

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #39

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District will open at 7:00 am Thursday, July 23 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period.

Cumulative sonar count through July 21 was 1.26 million fish, whereas the anticipated count for this date is 653,000 fish. The 0600 count for July 22 was 4,046 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 14 were 38% Gulkana Hatchery. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Friday, July 17 was 1 Chinook and 14,700 sockeye salmon with 92 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 Thursday, July 23 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 Friday, July 17.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Waters of the Main Bay Subdistrict will open for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am Thursday, July 23. **The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period.** Harvest from the fishing period that closed Saturday, July 18 was 57,000 sockeye, 25,500 pink, and 1,300 chum salmon with 341 deliveries reported.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet for 84 hours at 8:00 am Thursday, July 23. 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 19 was 3,300 chum, 5 sockeye, and 211 pink salmon with 5 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 Thursday, July 23. **The Unakwik District will close for the season at 8:00 pm on Friday, July 24.** No harvest has been reported for the district since July 14.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will provide time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing opportunity throughout PWS on Thursday, July 23. All other previously announced seine fisheries remain as announced. It is expected that there will be a regular schedule of broad area commercial purse seine fishing periods taking place throughout PWS on Thursday, July 23, Monday, July 27, and Thursday, July 30. It is anticipated that there will be daily fishing periods in eastern PWS targeting the SGH pink salmon run until further notice.

Aerial surveys of Prince William Sound indicate that pink salmon escapement indices are tracking ahead of anticipated numbers.

PWSAC anticipates beginning its pink salmon cost recovery program this weekend or early next week. The R/V Solstice will be on station in the Southwestern District beginning July 23, gauging pink salmon run entry and stock composition.

It is estimated that 2.1 million pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Tuesday, July 21. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through July 21 is estimated at 29.6 million CPF and 1.8 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 31.4 million fish; this is a record cumulative total for the date.

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 23.

Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' 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° 23.00' 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.

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 23.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the WNH THA and SHA up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, waters of the Esther Subdistrict within 1 nautical mile of Esther Island, and waters of the Granite Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period starting at 6:00 am on Thursday, July 23.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, including waters of the CCH SHA and THA, waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict, and **EXCLUDING** all waters of the Perry Island Subdistrict, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 23. Waters inside of the following Northern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers are closed to commercial fishing during this period:

- (1) 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.;
- (2) Granite Bay: north and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°55.02' N. lat., 147°27.61' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°54.66' N. lat., 147°26.72' W. long.;
- (3) Cedar Bay: north and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.46' N. lat., 147°27.03' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.03' N. lat., 147°26.39' W. long.;
- (4) Wells Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.75' N. lat., 147°29.92' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°57.08' N. lat., 147°28.14' W. long.;
- (5) Siwash Bay: west of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°58.26' N. lat., 147°37.32' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.96' N. lat., 147°36.02' W. long.;
- (6) Jonah Bay: west of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°01.17' N. lat., 147°35.07' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°00.40' N. lat., 147°35.93' W. long.;
- (7) Eaglek Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°50.66' N. lat., 147°40.27' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°50.56' N. lat., 147°44.57' W. long.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the AFK SHA and THA, waters of the San Juan Subdistrict, and waters of the Elrington Subdistrict will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 23.

The next scheduled purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Thursday, July 23. The next scheduled gillnet salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 25.

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=commercialbyareacopperiver.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.