

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #17

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 2 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. **The Chinook salmon inside closure area will remain open during commercial fishing periods for the remainder of the season.**

Cumulative sonar count through June 30 was 961,491 fish, whereas the anticipated count for this date is 487,579 fish. The 0600 count for July 1 was 3,282 fish. For the week ending June 27, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 32,420 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 17,627 – 41,665. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 20 were 6% Gulkana Hatchery and 10% Main Bay. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Tuesday, June 30 was 125 Chinook and 37,400 sockeye salmon with 511 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:** Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 2 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending June 27, the actual Bering River District survey count was 11,500 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 6,092 – 13,402. No harvest was reported for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, June 30.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** Coghill District, excluding waters of the Esther and Granite Bay Subdistricts and waters of the WNH SHA and THA, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 2. Granite Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 2. To date, 3,520 sockeye salmon have passed the Coghill River weir. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Tuesday, June 30 was 20,700 chum and 4,100 sockeye salmon with 89 deliveries reported.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** Eshamy District, excluding the Main Bay Subdistrict, will open for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 2. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Tuesday, June 30 was 161,000 sockeye, 5,100 pink, and 14,300 chum salmon with 747 deliveries reported.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 2 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Sunday, June 28 was 19,200 chum, 1,100 sockeye, and 5,100 pink salmon with 83 deliveries reported.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 36-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 2. Fishing period specific harvest data remain confidential due to low participation. Cumulative harvest through June 30 is 820 sockeye, 190 chum, 3 Chinook, and 5 pink salmon.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** VFDA began its cost recovery sales program yesterday, June 30, and reports a harvest of approximately 62,900 fish with an average weight of 3.76 pounds per fish and 17% female. ADF&G sampling of VFDA cost recovery harvest from June 30 resulted in 10.8% female (sample size of 951 fish). The 10-year odd-year average (1995–2013) cumulative cost recovery harvest of VFDA pink salmon through June 30 is 869,000 fish. For this same time frame, there was a minimum cumulative harvest of 38,800 pink salmon for the same date in 2009, and a maximum

cumulative harvest of 1.8 million fish in 2005. Based on the preseason forecast for a 15.7 million SGH pink salmon return, VFDA's run timing curves predict a cumulative harvest (cost recovery plus CPF) of 1.57 million fish through June 30, and 15.2% female. It is estimated that a total (cost recovery plus CPF) of 168,000 SGH pink salmon have been harvested in PWS through June 30. VFDA's remaining cost recovery and broodstock needs total approximately 2.02 million fish. Cost recovery fishing continues today, and initial fishing reports are consistent with June 30 results.

An aerial survey of eastern PWS flown last week indicated that early wild pink salmon returns were greater than anticipated for the date; chum salmon escapements were within anticipated ranges. To put anticipated pink salmon escapements into perspective, a total of 47,700 fish are anticipated for June 24 cumulative bay, mouth and stream counts. In most years, wild stock returns alone would not support directed effort exclusive of opportunity targeting SGH returns. Aerial surveys of Eastern, Northern, Coghill, and Southeastern districts are scheduled for tomorrow.

**The PWS purse seine fishery in eastern PWS will remain closed until further notice.** Future early season commercial fishing opportunity in eastern PWS will be dependent on VFDA cost recovery progress and wild stock escapements. Daily informational announcements are anticipated to be distributed at 2:00 pm on Friday through Sunday. It is anticipated that the earliest CPF opportunity in eastern PWS could occur on Monday, July 6.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District will remain closed to commercial fishing. Harvest from the June 29 Eastern District CPF is 130,000 pink, 11,800 chum, 6,320 sockeye, 549 coho, and 38 Chinook salmon, with 77 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of recent Eastern District CPF pink salmon harvests result in a composition of 90% wild and 10% SGH fish for June 22; 80% wild and 20% SGH fish for June 25; and, 72% wild and 28% SGH fish for June 29.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District will remain closed to commercial fishing. ADF&G sampling of the June 22 Northern District CPF results in a harvest composition of 74% wild and 26% SGH pink salmon.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southeastern District will remain closed to commercial fishing. Harvest from the June 29 Southeastern District CPF is 6,120 pink, 792 sockeye, 726 chum, and 217 coho salmon, with 14 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of recent Southeastern District CPF pink salmon harvests result in a composition of 85% wild, 14% SGH, and 1% AFK fish for June 22; and, 68% wild and 32% SGH fish for June 25.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 2 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, June 28 is 11,700 chum, 15,700 sockeye, 1,850 pink, 400 coho, and 12 Chinook salmon, with 33 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of the Southwestern District CPF ending on June 28 results in a sockeye salmon harvest composition of 98% MBH, and 2% wild fish. ADF&G sampling of recent Southwestern District CPF pink salmon harvests result in a composition of 85% wild and 15% SGH fish for the CPF ending June 21; 71% wild and 29% SGH fish for the CPF ending June 24; and, 75% wild and 25% SGH fish for the CPF ending June 28.

**The next scheduled purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Friday, July 3. The next scheduled gillnet salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 4.**

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 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 907-586-7642.