

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #16

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 26 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 790,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 438,000 fish. For the week ending June 21, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 11,715 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 14,273. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown this week. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 14 were 19% Gulkana Hatchery and 11% Main Bay Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, June 24 was 100,000 sockeye salmon and 92 Chinook salmon with 453 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 is closed to commercial fishing. For the week ending June 21, the actual Bering River District aerial survey count was 1,100 versus a minimum anticipated of 4,048 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown this week.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the Esther Subdistrict, will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 26 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 26 for a 36-hour period. **Effective from 8:00 am, Thursday, June 26 to 8:00 pm, Saturday, June 28, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide.** Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, June 21 was 121,000 chum and 24,700 sockeye salmon with 638 deliveries reported.

The Coghill weir was operational as of Sunday, June 8. The Coghill River weir crew is sampling sockeye salmon and did not pass any fish yesterday. The cumulative sockeye salmon passage to date is 4,760 fish. This compares to an anticipated cumulative count of 1,430 fish for this date. 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, excluding the AGZ shoreward of a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 26 for a 60-hour commercial gillnet fishing period. The AGZ, up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, will open to **DRIFT GILLNET** permit holders only during this fishing period. Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, June 21 was 175,000 sockeye and 16,500 chum salmon with 1,749 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 26 for a 36-hour commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing period. The harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, June 24 is confidential.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will detail PWS purse seine fishing periods commencing on Thursday, June 26. An aerial survey of the Eastern and Northern districts on Tuesday, June 24, indicated that early wild chum salmon returns to Port Gravina and Sheep Bay were greater than anticipated for this date.

VFDA began its cost recovery sales program on Monday, June 23, and has collected approximately 2.3% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through June 24. Cost recovery pink salmon harvest in Port Valdez on Tuesday, June 24 was approximately 26,200 fish with an average weight of approximately 2.78 pounds per fish and less than 1% female. Cost recovery fishing resumed this morning.

It is anticipated that there will be another commercial fishing period on Monday, June 30 in eastern PWS, with time and area to be announced on Saturday, June 28.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of the latitude of the Rocky Point light, will open to commercial fishing for 12 hours on Thursday, June 26 beginning at 8:00 am. **All waters of Galena Bay will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Waters inside of the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed for this period to ensure early season escapement:**

- (1) Sheep Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°41.13' N. lat., 145°58.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°40.46' N. lat., 145°58.01' W. long.;
- (2) Beartrap Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°45.13' N. lat., 146°06.12' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°44.51' N. lat., 146°04.57' W. long.; **this includes all waters of Port Gravina and Beartrap Bay inside of this line;**
- (3) Olsen Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.46' N. lat., 146°10.14' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°43.21' N. lat., 146°13.97' W. long.;
- (4) St. Matthews Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.36' N. lat., 146°19.07' W. long. to a shore maker at approximately 60°43.61' N. lat., 146°21.17' W. long.;
- (5) Irish Cove: south of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°46.73' N. lat., 146°26.62' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°46.27' N. lat., 146°27.12' W. long.;
- (6) Landlocked Bay: waters north of 60°50.76' N. lat.;
- (7) Port Fidalgo Subdistrict: waters east of 146°24.12' W. long.

SHTF marker coordinates will also be available in the Cordova ADF&G office, and have been provided to area processors, VFDA and PWSAC for distribution to fishery participants. A copy of these coordinates may also be found on the ADF&G Web-site at the following address:

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

Harvest from the June 23 fishing period was 11,100 pink and 4,960 chum salmon with 29 deliveries reported. It is anticipated that early season fishing opportunities will be limited in frequency, with time and area for subsequent openers being dependent upon escapement, harvest and effort.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to purse seine fishing for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 26 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 30. 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 22 was 50,400 chum and 56,600 pink salmon with 91 deliveries reported.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District east of Granite Point will open to commercial fishing for 12 hours on Thursday, June 26 beginning at 8:00 am. Waters of Long Bay north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°57.63' N. lat., 147°13.50' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°57.01' N. lat., 147°15.47' W. long. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for 12 hours on Thursday, June 26 beginning at 8:00 am. There was no harvest reported for the June 23 fishing period. It is anticipated that early season fishing opportunities will be limited in frequency, with time and area for subsequent openers dependent upon escapement, harvest and effort.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 26 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 30. 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 22 was 13,500 chum, 6,100 sockeye, and 2,750 pink salmon with 45 deliveries reported.

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>

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, June 28.

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 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 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.