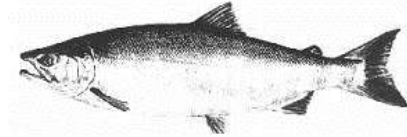


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner  
Scott Kelley, Director*



---

Travis Elison, Naknek-Kvichak Manager  
Paul Salomone, Egegik and Ugashik Manager  
Tim Sands, Nushagak and Togiak Manager  
Date Issued: April 12, 2018  
Time: 11:30 a.m.

King Salmon Office P.O. Box 37  
King Salmon, AK 99613  
Phone: 246-3341 Fax: 246-3309  
Dillingham Office P.O. Box 230  
Dillingham, AK 99576  
Phone: 842-5227 Fax: 842-5937

**BRISTOL BAY  
2018 OUTLOOK FOR COMMERCIAL  
SALMON FISHING**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document provides general information to fishermen, processors, and the public, concerning the upcoming Bristol Bay salmon season. Included is the general framework for management of each of the five major districts and the 2018 salmon forecast.

During the season, Bristol Bay salmon fishing announcements are broadcast on marine VHF Channel 07A. Current fishing announcements are aired on local radio stations – KAKN and KDLG. As conditions in the fishery change, for the most current information, fishermen should stand by at regular announcement times: 9:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated. Information is also available via telephone; for east-side fisheries (Naknek-Kvichak, Egegik, and Ugashik), dial 246-INFO (4636), for west-side fisheries (Nushagak and Togiak) dial 842-5226. Fishermen are asked to note office hours at the Dillingham ADF&G office will be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday from June 1–June 15, and again beginning Monday July 16. From June 16 to July 15 weekday office hours will be the same as above, but weekend office hours will be from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. In King Salmon the office hours are as follows: June 1 to June 15 and after July 17: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed for lunch and weekends. From June 16 to July 17: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days per week.

Regarding district registration cards: set gillnet permit holders are only required to fill out and return set gillnet registration cards if they fish in the Nushagak District. Drift gillnet permit holders must fill out and return district registration cards prior to commercial fishing in any district in Bristol Bay. District registration cards will be available at the Anchorage, King Salmon, and Dillingham offices beginning May 1. In addition, PDF files of district registration cards are posted on the ADF&G Bristol Bay homepage and can be printed, completed, mailed to the address on the printout, or submitted to Anchorage, King Salmon, or Dillingham office

personnel. District registration for drift gillnet permit holders can also be accomplished online at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareabristolbay.salmon#management>

Fishery updates, announcements, catch and escapement information, and Port Moller Test Fishery genetic stock composition estimates will be available at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareabristolbay.salmon>

The Port Moller Test Fishery daily catch updates and interpretations of the data will be posted at the following web site once the project becomes operational on June 10:

<https://www.bbsri.org/port-moller-test-fishery>

Fishermen and processors should be aware of the reporting requirements in 5 AAC 06.377 (b) that state:

**“Each commercial fisherman shall report, on an ADF&G fish ticket, at the time of landing, the number of Chinook and coho salmon taken but not sold.”**

### **Alaska Wildlife Troopers – Summer 2018 Outlook – Bristol Bay**

Enforcement Priorities:

- A continued strong focus on fishing district lines and open period enforcement, particularly in the Naknek-Kvichak and Egegik districts using all available assets to include aircraft, rotorcraft, large and small enforcement vessels, and undercover fishing vessels.
- Routine boarding of drift gillnet and processor vessels to verify licensing and permitting regulations are met. Fishermen and processors are reminded that at the time of delivery of fish, a fish ticket must be generated and must include the signature of a company representative and the full name and signature of the CFEC permit holder (BOTH permit holders if dual operation). The permit holder must be present at the time of delivery in order to sign the fish ticket. Crew members cannot sign fish tickets for permit holders.
- Increased enforcement of state boating safety laws in cooperation with the US Coast Guard.
- Increased Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) presence in the Ugashik and Togiak Districts.
- Added enforcement and educational outreach regarding potential conflicts between resource users and marine mammals in cooperation with National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Compliance checks for basic vessel and gear ID such as boat, buoy, and corkline markings.

### **Captain of the Port, Western Alaska Navigation Safety Advisory**

In January 2018 the US Coast Guard participated in an industry-led navigation safety workshop composed of Bristol Bay commercial fishermen and tug/barge industry members who developed safety measures and reminders on the International Navigation Rules. This navigation advisory addresses the requirements for operating a vessel upon the navigable waters of Bristol Bay. Additionally, it outlines specific navigational safety concerns and risk mitigation measures for vessels operating in the Naknek River. Please refer to the attached Navigation Safety Advisory for details.

## **SALMON OUTLOOK**

### **BAYWIDE**

The 2018 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run is forecasted to be approximately 51.3 million fish. Based

on the forecast and using the mid-points of the lower or upper portion of escapement goal ranges, depending on forecasted run size, 37.6 million fish are potentially available for commercial inshore harvest (Table 1). The department manages fisheries based on inseason information regarding abundance. The inseason management approach uses a suite of tools to provide information on abundance in each district as each run develops and that information is used by the department to determine fishing opportunity.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opens June 1 by regulation. Fishing in eastside districts and Togiak will be allowed using a weekly schedule that will vary by district. The schedules are in place to balance fishing opportunity with escapement in the early part of the season, particularly for Chinook salmon. As each run develops and sockeye salmon run characteristics become defined within individual districts, fishing time will be adjusted accordingly. In the Nushagak District, management of the Chinook salmon fishery will govern fishing time in the early part of the season, followed by directed sockeye salmon management as abundance dictates.

### **NAKNEK-KVICHAK DISTRICT**

A run of approximately 16.6 million sockeye salmon is expected for the Naknek-Kvichak District in 2018. Based on the forecast, the projected harvest in the Naknek-Kvichak District is approximately 9 million sockeye salmon: 4.1 million from the Kvichak River, 2.2 million from the Alagnak River, and 2.7 million from the Naknek River (Table 1). Sockeye salmon returning to the Naknek-Kvichak District are predicted to be 45% age-1.2, 40% age-1.3, 10% age-2.2, and 6% age-2.3 fish.

The Naknek River escapement goal range is 800,000–2.0 million sockeye salmon. The Kvichak River escapement goal range is 2.0 million–10.0 million sockeye salmon. Escapements will be managed within the lower or upper portions of the escapement goals proportional to the run size based on the preseason forecast and inseason assessment of run size.

Fishing in the Naknek-Kvichak District will be open four days per week from 9:00 a.m. Mondays to 9:00 a.m. Fridays, beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 4 and ending 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 22. Drift gillnet gear will be restricted to fishing in the Naknek Section only, while set gillnet gear will be allowed to fish in the entire Naknek-Kvichak District. From June 22 until July 17 fishing periods will be based on sockeye salmon escapements, abundance in the district, and gear group harvest percentages. District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. As in previous years, some openings could occur on short notice.

A mesh size restriction of 5.5 inches or less will be in effect beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 4 until 9:00 a.m. Friday, July 20, for the conservation of Chinook salmon.

### **EGEGIK DISTRICT**

A forecasted run of approximately 9.1 million sockeye salmon is expected for the Egegik River in 2018. The escapement goal range is 800,000–2.0 million sockeye salmon. Based on the forecast, the expected surplus potentially available for harvest is 7.4 million fish. Approximately 40 % of the run is expected to be age-2.2 fish, followed by 30% age-2.3, 16% age-1.3, and age 13% 1.2.

In 2018, separate gear openings and extensions will be used to adjust harvest in an attempt to achieve allocation percentages. Fishermen are reminded that regulation directs the department to avoid “to the extent practicable”, continuous fishing with set gillnet gear in the Egegik District, therefore Egegik set gillnet fishermen should expect breaks in fishing.

Based on the Kvichak River sockeye salmon forecast, fishing will begin in the full Egegik District.

The season will start with a three day per week schedule that will be in effect through June 15. The primary reason for the three day per week schedule is to provide for Chinook salmon escapement. By emergency order (E.O.), commercial fishing will be allowed in the Egegik District from 9:00 a.m. Monday, until 9:00 a.m. Wednesday and from 9:00 a.m. Thursday until 9:00 a.m. Friday. This schedule will begin at 9:00 a.m. Monday June 4 and run through 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 15 for drift and set gillnet gear. After June 15, additional fishing time for both gear groups will be scheduled according to sockeye salmon run strength. As in previous years, some openings could occur on short notice. Periods will be adjusted to allocate harvest between drift and set gillnet gear groups.

In addition, subsistence fishing will be permitted in the waters of the Egegik commercial district from 12:01 a.m. Friday June 1 until 11:59 p.m. Friday, June 15. The department will consider additional directed subsistence openings but will wait until inseason to announce the timing of those openings.

### **UGASHIK DISTRICT**

The forecasted Ugashik River sockeye salmon run in 2018 is approximately 2.9 million fish. The escapement goal range is 500,000–1.4 million sockeye salmon. Based on the forecast, 2.0 million fish are potentially available for harvest. Approximately 54% of the run is expected to be age-1.3 fish, 22% age-2.2, 10% age-2.3, and 15% age-1.2 fish.

The Ugashik District allocation plan specifies 10% set gillnet and 90% for the drift gillnet group. As in previous years separate gear openings and adjusting length of commercial periods will be used to address allocation between gear groups in 2018. A mesh size restriction of 5.5 inches or less will be in effect beginning 12:01 a.m. Friday June 1 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday July 22, to help in the conservation of Chinook salmon.

Beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday June 4, commercial fishing in the Ugashik District will be allowed on a 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Friday schedule through 9:00 a.m. Friday June 15. With an expected run to the Kvichak River that exceeds the minimum escapement goal stipulated in regulation, fishing will begin in the full Ugashik District. Additional fishing time after June 15 will depend on fishery performance and run strength indicators.

### **WALRUS**

It is unknown at this time whether walrus will return to the Cape Greig area. If they do return, the department will use the adjusted line that was in place in 2016 and 2017. If they do not return, the district boundaries will revert to those in regulation 5 AAC 06.200(d). The first announcement of the 2018 season will clarify which boundary will be in place for the summer.

At the March 2013, Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) meeting the board made changes to when Area T permit holders may fish in the inner portion of the Cinder River Section (river and lagoon) and Inner Port Heiden sections. The BOF adopted proposals that would allow Area T permit holders to fish within the inner portion of the Cinder River Section and Inner Port Heiden Section during all months when open by regulation. For further information contact ADF&G in Port Moller at 907-375-2716. Area T permit holders who fish the Cinder River and Port Heiden sections and deliver their catch in the Ugashik District are reminded to report the section of catch on the appropriate fish tickets and note that transporting fish from the sections mentioned above to deliver in the Ugashik District is not permitted during July.

### **NUSHAGAK DISTRICT**

Nushagak River Chinook salmon are managed according to the *Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.361). This plan directs the commercial fishery to be managed for an inriver goal of 95,000 Chinook salmon. The department will closely monitor Chinook salmon escapement to evaluate the potential for any directed Chinook salmon openings in 2018.

The Nushagak District sockeye salmon forecast is approximately 21.8 million fish; 2.6 million for escapement and 18.5 million potentially available for harvest in the Nushagak District commercial salmon fishery (Table 1). The total run by river system is Wood River 12.3 million (escapement goal range 700,000–1.8 million), Igushik River 2.1 million (escapement goal range 150,000–400,000), and Nushagak River 7.4 million (escapement goal range of 370,000–900,000). Approximately 42% of the forecasted run is expected to be age-1.2 sockeye salmon, < 1% age-2.2, 56% age-1.3, and < 1% age-2.3 fish.

Management strategies for 2018 include: 1) directed Chinook salmon openings only if warranted by escapement, 2) sockeye salmon openings in the Nushagak Section contingent upon Nushagak Chinook escapement or 100,000 sockeye salmon escapement in Wood River if Nushagak Chinook salmon escapement is below expected level. 3) Igushik Section sockeye salmon openings are likely to begin in the second week of June and will likely be set gillnet only until escapement or strong harvests dictate otherwise, and 4) begin fishing in the regular district around June 20 with short openings. Openings will be scheduled based on sockeye salmon escapement levels in the Nushagak and Wood rivers. Mesh size will be limited to 5.5 inches or smaller unless Chinook salmon escapement is above expectations. If the Nushagak River sockeye salmon escapement decreases relative to expected escapements the department may first warn and then impose the 4.75 inch mesh restriction in the Nushagak District. Based on changes made by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in December 2015 the department would also open the Wood River Special Harvest Area (WRSHA) at this time. Subsequently, if Nushagak River sockeye salmon escapement falls below the expected 370,000 fish curve, then the department may limit fishing to only the WRSHA to protect Nushagak River sockeye salmon. Commercial openings in the district may follow as allowed by escapement levels in the Nushagak River. With the large forecast this year the department will try to provide early season opportunity in the Nushagak District. Contingent upon sockeye and Chinook salmon escapement, the department plans to begin fishing once Wood River sockeye salmon escapement exceeds 30,000 fish.

Igushik River sockeye salmon will be managed independently of the Nushagak-Wood River sockeye salmon stocks. Set gillnet fishing will begin in the Igushik Section when there is a market available. Initial openings will be 8-hours per day and additional time will be added if large harvests or escapement information indicate more time is warranted. Drift gillnet openings in the Igushik Section will be added as needed to control sockeye salmon escapement. Igushik River sockeye salmon returns can be quite variable relative to forecasted run strength. Management will incorporate a readiness to respond with increasing early set gillnet openings, and an attempt to maintain the 6% sockeye salmon harvest allocated to the Igushik Section set gillnet group by only adding drift gillnet openings as needed.

The department will switch to coho salmon management around July 23, when sockeye salmon harvest decreases. Sonar counts will be used to make management decisions regarding pink and coho salmon fishing opportunity.

District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. Permit holders interested in test fishing in the Nushagak District should contact

Tim Sands in Dillingham at (907) 842-5227.

## **TOGIAC DISTRICT**

The 2018 run of Togiak River sockeye salmon is forecast is approximately 860,000 fish. Based on the forecast, approximately 610,000 sockeye salmon will potentially be available for commercial harvest. The escapement goal range is 120,000– 270,000 sockeye salmon. Approximately 21% of the run is expected to be age 1.2, 1% of the run is expected to be age 2.2, 77% is expected to be age 1.3 and 1% is expected to be age 2.3. Unlike other fishing districts in Bristol Bay that require emergency orders to announce fishing periods, Togiak District follows a regular weekly schedule that allows fishing in: Togiak Bay four days per week, fishing in Kulukak Section two and a half days per week, and fishing in Matogak, Osviak, and Cape Peirce Sections five days per week. Following the *Togiak District Salmon Management Plan*, permit holders are restricted from fishing in the Togiak District until July 27 if they have fished in any other district in Bristol Bay, and conversely, restricts permit holders from fishing in any other district until July 27 if they have fished in the Togiak District. A 2015 BOF action now requires vessel transfers to be restricted in Togiak District similarly to the restriction of permit transfers. Other recent regulation changes prevent drift gillnet fishing effort near the Togiak River mouth through July 15 and restrict mesh size to 5.5 inches or smaller between June 15 and July 15 for the conservation of Chinook salmon.

Chinook salmon run strength in the Togiak River has been considered below average for several years. Anticipating another poor Chinook salmon run, permit holders can expect emergency orders to reduce the weekly fishing schedule in the last two weeks of June and a mesh size restriction through all of July.

Harvest of coho and pink salmon will be dependent on market presence. If a market for coho salmon is present, we will continue to follow the regular weekly schedule unless we determine more conservative action is needed.

### **Acknowledgement**

The department would like to thank the Bristol Bay Fisheries Collaborative (BBFC) for funding assistance in 2018. The BBFC began in 2016 and is an agreement between ADF&G and the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute to work together with stakeholders to restore a world-class fishery management system and raise funds to support and maintain it. This agreement is supported by ADF&G, BBSRI, drift and set net fishermen, processors, municipalities, villages, support industries and other stakeholders. A list of organizations that committed financial support to the BBFC in 2018, as well as additional information about this agreement can be found at <https://www.bbsri.org/bbfc>.

Table 1.-Forecast of total run, escapement and harvest of sockeye salmon returning to Bristol Bay River systems in 2018.

Millions of Sockeye Salmon							
DISTRICT River	Total Run Forecast by Age Class					Escapement	Inshore Harvest <sup>a</sup>
	1.2	2.2	1.3	2.3	Total		
<b>NAKNEK-KVICHAK</b>							
Kvichak	4.30	1.05	2.61	0.40	8.36	4.00	4.12
Alagnak	1.67	0.01	2.72	0.01	4.41	2.11 <sup>b</sup>	2.17
Naknek	1.51	0.53	1.25	0.58	3.87	1.10	2.65
Total	7.48	1.59	6.58	0.99	16.64	7.21	8.95
EGEGIK	1.19	3.67	1.48	2.77	9.12	1.40	7.45
UGASHIK	0.42	0.62	1.54	0.29	2.87	0.73	2.06
<b>NUSHAGAK</b>							
Wood	8.00	0.13	4.13	0.04	12.31	1.53	10.42
Igushik	0.59	0.01	1.50	0.02	2.13	0.34	1.73
Nushagak	0.56	0.00	6.64	0.01	7.36	0.77	6.38
Total	9.16	0.14	12.28	0.07	21.79	2.63	18.53
TOGIAK	0.18	0.01	0.66	0.01	0.86	0.23	0.61
<b>BRISTOL BAY</b>	<b>18.43</b>	<b>6.03</b>	<b>22.55</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>51.28</b>	<b>12.20</b>	<b>37.59</b>

<sup>a</sup> The projected harvest accounts for the inshore run of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon, excluding harvest in the South Peninsula commercial salmon fisheries. The South Peninsula harvest has averaged 2.9% of the total Bristol Bay sockeye production during the last five years and is forecasted to be 1.49 million in 2018.

<sup>b</sup> The escapement to the Alagnak was estimated based on exploiting the Alagnak stock at the same level as the Kvichak River stock.



16670  
March 1, 2018

**CAPTAIN OF THE PORT, WESTERN ALASKA**  
**NAVIGATION SAFETY ADVISORY**

1. **PURPOSE:** This navigation advisory addresses the requirements for operating a vessel upon the navigable waters of Bristol Bay. Additionally, it outlines specific navigational safety concerns and risk mitigation measures for vessels operating in the Naknek River.
2. **DISCUSSION:** In January 2018 the Coast Guard participated in an industry-led navigation safety workshop composed of Bristol Bay commercial fishermen and tug/barge industry members who developed the following safety measures and reminders on the International Navigation Rules:
  - a. **Responsibilities Between Vessels:**
    - i. All vessels shall adhere to Rule 18 of the International Navigation Rules, which outlines the navigational responsibilities between vessels underway.
    - ii. Any vessel less than 20 meters, or 65 feet, shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway, per Rule 9 of the International Navigation Rules.
    - iii. Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision, per Rule 5 of the International Navigation Rules.
  - b. **Anchoring:**
    - i. Fishing vessels shall anchor away from the deep draft navigable channel in the Naknek River, as illustrated by the Naknek River Chartlet in Enclosure (1).
    - ii. Per Rule 9 of the International Navigation Rules, anchoring within the narrow channel impedes safe navigation, increases the risk of collision, and is a violation of federal regulation.
  - c. **Tug/Barge Pre-Arrival Notifications:**
    - i. Tug/barge operators should provide a pre-arrival notice to vessels in the Naknek River by all available means per the Pre-Arrival Communication Flowchart in Enclosure (2), and publish transit windows based on a minimum 17 foot Nushagak tide.
    - ii. All vessel operators and crew should register to receive tug/barge pre-arrival notices via text message by texting "AML" to 74121.



d. **Navigation Lights:**

- i. Vessels shall display proper navigation lights at all times whether underway, anchored, or engaged in fishing, and use appropriate sound signals as required by the International Navigation Rules.
- ii. Vessels shall not use any unauthorized lights, such as sodium or LED lights, that impair the visibility of other mariners or interfere with the keeping of a proper lookout per Rule 20 of the International Navigation Rules.
- iii. Fishing vessels shall pay particular attention to Rule 26 and Annex II of the International Navigation Rules, which prescribe the proper lights and shapes that shall be displayed for vessels fishing in close proximity to one another.

e. **Communication:**

- i. Tug/barge operators shall make “sécurité” calls on local working VHF frequencies, and alert fishing vessels as necessary when transiting.
- ii. All vessels shall monitor VHF channels 13/16 as required by the International Navigation Rules and relay information to fishing vessels as necessary.
- iii. Tug/barge operators shall use appropriate sound signals when departing a berth and while underway as required by the International Navigation Rules.

f. **Violation of the International Navigation Rules:**

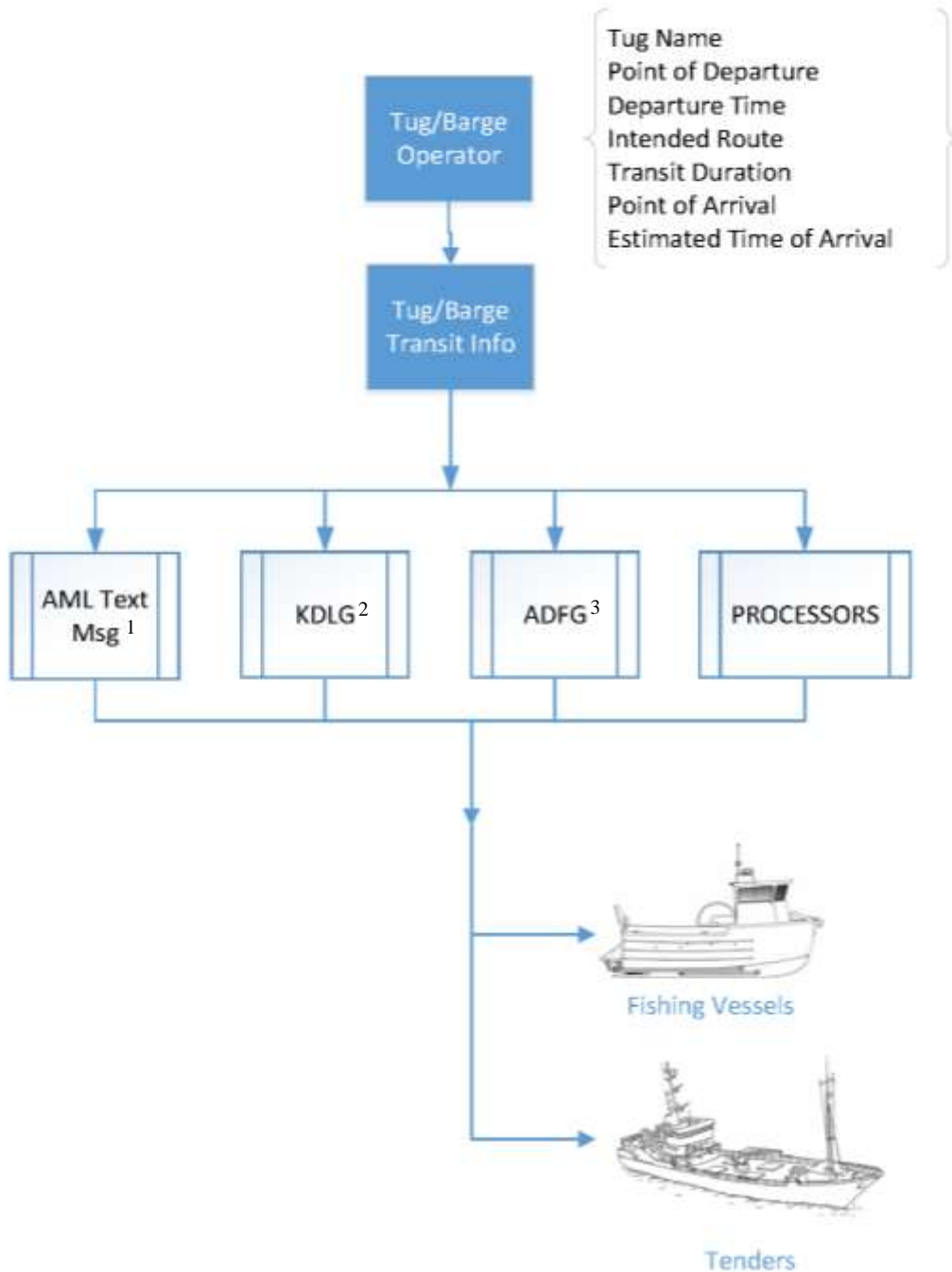
- i. In addition to the specific rules referenced in this advisory, vessels must comply with all International Navigation Rules appropriate to their operations.
- ii. Any vessel found in violation of these or any of the International Navigation Rules is subject to enforcement action by the Coast Guard and can result in civil penalties and monetary fines.



S. C. MACKENZIE  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska



## Pre-Arrival Communication Flowchart



1 Alaska Marine Lines Pre-Arrival Text Message Alert System

2 KDLG Public Radio Station (670 AM, 89.9 FM)

3 Alaska Dept of Fish and Game