

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #64

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District will open for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 7:00 am, Monday, September 7. The standard management strategy for coho salmon is one or two 24-hour periods per week depending on escapement and harvest levels.

For the week ending September 5, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 21,880 coho salmon versus an anticipated range of 16,147 – 33,807. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Friday, September 4 was 19,200 coho and 300 sockeye salmon with 197 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 for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 7:00 am, Monday, September 7. For the week ending September 5, the actual Bering River District survey count was 6,250 coho salmon versus an anticipated range of 8,732 – 22,165. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Friday, September 4 was 3,900 coho salmon with 32 deliveries reported.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Eshamy District north of Loomis Creek (60° 29.44'N., 147° 58.42'W.), will open for a 12-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am, Monday, September 7. Main Bay Subdistrict will open for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am, Monday, September 7. **The AGZ will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period.** Eshamy River video weir counted approximately 3,821 sockeye salmon between July 11 and August 21 versus a minimum anticipated count of 8,719 fish. No harvest has been reported since the fishing period that closed August 15 and **the district is anticipated to close for the season at the end of the next fishing period, 8:00 pm, Tuesday, September 8.**

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will provide time and area specifics for daily commercial purse seine fishing opportunity throughout PWS on Sunday, September 6 through Wednesday, September 9, including commercial purse seine fishing opportunity targeting SGH coho salmon in Port Valdez on Tuesday, September 8, and Wednesday, September 9.

PWSAC completed its pink salmon cost recovery program on August 10. PWSAC began their pink salmon egg take operations at WNH, AFK, and CCH on August 24, August 25, and August 29, respectively. Through September 4, PWSAC reports egg take progress of 64% towards the final goal at WNH, and 38% complete at CCH. **PWSAC anticipates achieving the 162 million egg collection goal at AFK this evening, and has provided area recommendations for commercial fishing opportunity within the AFK SHA for the fishing periods detailed in this announcement.**

There have been no purse seine deliveries reported in PWS since Saturday, August 29. The preliminary cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest estimate through September 1 is 91.7 million CPF and 6.1 million cost recovery fish (VFDA and PWSAC), for a total of 97.8 million fish. This is the largest cumulative harvest total on record for PWS, exceeding the 2013 harvest of 92.6 million pink salmon.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, **excluding all waters of the WNH Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ)**, will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9. The WNH HEEZ consists of the waters of the WNH SHA north of a latitude line at 60° 47.78' N. Coghill

District harvest from the September 2–September 4 fishing periods includes 388 coho and 1,704 pink salmon, with 12 drift gillnet deliveries reported. There have been no purse seine deliveries reported for the Coghill District since Friday, August 28. Interest has been expressed in keeping the district open to purse seine gear. **It is anticipated that these may be the final purse seine fishing periods in the Coghill District for the 2015 season.**

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, **south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9.

Waters of Port Valdez north of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point will also open to commercial purse seine fishing for **12-hour periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Tuesday, September 8, and Wednesday, September 9. Waters inside of a line from the brown oil boom container van located between Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Allison Point, along the yellow SERVS buoys around Solomon Gulch Hatchery to the brown oil boom container east of the hatchery between VFDA and PetroStar will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods.** Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect during these fishing periods. 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. All waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor are closed to commercial fishing. It is expected that portions of Port Valdez will remain open to commercial fishing beyond September 9, with time and area to be announced by 2:00 pm on September 9.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding the CCH SHA and CCH THA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for **daily 12-hour fishing periods, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm**, on Sunday, September 6; Monday, September 7; Tuesday, September 8; and Wednesday, September 9. **Waters of the AFK SHA west and south of a line from 60° 03.186' N., 148° 03.892' W. to 60° 03.042' N., 148° 03.969' W. will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods to provide protection for hatchery equipment.**

The next scheduled gillnet and purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur at 2:00 pm Wednesday, September 9.

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.