



Prince William Sound

Sport Fishing Opportunity

Prince William Sound Salmon

Overview

King (chinook), pink (humpy), red (sock-eye), silver (coho), and chum salmon are all native to Prince William Sound and the Copper River Delta. These fish are also raised in five private, nonprofit hatcheries in the Sound. The majority of PWS salmon are pinks and reds. These two species provide many of the sport fishing opportunities in Prince William Sound.

Regulations, Weir Counts, and Charters

Please consult a copy of the *Southcentral Alaska 2001 Sport Fishing Regulation Summary* before heading out to fish. Check the "Southcentral Alaska Salt Waters, Prince William Sound" section as well as the "Fresh Waters of the North Gulf Coast and Prince William Sound" section.

It's all on the Web:

ADF&G Southcentral Region Home Page:

www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/Region2/html/r2home.stm
ADF&G Southcentral Regional office (907) 267-2219

In-season weir counts:

www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/region2/escapement/html/query.cfm

Registered fishing guides:

www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/sfguides/html/index.cfm

U.S. Forest Service Public Cabins:

www.reserveusa.com

USFS Chugach National Forest Info:

www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/

Alaska State Parks:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/index.htm



A calm day in Valdez Narrows.

King Salmon Regulations

Anglers fishing for king salmon must have a current year's fishing license and King Salmon Stamp in their possession. Exceptions are listed in the regulation booklet.

Most fresh and salt waters of PWS are open year-round to the taking of king salmon. Certain fresh waters are closed to fishing for king salmon; check the regulation booklet closely.

King Salmon Bag Limits

Fresh Waters	Salt Waters
Kings 20" or longer 2 per day/4 in possession	Kings 16" or longer 2 per day/4 in possession
Kings Under 20" 10 per day/10 in possession	Kings Under 16" 10 per day/10 in possession

Limits are NOT cumulative. For example, anglers cannot keep 2 20" kings from salt waters AND 2 16" kings from fresh waters on the same day. Anglers cannot keep 10 kings under 20" from fresh waters AND 10 kings under 16" from salt waters on the same day.

Other Salmon Regulations

Most fresh and salt waters of PWS are open year-round to fishing for red, pink, silver, and chum salmon.

In most Prince William Sound waters, the daily bag and possession limit for salmon (other than king salmon) is 6 per day/12 in possession. Only 3 per day/3 in possession may be coho (silver) salmon.

There are four specific areas where you can take more than 3 silvers per day. They are “Terminal Harvest” areas, and are located in waters that have high concentrations of hatchery fish.

1. **Cordova:** salt waters north of a line from Odiak Slough to Stump Point, and south of a line from Orca Cannery to Knot Point.
2. **Whittier:** all of Passage Canal salt waters (salt waters west of a line from Blackstone Point to Pigot Point).
3. **Valdez:** salt waters north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point.
4. **Chenega:** salt waters inside the entrance of Sawmill and Crab bays (Evans Island).

In these four areas, you may have 6 salmon (other than king salmon) per day /12 in possession, and all 6 may be silvers.

Fishing for King Salmon

From the mid-1980s through 1998, Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. (PWSAC) stocked kings at several sites in Prince William Sound. Even though PWSAC ended their program in 1998, stocked kings are still be available in Whittier, Cordova, and Valdez through an ADF&G state hatchery program.

The stocked kings begin to return in mid- to late May and are available to anglers through mid-June. “Feeder” kings (kings that are not ready to return to their home streams) are also available in the marine waters of the Sound year-round.

In the Whittier area, kings are caught by trolling off the points in Passage Canal and out to Ester Island. Anglers have had good success in Lake Bay on Ester Island in late May and June. In the Valdez area, a few kings, primarily feeder kings, can be caught while trolling in Valdez Arm. At Cordova, king salmon return to Fleming Spit. Fishing is best off the shore of the spit during the four hours around high tide.

The most significant run of wild king salmon re-

turns to the glacial Copper River, east of Cordova. Although there is a commercial king fishery at the mouth, most sport fishing targeting kings takes place far upriver, in the clear water tributaries to the Copper.

Fishing for Red Salmon

Small runs of red salmon are available somewhere in the Sound during most of the summer. The largest red salmon run returns to Eshamy Lagoon. Other much smaller runs head return to Cordova freshwaters, Valdez freshwaters, and Coghill Lake. There is also a hatchery return to Main Bay.

Streamer flies on an 7-8 wt. fly rod, or smaller spinners and a medium action spinning rod loaded with 15-20 lb. monofilament are popular methods.

Cordova Area

Reds show up in the Eyak River near Cordova as early as mid-May, and various later runs in the Eyak provide red salmon through August. Reds are also available along the Cordova road system at Clear Creek, the McKinley Lake area, and the Alaganik area in June and July. Anglers can fish from both shore and boats in Alaganik Slough. Boats can be launched at points along the road that parallels the slough, as well as a USFS boat ramp.

Coghill Lake

Although sockeye returns to Coghill were depressed in the early 1990s, management actions and lake fertilization have aided in rebuilding this run. Reds begin returning in late June, peak in early July, and continue into August. Coghill can be accessed by boat from Whittier or anglers can fly into Coghill Lake. Anglers commonly troll or snag in the lagoon, or fish from shore at the outlet of the lake.

ADF&G operates a weir on the Coghill River. Daily weir counts can be viewed at www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/region2/escapement/html/query.cfm

✓ Anglers are reminded that waters within 300 feet of a weir are closed to fishing.

Eshamy Lagoon

Although returns have been low in recent years, the Eshamy red salmon run continues to be a popular sport fishery in the western Sound. The Eshamy return begins in mid- to late July. In recent years it has peaked in early to mid-September. Eshamy can be accessed by boat from Whittier, or by float planes that land in the lagoon. Anglers fish in the lagoon or at the outlet of Eshamy Creek

- ✓ Note that the bag limit is three sockeye per day at Eshamy. Refer to the sport fishing regulations for a description of the no-snagging area within the lagoon.

ADF&G operates a weir on the Eshamy Creek. Daily weir counts can be viewed at www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/region2/escapement/html/query.cfm

- ✓ Anglers are reminded that waters within 300 feet of a weir are closed to fishing.

Pink Salmon

There are over 200 streams in PWS that support natural returns of pink salmon. In addition, four private non-profit hatcheries produce pink salmon.

Pink salmon return to the Sound from mid-June through late August, with the peak typically occurring in late July.

The largest pink salmon sport fishery in the state occurs in Valdez. Pinks released from the Valdez Fisheries Development Association's (VFDA) Solomon Gulch hatchery return to Valdez arm in mid-June and peak around the Fourth of July. Shore fishing is best off the breakwater beach near the harbor and along the beach at Allison Point. Anglers fishing by boat can catch pinks by casting or trolling along the shoreline off Allison Point.

Medium spinners or lures such as Pixies, Daredevils and Tee-Spoons provide good action here. Fishing is generally best within a few hours either side of high tide.

Other noteworthy pink salmon fisheries occur at Sawmill Bay on Evans Island, at Lake Bay, and at Cannery Creek in Unakwik Inlet.

Silver Salmon

PWS has both wild and hatchery silvers. Wild stocks support growing fisheries along the road system near Cordova and in the many small streams draining into bays of PWS. Silver salmon smolt have been stocked at Valdez, Cordova, Chenega, and Whittier and returns from these stocking efforts have established additional sport fishing opportunities.

Silvers return from mid-August through October, with best fishing from mid-August though early September.

While most anglers use spinners or lures on medium action rods and at least 20 lb. monofilament, fishing herring or salmon roe suspended below a bobber is also popular and productive. Silvers strike readily at lures, roe and streamer flies, making these aggressive and hard fighting fish a prime target of sport anglers.

In the Valdez area, the primary silver fisheries are in the Valdez Narrows and off the beaches of Allison Point, Anderson Bay, and Gold Creek. Many boat anglers fish with bright hootchies (imitation squid) in the silty waters near Allison Point. Near Cordova, the Eyak River, Alaganik Slough, Fleming Spit, and Clear Creek provide the finest silver fishing along the road system. At Whittier, most anglers fish from boats in Passage Canal. Some anglers also fish from shore near the town of Whittier.

Elsewhere in Prince William Sound there are good silver runs at Bay of Isles, Port Chalmers, the north side of Hinchinbrook Island, and Orca Bay.

Most wild stocks of silver salmon in Prince William Sound are characterized as small and scattered, and present management challenges to protect them from overharvest.

Chum Salmon

Chum salmon are usually taken by anglers targeting other species of salmon. Hatchery chum runs to Ester Island and at Port Chalmers have also been fished by sport anglers.

Additional Information

Additional information, including accommodations and charters, is available from

Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau

PO Box 1603

Valdez AK 99696

(907) 835-2984 or 1-800-770-5954

www.valdezalaska.org

Cordova Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 99

Cordova, AK 99574

(907) 424-7260

www.ptialaska.net/~cchamber

Whittier Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 607

Whittier, AK 99693

(907) 472-2309

Prince William Sound Major Salmon Fisheries

AREA	SPECIES	RUN TIMING— <i>Peak of the run is midway through dates given</i>
CORDOVA		
Eyak	Red Salmon	Late May through late July
	Silver Salmon	Early August through late September
Cordova Roadside	Red Salmon	Early July through late July.
	Silver Salmon	Early August through late September.
Fleming Spit	King Salmon	Late May through early July.
	Silver Salmon	Mid-July through early September.
VALDEZ	King Salmon	Late May through early July.
	Pink Salmon	Mid-June through late July.
	Silver Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
WHITTIER (Passage Canal)	King Salmon	Late May through early July.
	Silver Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
MAIN BAY	Red Salmon	Early May through mid-September. Peak is late June. through late August.
	Chum Salmon	Mid-June.
COGHILL LAKE	Red Salmon	Early June through mid-July.
ESHAMY LAGOON	Red Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND WEST SIDE	Red Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
	Pink Salmon	Mid-June through mid-September. Peak is late July through late August.
LONG BAY	Red Salmon	Early June through mid-July.
LAKE BAY	King Salmon	Late May through early July.
	Silver Salmon	Early August through early September.
	Pink Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
	Chum Salmon	Early June through early July.
UNAKWIK	Pink Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
SAWMILL BAY (Evans Island)	Pink Salmon	Mid-July through late August.
MARINE FISHERIES	Halibut	Peak is early June through mid-August. Closed during month of January.
	Lingcod	Peak is early July through late September. Closed Jan. 1 through June 30.
	Rockfish	Available year-round.

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If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire further information please write to ADF&G, P.O. Box 25526, Juneau, AK 99802-5526; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfield Drive, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 or O.E.O., U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington DC 20240.

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