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

Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director

Contact: Cordova ADF&G
Cordova Management and Research Staff: Jeremy Botz, 401 Railroad Avenue
Tommy Sheridan, Steve Moffitt, Amanda Wiese, Richard Brenner P.O. Box 669
Phone: (907) 424-3212 Cordova, AK 99574
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2014 PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2014 Prince William Sound (PWS) Area commercial salmon season. Preliminary harvest totals are representative for Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon. Please note that numbers in the narrative are rounded for simplicity and all data are considered preliminary.

The 2014 PWS Area commercial salmon harvest was 43.90 million fish. Harvest was composed of 38.39 million pink, 3.32 million sockeye, 1.53 million chum, 610,000 coho, and 10,300 Chinook salmon. The 2014 harvest was composed of 43.46 million commercial common property fishery (CPF) (88%), and 5.92 million (12%) hatchery cost recovery and broodstock fish.

GILLNET FISHERIES

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT

The 2014 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Copper River District was 22,000 Chinook, 1.60 million sockeye, and 229,000 coho salmon. Gulkana Hatchery was expected to contribute 270,000 sockeye salmon to the CPF harvest. The commercial salmon fishing season in the Copper River District began on Thursday, May 15. The sockeye salmon harvest of 2.07 million fish was more than 1.5 times the previous 10-year (2004–2013) harvest average of 1.32 million sockeye salmon. The number of wild sockeye salmon in the Copper River District CPF harvest was 1.69 million, or 82%. Gulkana Hatchery contributed 304,000 sockeye salmon, or 15%, to the commercial harvest. Main Bay Hatchery contributed 73,200, or nearly 4%. The CPF harvest of 9,620 Chinook salmon was below the previous 10-year (2004–2013) average harvest of 21,200. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 318,000 fish was above the previous 10-year (2004–2013) average harvest of 229,000 coho salmon. The inriver goal for salmon passing the Miles Lake sonar site was 748,000–1,140,000 salmon. Preliminary estimates of inriver Chinook salmon abundance indicate that escapement may be near the lower bound of the escapement goal (24,000). The 2014 preliminary sonar escapement estimate was 1.22 million salmon and exceeded the upper end of the inriver goal. Spawning escapement to Copper River delta systems

based on aerial survey indices was 64,000 sockeye salmon, and was within the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) range of 55,000-130,000 fish. Coho salmon spawning escapement to the Copper River Delta based on aerial survey indices was 43,000 and was within the SEG range of 32,000–67,000 fish.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT

The 2014 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Bering River District was 15,300 sockeye, and 45,700 coho salmon. The sockeye salmon commercial harvest of 50 was below the previous 10-year (2004–2013) harvest average of 15,300 fish. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 98,000 was above the previous 10-year (2004–2013) harvest average of 48,100 fish. The aerial escapement index of 14,000 sockeye salmon was below the SEG range of 15,000–33,000 fish. Aerial surveys of coho salmon produced an escapement index of 26,000 fish that was within the SEG range of 13,000–33,000 fish.

COGHILL DISTRICT

Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) forecasted a run of 1.64 million chum salmon to Wally Noerenberg Hatchery (WNH) in 2014. Approximately 512,000 chum salmon (31%) of the forecasted run were designated for corporate cost recovery and broodstock. The CPF harvest of chum salmon in the Coghill District was 671,000 fish. PWSAC harvested 370,000 chum salmon for corporate cost recovery and broodstock. The total CPF harvest of sockeye salmon in the Coghill District was 166,000 fish. The proportion of wild sockeye salmon in the Coghill District CPF harvest was 26%. Pink salmon CPF harvest in the Coghill District was 2.05 million fish. The proportion of wild pink salmon in the Coghill District CPF harvest was 6%. The total CPF harvest of coho salmon in the Coghill District was 147,000 fish, the majority of which were assumed to be enhanced from WNH.

The sockeye salmon run forecast for Coghill River was 168,000 fish. The Coghill River weir passed 22,000 sockeye salmon, which was within the SEG range of 20,000–60,000 fish.

ESHAMY DISTRICT

The department's preseason forecast for Eshamy Lake was 53,000 wild sockeye salmon and PWSAC forecasted a run of 1.04 million MBH enhanced sockeye salmon. The CPF harvest of sockeye salmon in the Eshamy District was 1.02 million fish, which was above the 10-year average of 699,000 sockeye salmon. The proportion of wild sockeye salmon in the Eshamy District CPF harvest was 6%. PWSAC harvested 12,700 sockeye salmon to meet broodstock requirements. Sockeye salmon escapement to Eshamy Lake is monitored by video camera and counts have not yet been finalized. The sockeye salmon Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) range for Eshamy Lake is 13,000-28,000 fish.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT

The department's preseason harvest forecast for the Unakwik District was 6,600 sockeye salmon. Unakwik District CPF harvest was 621 sockeye salmon, which was below the 10-year average of 5,720 sockeye salmon.

PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

CHUM SALMON

The 2014 chum salmon total run forecast for PWS was 3.08 million fish. The majority of the forecast return, 2.63 million fish (85%), was projected PWSAC enhanced fish. Of these PWSAC enhanced chum salmon, 492,000 fish were forecasted to return to AFK Hatchery and 495,000 were forecasted to return to Port Chalmers. The purse seine fleet had exclusive access to both the AFK and Port Chalmers enhanced chum salmon fisheries in 2014. Enhanced chum salmon returning to WNH were expected to be harvested in gillnet fisheries.

Based on the department's wild chum salmon forecast of 445,000 fish, there was a preseason expectation for the potential CPF harvest of 245,000 wild chum salmon in PWS, leaving 200,000 fish for escapement. The preseason forecast for total chum salmon CPF harvest in PWS was 2.36 million fish.

Total commercial chum salmon harvest in PWS was 1.53 million fish, including 370,000 fish for WNH broodstock and cost recovery. Chum salmon CPF harvest in PWS was 1.12 million fish, which was 50% below the CPF preseason forecast. Chum salmon commercial harvest in the Southwestern District was 58,000 versus a preseason forecast of 492,000. Chum salmon commercial harvest in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict was 179,000, which was below the preseason forecast of 495,000. Commercial fisheries in the Eastern and Southeastern districts resulted in harvest totals of 87,700 and 12,700 chum salmon, respectively.

PINK SALMON

The 2014 pink salmon total run forecast for PWS was 38.40 million fish. This estimate included 4.30 million wild fish, 12.90 million Valdez Fisheries Development Association (VFDA) enhanced fish, and 21.20 million PWSAC enhanced fish. Approximately 3.07 million (14%) of the 21.20 million PWSAC pink salmon return forecast was projected for cost recovery and broodstock with the remaining 18.1 million fish expected to be available for CPF harvest. Approximately 2.76 million (21%) of the projected 12.90 million pink salmon return forecast to VFDA's Solomon Gulch Hatchery (SGH) were projected for cost recovery and broodstock. The remaining 10.20 million VFDA fish were expected to be available for CPF harvest. A total harvest of 3.14 million wild stock pink salmon was forecasted for CPF harvest in PWS, leaving 1.16 million fish for escapement.

Total commercial pink salmon harvest was 43.90 million fish, including 5.51 million (3.58 million for PWSAC and 1.93 million for VFDA) fish for hatchery cost recovery and broodstock. This is the third largest even-year commercial pink salmon harvest on record for PWS.VFDA's pink salmon total run set a new record for that facility with over 24.23 million fish.

COHO SALMON

The VFDA coho salmon run was anticipated to be 106,000 fish. VFDA's broodstock objective was 1,000 coho salmon. Due to a weak run, Port Valdez was not opened to commercial purse seine fishing to target surplus VFDA coho salmon in 2014. Total CPF harvest of coho salmon in PWS (excluding Copper River and Bering River districts) was 172,000 fish. The majority of CPF coho salmon harvested in the Coghill (147,000) and Southwestern (18,400) districts are assumed to be of enhanced stock origin.

Table 1.–Preliminary Area E salmon harvest, 2014.

District	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Bering River	0	50	98,041	4	0	97,775
Copper River	9,626	2,068,418	317,616	11,614	42,633	2,449,907
Eastern	27	9,474	1,998	19,288,176	87,740	19,387,415
Northern	4	3,343	2,020	4,989,618	2,862	4,997,847
Coghill	79	165,928	147,415	2,132,868	671,089	3,117,379
Northwestern	0	418	139	70,684	5,884	77,125
Eshamy	269	1,022,437	1,670	228,166	101,066	1,353,608
Southwestern	114	28,360	18,386	8,779,636	58,245	8,884,741
Montague	210	10,850	873	2,881,396	179,413	3,072,742
Southeastern	0	4	0	10,144	12,747	22,895
Unakwik	0	346	0	3	135	759
CPF Total	**10,329**	**3,309,628**	**588,158**	**38,392,309**	**1,161,814**	**43,462,193**
Hatchery						
Solomon Gulch	0	0	2,000 [a]	1,928,557	0	1,930,557
Cannery Creek	0	0	0	303,099	0	303,099
Wally Noerenberg	0	0	20,084	2,180,361	370,346	2,570,791
Main Bay	0	12,652	0	0	0	12,652
Armin F. Koernig	0	0	0	1,100,457	0	1,100,457
Hatchery total [a]	**0**	**12,652**	**22,084**	**5,512,474**	**370,346**	**5,917,556**
PWS Total Harvest	**10,329**	**3,322,280**	**610,242**	**43,904,783**	**1,532,160**	**49,379,749**

[a] Hatchery sales harvest for operating costs and broodstock harvest.