

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #41

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District will open at 7:00 am Monday, July 27 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period.

Cumulative sonar count through July 24 was 1.31 million fish, whereas the anticipated count for this date is 677,000 fish. The 0600 count for July 25 was 3,090 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 17 were 39% Gulkana Hatchery. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Friday, July 24 was 19,400 sockeye salmon with 112 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 Monday, July 27 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 Monday, July 27. **The AGZ will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period.** Harvest from the fishing period that closed Wednesday, July 22 was 48,946 sockeye, 37,929 pink, and 490 chum salmon with 252 deliveries reported.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet for 72 hours at 8:00 am Monday, July 27. 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. The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will close to drift gillnet harvest for the season after this period. 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 is closed to commercial fishing for the remainder of the 2015 season. Cumulative harvest for the 2015 season is 4,090 sockeye, 348 pink, 205 chum, and 5 Chinook salmon.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will provide time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing opportunity throughout PWS on Monday, July 27. All other previously announced seine fisheries remain as announced. It is expected that opportunity targeting the SGH pink salmon run will be provided on Tuesday, July 28, and Wednesday, July 29, with time and area to be announced on Monday, July 27. A broad area opener throughout PWS is anticipated for Thursday, July 30.

VFDA began its cost recovery sales program on Tuesday, June 30, and reached its cost recovery goal yesterday. VFDA reports that cost recovery pink salmon harvest in Port Valdez on Friday, July 24 was approximately 94,800 fish. VFDA reports that they have secured sufficient broodstock at SGH, and has recommended continued fishing opportunity in Port Valdez and Valdez Arm.

PWSAC anticipates beginning its pink salmon cost recovery program today, and has provided area recommendations and requests in hatchery subdistricts for Monday's CPF. Test fishing in the Southwestern District on the R/V Sostice began on July 24, gauging pink salmon run entry and stock composition. The set size per sample location ranged from 300 – 3,000 pink salmon.

It is estimated that 2.2 million pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Thursday, July 23, and 2 million on Friday, July 23. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through July 24 is estimated at 36 million CPF and 1.9 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 37.9 million fish; this is a record cumulative total for the date.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, **excluding the Bettles Bay Subdistrict, excluding waters of College Fiord north of Point Pakenham, and excluding waters of the WNH Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ) within the WNH SHA,** will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, July 27. The WNH HEEZ consists of the waters of the WNH SHA north of a latitude line at 60°47.78' N. lat.

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 Monday, July 27.

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.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District, **excluding the Port Chalmers Subdistrict,** will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Monday, July 27.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, including waters of the CCH SHA and THA, waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict, and **INCLUDING** 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 Monday, July 27. Anadromous stream closures within the CCH THA will not be in effect until further notice. 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.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, July 27.

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 Monday, July 27.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters within 1 nautical mile of Latouche Island east of Pt. Grace and east of the southern tip of the Latouche Island, waters of the Elrington Subdistrict, waters of the San Juan Subdistrict, and waters of the AFK THA and SHA, **excluding waters of the AFK inner Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ)**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, July 27. The AFK inner HEEZ consists of the waters of the AFK SHA west and south of a line from 60°03.253'N lat, 148°03.576'W long to 60°02.889'N lat, 148°03.644'W long.

The next scheduled purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Monday, July 27.

The next scheduled gillnet salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 29.

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.