



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: June 18, 2022

Time: 8:00 p.m.

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**Kuskokwim Area Management Biologists
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Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #4

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-04-22

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in Bethel for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim Area.

Subsistence Sections 1-3 (Yukon Delta Refuge boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to Yukon Delta Refuge boundary near Aniak):

- Subsistence fishing with 6-inch or less mesh gillnets (set or drift) will open in the mainstem Kuskokwim River from **6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22, 2022**, from the Yukon Delta Refuge boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to a line formed between two points lat 61° 20.333' N, long 160° 34.867' W and lat 61° 20.333' N, long 160° 41.05' W (**Kalskag Bluffs**).
 - Below the Johnson River, gillnets are restricted to 45 meshes in depth, and 50 fathoms (300 feet) in length.
 - Above the Johnson River, gillnets are restricted to 45 meshes in depth, and 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length.
- The Kuskokwim River from a line formed between two points lat 61° 20.333' N, long 160° 34.867' W and lat 61° 20.333' N, long 160° 41.05' W (**Kalskag Bluffs**) upstream to a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.264' N, long 159° 33.459' W and lat 61° 35.611' N, long 159° 33.260' W near Aniak (**downriver boundary of Aniak Box**) **will open to subsistence fishing with 6-inch or less mesh gillnets, not to exceed 25 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth beginning 6:00 a.m. June 20, 2022 until further notice.**
- King salmon may be retained if caught with fish wheels, dip nets, beach seines, and hook and line in the mainstem Kuskokwim River from the Yukon Delta Refuge boundary at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River to a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.264' N, long 159° 33.459' W and lat 61° 35.611' N, long 159° 33.260' W near Aniak (**downriver boundary of Aniak Box**) **beginning 6:00 a.m. June 20, 2022 until further notice.**
- **Aniak Box:** The waters of the Kuskokwim River near Aniak, from a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.264' N, long 159° 33.459' W and lat 61° 35.611' N, long 159° 33.260' W upstream to a line formed between two points lat 61° 35.308' N, long 159° 29.167' W and lat 61° 34.731' N, long 159° 28.939' W (Figure 1), **will remain closed to subsistence fishing with gillnets until further notice.** Subsistence fishing with rod and reel, fish wheels equipped with a live box or

chute, beach seines and dip nets is allowed, **but all king salmon caught must be returned to the water alive.**

As previously announced:

Subsistence fishing with gillnets and harvest of king salmon in selective gears will continue to be closed on the following tributaries until further notice:

- The Eek River drainage to its confluence with the Kuskokwim River.
- The Kwethluk River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers located at its confluence with Kuskokuak Slough.
- The Kasigluk and Kisaralik river drainages, including Old Kuskokuak Slough to ADF&G regulatory markers at the confluence of Old Kuskokuak Slough with Kuskokuak Slough.
- The Tuluksak River drainage, including its confluence with the Kuskokwim River and downstream approximately 1-mile to ADF&G regulatory markers.
- The Aniak River drainage to ADF&G regulatory markers at its confluence with the Kuskokwim River.

The 2022 season is managed in accordance with the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.365) as directed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. The preseason forecast of Kuskokwim River king salmon is for a range of 99,000 to 161,000 fish. As of June 17, the Bethel test fishery cumulative CPUE for king salmon was 91 and the total king salmon passage past the sonar, as of June 14, was 17,000 fish. Inseason assessment indicates that this year's run may be similar to 2021, which was a total run of 129,751 fish. Drainage-wide escapement in 2021 was 101,000 fish.

Projections from the collaboratively developed Chinook Salmon In-season Bayesian Risk Assessment Tool (<https://bstaton.shinyapps.io/BayesTool/>) were used to estimate expected run/escapement and harvestable surplus. A current total harvest of 17,600 fish was used to inform the model. This harvest includes total harvest to date downstream, and including, Akiak and an estimated 5,000 fish harvest upriver from, and including, Tuluksak. Expected harvest on June 22 is 6,500 king salmon. The updated model indicates that fishing on June 22 will result in an expected escapement of 94,000 king salmon, with a very high probability (88%) of being above the lower bound of the ADF&G established drainage wide escapement goal. There are no longer any concerns like the ones we expressed from the excessive harvest of headwaters stocks during the federal June 12 and 16 fishing periods. Past tagging projects indicate that by June 22 all sub-stock components will be represented in the harvest and headwaters stocks will only comprise between 6-11% of the total catch. While projections are uncertain this early in the run, inseason assessment, sub-stock timing, harvest reports, and expected harvest based on prior years indicate an opening on June 22 is warranted.

We do not believe this opportunity under State subsistence fishing regulations will negatively impact the ability of federally qualified subsistence users from meeting their needs during these fishing periods if they so choose to participate in the fishery. This opportunity will allow those individuals who have been displaced to the urban areas of Alaska for educational, social, health or other reasons to practice their traditional and cultural subsistence way of life that is closely tied to the Kuskokwim River.

As a reminder the next meeting of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group is scheduled for Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., by teleconference. This meeting is open to the public. Please call 1-800-315-6338 passcode: 58756#, to attend via teleconference.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office, on the State of Alaska web site (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>), local radio stations, and Kuskokwim River

Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/KuskoRiverFishingADFG/>). Advisory Announcements will be faxed to area villages. For additional information or questions regarding Kuskokwim Area fisheries, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Bethel at 543-2433 or toll free at 1-855-933-2433.

For information regarding federal subsistence fishing regulations and any announcements, please contact the Yukon Delta NWR at (907) 543-3151 or (907) 543-1002.



Figure 1.— Map of Aniak area closed waters.

For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:
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