

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #13

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 19 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be closed during this period. Indices of Chinook salmon abundance suggest that total escapement may end up near the escapement goal threshold. The Chinook salmon inside closure area remains closed during this coming fishing period to allow additional late run entry of Chinook salmon into the river. By Monday, June 23 Chinook salmon run timing should be advanced enough to justify opening the Chinook salmon inside closure area. For the remainder of the 2014 fishing season the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be defined as waters north of a line connecting the following points:

<i>Point</i>	<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>
<b><u>Steamboat North</u></b>	<b><u>60° 22.87' N.</u></b>	<b><u>145° 33.50' W.</u></b>
Steamboat South	60° 22.31' N.	145° 33.50' W.
West side Pete Dahl Entrance	60° 18.89' N.	145° 30.99' W.
West end Grass Island	60° 18.30' N.	145° 28.42' W.
East end Grass Island	60° 15.24' N.	145° 17.89' W.
West end Kokenhenik Bar	60° 15.00' N.	145° 16.20' W.
East end Kokenhenik Bar	60° 13.65' N.	145° 09.46' W.
Western tip of Softuk Bar	60° 13.68' N.	145° 05.78' W.
Coffee Creek West	60° 14.13' N.	144° 58.31' W.

Cumulative sonar count to date is 679,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 383,000 fish. For the week ending June 7, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 2,885 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 2,697. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown this week. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 11 were 13% Main Bay and 9% Gulkana Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, June 17 was 33,100 sockeye salmon and 48 Chinook salmon with 166 deliveries reported.

During the commercial fishing season subsistence harvest may occur in the Copper River District concurrent with commercial periods until the Copper River District is closed at the end of the season. Subsistence users may obtain subsistence permits during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday– Friday, 8:00 am–12:00 pm and 1:00 pm– 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open for the commercial fishing at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 19 for a 12-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending June 7, the actual Bering River District survey count was 200 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 1,430 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown this week. No harvest was reported from the period that closed Monday, June 16. **Accurate commercial harvest reporting is integral to the management decision making process and permit holders are responsible for ensuring that their harvest is accurately reported on commercial fish tickets.**

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District, excluding waters of the Esther Subdistrict, will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 19 for a 60-hour commercial drift gillnet fishing period. Esther Subdistrict, excluding the WNH THA and SHA, will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 19 for a 36-hour period. Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, June 14 was 55,900 chum and 14,900 sockeye salmon with 325 deliveries reported.

The Coghill weir was operational as of Sunday, June 8. A total of 279 sockeye salmon were passed at the weir yesterday for a season cumulative of 1,740 fish. An estimated total run of 168,000 sockeye salmon are expected to return to the Coghill River, with an SEG of 20–40 thousand fish to be passed at the weir.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 19 for a 60-hour commercial gillnet fishing period. **Per PWSAC's recommendation, the MBH AGZ will be closed during this fishing period.** Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, June 14 was 87,300 sockeye and 14,500 chum salmon with 607 deliveries reported. As a reminder, regulation 5 AAC 24.367(g) suspends regulatory closed waters in the Main Bay Subdistrict prior to July 8.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District will open at 8:00 am Thursday, June 19 for a 36-hour commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing period. No harvest was reported for the period that closed Friday, June 13.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An aerial survey of the Eastern and Northern districts on Sunday, June 15, indicated that early wild chum salmon returns to Port Gravina and Sheep Bay are greater than anticipated for this date. Cumulative pink salmon harvest in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict through June 15 is 135,000 fish. For the years 1997–2008, the average cumulative harvest for a similar date is 214 pink salmon. VFDA reports having made two test sets near Entrance Point on Tuesday, June 18, with catches of 30 and 10 pink salmon per set. Test fishing continues today in Valdez Narrows and Port Valdez. VFDA expects to begin its cost recovery sales program on Friday, June 20.

**There will be a commercial fishing period on Monday, June 23 in eastern PWS, with time and area to be announced on Saturday, June 21.**

The department has used yellow Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers in the past to close terminal wild stock areas, both for escapement and quality concerns. The department may use the yellow SHTF markers as a management tool for closing terminal wild stock areas to allow for early season broad area openings, and when escapements are lower than expected. These markers may also be employed as an intermediate step before area-wide closures are used. SHTF marker coordinates are available in the Cordova ADF&G office, and have been provided to area processors, VFDA and PWSAC for distribution to fishery participants. Electronic copies of the list and associated coordinates detailing these closed waters are available at the following web address under the *Prince William Sound Salmon Harvest Task Force Closures* heading:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.salmon#/maps>

Please refer to Prince William Sound News Release #7 from Saturday, May 31 for details regarding Prince William Sound stream closures. This announcement highlights closed waters in the vicinity of select streams in Prince William Sound. A list of Latitude/Longitude points is being provided to identify select streams within and around which are closed to commercial fishing. As specified in 5 AAC 39.290 Closed Waters, commercial fishing for salmon is prohibited at all times within the fresh water of these streams, and within 500 yards of the fresh water of these streams. **This list of Latitude/Longitude points has been updated since 2013. It went into effect starting 8:00 am, Monday, June 2 and will remain effective through the remainder of the 2014 commercial salmon fishing season.** Closed areas defined by existing markers remain in effect. Electronic copies of the list and associated map detailing these closed waters are available at the following web address under the *Prince William Sound Stream Closures* heading:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.salmon#/maps>

Copies of the list and associated maps will also be available in the Cordova ADF&G office.

Please refer to the ADF&G 2012-2015 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound booklet for regulations regarding commercial salmon fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area. This booklet is available in the Cordova ADF&G office and at the following web address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/PWSSalmon-2012-2015.pdf>

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to purse seine fishing for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 19 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 23. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, June 15 was 18,500 chum and 123,000 pink salmon with 51 deliveries reported.

ADF&G otolith contribution estimates for the Montague District fishing period that closed on Sunday, June 15 resulted in a harvest composition of 89% hatchery and 11% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest of approximately 14,050 pink salmon. Of the estimated 109,000 hatchery fish harvested on this date, the hatchery composition is as follows: 94% SGH, 4% AFK, and 2% WNH.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 19 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 23. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, June 15 was 8,360 chum and 263 pink salmon with 22 deliveries reported.

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, June 21.**

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current. The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species).

Under the ESA, “take” means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” “16U.S.C. 1532(19); and “harass” means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.