taking of salmon other than king salmon during times of king salmon conservation was submitted. The board found that this petition met the criteria for the finding of an emergency and adopted it as an emergency regulation. This allows the department to open subsistence fishing periods with dip net gear and all king salmon caught must be returned immediately to the water alive. This will be used to provide more opportunity to harvest chum and sockeye salmon while conserving king salmon.

The specifications of a legal dip net (5 AAC 39.105) is a bag-shaped net supported on all sides by a rigid frame; the maximum distance between any two points on the net frame may not exceed 5 feet; the bag of the frame must be at least one-half the distance of the maximum frame opening; the webbing of the net may not exceed 4.5-inches stretch mesh.

An emergency petition to provide the department the ability to restrict the length of subsistence gillnets from 50-fathoms to 25-fathoms (150 feet) during times of king salmon conservation was submitted. The board found that this petition met the criteria for the finding of an emergency and adopted it as an emergency regulation. This gives the department more flexibility to open subsistence fishing periods during times of king salmon conservation. Gillnets may be over 25-

fathoms in total length, but must be tied and/or bagged in such a way that only 25-fathoms can be used to fish.

The board gave the commissioner the authority to make these emergency regulations permanent.

Any questions regarding these regulatory changes in the Kuskokwim Area can be directed to Travis Elison in Anchorage at 907-267-2379 or Aaron Tiernan at 907-267-2303. When final regulations are published the department will provide further information to the public.

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