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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: July 1, 2020

Time: 12:08 p.m.

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**Kuskokwim Area Management Biologists
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Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery Announcement #8

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-07-20

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in Bethel for subsistence fishermen in the Kuskokwim Area. The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group voted to support this management action during an inseason meeting held on June 29, 2020.

Current projections are for a below average run of King salmon that is tracking late run timing. Chum and sockeye salmon runs are late and tracking the 2019 run timing based on catch information from the Bethel Test Fishery. Chum and sockeye salmon runs are just beginning to build in the lower Kuskokwim River.

Effective 12:01 a.m. July 2, 2020, the following restrictions to the mainstem Kuskokwim River subsistence salmon fishery are rescinded within **Subsistence Sections 1-3** (Yukon Delta Refuge boundary at mouth of the Kuskokwim River to a line formed between two points lat 61° 20.333' N, long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**]):

- Live release requirements of Chinook salmon while fishing with hook and line, dip nets, fish wheels, and beach seines are rescinded within the mainstem of the Kuskokwim River described above. Live release requirements will remain in effect within the closed waters of the Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak River drainages as previously announced; any Chinook salmon caught with these gear types in these waters must be returned immediately to the water alive

As Previously Announced:

Subsistence fishing in Subsistence Sections 4 & 5 (Yukon Delta NWR boundary at Aniak to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River) opened at 12:01 a.m. on June 12, 2020 to the use of 6-inch or less mesh and 45 meshes in depth gillnets not to exceed 25 fathoms in length until further notice.

The waters of 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 (Lower Aniak Box Boundary), opened to subsistence fishing with 6-inch or less mesh gillnets, not to exceed 25 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth beginning 6:01 p.m. June 18, 2020 until further notice.

The waters of the Kuskokwim River near Aniak (known as the "Aniak Box"), 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 closed at 12:01 a.m. on June 12, 2020 to subsistence fishing with gillnets until further notice (Figure 1). Subsistence fishing with hook and line, fish wheels equipped with a live box or chute, beach seines and dip nets will be allowed, but all Chinook salmon caught must be returned to the water alive.

Subsistence fishing with gillnets continues to be closed on these portions of the Kuskokwim River and the following tributaries until further notice:

- 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 mainstem Kuskokwim River Yukon Delta Refuge boundary at 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)

Kuskokwim River Salmon Working Group:

The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., by teleconference. This meeting is open to the public. Please call 1-800-365-6338 passcode: 58756#, to attend via teleconference.

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 11, and 12, Subsistence fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Subsistence fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>

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 the Bethel at 543-2433 or toll free at 1-855-933-2433.

**For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:
ADF&G: Nicholas Smith in Anchorage 907-267-2379 or Ben Gray 907-543-2331**

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Figure 1.– Map of Aniak area closed waters.