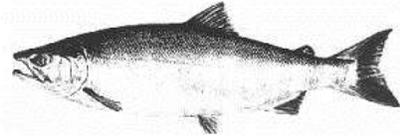


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



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**BRISTOL BAY  
2014 OUTLOOK FOR COMMERCIAL  
SALMON FISHING**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document is provided as a guide to fishermen, processors, and the public. The intent of this document is to provide the reader with general information regarding the 2014 Bristol Bay salmon season. Included is a short narrative regarding general framework for management of each of the five major districts and the 2014 salmon forecast.

During the season, Bristol Bay salmon fishing announcements are broadcast on marine VHF Channel 07A. Current fishing announcements are aired on local radio stations – KAKN and KDLG. Regular announcement times that may be utilized are 9:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated. Information is also available via telephone; for east side fisheries (Naknek-Kvichak, Egegik, and Ugashik), dial **246-INFO (4636)**, for west side fisheries (Nushagak and Togiak) dial **842-5226**. Fishermen are asked to note office hours at the Dillingham fish and game office will be 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday from June 2–June 20, and again after July 19. From June 21–July 18 weekday office hours will be the same as above, but weekend office hours will be from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.

Regarding drift and set gillnet district registration cards. Drift gillnet permit holders that fish in the Ugashik, Egegik, and Naknek-Kvichak Districts may commercial fish without registering for one of those districts through June 24. However, they must fill out and return a district registration card prior to commercial fishing on June 25. Set gillnet permit holders in the Nushagak District and drift gillnet permit holders in the Nushagak and Togiak Districts must fill out and return the appropriate district registration cards prior to commercial fishing. District registration cards will be available at the Anchorage, King Salmon, and Dillingham offices beginning May 1. In addition, PDF files of district registration cards are posted on the Bristol Bay homepage and can be printed, completed, mailed to the address on the printout, or submitted to Anchorage, King Salmon, or Dillingham office

personnel. During the 2014 season, catch, escapement, and announcements will be available at the same site (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareabristolbay.salmon>).

Fishermen and processors should be aware of the reporting requirements in 5 AAC 06.377 (b) that state:

**“Each commercial fisherman shall report, on an ADF&G fish ticket, at the time of landing, the number of Chinook and coho salmon taken but not sold.”**

### **2014 REGULATORY CHANGES**

At the March 2014 Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting in Anchorage the Board adopted a proposal to allow permit holders in the Ugashik Village area (stat area 321-50) a maximum of 600 feet from the 18 foot east bank high tide mark to deploy set gillnet gear. This includes, buoys, running lines, anchors and all gear associated with a set gillnet operation and will apply to the Ugashik Village area only. The Ugashik Village area is defined in regulation as “in the Ugashik District in that portion of the east bank of the Ugashik River from a point at 57° 30.74’ N. lat., 157° 24.10’ W. long., to 57° 32.27’ N. lat., 157° 24.36’ W. long. “. Regulations for set gillnets in the rest of the Ugashik District remain the same.

### **Alaska Wildlife Troopers – Summer 2014 Outlook – Bristol Bay**

Enforcement Priorities:

- Continued strong focus on fishing district lines and open period enforcement, particularly in the Naknek/Kvichak and Egegik districts using all available assets to include aircraft, rotorcraft, large and small enforcement vessels and undercover fishing vessels.
- Routine boardings of drift gillnet and processor vessels to verify licensing and permitting regulations are met. Fishermen and processors are reminded that at the time of delivery, a fish ticket must be generated and must include the signature of a company representative and the full name and signature of the CFEC permit holder. The permit holder must be present at the time of delivery in order to sign the fish ticket. Crew members cannot sign fish tickets for permit holders.
- Increased enforcement of state boating safety laws in cooperation with the US Coast Guard.
- Increased Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) presence in the Ugashik and Togiak Districts.

### **SALMON OUTLOOKS**

#### **BAYWIDE**

The forecasted Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run for 2014 is approximately 26.58 million fish. Based on the forecast, 16.86 million fish are potentially available for commercial harvest in Bristol Bay (Table 1). However, run timing will be the key factor as to when fishing will occur. Bering Sea ice and temperature maps can be found online at the following web address: <http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/ice.php?img=icehttp://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/ice.php?img=sst>.

The department manages fisheries based on inseason information regarding abundance. The inseason management approach uses a suite of tools to provide abundance information in each district as each run develops and is used by the department to determine fishing opportunity.

The commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay opens June 1 by regulation. Fishing in eastside districts will be allowed using a weekly schedule that will vary by district. The schedules are in place to balance fishing opportunity with escapement in the early part of the season (particularly for Chinook salmon). As each run develops and sockeye salmon run characteristics become defined within individual districts, fishing time will be adjusted accordingly. In the Nushagak District, management of the Chinook salmon fishery will govern fishing time in the early part of the season, followed by directed sockeye salmon management as abundance dictates.

## **NAKNEK/KVICHAK DISTRICT**

An inshore run of approximately 10.51 million sockeye salmon is expected for the Naknek/Kvichak District in 2014. Based on the forecast, the projected harvest in the Naknek/Kvichak District is approximately 5.48 million sockeye salmon; approximately 2.44 million from the Kvichak River, 800,000 from the Alagnak River and 2.25 million from the Naknek River. The 2014 Kvichak River escapement goal will be 2.65 million sockeye. If the run is greater or less than the forecast, the inseason point goal will be adjusted to reflect the actual inseason total run. The Naknek River escapement goal range is 800,000 to 1.4 million. Sockeye salmon returning to the Naknek/Kvichak District are predicted to be 36% age-1.3, 36% age-1.2, 17% age-2.2, and 11% age-2.3 fish.

At the beginning of the season, the Naknek Section only will be open to drift gillnet gear, and set gillnet gear in both the Naknek and Kvichak Sections will be open beginning June 2. Fishing time during the first 2 weeks of June will be 4 days a week from 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Friday, beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 2 and ending 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 13.

During the week of June 16, set gillnet fishing will be open from 9:00 a.m. Monday until 9:00 a.m. Friday. Drift gillnet fishing in the Naknek Section will be open to the following schedule:

3:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. Monday June 16, a 6 hour period;

4:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Tuesday June 17, a 8 hour period;

4:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. Tuesday June 17, a 6 hour period;

5:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Wednesday June 18, a 7.5 hour period;

6:00 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. Wednesday June 18, a 5.5 hour period;

6:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Thursday June 19, a 7 hour period;

7:00 p.m. Thursday June 19, until 1:00 a.m. Friday June 20, a 6 hour period.

There is the possibility of escapement falling behind schedule in the Kvichak River. In order to reduce the harvest of Kvichak stocks, the department may restrict fishing to the flood portion of the tide only, from the 7-foot level to high water slack.

With limited information and low abundance over the past 5 years, special attention will be given to Chinook salmon run strength and effort levels. A mesh size restriction of 5.5 inches or less will be in effect beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 2 until 9:00 a.m. Friday, July 25, to help in the conservation of Chinook salmon.

During closures, there may be extensive use of district test fishing boats. Additional volunteer test boats may be needed due to increased test fishing. Permit holders interested in district test

fishing in the Naknek-Kvichak District should contact Slim Morstad at (907) 246-3341 in King Salmon.

## **EGEGIK DISTRICT**

A forecasted run of approximately 4.65 million sockeye salmon is expected for the Egegik River in 2014. The escapement goal range is 800,000 to 1.4 million sockeye. Based on the forecast, the expected surplus potentially available for harvest is 3.36 million fish. Approximately 56% of the run is expected to be age-2.2 fish, followed by age-2.3 (25%), age-1.3 (14%) and age 1.2 (6%).

In 2014, separate gear openings and extensions will be used to adjust harvest in an attempt to achieve allocation percentages. Fishermen are reminded that regulation directs the department to avoid “to the extent practicable”, continuous fishing with set gillnet gear in the Egegik District, and that Egegik set gillnet fishermen should expect breaks in fishing.

Based on the Kvichak River sockeye salmon forecast, fishing will begin in the full Egegik District. The season will start with a 3 day per week schedule that will be in effect through June 13. The primary reason for returning to the 3 day per week schedule is to provide for Chinook salmon escapement. By emergency order, commercial fishing will be allowed in the Egegik District from 9:00 a.m. Monday, until 9:00 a.m. Wednesday and from 9:00 a.m. Thursday until 9:00 a.m. Friday. This schedule will be in effect beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday, June 2, and run through 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 13. After June 14, fishing will be scheduled according to sockeye salmon run strength. As in previous years, some openings could occur on short notice. Periods will be adjusted to allocate harvest between drift and set gillnet gear groups.

In addition, subsistence fishing will be permitted in the waters of the Egegik commercial district from 12:01 a.m., June 1, until 11:59 p.m. Friday, June 13. The department will consider additional directed subsistence openings but will wait until inseason to announce the timing of those openings.

ADF&G does not forecast Egegik River coho salmon. Escapement assessments are done with aerial surveys, however during the time coho salmon are inriver weather conditions frequently make aerial surveys difficult. In 2010, surveys were not flown due to bad weather and no assessment of the escapement for that year is available. In 2014, management of the fall coho fishery will be based on fishery performance and run strength indicators.

District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. Permit holders interested in test fishing in the Egegik District should contact Paul Salomone in King Salmon at (907) 246-3341.

## **UGASHIK DISTRICT**

The 2014 Ugashik River sockeye salmon forecast is 1.81 million fish. The escapement goal range is 500,000 to 1.2 million sockeye. Based on the forecast, 0.89 million fish are potentially available for harvest. Fishermen should note that this is a fairly small forecast and the department will be conservative in providing fishing opportunity. Approximately 35% of the run is expected to be age-1.2 fish, 34% age-1.3, 23% age-2.2, and 8% age-2.3 sockeye.

The Ugashik District allocation plan specifies 10% set gillnet and 90% for drift gillnet. As in previous years separate gear openings and adjusting length of commercial periods will be used to

address allocation between gear groups during 2014. With limited information and low abundance over the past 5 years, special attention will be given to Chinook salmon run strength and effort levels. A mesh size restriction of 5.5 inches or less will be in effect beginning 12:01a.m., Sunday June 1 until 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, July 22, to help in the conservation of Chinook salmon.

Beginning 9:00 a.m. Monday June 2, commercial fishing in the Ugashik District will be allowed on a 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Friday schedule through 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 13. With an expected Kvichak River run that exceeds a 40% exploitation rate above the minimum escapement goal stipulated in regulation, fishing time after June 14 will be allowed under E.O. authority and will depend on fishery performance and run strength indicators. Permit holders should note that the regulation restricting opportunity to no more than 48 hours between June 16 and June 23 will not be in effect in 2014.

In addition, subsistence fishing will be permitted in the waters of the Ugashik commercial district from 12:01 a.m., June 1 until 11:59 p.m. Friday June 13. The department will consider additional directed subsistence openings but will wait until inseason to announce the timing of those openings.

ADF&G does not forecast Ugashik River coho salmon and all escapement assessments are done via aerial surveys. The parent year for the 2014 coho return is the 2010 escapement, however, because of weather conditions surveys were not flown and no assessment of the 2010 coho escapement is available. In 2014, management of the fall coho fishery will be based on fishery performance and run strength indicators.

At the March 2013 Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting, the board made changes to when Area T permit holders may fish in the inner portion of the Cinder River Section (river and lagoon) and Inner Port Heiden sections. The board adopted proposals that would allow Area T permit holders to fish within the inner portion of the Cinder River Section and Inner Port Heiden Section during all months when open by regulation. Permit holders are advised that regulations allow for fish caught in Cinder River and Inner Port Heiden sections to be transported to and delivered in Ugashik every month except July (**5 AAC 06.375 Landing requirements**). Permit holders wishing to fish in those sections above are advised to be certain of their markets **BEFORE** fishing. For further information contact ADF&G in Port Moller at 907-375-2716.

District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. Permit holders interested in test fishing in the Ugashik District should contact Paul Salomone in King Salmon at (907) 246-3341.

## **NUSHAGAK DISTRICT**

The variable escapement goal adopted for the Nushagak River is contained in the Wood River Special Harvest Area (WRSHA) Management Plan. This plan directs the department to achieve sockeye salmon escapements within the escapement goal range of 370,000 to 760,000 when the preseason forecast is greater than 1 million fish. If the preseason forecast is below 1 million fish, then an Optimum Escapement Goal (OEG) minimum of 260,000 sockeye salmon is in effect when the ratio of Wood River to Nushagak River sockeye salmon is projected to exceed 3:1. During the first week of July, the department assesses Nushagak River sockeye salmon run strength through July 1 and adjusts the escapement goal based on that assessment. If the Wood

and Nushagak Rivers sockeye salmon forecasts for 2014 (6.89 million and 1.17 million respectively), is accurate, the likelihood of fishing in the WRSHA is increased.

Nushagak River Chinook salmon are managed according to the Nushagak/Mulchatna Chinook Salmon Management Plan. This plan directs the commercial fishery to be managed for an inriver goal of 95,000 Chinook salmon. In 2013, escapement was sufficient to warrant a short directed Chinook salmon opening on June 14. The department will closely monitor Chinook salmon escapement and have openings if escapement warrants beginning as early as June 12.

The 2014 Nushagak District sockeye salmon forecast is 8.8 million fish, 1.9 million for escapement and 6.6 million potentially available for harvest in the Nushagak commercial salmon fishery. The approximate total run by river system is: Wood River 6.89 million (escapement goal range 700,000 to 1.5 million); Igushik River 0.83 million (escapement goal range 150,000 to 300,000); and Nushagak River 1.17 million (escapement goal range of 370,000 to 840,000). Approximately 58% of the forecasted run is expected to be age-1.2 sockeye salmon, < 3% age-2.2, 38% age-1.3, and < 2% age-2.3 fish.

Management strategies for 2014 include: 1) directed Chinook salmon openings when warranted by escapement. 2) Igushik Section sockeye salmon openings are likely to begin in the third week of June and will likely be set gillnet only until escapement or strong harvests dictate otherwise, and 3) begin fishing in the regular district in late June with short openings. Openings will be scheduled based on sockeye salmon escapement levels in the Nushagak and Wood rivers. Mesh size will be limited to 5.5 inches or smaller unless Chinook salmon escapement is above expectations. If the Nushagak River sockeye salmon escapement decreases relative to expected escapements the department may first warn and then impose the 4.75 inch mesh restriction in the Nushagak District. Subsequently, if Nushagak River sockeye salmon escapement falls below the expected 370,000 fish curve, then the department may utilize the WRSHA to protect Nushagak River sockeye salmon. Commercial openings in the district may follow as allowed by escapement levels in the Nushagak River.

Permit holders are reminded that there were significant changes made to the WRSHA management plan at the December 2012 Board of Fish meeting. The changes require separate gear type openings with an allocation ratio of 3:1 for the different gear types. Other changes include restrictions regarding where and how set gillnets may be fished and the amount of gear allowed on board set or drift gillnet vessels. Please be sure to understand all regulations before participating in any fishing activities.

Igushik River sockeye salmon will be managed independently of the Nushagak/Wood River sockeye salmon stocks. Set gillnet fishing will begin in the Igushik Section when a market is available. Initial openings will be 8 hours per day and additional time will be added if large harvests or escapement information indicate more time is warranted. Drift gillnet openings in the Igushik Section will be added as needed to control sockeye salmon escapement. Igushik River sockeye salmon returns can be quite variable relative to forecasted run strength. Management will incorporate a readiness to respond with increasing early set gillnet openings, and an attempt to maintain the 6% sockeye harvest allocated to the Igushik Section set gillnet group by only adding drift gillnet openings as needed.

In 2014 no forecasts were produced for Nushagak River coho or pink salmon. The department will switch to pink and coho salmon management approximately July 23 when sockeye salmon harvest decreases. The department will use enumeration information from the Nushagak River

sonar project to determine what amount of fishing time is warranted.

District test fishing for inseason management may be conducted periodically depending on run characteristics. Permit holders interested in test fishing in the Nushagak District should contact Tim Sands in Dillingham at (907) 842-5227.

## **TOGIAK DISTRICT**

The 2014 total run of Togiak River sockeye salmon is forecast at 720,000 fish, an increase from the 2013 forecast of 590,000. The Togiak District Salmon Management Plan (TDSMP) calls for sockeye salmon escapement of 150,000 fish past the counting towers located at the outlet of Togiak Lake. Based on the forecast, approximately 520,000 sockeye salmon will potentially be available for commercial harvest. Approximately 22% of the run is expected to be 2-ocean fish and 78% is expected to be 3-ocean fish.

Commercial fisheries in the Togiak District are managed under the Togiak District Salmon Management Plan (TDSMP). The plan restricts permit holders from fishing in the Togiak District until July 27 if they have fished in any other district in Bristol Bay, and conversely, restricts permit holders from fishing in any other district until July 27 if they have fished in the Togiak District. The plan also increases the weekly fishing schedule in the Togiak River Section between July 1 and July 16, and restricts mesh size to 5.5 inches or smaller between June 15 and July 15 for the conservation of Chinook salmon.

Chinook salmon run strength in the Togiak River has been considered below average for several years. Adequate Chinook salmon escapement in most years can be attributed to mesh size restrictions in late June and early July, as well as to reductions in the weekly fishing schedule during late June. Anticipating another poor Chinook salmon run, reductions in the weekly fishing schedule are anticipated for the 2014 season. These reductions will likely limit commercial fishing to between 48 and 72 hours of fishing time during each of the last 2 weeks of June. Additionally, a mesh size restriction for Chinook salmon conservation may be in place throughout July. Fishermen are also reminded of Togiak regulation changes adopted at the 2012 Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting. These changes include: 1) prohibiting dual drift permit operation throughout the salmon season in Togiak District, 2) a boundary change for drift gillnet fishing near the Togiak River mouth for part of the season, and 3) a small change of the Togiak River Section northwest boundary.

Coho, pink, and chum salmon returns are not formally forecast in the Togiak District due to a lack of sufficient age class information and accurate escapement data. If a market for coho salmon is present, a conservative harvest strategy will be utilized due to the lack of information about the returning coho salmon run.

Table 1.-Forecast of total run, escapement and harvest of sockeye salmon returning to Bristol Bay River systems in 2014.

<b>Millions of Sockeye Salmon</b>							
<b>DISTRICT River</b>	<b>Total Run Forecast by Age Class</b>				<b>Total</b>	<b>Escapement</b>	<b>Total Harvest</b>
	1.2	2.2	1.3	2.3			
<b>NAKNEK-KVICHAK:</b>							
<b>Kvichak</b>	2.37	1.21	1.31	0.41	5.30	2.65	2.44
<b>Alagnak</b>	0.26	0.04	1.30	0.13	1.72	.86	0.79
<b>Naknek</b>	1.20	0.49	1.21	0.59	3.49	1.10	2.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>10.51</b>	<b>4.61</b>	<b>5.48</b>
<b>EGEGIK</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>.65</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>4.65</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>3.36</b>
<b>UGASHIK</b>	<b>.64</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>.89</b>
<b>NUSHAGAK</b>							
<b>Wood</b>	4.93	0.15	1.75	0.06	6.89	1.10	5.51
<b>Igushik</b>	0.15	0.02	0.64	0.02	0.83	0.23	0.57
<b>Nushagak</b>	0.06	0.01	.98	0.01	1.17	0.60	0.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.13</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>8.88</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>6.60</b>
<b>TOGIAK</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.52</b>
<b>BRISTOL BAY</b>	<b>9.99</b>	<b>4.95</b>	<b>8.97</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>26.58</b>	<b>8.66</b>	<b>16.86</b>