

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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MID-AUGUST SILVER SALMON OPENINGS

Nearly 54,000 silver salmon have been harvested in the Norton Sound commercial fishery this season. Commercial harvest of silver salmon in Norton Sound is well above average for the first week of August and on pace to crack the top 5 highest silver salmon harvests ever. The nearly 37,000 silvers taken in the Unalakleet Subdistrict alone is second only to 2007's harvest for the first week of August. Commercial harvests of silver salmon in other subdistricts are also above average for the first week of August. Ground based escapement data from all projects from Subdistrict 2–6 also indicate escapement goals will be achieved and subsistence use of silver salmon should not be jeopardized by additional commercial fishing. The second week of August is usually the peak harvest week in the commercial fishery and all assessment data suggest additional commercial fishing is warranted to capitalize on the expected surpluses. As a result, there will be two 48-hour periods in Subdistricts 2–6 that will commence this weekend. Permit holders in all subdistricts are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Fishing times by subdistrict are as follows:

Subdistricts 2, 3, and 4: Golovin, Elim, and Norton Bay Subdistricts

Subdistricts 2–4 will reopen for two 48-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Saturday, August 8 to 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 10, and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 12 to 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 14. Silver salmon runs as indexed by commercial catch statistics are tracking only slightly behind last season in Norton Sound Subdistricts 2–4 which had near record to record silver salmon harvests. Additionally, projections of Niukluk River and Kwiniuk River silver salmon escapements based on Fish River and Kwiniuk River tower passage estimates have improved over the past week. Current passage estimates at these projects indicate inriver abundance of silver salmon will be more than sufficient to achieve escapement goals and provide reasonable subsistence harvest opportunity.

Subdistricts 5 and 6: Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts

Subdistricts 5 and 6 will reopen for two 48-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Sunday, August 9 to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, and from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 12 to 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 14. Silver salmon counts at the Unalakleet River weir continue to be strong for early August with over 18,000 silvers counted through August 6. Additionally, projections of escapement to the North River based on 1,950 silvers counted through August 6 range between 4,700–6,700 silvers. This range of projected escapements will be sufficient to exceed the North River aerial survey-based SEG range of 550–1,100 silver salmon and provide for subsistence and sport harvest of silver salmon. Good Luck and Good Fishing!