



**Tuesday, June 6, 2023 @ 10:00am**  
**Weekly River-Wide Teleconference**

**Join by computer:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81230332731>

**Join toll-free by phone:** 888-788-0099

**Meeting ID:** 812 3033 2731

No passcode.

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Every week of the salmon season, the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) hosts a river-wide teleconference for fishermen along the Kuskokwim River to call in and discuss fishing regulations, closures and openers, fish camp updates, Traditional Knowledge, and management action. This call is held tollfree on Zoom and open to the public. In 2023, it will be held Tuesdays at 10am starting May 30 until the end of the salmon season.

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Identified Participants (16 total):

- *KRITFC Staff:* Kevin Whitworth, Terese Schomogyi, Nikki Pollock, Justin Leon, Jim Simon
  - *KRITFC In-Season Managers & Council:* Jonathan Samuelson, Adolph Lupie
  - *Yukon Delta NWR Staff:* Christian Alexie Jr., Emmitt Nicori, Laurie Boeck, Aaron Moses
  - *Public:* Karen Gillis, Liz Ruskin
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- Today is a set net opportunity in the lower river; some folks might be out fishing. 16 hours from 6am–10am. 6” mesh, 60-foot in length, 45 meshes deep.
- In McGrath, is coming down a lot. Debris, sandbars. Surprising bit of snow on the hills. Folks are set netting in the area and catching whitefish, sheefish, and suckers. Some fresh meat to start the season. ADF&G has closed drifting above Aniak starting June 7. First mosquitoes and flycatcher seen today.
- KRITFC team is working on producing a harvest estimate for the 6/3/we set net opportunity. Likely fewer than 400 kings and many whitefish caught, mostly between Napaskiak and Akiachak. Will finalize and release soon.
- In Tuntutuliak, cloudy today. Fewer than 5 nets set on the 6/3/23. Have not seen many mosquitoes because of the cold.
- Killer whales in the ocean can scar salmon, and make the salmon swim upriver faster.
- On the coast, seeing more herring than last year, and spawning in new places. In Kongiganak, people catching tote-fulls. Some people are wondering if they can fish in the ocean over here; many people going to Pailleq or Quinhagak area during the openers. A few people have caught kings, no reds or chums yet. Still catching herring and smelt.
  - Off the coast, ADFG has limited gear to one 300-foot, 6” mesh net per boat and closed fishing (subsistence and commercial) on Sundays in the Quinhagak area, starting June 1 to July 15.
- From Kipnuk to Kwigillingok, seeing 5 trawlers off the coast.
- Someone on KYUK’s Yuk to Yuk show said KRITFC is failing at salmon management.

- KRITFC partnership with USFWS is strong with a Tribal in-season managers and Elders making decisions alongside the federal government.
- KRITFC, YDNWR/USFWS, and OVK Kwethluk weir screw trap has been in operation for several weeks. Was installed a bit late because of high water and late breakup. Caught and counted kings, coho, chum, pink, and red salmon, as well as lamprey, sculpin, burbot, whitefish, pike, blackfish, dolly varden, trout, stickleback.
- Pilot eDNA project collects water samples to filter them for salmon DNA as a way to identify species and quantity of fish in tributaries in a more cost-effective, reliable way than traditional salmon spawner counting methods (e.g., aerial surveys, counting towers, weirs). In 2022, tested feasibility at the Kwethluk. This year, expanding to Kwethluk, Takotna, and George.
- KRITFC working on getting a drone spawner count program going with a researcher from Washington State University as another way to monitor salmon in a cost-effective and reliable way, and to train students in communities to become drone pilots. More information to come.
- The Kwethluk weir will start operating soon this season. The research team is looking at getting a second passage chute to allow more places for salmon to pass through.
- The Takotna weir is aiming for a July 1 start date, and is currently getting the crew hired. This is the only long-term headwaters weir, and is completely community- and Tribally-led.
- KRITFC manages and does projects with Traditional Knowledge and Western science.
- KRITFC wrote a letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to reduce salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea. This week, the NPFMC is meeting, and while they're not focusing on salmon or bycatch, there is opportunity for comments on the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), which guides fishery management. KRITFC is trying to get the PEIS revised through a NEPA process to get a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable fisheries management.
- From Adolph Lupie: Before I go, I would like my knowledge recorded by KRITFC.
- Opportunity for the public to comment on the National Standards in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which also guide marine fisheries management.
- The Area M fishery is starting soon. That's a big intercept fishery for AYK chum salmon. We will keep track of their harvests.
- In the Bering Sea this year, almost 13,000 king salmon (double last year) and 1,000 chum salmon have been caught as bycatch.
- KRITFC is hoping to document Indigenous Knowledge, even during calls like this. A great way to document IK is through co-management, like KRITFC does with YDNWR, and like we would like to see with Tribal seats on the NPFMC.
- On Wednesdays at 10:00am–12:00pm, the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group meetings happen. Great way to interact with ADFG and state management.
- On Thursdays at 1:00–2:30pm, we host KYUK Fish Talk with USFWS, ADFG, and Sam Berlin. Good way to speak with us about fisheries management. 640am.
- KRITFC has hired Avery Hoffman to work with us this summer season. Our team is glad to have him on board.
- In Napakiak, only a few set netters so far.
- Near Bethel, the river and sloughs have dropped significantly since last week, but still high.