



**Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Weekly River-Wide Teleconference
Monday, May 31, 2021 | 10am AKDT**

Join by computer: <https://zoom.us/j/5694903415>

Join toll-free by phone: 833-548-0282

Meeting ID: 569 490 3415

About:

Every Monday of king salmon season, the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) co-host 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 toll-free on Zoom and open to the public. In 2021, it will be held Mondays at 10am from May 17 to July 12.

Hosts on this call:

Mary Peltola, Executive Director of KRITFC

People on this call: 4

Summary:

- Federal management and the front-end closure begin tomorrow, Tuesday, June 1. There will be set net opportunities on June 2, 5, and 9, each from 6am to 10pm using 6-inch gear or smaller. Drift net opportunities will be June 12 and 15 from 6am to 6pm using 6-inch gear or smaller.
- KRITFC and ONC are gearing up for their harvest monitoring surveys in the lower river villages (KRITFC) and Bethel area fish camps and boat harbor (ONC).
- ONC has begun delivering fish to Elders in town.
- The State's first Working Group meeting (open to the public) will be this Wednesday, June 2, starting at 10am.

Full Notes:

- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** Good morning, Tess. Have you been out fishing or seen anyone who has?
- **Tess Guinn:** I've seen people out, some have caught some fish. They must be using the big mesh, though, looking at the size of the fish they caught. But that big gear is still legal until tomorrow, right?
- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** Yes, the Federal management starts tomorrow and then it goes down to 6-inch gear. I'm sure people who have been catching the big fish using gear bigger than that are sharing it around, though. Good morning, caller. Tomorrow, we have the beginning of Federal management, and

the beginning of the front-end closure. So, tomorrow, it is not legal to fish with either set net or drift net gillnets in the Kuskokwim. On the 2 of June, however – it's a Wednesday – there will be a set net opening from 6am to 10pm, 6-inch gear, 60 feet long. It's very short. Set in a way so you're not intentionally catching kings. It can be 6-inches or less, so if you are fishing for whitefish or smaller fish, it can be less than 6-inches. There's 2 other set net periods, one on the 5 of June and the 9 of June. June 2, 5, and 9 are the dates, a Wednesday, Saturday, and Wednesday. All three of those are the same time and same gear type: 6am to 10pm and 6-inch gear. It can only be 40 meshes deep. After the front-end closure is over on June 11, on June 12, from 6am to 6pm, there will be a drift net opportunity using 6-inch mesh or less, and then again on June 15, 6am to 6pm, 6-inches or less. We will be meeting with USFWS tomorrow and the next Tuesday to look at data. There won't be much tomorrow because ADF&G test fish and sonar have just started, but hopefully by the next Tuesday, June 8, there should be much more data from ADF&G, and we will also have harvest estimates from the set net openings, so that should hopefully tell us something. The best indicator in my opinion for what we have in the river are the subsistence fishing opportunities, looking at the data from the drift net opportunities on the 12 and 15. Hopefully there's enough there on the 12 to feel comfortable fishing more after the 15. We don't know when USFWS and KRITFC will announce more fishing times after the 15 – or if they will. We're hoping they will, but we don't have a firm time on that yet. I will say we haven't ever had so much planned out so far ahead as we have this year; that's been a real blessing to know through the 15 when our fishing opportunities are. With that, does anyone have any questions?

- **Katie Russell, ONC:** This is Katie Russell with ONC, I'm just calling in to let you know I'm listening in today.
- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** Thanks for calling in, Katie. Also on the phone is Tess Guinn and Terese Schomogyi. We've been on the phone for 10 minutes and no one else has called in, I think because there's been so much pre-planning. We have periods out to the 15. We're not going to have as many callers this year, which is good.
- **Tess Guinn:** It's a very awesome thing to know. Thank you, Mary.
- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** That was really Boyd.. We're so blessed to have Boyd Blihovde [at the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge]. After a number of years of challenging Refuge managers, we really have a good manager. One of the coolest things about Boyd is the team he chose to help him with the salmon management: Spencer Reardon, Aaron Moses, and Christopher Tulik. They're all Kuskokwim people, which makes it even easier working with them. Terese and Katie, do you have anything you want to add?
- **Terese Schomogyi, KRITFC:** Just that here, we're getting ready to do our community-based harvest monitoring surveys. We'll do the first one on Wednesday with our people. We've got monitors in Tuntutuliak, Eek, Napakiak, maybe Napaskiak, Kwethluk, and I saw somebody from Akiak, so we might have gotten somebody from Akiak to do harvest monitoring after each of the opportunities. We'll be able to start collecting that in-season data that's super important for our management meetings and just managing the river. That's what LaMont Albertson and I have been chatting about, so we're gearing up for that. I know Katie probably is gearing up for all the ONC boat harbor and fish camp surveys in Bethel. Katie, do you have updates to share about that?
- **Katie Russell, ONC:** ONC is getting ready to do our surveys too. Come Wednesday, ONC technicians and me and Danielle Lowrey will be at the boat harbor, just a couple of us at a time, doing harvest surveys with the fishers, and going out to fish camps to connect with the people there as well to hear about their harvests. I'm looking forward to getting some good data so we can get some harvest

estimates run in collaboration with Kevin Whitworth from KRITFC. Hopefully, like you were saying, Mary, by this time next week we can have some more information. That will be great. ONC has also begun to distribute fish to elders from Bethel Test Fish, which has been really great. Hopefully we'll have lots more fish this week to distribute and be able to share that. That's all we have going on. It'll be busy, but we're looking forward to it.

- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** Thank you, Katie. Will you make sure that Johnny and Margaret Guinn are on your list?
- **Katie Russell, ONC:** I can double check and make sure that they're on there.
- **Tess Guinn:** My parents would be so excited – so excited! Over the moon.
- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** Tess, they usually call, and if your parents don't answer, they won't stop by. Make sure your folks answer their phones the next few days.
- **Katie Russell, ONC:** I see Margaret at the top of my list, so hopefully we can get her some fish this week. It depends on how much BTF is able to catch, but we were already able to deliver some last week, so hopefully we'll be able to get some out this week.
- **Tess Guinn:** That's so wonderful, Katie, thank you.
- **Mary Peltola, KRITFC:** Alright. Well, the first Working Group meeting for the State is going to be June 2, which is this upcoming Wednesday, at 10am. It usually ends at noon. That's one of the meetings coming up this week that I'm looking forward to. Happy Memorial Day!