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Forest Service

## Federal Subsistence Board News Release

**For Immediate Release:**  
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### **Kuskokwim River Upstream of Kalskag Bluffs Open June 18 until Further Notice for Harvest of Chinook Salmon by Federally Qualified Subsistence Users**

In coordination with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, Office of Subsistence Management, Western Interior RAC and Yukon Kuskokwim Delta RAC, the Federal In-season Manager announces the opening of a portion of the Kuskokwim River main-stem. The portion of the river opening is from the Kalskag bluffs, described as 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 (Refuge) boundary at Aniak (see map ESA 3-KS-04-20). This portion is opening to the harvest of Chinook Salmon, by Federally qualified subsistence users identified in the Section 804 subsistence user prioritization analysis, which includes residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Cheforanak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganak, effective June 18, 2020 from 6:00 PM until superseded by subsequent emergency special action.

Areas that remain closed include the Aniak River within the boundaries of the Refuge, as well as the area referred to as the “Aniak Box”, from the Refuge boundary at Aniak to the downstream end of the Aniak runway. These areas will remain closed to all users for Chinook Salmon fishing to protect fish bound for the Aniak River.

When using gillnets, the following restrictions apply:

- 6-inch or less mesh;
- May not exceed 45 meshes in depth;
- May not exceed 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length.

As a reminder, the following restrictions remain in effect for Kuskokwim Area Subsistence fishing:

- You may not obstruct a stream by more than one-half of its width.
- Kegs, buoys, stakes, unattended gear must be marked with your first initial, last name, and address plainly and legibly on each keg, buoy, and any other unattended fishing gear you use to take fish for subsistence uses. We recommend your phone number also be included.

- In the Kuskokwim River tributaries, you must attach each subsistence gillnet to the bank. Your net should be substantially perpendicular to the bank and in a straight line.
- When subsistence fishing for salmon, you **may not** use an aggregate length of set or drift gillnets in excess of 50 fathoms (*300 feet*).

This harvest opportunity is to provide for the continuation of subsistence uses of Chinook Salmon that are critical to cultural and traditional needs. While the strength of the Chinook run is still unknown, early indications from sonar and the Bethel Test Fishery suggest an adequate number of Chinook Salmon have escaped past Bethel to provide for a limited opportunity. The Chinook fishery is being managed with a cautionary approach as advised during tribal consultation. However, the run is strong enough to allow this limited opportunity for Chinook Salmon harvest for Kuskokwim River rural residents (Federally qualified subsistence users).

The Federal in-season manager has implemented this Emergency Special Action (3-KS-04-20) limited opportunity under delegated authority from the Federal Subsistence Board. Only Kuskokwim River rural residents (Federally Qualified Subsistence Users in villages described in the Section 804 subsistence user prioritization analysis) may target and retain Chinook Salmon during this opportunity.

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by calling 907-543-1008 or visit the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge [Facebook](#) page or [www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon\\_delta/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/yukon_delta/).  
**Questions?** Call the Refuge at (907) 543-3151 or at (800) 621-5804.

Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence) or by visiting [www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska](http://www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

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