



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
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Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199



Forest Service

Notice to Rescind Salmon Fishing Restrictions within Federal Waters of the Kuskokwim River Drainage

TEMPORARY SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of: 36 CFR 242.10 and .19
50 CFR 100.10 and .19

Temporary Special Action No: FSA-YD-24-02

Issued at: Bethel, AK August 13, 2024

Effective Date: **August 17, 2024, 12:00 AM**

This Federal Special Action (FSA-YD-24-02) rescinds all previous salmon fishing restrictions announced in FSA-YD-24-01 within Federal waters of the Kuskokwim River Drainage. The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) Manager, in partnership with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), determined that Federal management for the conservation of Chinook, Chum, and Coho is no longer needed in 2024.

The closure of Federal public waters throughout the Kuskokwim River drainage to the use of gillnets and harvest of Chinook, Chum, and Coho Salmon began on June 1, 2024. This decision was based on conservation concerns and to prioritize Federally qualified subsistence users through the provisions of Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and delegation of authority letter from the Federal Subsistence Board. The YDNWR manager and the KRITFC announced limited fishing opportunities to balance the needs of conservation and subsistence users. Decisions were based on run-strength data and input from local subsistence users. As in recent years, subsistence needs were likely not fulfilled due to the relatively low abundance and restrictions.

The Chinook and Chum Salmon runs were considered completely past the lower Kuskokwim River (where most harvest occurs) in July whereas the Coho Salmon run mostly occurs in August. The 2024 Coho Salmon run was determined to be weaker than the 2023 run but likely better than 2018-2022 years. Caution was used and fishing opportunities were limited early in August to help ensure adequate numbers made it to upriver communities and to the Kogrukluk and Kwethluk rivers, where there are weir projects with management escapement goals.

On August 12, the KRITFC and YDNWR met to discuss run timing and strength of the Coho Salmon returns along with subsistence needs. We determined that conservation



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efforts in early August likely helped ensure adequate escapement, Federally qualified subsistence users were prioritized, and the anticipated effort by subsistence users would be low at the end of the Coho Salmon run. Therefore, Federal management was thought to no longer be necessary.

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