

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:

Jim Menard, Area Management Biologist

Scott Kent, Assistant Management Biologist

Phone: (907) 443-5167

Fax: (907) 443-5893

Norton Sound Area Office

Pouch 1148

Nome, AK, 99762

Date Issued: June 24, 2015

Time: 11:15 a.m.

COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING BEGINS IN NORTON SOUND

Initial subsistence catch and ground-based escapement information suggests that chum salmon abundance is beginning to build in northern Norton Sound Subdistricts 2 and 3, the Golovin and Elim Subdistricts, as well as in the Norton Bay Subdistrict in eastern Norton Sound. Commercial salmon fishing will commence in these subdistricts beginning Thursday evening. Additionally, there will be another subsistence salmon fishing opening set in the southern Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts beginning Friday evening to provide subsistence harvest opportunities for chum salmon. Periods and fishing times by area are as follows:

Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts

Commercial salmon fishing will open for 48 hours in Norton Sound Subdistricts 2, 3, and 4, the Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts, from 6:00 p.m. Thursday, June 25 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 27. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or less. No commercial fishing is permitted within 500 yards of any salmon spawning stream and all helpers must have a crew member's license or current 2015 commercial fishing permit from any State of Alaska fishery. This period will allow for commercial utilization of chum salmon harvestable surpluses and will provide an additional index of early chum salmon run strength to northern Norton Sound and Norton Bay. Subsistence fishermen in these areas reported good marine and freshwater catches of chum salmon beginning in mid-June. More recently, escapement of chum salmon at the Kwiniuk River tower east of Elim has increased dramatically over the past 3 days, as has escapement of chum salmon at the NSEDC-operated Fish River counting tower near the village of White Mountain. Cumulative passage of chum salmon at the Kwiniuk River tower is 3,600 fish, the third highest in 51 years of estimates for June 23 and the optimal escapement goal range of 11,500–23,000 chum salmon is projected to be easily reached this season.

Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts

Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts will have one 24-hour subsistence fishing period from 6:00 p.m. Friday, June 26 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 27. This period applies only to the marine waters from Cape Denbigh south to Black Point and fishermen are restricted to set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The department will evaluate escapement and subsistence catch information this week to determine if subsistence fishing opportunities can be increased next week.