



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Federal Subsistence Board News Release



For Immediate Release
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Under the Authority of:

36 CFR Part 242.10 and .19
50 CFR Part 100.10 and .19

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY FOR CHINOOK SALMON CLOSED IN THE SITUK RIVER

YAKUTAT, Alaska – Yakutat District Ranger Lee Benson has announced that he is acting immediately to protect Chinook salmon in the Situk River near Yakutat. The District Ranger, as in-season manager, is closing the Federal Subsistence fishery for Chinook salmon in the Situk River and prohibiting fishing with gillnet gear and use of bait when fishing with rod and reel in the Situk River. The closure begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday, May 20, 2012 and continues through 11:59 p.m. July 19, 2012. Beginning May 20, 2012, all Chinook salmon incidentally caught must be immediately released back into the water with as little handling as possible. Subsistence fishing for species other than Chinook salmon in the Situk River continues to be permitted but the use of gillnets or bait when fishing with rod and reel is prohibited.

The return of Chinook salmon to the Situk River has been poor in recent years. In 2010, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) personnel counted only 167 large (three ocean-age and older) Chinook salmon through their weir on the Situk River. In 2011, the weir count was 240 large Chinook salmon. In 2012, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game projects an escapement of 500 large Chinook salmon into the Situk River. The Alaska Board of Fish has set the biological escapement goal range between 450 and 1,050 large Chinook. This closure is needed to minimize harvests of Situk Chinook salmon. Therefore, Federal public waters in the Situk River will be closed to taking Chinook salmon to provide for conservation of Chinook salmon. The prohibition of gillnet gear and the use of bait when fishing with rod and reel is necessary to minimize the incidental mortality of Chinook salmon when fishing for other species.

This special action follows similar actions taken by ADF&G to protect Situk Chinook salmon. They closed the sport fishery for Chinook salmon in the Situk River drainage effective 12:01 a.m. Friday, May 11, 2012 and closed subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon in the Situk-Ahrnklin Inlet effective 6:00 a.m. May 20, 2012. The State commercial fisheries are presently closed in the Situk-Ahrnklin inlet but if opened the retention of Chinook salmon will be prohibited according to the ADF&G Area Management Biologist.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY FOR CHINOOK SALMON CLOSED IN THE SITUK
RIVER

Page 2 of 2

For more information on this Situk Chinook closure, contact Lee Benson by phone (907-784-3359) or e-mail labenson@fs.fed.us.

Information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program can be found at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/home.html>.

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