

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:
Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist
Steve Moffitt, Area Research Biologist
Stormy Haight, 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
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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #5

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, May 30 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. **The Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN for 5 hours, 7:00 am to 12:00 pm, Monday, May 30, and for 6 hours, 7:00 am to 1:00 pm, Tuesday, May 31. The Chinook salmon inside closure area will be CLOSED during the remainder of this fishing period.**

The Chinook salmon inside closure area remains expanded in the eastern portion of the Copper River District. Until rescinded or modified, the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be defined as waters north of a line connecting the following points:

Point	Latitude	Longitude
Steamboat North	60° 22.87' N.	145° 33.50' W.
Steamboat South	60° 22.31' N.	145° 33.50' W.
West side Pete Dahl Entrance	60° 18.89' N.	145° 30.99' W.
West end Grass Island	60° 18.30' N.	145° 28.42' W.
East end Grass Island	60° 15.24' N.	145° 17.89' W.
West end Kokenhenik Bar	60° 15.00' N.	145° 16.20' W.
East end Kokenhenik Bar	60° 13.65' N.	145° 09.46' W.
Western tip of Softuk Bar	60° 13.68' N.	145° 05.78' W.
Chinook Alternate #1	60° 13.79' N.	144° 59.09' W.
Chinook Alternate #2	60° 13.64' N.	144° 53.78' W.
Chinook Alternate #3	60° 12.64' N.	144° 40.21' W.

*Please note that the 'Coffee Creek West' point was replaced with 'Chinook Alternate #1'.

The expansion of the Chinook salmon inside closure area and the bracketed opening of these waters around high water are being implemented to reduce Chinook salmon harvest potential. Cumulative Miles Lake sonar count through 5/27 was 134,330 fish whereas the anticipated range for this date is 88,840–137,504. The 0600 count for 5/28 was 1,885 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Thursday, May 26 was 1,100 Chinook and 47,700 sockeye salmon with 630 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, west of a longitude line at 144° 28.20' W., will open at 7:00 pm this evening, Saturday, May 28 for a 12-hour commercial fishing period. Additionally, Bering River District, west of a longitude line at 144° 28.20' W., will open at 7:00 pm on Monday, May 30 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period. The intent of these openings is to target Copper River sockeye salmon that are traveling through the western portion of this district. **As overlap with the Bering River sockeye salmon run timing increases, the likelihood of future early season opening in the Bering River District will diminish. Additionally, future openings of the Bering River District will be contingent on accurate reporting of harvest from within this district.**

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH SHA and THA, will open for the 2016 season to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 12-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, May 30. A total of 978,000 WNH onsite released chum salmon are anticipated to be available for common property harvest. Historical harvest timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27. A total of 80,000 Coghill Lake sockeye salmon are anticipated to be available for common property harvest. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1. The Coghill River weir is expected to start operations on June 6. State funding has been cut for this project and it is being operated on funds provided by PWSAC and the Prince William Sound/Copper River Marketing Association.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District will open for the 2016 season to commercial gillnet harvest for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, May 30. A total of 1.6 million MBH sockeye salmon are anticipated to be available for common property harvest. The historical harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for the 2016 season to drift gillnet fishing for 60 hours at 8:00 am on Monday, May 30 with an additional 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 2. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. 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.** A total of 330,000 chum salmon are anticipated to return to Port Chalmers and be available for common property harvest. The historical harvest timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open for the 2016 season to purse seine fishing for 84 hours at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 2. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until late June. **Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice.** A total of 394,000 chum salmon are forecast to return to AFK. Hatchery. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, June 1.

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 907-271-5006.