

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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Date Issued: Saturday, August 13, 2016  
Time: 1:00 pm

### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #48

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 15 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period. Copper River District is switching to coho salmon management starting with Monday's fishing period. 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 August 6, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 28,180 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 24,976–59,034 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Thursday, August 11 was 2,400 sockeye, 45 pink, and 10,200 coho salmon with 121 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 at 7:00 am, Monday, August 15 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period. Bering River District is switching to coho salmon management starting on Monday, August 15 with fishing periods anticipated to run concurrent to those in the Copper River District.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, August 15. **The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period.** Preliminary Eshamy video weir count through August 10 is 4,150 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated cumulative of 5,500 to 11,900 for this date.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** This announcement provides time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing opportunity in PWS on Monday, August 15. Please ensure that you have established a market prior to harvesting fish.

An estimated 420,000 pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Thursday, August 11. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through August 11 is estimated at 7.8 million CPF. This is below the 10-year even year average harvest level of approximately 17.6 million fish for this date.

PWSAC has collected approximately 71% of the pink salmon cost recovery goal through August 12 and continues fishing today. Approximately 1.3 million cost recovery and 111,000 commercial CPF pink salmon have been caught as of August 12 versus PWSAC's anticipated cumulative harvest of 7.5 million fish. The most recent cost recovery fisheries had a 4.2 pound average weight and 58% female at WNH, 4.4 pound average and 50% female at AFK, and 4.4 pound average and 43% female at CCH. ADF&G sampling of WNH cost recovery harvest from August 12 was 59.2% female (n=972).

**PWSAC recommends the AFK, CCH, and WNH SHAs, THAs, and corresponding hatchery subdistricts remain closed. PWSAC reports stronger daily run entry at AFK, CCH, and WNH over the past several days. If stronger daily run entry continues and cost recovery and site specific brood stock goals are near complete, PWSAC may be comfortable including some of the hatchery subdistricts in a commercial fishing period next Tuesday, August 16 or Wednesday, August 17.**

VFDA has collected 120 million eggs (48%) of a 250 million egg take goal. Egg take progress has been slow because of tides and recent rain that limit fish entry into the hatchery raceways.

Aerial surveys of all districts were completed this week to assess wild stock returns. Wild stock harvest opportunity is based on escapement progress as measured by aerial surveys. Weather and pilot availability have resulted in limited aerial survey escapement data this season. As of August 10 pink salmon escapements appear to be early and above anticipated escapement levels within the Eastern, Southwestern, Northwestern, Coghill, and Montague districts. Recent surveys have indicated escapement levels below the anticipated within the Northern District, ADF&G will be taking a conservative management approach within Northern District migration corridors to ensure escapement goals are met.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will be open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, August 15.

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

- (1) **Port Fidalgo Subdistrict:** waters east of 146°24.12' W. long.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District, within Hidden Bay, west of 148° 06.40' W. long will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, August 15. All regulatory closed waters within Hidden Bay, west of 148° 06.40' W., will not be in effect for these fishing periods.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, August 15.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** Waters of the Coghill District, **excluding Esther Subdistrict, Granite Bay Subdistrict, and WNH SHA and THA**, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, August 15.

**NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 12-hour fishing period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Monday, August 15.

**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 Monday, August 15.**

**The next scheduled fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, August 17.**

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](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 fishery 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](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.