

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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Date Issued: 8/11/2014
Time: 12:00 p.m.

NORTON SOUND COMMERCIAL COHO SALMON SCHEDULES BEGIN

Nearly 49,000 coho salmon have been harvested in the Norton Sound commercial salmon fishery this season. At current harvest rates, the commercial catch of coho salmon is likely to approach the upper end of the forecasted harvest outlook of 60,000–90,000 coho salmon.

Early August projections show escapement needs of coho salmon will be achieved in Subdistricts 2–3, the Golovin and Elim Subdistricts. Thus far there have been nearly 4,900 coho salmon enumerated at the Kwiniuk River counting tower east of Elim. This is the highest count through August 10 since the record breaking year of 2006. Early to normal run timing projections of Kwiniuk River coho salmon escapement range from 11,000–14,000 cohos based on current tower counts. The current Fish River count of 6,600 coho salmon would place the Niukluk River escapement estimate at 2,200 cohos based on radiotelemetry studies conducted in the mid-2000s. The projected Niukluk River escapement is 8,700 cohos based on normal run timing models. The projected level of escapement is in excess of the upper end of the previously-used Niukluk River tower escapement goal range of 2,400–7,200 cohos. The department will be flying aerial surveys of the Niukluk and lower Fish River drainages this week to assess the relationship of Niukluk River escapement to Fish River tower counts. Although there is no ground-based escapement information available for Norton Bay Subdistrict, catches of coho salmon for the ongoing period are well above average for mid-August.

The department will be setting one 72-hour commercial fishing period for Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts to maximize harvests during the peak of the coho salmon run. This period will be from 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 11 to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, August 14. Effective 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 15, Subdistricts 5 and 6 will also be placed on a commercial fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week for the remainder of the season. Periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. The season closes by regulation on Sunday, September 7. Additionally, Norton Sound Subdistricts 2–4, the Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts will reopen to a commercial fishing schedule of two 48-hour periods per week effective 6:00

p.m. Tuesday, August 12. Periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays for the remainder of the season. The Subdistricts 2 and 3 season closes by regulation Sunday, August 31 and the Norton Bay Subdistrict season closes on Sunday, September 7. Permit holders in all subdistricts are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Good Luck and Good Fishing