

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #38**

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 24 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative sonar count to date is 1.16 million fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 652,000 fish. For the week ending July 26, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 33,050 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 32,059–75,775. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown early next week. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 15 were 37% Gulkana Hatchery and 3% Main Bay Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 22 was 20,000 sockeye with 188 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 Thursday, July 24 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending July 26, the actual Bering River District aerial survey count was 12,855 versus an anticipated range of 9,401–20,683 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown early next week. No harvest was reported from the period that closed Tuesday, July 22.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District **north of Loomis Creek (60° 29.44' N., 147° 58.42' W.)**, excluding the AGZ, will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 24 for a 36-hour commercial gillnet fishing period. The AGZ will open to **DRIFT GILLNET** permit holders only during this fishing period. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 22 was 6,180 sockeye, 281 coho, 7,500 pink and 298 chum salmon with 75 deliveries reported.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District is closed for the season.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** This announcement provides time and area specifics for purse seine fisheries starting on Thursday, July 24. VFDA reports escapement of 300,000 to 400,000 pink salmon at the head of Port Valdez, and has provided area recommendations for fishing opportunity in Port Valdez on Thursday, July 24. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon. All other purse seine fisheries remain as previously announced. Time and area for future commercial fishing periods targeting VFDA pink salmon in Port Valdez will be based on consideration for VFDA escapement. **An update on fisheries targeting VFDA pink salmon will be provided at 2 pm on Thursday, July 24.**

Eastern District stream escapements were less than anticipated for the date following an aerial survey on Tuesday, July 15. An aerial survey of the Eastern and Northern districts is scheduled for tomorrow, weather permitting. Stream escapements elsewhere in PWS are near anticipated numbers for the date. Fishing opportunity directed on wild stocks will be limited to two days per week for the near future. The next opportunities targeting wild stocks are expected to take place on Thursday, July 24, and Monday, July 28.

PWSAC and the department switched to pink salmon management in PWSAC hatchery subdistricts on Monday, July 21. PWSAC has recommended hatchery subdistrict closures in most PWSAC hatchery subdistricts for seine openings this week. PWSAC began its pink salmon cost recovery program at WNH this morning.

ADF&G test fishing in the Southwestern District began on July 22, gauging pink salmon run entry and stock composition. The maximum set size on July 22 was 442 pink salmon.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District will remain closed until further notice.

The 2014 WNH chum salmon egg take began on Saturday, July 5. Through July 20, PWSAC had collected approximately 76% of the 165 million chum salmon egg goal, and estimated 35,000–45,000 chum salmon in the WNH HEEZ. Future commercial fishing opportunity targeting WNH pink and chum salmon will be dependent upon PWSAC recommendations.

A total of 578 sockeye salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday for a season cumulative of 18,612 fish. This compares to an anticipated range of 17,891–53,672 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goal range for Coghill Lake sockeye is 20,000–60,000 fish. A total of 170 pink salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday for a season cumulative of 2,428 fish. Future commercial fishing opportunity targeting Coghill Lake wild stocks will be dependent upon escapement indices and availability of wild stock surplus.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters in the Eastern District, north of a line from 61° 02.855'N., 146° 44.204'W. to 61° 02.373'N., 146° 43.407'W. to 61° 02.992'N., 146° 39.165'W., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 24. **Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' W Long., will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.** 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 this fishing period. Harvest from the July 22 period is unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that at least 800,000 pink salmon were harvested in Valdez Narrows and Port Valdez on Tuesday, July 22.

Waters of the Eastern District south of the latitude of Black Point will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 24. **Waters inside of the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed for this period:**

- (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 website at the following address:

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

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict, north of 60°12.56' N. lat. and within 0.5 miles of Montague Island, will open to purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 24. **Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the open area of Port Chalmers Subdistrict will be in effect until further notice.** No harvest was reported for the July 21 fishing period.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 24. Harvest from the July 21 period is confidential.

**The next scheduled salmon purse seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Thursday, July 24. The next scheduled salmon gillnet fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 26.**

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.