

Division of Commercial Fisheries
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Advisory Announcement

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UPPER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL FISHING ANNOUNCEMENT No. 30 EMERGENCY ORDER NUMBER 2S-30-20

Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 30 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 13, 2020. Commercial 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.

With the exception of Northern District set gillnet fishing (See UCI Advisory Announcement # 29) in that portion of the General Subdistrict of the Northern District east of the Susitna River, including Fire Island, all other set gillnet fisheries in UCI, outside of the Upper Subdistrict, will fish the regularly scheduled period from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2020.

5 AAC 21.359(d)(3) Kenai River Late-Run King Management Plan states that if the projected late-run large king salmon escapement is less than the optimal escapement goal of 15,000–30,000 fish, the department shall close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict. As of August 11, 2020, Kenai River late-run large king salmon passage was estimated to be 9,867 fish and projected a final escapement of less than 15,000 fish. The Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery will close for the 2020 season by regulation after August 15.

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 89% complete through August 11, projecting an inriver run exceeding 1.2 million sockeye salmon based on an average run timing scenario. On August 4, the Division of Sport Fish released Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-48-20, prohibiting the use of bait in the Little Susitna River effective 12:01 a.m., August 6. On August 11, Emergency Order 2-SS-2-50-20 reduced the bag and possession limit for coho salmon effective 12:01 a.m., August 13. The Little Susitna River coho salmon sustainable escapement goal (SEG) is 9,200–17,700 fish. Recent daily weir counts remain below average. As of August 11, total passage through the Little Susitna weir of 3,317 coho salmon projects that the SEG will not be achieved. 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 13, 2020 is being restricted to the Expanded Kenai, the Expanded Kasilof and the Anchor Point sections.

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/>