

Division of Commercial Fisheries
Sam Rabung, Director

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Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: May 30, 2024
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Kuskokwim River Fishery Announcement #1

Kuskokwim River Subsistence Fishery Outlook and Front-End Closure

Emergency Order #3-S-WR-01-24

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

2024 Run and Harvest Outlook for Kuskokwim River Salmon:

	Chinook	Chum	Sockeye	Coho
Projection:	Recent Average	Near Average	Above Average	Average
Escapement:	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goal	Expect to meet goals	Expect to meet goals
Subsistence:	Limited Harvest	Limited Harvest	Normal Harvest	Normal Harvest
Commercial:	None	None	None	Limited Harvest

Chinook Salmon Forecast

The 2024 Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon forecast is for a range of 108,000–160,000 fish. The drainagewide Chinook salmon escapement goal is 65,000–120,000 fish. If the run returns as projected, the drainagewide escapement and tributary goals are expected to be achieved and a surplus above escapement needs may be available to support a limited subsistence harvest. The 2024 season will be managed in accordance with the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.365) with input from the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group). It is the intent of the department that all Kuskokwim River salmon stocks shall be managed in a conservative manner consistent with the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries under 5 AAC 39.222 to meet escapement goals and the subsistence priority.

Based on the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 07.365) and the 2024 Chinook salmon forecast, the department's early season management strategy is to put in place the front-end closure (**dates and times listed below**). The department will be assessing the run in-season through the Bethel Test Fishery, subsistence harvest reports, Kuskokwim River Sonar, and the Aniak Test Fishery. The next Working Group meeting will be held **Friday, June 14 at 10 a.m.**, at the Bethel Fish and Game Office to review in-season assessment information and to determine subsistence fishing periods after the front-end closure.

Subsistence fishing with gillnets (drift or set) in the Kuskokwim River will be closed under state regulations during the following times and areas until further notice:

- **Sections 4 & 5:** Beginning Friday, June 7, 2024 at 12:01 a.m., from the Yukon Delta Refuge boundary near Aniak to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

The following tributary gillnet fishing closures under state regulations go into effect beginning Friday, June 7, 2024 at 12:01 a.m., until further notice:

- In the Aniak River from the Yukon Delta Refuge boundary near the Buckstock River to the headwaters of the Aniak River.

In addition, the following subsistence fishing restrictions will go into effect beginning Friday, June 7, 2024 at 12:01 a.m. until further notice:

- **Sections 4 & 5:** From the Yukon Delta Refuge boundary near Aniak to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.
 - **Subsistence fishing with hook and line for Chinook salmon will close until further notice.** Any Chinook salmon caught must be returned alive to the water.
 - **Subsistence fishing with fish wheels will be allowed until further notice.** Fish wheels are required to have a live box with no less than 45 cubic feet of water, must be checked at least every 6 hours. Fish wheels may be equipped with a chute and must be closely attended while in operation. All Chinook salmon must be returned alive to the water.
 - **Subsistence fishing with dip nets and beach seines will be allowed until further notice.** Any Chinook salmon caught in a dip net or beach seine must be returned immediately to the water alive.
- **In the Aniak River:** From the Yukon Delta Refuge boundary near the Buckstock River to the headwaters of the Aniak River.
 - **Subsistence fishing with hook and line for Chinook salmon will close until further notice.** Any Chinook salmon caught must be returned alive to the water.
 - **Subsistence fishing with fish wheels will be allowed until further notice.** Fish wheels are required to have a live box with no less than 45 cubic feet of water, must be checked at least every 6 hours. Fish wheels may be equipped with a chute and must be closely attended while in operation. All Chinook salmon must be returned alive to the water.
 - **Subsistence fishing with dip nets and beach seines will be allowed until further notice.** Any Chinook salmon caught in a dip net or beach seine must be returned immediately to the water alive.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office, on the State of Alaska website (<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 information regarding federal subsistence fishing regulations and any announcements, please contact the Yukon Delta NWR at (907) 543-3151 or (907) 543-1021.

For additional information concerning this advisory announcement:

ADF&G: Sam Decker 907-543-2709

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