

**Division of Commercial Fisheries**  
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## **Advisory Announcement**

*For Immediate Release: August 1, 2020*

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**Kotzebue Area Manager & Asst. Area Manager  
(907) 442-3420 (800) 560-2271**

### **Kotzebue Commercial Fishery Announcement #5**

#### **KOTZEBUE COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING TO OPEN ON MONDAY**

Commercial salmon fishing will be open for 8 hours on Monday, August 3, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. in the Kotzebue District.

The commercial catch in July was nearly 59,000 chum salmon. The catch was half of last year's July catch of 129,000 chum salmon. Likewise, the average of 21 permit holders fishing daily in July was just over half the average of the 40 permit holders fishing daily last year.

The catch per unit of effort (CPUE) in July was the same in both years even though there was less fishing time and fishing effort this year. The CPUE measures the average catch per permit holder per hour.

This year's chum salmon run has been unexpectedly below average and has been like chum salmon runs throughout western Alaska. This year's Kotzebue commercial catch salmon samples have shown a weak 4-year-old return. The 4-year-old age class would be from the 2016 parent-year and that parent-year was a good run with good escapement.

The Kobuk River test fish chum salmon catches at Kiana have been poor with sheefish catches outnumbering chum catches nearly four to one. The last time sheefish catches exceeded chum salmon catches in July at the Kiana test fish site was in 2006. That year was the last year when commercial fishing was suspended for several days to allow for more chum salmon escapement.

The department will reduce commercial fishing time this week to allow more chum salmon to move through the fishing district and into the rivers. Commercial fishing openings this week are expected to be every other day. The department will compare the Kotzebue commercial catch and the test fish project CPUE with previous years data to determine if fishing time can be expanded in the Kotzebue commercial fishery later in the week or next week.

If you have any questions concerning the fishery you can call the Kotzebue office at 442-3420, or the Commercial Fisheries office in Nome at 1-800-560-2271.

## **COVID-19**

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>