

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #23

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 7 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 926,000 fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 505,000 fish. For the week ending July 5, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 43,875 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 28,229–66,722. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown next week. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 27 were 42% Gulkana Hatchery and 8% Main Bay Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, July 2 was 79,000 sockeye and 58 Chinook salmon with 626 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 at 7:00 am on Monday, July 7 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending June 28, the actual Bering River District aerial survey count was 13,700 versus an anticipated range of 11,015–24,232 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, **excluding the WNH Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ)**, will open at 8:00 am on Monday, July 7 for a 48-hour commercial drift gillnet fishing period. The WNH HEEZ consists of waters of Lake Bay north of a latitude line at 60°47.78'N. **Coghill River regulatory closed waters are in effect.** Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, July 2 was 50,100 chum and 9,500 sockeye salmon with 398 deliveries reported.

A total of 680 sockeye salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday for a season cumulative of 10,750 fish. This compares to an anticipated range of 7,886–23,657 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 Monday, July 7 for a 48-hour commercial gillnet fishing period. The AGZ, up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, will open to **SET GILLNET** permit holders only during this fishing period. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, July 2 was 45,200 sockeye and 4,300 chum salmon with 385 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 Monday, July 7 for a 36-hour commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing period. No harvest was reported for the period that closed Friday, July 4.

SEINE FISHERIES: The purpose of this announcement is to provide time and area specifics for fisheries targeting VFDA pink salmon for Sunday, July 6, and Monday, July 7. Fishing opportunity targeting VFDA pink salmon may be offered again on Tuesday, with details being provided at 2 pm on Monday, July 7.

Aerial surveys of Eastern and Northern district streams were flown on Wednesday, July 2, and Friday, July 4. Aerial surveys of the purse seine fishery were flown concurrent to these stream surveys, and on Thursday, July 3. Early wild pink and chum salmon returns have begun in these districts. Very few of these fish have entered the streams, which is to be expected for this date.

ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Port Valdez on July 2 resulted in an estimated 11.5% female. VFDA's historical run timing data suggests an anticipated 19.6% female at/near the Solomon Gulch Hatchery (SGH). Final harvest numbers for the July 4 fishery in Prince William Sound are unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that 1.5 million pink salmon were harvested. Cumulative pink salmon harvest totals for Prince William Sound through July 4 include approximately 1.26 million VFDA cost recovery fish, and an estimated 11.64 million CPF fish. This is a record cumulative pink salmon harvest for Prince William Sound for this date. Sex ratio data and cumulative harvest to date indicate that VFDA's 2014 pink salmon return to SGH is well above forecast. VFDA estimates remaining escapement needs of 645,000 pink salmon (299,000 for cost recovery and 346,000 for broodstock). Time and area for commercial fishing periods beyond July 7 will be based on harvest results through the July 6 fishery, and updated sex ratios.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 6, and Monday, July 7. **Waters in Port Valdez, east of a line from 61° 05.00' N, 146° 21.50' W to 61° 06.00' N, 146° 21.50' W and south of a line from 61° 06.00' N, 146° 21.50' W to 61° 06.00' N, 146° 15.10' W. will be closed during this period.** All waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor will be closed to commercial fishing. Waters within 200 yards of the AMHS Valdez Ferry Terminal will also be closed to commercial fishing when the ferry is arriving and departing. Waters within the Alyeska Marine Terminal (Trans Alaska Pipeline System) Security Zone are closed to commercial fishing. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect during these fishing periods.

Fishermen are advised of a new outfall line located near Old Town Valdez at 61°06'58.788 N, 146°16'49.748 W. The line is marked with orange and white buoys. Please avoid this area to prevent gear entanglement.

Waters inside of the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed for these periods 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 marker 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.
- (8) Galena Bay: east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.87' N. lat., 146°39.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.55' N. lat., 146°39.65' W. long.;
- (9) Jack Bay: south and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.34' N. lat., 146°35.27' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.17' N. lat., 146°39.77' W. long.;
- (10) Sawmill Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.71' N. lat., 146°46.44' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.58' N. lat., 146°47.07' 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>

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District east of Granite Point will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 6, and Monday, July 7. 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 these periods.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 6, and Monday, July 7.

The next scheduled purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Monday, July 7.
The next scheduled gillnet salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 9.

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.