

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING RESUMES IN NORTON SOUND

Commercial catches of chum salmon for the most recent period ending 6:00 p.m. Saturday, June 27 ranged from below average to well above average depending on the subdistrict fished. Commercial harvest in Golovin Bay was 19 Chinook, 11 sockeye, and 2,800 chum salmon by 10 permit holders. In the Elim Subdistrict, 21 fishermen caught 153 Chinook, 1 sockeye, 2 pink, and 4,700 chum salmon. In Norton Bay Subdistrict, 8 permit holders caught 85 Chinook, 47 pink, and 3,200 chum salmon. Commercial harvest of chum salmon was 38% and 11% below the long-term average harvests for late June in the Golovin and Elim Subdistricts, respectively. Norton Bay's commercial harvest was 250% above the long-term average harvest for the last week of June. Ground-based escapements to Subdistricts 2 and 3 as indexed by the Kwiniuk River tower east of Elim through June 28 are 6,800 chum salmon, which is well above recent 5, 10, and 20-year average escapements for this date. Projected escapement based on current Kwiniuk River tower passage is expected to exceed the upper bound of the tower-based escapement goal range of 11,500–23,000 chum salmon.

Escapement information and comparative catch statistics indicate there are additional harvestable surpluses of chum salmon available for commercial utilization. Accordingly, commercial salmon fishing will reopen this evening for 48 hours in the Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts, from 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 29 to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 1. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

Also effective 12:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 1, there are changes that will go into effect for the southern Norton Sound subsistence salmon fishery. In all fresh and marine waters of Norton Sound Subdistrict 4, the Norton Bay Subdistrict, and all coastal waters from Point Dexter west to Cape Denbigh and all marine waters from Black Point south to Wood Point, subsistence salmon fishing with set gillnets reopens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with no gear restrictions. Until further notice, subsistence salmon fishing in all freshwaters and marine waters from Cape Denbigh to Black Point remains closed except during subsistence fishing periods established by emergency order. Additional restricted mesh marine fishing periods with increases in fishing time are planned for this week, as are beach seining openings in freshwater to allow for subsistence use of salmon other than Chinook salmon. The department will announce the next freshwater and marine subsistence periods for Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, on Tuesday, June 30.