



Federal Subsistence Board



1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

FOREST SERVICE

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE EULACHON FISHERY CLOSED IN DISTRICT ONE

EMERGENCY SPECIAL ACTION: FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

Under authority of: 36 CFR 242.10 and .19
50 CFR 100.10 and .19

Special Action No: 13-EU-01-19

Issued at: Ketchikan Alaska, February 20, 2019

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, February 25, 2019

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday, April 25, 2019 unless superseded by subsequent emergency special action

EXPLANATION:

This emergency Special Action closes Federal public waters draining into District 1 to the harvest of Eulachon. All Eulachon incidentally caught must be immediately released into the water unharmed. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is also implementing a similar closure of District 1 for the State subsistence, personal use and commercial fisheries.

REGULATION: 50 CFR 100.27(e)(13)(ii) and 36 CFR 242.27(e)(13)(ii) are amended to read:

*§ __.27(e)(13)(ii) You must possess a subsistence fishing permit to take salmon, trout, grayling, or char. You must possess a subsistence fishing permit to take Eulachon from any freshwater stream flowing into fishing Sections 1C or 1D. **Eulachon may not be taken from waters draining into District 1 from 12:01 a.m., February 25 through 11:59 p.m., April 25, 2019***

Federal Subsistence Board by delegation to /s/Susan A. Howle

SUSAN A. HOWLE

District Ranger

Ketchikan-Misty Fjords Ranger District

20 February 2019

JUSTIFICATION:

Populations of Eulachon in District 1 have been at critically low levels since 2005. Monitoring efforts made by the Forest Service, ADF&G, and fisherman since 2001 have provided base line information that indicated a decline in the populations of District 1 Eulachon. Although river surveys have occurred to document adult returns, little is still known about the Eulachon after they leave river systems for saltwater.

District 1 historically supported subsistence, personal use and commercial fisheries for Eulachon. In 2004, only 1500 pounds of Eulachon were harvested and very low numbers of returning eulachon were seen by both subsistence fisherman and Forest Service personnel. From 2005 through 2010, very few eulachon were seen annually in the area during this period.

Due to the sharp declines in the overall number of eulachon, along with critically low numbers returning to the area, portions of District 1 have been closed since 2005. Managers are starting to see signs of a stock recovery. From 2011-2015, unknown sized returns of Eulachon occurred in both Burroughs Bay and also in the Carroll Inlet area. Eulachon again returned to the area from 2016-2018, however in far less abundance than seen during the previous years. Genetic analysis of Carroll Inlet fish showed these fish to be genetically similar to Unuk River Eulachon.

Despite these returns, the stock sizes within District 1 still remain at critically low levels. With the stocks at these levels, there are few options available to managers for conservation other than closure. The Eulachon life cycle is typically five years. Based on the numbers observed for the last three years it is not likely a harvestable surplus will be available in 2019. It is anticipated that all Eulachon returning to District 1 in 2019 will be needed for spawning to rebuild the area Eulachon returns. Therefore, Federal public waters draining into District 1 will be closed to the taking of Eulachon by all users in 2019 to provide for conservation of Eulachon.

DISTRIBUTION:

RADIO

KBRD Radio; KCAW Radio; KRSA Radio

PRINT

Ketchikan Daily News; Sitka Sentinel; Juneau Empire

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Donald Hernandez, Chair, Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council; ADF&G Commercial and Sportfish Divisions-Ketchikan; Joseph Boggs, Subsistence L.E.O., USFS – Petersburg; Bill Elsner, L.E.O., USFS-Ketchikan; Paul Robbins, Public Affairs, USFS-Ketchikan; Terry Suminski, Tongass Subsistence Program Leader, USFS-Sitka; Deanna Perry, Council Coordinator, USFS – Juneau; Thomas Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader, USFS – Anchorage; Melinda Hernandez-Burke, Tribal Relations Program Manager, USFS – Juneau; Chris McKee, Wildlife Division Chief, OSM – Anchorage; Caron McKee, Subsistence Outreach Coordinator/Public Affairs, OSM – Anchorage; Theo Matuskowitz, Regulations Specialist, OSM – Anchorage; Alaska Public Safety Department-Fish & Wildlife Protection Division, Ketchikan; Karl Cook, Mayor, Metlakatla Indian Community; Lee Wallace, President, Organized Village of Saxman; Organized Village of Saxman Council; Norman Skan, President, Ketchikan Indian Corporation