As Other Rivers Open, Olds Remains Closed Above Highway

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Mid September is a good time of year for Kodiak anglers. Up until then fishermen are often crowded in and alone the shorelines of road system rivers, unable to fish above the highways that bisect them. But yesterday things spread out a little when the Alaska Department of Fish and Game opened up the rivers and creeks above the highway for those looking to catch a silver or two.

Fisheries Biologist Tyler Polum said fishing is prohibited above the bridges until mid September as a way to protect early fish runs and make sure escapement goals are met.

“By now most of our road system creeks are at the mid point or into the peak of the coho run. So that’s my understanding is it’s to protect the early fish going into those creeks.”

Polum said Monashka and Pillar Creek are closed above the highway year round, and this year the Olds River will join that list. He said the closure is a preemptive measure to offset the downward trend in coho numbers.

“We monitor that by foot surveys after the fishing season is over and for the last five years we’ve missed our escapement goal for that river, which is 1,000 fish. And so since we don’t have any in season monitoring of that, like we don’t have weir on it, but we wanted to take action preemptively because there’s no indication that we’re going to have a better coho run this year. And so rather than closing the river entirely, we just decided to keep the upper river closed through the end of the year, as opposed to when it normally opens on September 16.”

He said fishing is still allowed in the lower part of the river, and anglers can take up to two fish per day. Other road system rivers are now open in the upper portion and the same two fish bag limit applies.