

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
Charlie Russell, Seine Area Management Biologist
Steve Moffitt, Area Research 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
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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #42

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 1 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period.

The last day of data collection at the Miles Lake sonar project was 7/28. The season cumulative Miles Lake sonar count was 801,593 fish whereas the anticipated range for this date is 663,261–1,026,564. For the week ending July 23, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 25,470 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 32,059–75,775 fish. Poor lighting, due to solid and low cloud cover, limited visibility in index systems during this survey. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Thursday, July 28 was 5,900 sockeye, 760 pink, and 530 coho salmon with 73 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° 33.60' W., will open at 7:00 am Monday, August 1 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, within College Fiord, north of the latitude of Pt. Pakenham, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 31. The last day of Coghill Lake weir counts was 7/27, and a total of 8,708 sockeye salmon were counted versus an anticipated range of 18,958–56,873.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Main Bay Subdistrict, excluding the MBH THA, SHA, and AGZ, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, August 1. The MBH THA, SHA, and AGZ will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, August 1. **The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period.** Preliminary sockeye salmon contributions to Eshamy District period 17 (7/25 to 7/27) were 91% MBH and 9% wild fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that started on Monday, July 25 is 14,250 sockeye, 6,890 pink, and 760 chum with 104 deliveries.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict, north of 60°12.56' N. lat. and within 0.5 miles of Montague Island, opened to drift gillnet fishing for 64 hours beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 28. **The Montague District will close to commercial drift gillnet fishing after the ongoing fishing period that opened on Thursday, July 28.** 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 through 11:59 pm Saturday, July 30.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: Waters of the Unakwik District are closed to commercial fishing for the 2016 season.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will provide time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing opportunity in PWS on Sunday, July 31.

VFDA will be continuing daily surveys of the SHA and THA, and will be providing daily recommendations to ADF&G on any openers harvesting surplus VFDA pink salmon within Port Valdez. VFDA began egg take on July 27 and has filled

approximately two incubators (approximately 8.4 million eggs). The percentage of green females was higher than anticipated and VFDA will hold off on egg takes this weekend to let fish ripen.

Aerial surveys of Southeastern, Eastern, Northern, Coghill, and Northwestern Districts were flown on July 29 and indicated that pink salmon escapements are currently above anticipated escapement for the date. The department does not anticipate that these stocks will sustain a consistent schedule of openings at this time.

PSWAC began its cost recovery sales program at AFK, WNH, and CCH on July 27, and has collected approximately 10% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 29. Cost recovery fishing is expected to continue today.

It is estimated that 254,000 pink salmon were harvested in Eastern PWS on Thursday, July 28, with 129 deliveries reported. The cumulative Eastern PWS pink salmon harvest through July 28 is estimated at 5.9 million CPF and 1.5 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 7.4 million fish.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters in the Eastern District, north of a line from 61° 02.855'N., 146° 44.204'W. to 61° 02.373'N., 146° 43.407'W. to 61° 02.992'N., 146° 39.165'W and south of the latitude of the Rocky Point light, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 31. **All waters of Galena Bay will be CLOSED to commercial fishing during this fishing period.**

Waters of Port Valdez east of a line from 146°32.00 W will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect during this fishing period.

Waters inside of all applicable Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed for this period to ensure escapement:

- (1) **Sheep Bay:** north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°41.13' N. lat., 145°58.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°40.46' N. lat., 145°58.01' W. long.;
- (2) **Beartrap Bay:** north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°45.13' N. lat., 146°06.12' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°44.51' N. lat., 146°04.57' W. long.; **this includes all waters of Port Gravina and Beartrap Bay inside of this line;**
- (3) **Olsen Bay:** north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.46' N. lat., 146°10.14' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°43.21' N. lat., 146°13.97' W. long.;
- (4) **St. Matthews Bay:** north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.36' N. lat., 146°19.07' W. long. to a shore maker at approximately 60°43.61' N. lat., 146°21.17' W. long.;
- (5) **Irish Cove:** south of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°46.73' N. lat., 146°26.62' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°46.27' N. lat., 146°27.12' W. long.;
- (6) **Landlocked Bay:** waters north of 60°50.76' N. lat.;
- (7) **Port Fidalgo Subdistrict:** waters east of 146°24.12' W. long.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District east of Granite Point will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 31. **Waters of 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. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.**

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 Sunday, July 31.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, within College Fiord, north of the latitude of Pt. Pakenham, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 31.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 31.

Waters inside all applicable Northwestern District SHTF markers closed for this period include the following areas:

- (1) **Culross Pass:** within the passage south of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°45.47' N. lat., 148°12.63' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°45.82' N. lat., 148°13.57' W. long. and north of a line

from a shore marker at approximately 60°37.48' N. lat., 148°10.12' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°37.16' N. lat., 148°11.42' W. long.;

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.

The next scheduled seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Sunday, July 31.

The next scheduled gillnet fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, August 3.

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.