FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE EULACHON FISHERY CLOSED IN DISTRICT ONE

EMERGENCY SPECIAL ACTION
Under Authority of: 36 CFR 242.10 and .19
50 CFR 100.10 and .19

Emergency Special Action No: 13-EU-01-20
Issued at: Ketchikan, Alaska, February 25, 2020

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Sunday, March 1, 2020
Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, April 29, 2020 unless superseded by subsequent special action

EXPLANATION: This emergency Special Action closes Federal public waters draining into District 1 to the harvest of Eulachon. All Eulachon incidentally caught must be immediately released into the water unharmed. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is also implementing a similar closure of District 1 for the State subsistence, personal use and commercial fisheries.

REGULATION: 50 CFR 100.27(e)(13)(ii) and 36 CFR 242.27(e)(13)(ii) are temporarily modified to read:

§ 100.27(e)(13)(ii) You must possess a subsistence fishing permit to take salmon, trout, grayling, or char. You must possess a subsistence fishing permit to take Eulachon from any freshwater stream flowing into fishing Sections 1C or 1D. Eulachon may not be taken from waters draining into District 1 from 12:01 a.m., March 1 through 11:59 p.m., April 29, 2020.

JUSTIFICATION: Eulachon populations in District 1 have been critically low since 2005. Monitoring by the Forest Service, ADF&G, Ketchikan Indian Community and fishermen since 2001 provided information that indicates a decline of Eulachon populations in District 1. Although river surveys have occurred to document adult returns, little is known about Eulachon after they leave river systems for saltwater.

District 1 historically supported subsistence, personal use and commercial fisheries for Eulachon. In 2004, only 1500 pounds of Eulachon was harvested, with very low numbers seen by both subsistence fisherman and Forest Service personnel. From 2005 to 2010, very few Eulachon were seen annually in the area during this period. Although returns of Eulachon have occurred in the Burroughs Bay and Carroll Inlet areas since 2011, State and Federal managers believe abundances are far lower than those prior to the decline. Genetic analysis of Carroll Inlet fish showed a genetic similarity to Unuk River Eulachon.

During the 2018 and 2019 seasons, Forest Service personnel resumed on site monitoring at the Unuk River. Although returns were documented, the abundance of Eulachon noted in 2019 was lower and...
of shorter duration than in 2018. State and Federal managers believe stock sizes within District I are still too low to support fishing and closure is necessary for conservation. The Eulachon life cycle is typically three to five years. Based on the numbers observed for the last three years it is not likely a harvestable surplus will be available in 2020. It is anticipated that all Eulachon returning to District I in 2020 will be needed for spawning to rebuild the area Eulachon populations. Therefore, Federal public waters draining into District I will be closed to the taking of Eulachon by all users in 2020 to provide for conservation of Eulachon.

Federal Subsistence Board by delegation to:

SUSAN A. HOWLE
District Ranger
· Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District
25 February 2020

DISTRIBUTION:
Anthony Christianson, Chair, Federal Subsistence Board
Don Hernandez, Chair, Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Tom Whitford, USFS Regional Subsistence Program Leader, Interagency Staff Committee
Terry Suminski, USFS Tongass Subsistence Program Leader
Deanna Perry, USFS Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Coordinator
Melinda Hernandez-Burke, USFS Tribal Relations Program Manager
Paul Robbins, USFS Public Affairs Officer
Bill Elsner, USFS Patrol Captain
Thomas Doolittle, Acting Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Greg Risdahl, Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
Suzanne Worker, Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Theo Matuskowitz, Regulations Specialist, Office of Subsistence Management
George Pappas, State Subsistence Liaison, Office of Subsistence Management
Caron McKee, Outreach Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Ben Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Mark Burch, Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Bo Meredith, Ketchikan Area Management Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Public Safety Department-Fish & Wildlife Protection Division, Ketchikan
Karl Cook, Mayor, Metlakatla Indian Community
Lee Wallace, President, Organized Village of Saxman
Norman Skan, President, Ketchikan Indian Community