

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:

Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist
Tommy Sheridan, Seine Area Management Biologist
Stormy Hought, Asst. Area Management/Research Biologist
Phone: (907) 424-3212 Fax: (907) 424-3235

Prince William Sound Area Office
401 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 669
Cordova, AK 99574-0669

Date Issued: Saturday, September 12, 2015
Time: 2:00 pm

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #66

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Additional time is being added to the Monday fishing period in the Copper River District. Copper River District will open for 48-hour fishing periods, starting at 7:00 am, Monday, September 14 and Thursday, September 17. The standard management strategy for coho salmon is one or two 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 11 was unavailable at the time of this announcement.

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 24-hour fishing periods, starting at 7:00 am, Monday, September 14 and Thursday, September 17. 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 11 was unavailable at the time of this announcement.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, **excluding all waters of the Esther Subdistrict, and excluding all waters of the WNH THA and SHA**, will open to commercial **drift gillnet** fishing for 60-hour commercial fishing periods, starting at 8:00 am, Monday, September 14 and Thursday, September 17. PWSAC reports that 245 coho salmon have been collected for broodstock at WNH, with another 100–150 staged in the WNH brood pond. The number of coho salmon required for broodstock at WNH is 2,700 fish.

SEINE FISHERIES: This news release will announce an extended duration commercial purse seine fishing period throughout PWS from Sunday, September 13 through Saturday, September 19, including commercial purse seine fishing opportunity targeting surplus SGH coho salmon in Port Valdez. **It is anticipated that this will be the final commercial purse seine fishing period of the 2015 season.**

PWSAC began their pink salmon egg take operations at WNH, AFK, and CCH on August 24, August 25, and August 29, respectively. PWSAC achieved the 162 million egg collection goal at AFK on September 6, and the 148 million egg collection goal at WNH on September 10. Through September 11, PWSAC reports egg take progress of 84% towards the final goal at CCH, and expects to meet the egg collection goal in the coming days.

VFDA reports that the coho salmon broodstock collection goal has been met at SGH. The minimum number of coho salmon required for broodstock at SGH is 1,000 fish.

There have been no purse seine deliveries reported in PWS since Saturday, August 29. The preliminary cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest estimate through September 11 is 91.7 million CPF and 6.7 million cost recovery fish (VFDA and PWSAC), for a total of 98.4 million fish. This is the largest cumulative harvest total on record for PWS, exceeding the 2013 harvest of 92.6 million pink salmon.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a **156-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Sunday, September 13, and ending at 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 19**. 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 this period. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point 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. All waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor are closed to commercial fishing.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a **156-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Sunday, September 13, and ending at 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 19.**

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding the CCH Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ), for a 156-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Sunday, September 13, and ending at 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 19.** The CCH HEEZ consists of the waters of the CCH SHA north and east of a line from 61° 00.97' N., 147° 32.62' W. southward to a point on the shore at 61° 00.444' N., 147° 31.497' W.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a **156-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Sunday, September 13, and ending at 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 19.**

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a **156-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Sunday, September 13, and ending at 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 19.**

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a **156-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Sunday, September 13, and ending at 8:00 pm on Saturday, September 19.** 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 this period to provide protection for hatchery equipment.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm on Saturday, September 19.

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.