

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

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UPPER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL FISHING ANNOUNCEMENT No. 26 EMERGENCY ORDER NUMBER 2S-26-20

Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 26 opens commercial fishing with drift gillnets only in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof sections of the Upper Subdistrict and the Anchor Point Section of the Lower Subdistrict from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 6, 2020. Commercial salmon fishing with drift gillnet gear remains closed within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River.

As per Emergency Order # 2S-04-20 issued on June 22, 2020, there are no regular set gillnet fishing periods in the Upper Subdistrict of UCI. Due to the low abundance of Kenai River late-run king salmon, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery remains closed on August 6, 2020 and will remain closed until further notice. The department will continue to monitor escapement of king salmon in the Kenai River and future openings may occur if the king salmon OEG is projected to be achieved in 2020.

All other set gillnet fisheries in UCI will fish the regularly scheduled period from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 6, 2020, except in that portion of the Western Subdistrict of the Central District south of the latitude of Redoubt Point, which is open from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. on Thursday August 6, 2020.

As of August 4, the Kasilof River sockeye salmon run is 92% complete based on average run timing and projects a final escapement of more than 460,000 fish. The biological escapement goal for Kasilof River sockeye salmon of 140,000 to 320,000, and the optimal escapement goal of 140,000 to 370,000 have been exceeded. In the Kenai River, average sockeye salmon passage is 76% complete through August 4, projecting an inriver run of 1.0 to 1.2 million sockeye salmon based on average to 3 day late run timing scenarios. Additionally, current coho salmon escapement to the Little Susitna River projects well below the sustainable escapement goal range of 9,000 to 17,700. Therefore, in order to harvest Kenai and Kasilof river salmon, while minimizing harvest of Northern Cook Inlet coho salmon, the drift gillnet fishing period on Thursday, August 6, 2020 is being restricted to the Expanded Kenai, the Expanded Kasilof and the Anchor Point sections.

As a reminder, UCI Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 24 modified and continued gear reductions in the Northern District set gillnet fishery of Upper Cook Inlet. Legal gear in the General Subdistrict of the Northern District south of the Susitna River, and in the Eastern Subdistrict of the Northern District is limited to no more than two set gillnets per permit, each not exceeding 35 fathom in length, and with the aggregate length not to exceed 70 fathoms, from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 6, 2020. Legal gear in the General Subdistrict of the Northern District east of the Susitna River, which includes Fire Island, will be limited to no more than one set gillnet per permit, measuring no more than 35 fathoms in length, from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 6, 2020.

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>