

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #32

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 16 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period.

Cumulative sonar count through July 14 was 1.17 million fish, whereas the anticipated count for this date is 591,000 fish. The 0600 count for July 15 was 2,310 fish. For the week ending July 11, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 45,960 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 30,055 – 71,040. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 7 were 25% Gulkana Hatchery and 0% Main Bay. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 14 was 16 Chinook and 29,400 sockeye salmon with 226 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 16 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending July 11, the actual Bering River District survey count was 20,920 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 11,051 – 24,313. No harvest was reported for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 14.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Granite Bay Subdistrict east of a longitude line at 148° 03.90'W., waters of the Esther Subdistrict within 1 nautical mile of Esther Island and east of a longitude line at 148° 08.00'W., and waters of the WNH THA and SHA up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier seine, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 12-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 16. Waters of the WNH THA and SHA up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier seine will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Friday, July 17. To date, 11,247 sockeye salmon have passed the Coghill River weir versus a minimum anticipated count of 14,690 fish. **The Coghill Weir sockeye salmon count is below anticipated and fishing time and area is being adjusted to reduce sockeye salmon harvest and focus fishing effort on enhanced chum salmon.** Harvest from the fishing period that closed Sunday, July 12 was 208,000 chum, 24,400 pink, and 11,100 sockeye salmon with 121 deliveries reported.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Waters of the Eshamy District, excluding the Main Bay Subdistrict, will open for a 12-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 16. Waters of Main Bay Subdistrict, including the MBH THA and SHA, will open for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 16. **The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. The Coghill Weir sockeye salmon count is below anticipated and fishing time and area is being adjusted to reduce wild sockeye salmon harvest and focus fishing effort on enhanced sockeye salmon.** Harvest from the fishing period that closed Sunday, July 12 was 95,000 sockeye, 7,200 pink, and 500 chum salmon with 491 deliveries reported.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 16 with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 20. 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, July 12 was 18,100 chum, 1,500 sockeye, and 16,600 pink salmon with 56 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 16. Fishing period specific harvest data remain confidential due to low participation. Cumulative harvest through July 14 is 3,766 sockeye, 348 pink, 205 chum, and 5 Chinook salmon.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will provide time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing periods beginning on Thursday, July 16. All other previously announced seine fisheries remain as announced.

ADF&G sampling of CPF pink salmon harvested in Valdez Arm on July 13 resulted in 43% female (sample size of 915 fish). Historical ADF&G sex ratio sampling data for Eastern District on July 13 results in an average of 53.5% female for the date.

It is estimated that 2.5 million pink salmon were harvested in eastern PWS on Tuesday, July 14.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 16.

Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 30.62' W. longitude will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point and west of 146° 30.62' W. longitude will not be in effect during this fishing period. Security zones in Port Valdez (in front of the Valdez Marine Terminal) and in the Valdez Narrows will continue to be enforced as detailed in Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #24, which was distributed on Wednesday, July 8.

Waters inside of the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed during this period:

- (1) **Galena Bay:** waters east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.87' N. lat., 146°39.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.55' N. lat., 146°39.65' W. long.;
- (2) **Jack Bay:** waters south and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.34' N. lat., 146°35.27' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.17' N. lat., 146°39.77' W. long.;
- (3) **Sawmill Bay:** waters north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.71' N. lat., 146°46.44' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.58' N. lat., 146°47.07' W. long.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District east of Granite Point will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 16. Waters of Long Bay north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°57.63' N. lat., 147°13.50' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°57.01' N. lat., 147°15.47' W. long. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 16.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 16. **The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will then close to commercial purse seine fishing as PWSAC and the department switch to pink salmon management in the Southwestern District.** Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect for this fishing period. Harvest from the 60-hour period that ended on Sunday, July 12 is 43,100 pink, 5,080 sockeye, 3,740 chum, and 10 coho salmon, with 7 deliveries reported.

The next scheduled purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Thursday, July 16. The next scheduled gillnet salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 18.

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 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 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.