

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #43

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 31 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. The last day of sonar operation for the 2014 season was July 28. The cumulative sonar count through July 28 was 1.22 million fish whereas the anticipated count for this date is 697,000 fish. For the week ending August 2, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 34,825 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 32,568–76,979. An aerial survey of the Copper River delta is anticipated to be flown next week. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 18 were 38% Gulkana Hatchery. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 29 was 9,850 sockeye and 525 coho salmon with 107 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 31 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending August 2, the actual Bering River District aerial survey count was 6,310 versus an anticipated range of 8,409–18,499 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week. No harvest was reported from the period that closed Tuesday, July 29.

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 31 for a 36-hour commercial gillnet fishing period. The AGZ will open to **DRIFT GILLNET** permit holders only during this fishing period. The Eshamy River video monitoring project started enumerating salmon on July 17, with 983 sockeye salmon counted through July 26. The anticipated range for sockeye salmon escapement on July 26 was 2,160–4,652. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 29 was 2,810 sockeye, 33 coho, 26,200 pink and 208 chum salmon with 63 deliveries reported.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement provides time and area specifics for purse seine fisheries targeting VFDA and PWSAC pink salmon. VFDA reports adequate broodstock escapement at the head of Port Valdez. Time and area for future commercial fishing periods targeting VFDA pink salmon in Port Valdez will be based on consideration for VFDA escapement. The SGH pink salmon egg take began yesterday, and is expected to take several weeks to complete.

PWSAC began its pink salmon cost recovery program on July 23, and has collected approximately 50% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 29. The July 29 cost recovery harvest estimate at AFK and WNH is approximately 439,000 pink salmon. Future CPF openings targeting PWSAC enhanced pink salmon in hatchery subdistricts will be based on cost recovery fishing progress, run entry, and PWSAC recommendations. **An update on fisheries targeting VFDA and PWSAC pink salmon will be provided at 2 pm on Friday, August 1.**

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, **excluding the Bettles Bay Subdistrict, excluding the Granite Bay Subdistrict, excluding the Esther Subdistrict, and excluding all waters of the WNH SHA and WNH THA**, will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 31. Harvest from the July 29 period is estimated to be 7,130 pink, 85 sockeye, and 80 chum salmon, with six deliveries reported.

The 2014 WNH chum salmon egg take began on Saturday, July 5. Through July 28, PWSAC had collected approximately 82% of the 165 million chum salmon egg goal, and estimated 1,000–2,000 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 505 sockeye salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir on July 26 for a season cumulative of 21,186 fish. This compares to an anticipated range of 18,845–56,536 fish for this date. The sustainable escapement goal range for Coghill Lake sockeye is 20,000–60,000 fish. A total of 666 pink salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir on July 26 for a season cumulative of 4,798 fish. July 26 was the final day of operation for the Coghill River weir.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 31. **Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 30.62' W Long. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point WILL BE IN EFFECT until further notice.** Harvest from the July 29 period is unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that 301,000 pink salmon were harvested on Friday, July 25; 235,000 on July 28; and at least 100,000 on July 29.

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) 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.;
- (8) 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.;
- (9) 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 website at the following address:

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

Waters of 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 Friday, August 1. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 30.62' W Long. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point WILL BE IN EFFECT until further notice.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 31. No harvest was reported for the July 28 period.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: In the Northern District, **ONLY** waters of Cannery Creek Subdistrict, **including all waters of the CCH THA, CCH SHA, and CCH HEEZ,** will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 31. Anadromous stream closures within the CCH THA will not be in effect until further notice. The Perry Island Subdistrict is closed at the recommendation of PWSAC. Remaining Northern District waters outside of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict are closed out of consideration for wild stock escapement. Harvest from the July 29 period is estimated to be 435,000 pink salmon.

Waters inside of the following Northern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers are also closed to commercial fishing during this period:

- (1) Siwash Bay: west of a line from 60°58.26' N. lat., 147°37.32' W. long. to 60°56.96' N. lat., 147°36.02' W. long.;
- (2) Jonah Bay: west of a line from 61°01.17' N. lat., 147°35.07' W. long. to 61°00.40' N. lat., 147°35.93' W. long.;

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 31. Harvest from the July 28 period is confidential.

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 31. No harvest was reported for the July 28 period.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District south of 60°02.76' N. lat., **excluding the Port San Juan Subdistrict, and excluding all waters of the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 31. **Waters east of Point Helen (on Knight Island) will also open to commercial purse seine fishing for this period.** Harvest from the July 29 period is estimated to be 887,000 pink salmon.

The next scheduled salmon purse seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Friday, August 1.

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

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.