

## Three Kodiak Salmon Rivers Closed or Restricted

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Erik Wander/KMXT

With historically low runs to many Kodiak Island streams so far this year, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has closed or restricted several sport fisheries.

The Buskin River sockeye salmon sport fishery is closed as are the Karluk River king salmon sport fishery and the state and federal king salmon subsistence fisheries in the Karluk drainage. In addition, the Ayakulik River king salmon sport fishery is restricted to catch-and-release only, and the use of bait is prohibited.

Area Management Biologist Donn Tracy said that the Ayakulik restrictions will remain in effect until July 26th and that the Buskin and Karluk fisheries will remain closed unless escapement improves, and it appears the escapement goal will be met. However, he said that's not likely.

-- (Sport Fish 1 30 sec. "So far that projection is ... we would definitely reconsider.")

Tracy said this week is historically when 40 to 50 percent of the Karluk king run has occurred. He said it's a simple formula to make a projection for total escapement after that.

-- (Sport Fish 2 40 sec. "That's essentially what ... when considering restrictions.")

According to Tracy, the only two wild stock Chinook populations on Kodiak are in the Karluk and Ayakulik rivers. He said the significant reduction in their escapement numbers so far this year is reflective of a statewide trend and even in areas outside Alaska.

-- (Sport  
Fish 3 33 sec. "Why that's  
occurring is ... would just be speculative.")

Tracy said closing or  
restricting fisheries is always a difficult decision for Fish and Game to make,  
but that they do so for important reasons.

-- (Sport  
Fish 4 39 sec. "The health of  
those runs ... chance to plan accordingly.")

Tracy  
said the escapement goal for the Buskin  
River is 8,000 to 13,000 sockeye  
salmon, and as of June 10th, the weir count was just 458, the second  
lowest count for the date. He also said the Ayakulik's June 10th  
weir count of 284 is the third lowest count. The Ayakulik's escapement goal is  
4,800 to 9,600 king salmon. On the Karluk, only 174 king salmon had passed the  
weir as of the 10th. Fish and Game does not expect the lower end of  
the Karluk's escapement goal of 3,600 to be reached.

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