

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2016 Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Fishery News Release 1
2016 Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Outlook**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for subsistence and commercial salmon fisherman in the Kuskokwim Area.

KUSKOKWIM BAY CHINOOK SALMON STATUS

Beginning in 2012, the Kanektok and Goodnews River drainages experienced poor Chinook salmon returns. Their respective escapement goals of 1,500–8,000 (Middle Fork Goodnews), 640–3,300 (North Fork Goodnews aerial), and 3,500–8,000 (Kanektok River aerial) fish were consistently not met. Due to the conservation efforts made by subsistence and commercial fisherman in the area, two of the three area Chinook salmon escapement goals were achieved in 2015.

Kanektok River

In 2015, the Kanektok River Chinook salmon aerial survey goal was achieved with a count of 4,919 fish. This was the highest aerial survey count since 2010. Also, the Kanektok River weir saw a dramatic improvement in weir passage with a count of 10,416 fish, which was the highest count since 2009.

Goodnews River

In 2015, the North Fork Goodnews River Chinook salmon aerial survey goal was achieved with a count of 991 fish. This was the highest aerial survey count since 2008. The Middle Fork Goodnews River weir did not achieve its respective escapement goal, with a passage of 1,494 Chinook salmon, though it was the highest escapement since 2011.

2016 KUSKOKWIM BAY OUTLOOK

Subsistence Fishery

Due to the improvements in escapement of Chinook salmon within the Kanektok and Goodnews River drainages in 2015, the department does not intend to restrict the subsistence fishery in Kuskokwim Bay, at this time. The department will be in contact with subsistence fisherman in the Kuskokwim Bay area to assess the progression of the subsistence harvest and early season run strength.

Commercial Fishery

At this time, the department does not have any processors or catcher-sellers registered in the Kuskokwim Area. Commercial fishing will not occur until a buyer or market is secured. If a buyer or market is found, please have them contact one of the department representatives below to register as a buyer or catcher-seller in the Kuskokwim Area.

Sport Fishery

The department has reduced the bag and possession limit for Chinook salmon to one Chinook salmon in all tributaries of the Kuskokwim Bay (including but not limited to the Goodnews, Kanektok, and Arolik rivers), effective 12:01 a.m. Sunday, May 1, 2016. The Kuskokwim Bay Chinook salmon sport-fishing season will close by regulation on July 26.

Inseason Assessment and Research

Inseason indicators of salmon run strength include weir escapement projects, verbal subsistence catch reports, commercial catch statistics, and aerial escapement surveys. A weir will be operated on the Middle Fork Goodnews River to monitor salmon escapements and collect biological data. The Kanektok River weir will not operate this season due to a loss of funding.

For more information contact:

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