

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



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**Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #57**

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will remain closed Thursday, August 21. It is anticipated that the Copper River District will be open once per week, with the potential for a second period dependent upon harvest and escapement trends. 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 today. The harvest estimate from the period that closed Tuesday, August 19 is 38,600 coho salmon and 781 sockeye salmon with 315 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 remain closed Thursday, August 21. It is anticipated that the Bering River District will be opened concurrently with the Copper River District. 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 today. The harvest estimate from the period that closed Tuesday, August 19 was 1,860 coho salmon and 19 sockeye salmon with 8 deliveries reported.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District will open at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 21 for a 36-hour commercial gillnet fishing period. Regulatory closed waters within the Eshamy District will be in effect during this period. The harvest estimate from the period that closed Tuesday, August 19 is confidential.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** The purpose of this announcement is to provide time and area specifics for PWS purse seine fisheries beginning on Thursday, August 21, and ending on Saturday, August 23. Future fishing opportunity targeting PWSAC pink salmon in hatchery subdistricts will be dependent upon hatchery escapement progress. PWSAC has provided area recommendations and requests for these fisheries.

PWSAC reports pink salmon escapement estimates at PWSAC facilities on August 20 as follows: 350,000–400,000 pink salmon in the **AFK SHA**; 240,000–280,000 in the **CCH SHA**; and, 248,000–290,000 in the **WNH SHA**. Pink salmon escapement goals for each facility are 309,000 pink salmon at AFK; 357,000 at CCH; and, 283,000 at WNH. The department flew an aerial survey of PWSAC facilities on Tuesday, August 19, and estimates that pink salmon escapements at AFK, CCH, and WNH have met the stated escapement goals. However, at CCH, more fish may be necessary to ensure the successful completion of egg takes, depending upon a variety of factors, including: sex ratio of fish available for broodstock, fecundity, pre-spawn mortality percentage, and immature or over-mature spawner percentage. PWSAC has requested that CCH hatchery subdistricts remain closed to provide sanctuary for the fish that eventually will become broodstock.

It is estimated that 381,000 pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Monday, August 18.

ADF&G otolith contribution estimates for the August 18 Southwestern District CPF result in a harvest composition of 94% hatchery and 6% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest of approximately 19,200 pink salmon. Of the estimated 303,000 hatchery fish harvested on this date, the hatchery composition is as follows: 55% AFK, 30% WNH, 14% CCH, and 1% SGH.

Aerial surveys of Eastern, Northern, Coghill, Northwestern, and Eshamy district streams were flown on Monday and Tuesday. A partial survey of Southwestern District was attempted on Tuesday, but discontinued due to weather. Stream escapements were good for the dates.

VFDA reports that the SGH egg take goal was accomplished this morning. VFDA does not report a harvestable surplus available for commercial harvest, and has not recommended a Port Valdez pink salmon clean up fishery. The next commercial fishing opportunity in Port Valdez may occur starting on Tuesday, September 2, dependent on surplus coho salmon escapement at SGH.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District, **excluding all waters of the WNH SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21.

In the Coghill District, **ONLY** the Esther Subdistrict and WNH THA will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21, Friday, August 22, and Saturday, August 23. All waters of the WNH SHA will be CLOSED during these fishing periods. Drift gillnet harvest from the August 18 fishing period includes 253 coho and 11,900 pink salmon, with 38 deliveries reported. Purse seine harvest for the August 18 fishing period is confidential.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District south of Black Point will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21. Harvest from the August 18 fishing period includes 0 pink, 26 coho and 18,000 chum salmon, with 9 deliveries reported.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21. There was no harvest reported for the August 18 fishing period.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District, **excluding the Cannery Creek Subdistrict, and excluding all waters of the CCH THA and CCH SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21. Harvest from the August 18 fishing period includes 29,000 pink salmon, with 12 deliveries reported.

**NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21. Harvest from the August 18 fishing period is confidential.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21. There was no harvest reported for the August 18 fishing period.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southwestern District, **excluding all waters of the AFK SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21.

In the Southwestern District, **ONLY** the Port San Juan Subdistrict will open to commercial purse seine fishing for daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 21, Friday, August 22, and Saturday, August 23. The AFK SHA and AFK THA will be CLOSED during these fishing periods. Harvest from the August 18 fishing period includes 319 sockeye, 8,700 coho, and 323,000 pink salmon, with 83 deliveries reported.

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be published by 2:00 pm Saturday, August 23.**

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.