ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #53

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, August 25 for a 12-hour commercial fishing period.

For the week ending August 20, the actual Copper River Delta coho salmon aerial survey count was 5,850 fish versus an anticipated range of 5,846 – 12,239 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, August 22 was 35,100 coho salmon with 243 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, Thursday, August 25 for a 12-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending August 20, the actual Bering River Delta coho salmon aerial survey count was 2,080 fish versus an anticipated range of 2,533 – 6,431 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, August 22 was 4,800 coho salmon with 21 deliveries reported.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Eshamy District, excluding waters south of Loomis Creek (60° 29.44'N., 147° 58.42'W.), will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 25. **The AGZ will open to DRIFT 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. Harvest from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, August 18 is confidential.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement provides time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing opportunity in PWS on Thursday, August 25.

ADF&G received multiple reports of fishing within regulatory closed waters over the last 14 days. The department reminds purse seine permit holders that illegal fishing can result in reduced fishing opportunity and closures of areas as stated in 5 AAC 39.185.

PWSAC recommends the AFK, CCH, and WNH SHAs, THAs, and corresponding hatchery subdistricts remain closed until brood stock goals are achieved at WNH, AFK, and CCH. PWSAC has collected 19% of its egg take goal at WNH and 2% at AFK as of Wednesday, August 24. Egg takes are expected to start at CCH on Thursday, August 25.

VFDA reports that it completed its 250 million egg take goal on Tuesday, August 23.

It is estimated that 22,000 pink salmon and 4,000 coho salmon were harvested in PWS on Monday, August 22. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through August 19 is estimated at 8.4 million CPF. This is well below the 10-year even year average harvest level of 24.7 million pink salmon for this date.

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 Thursday, August 25.

All waters within Port Fidalgo north of the latitude of 60°51.00' N 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 12-hour period, from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, August 25.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District are closed due to reports of illegal fishing.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District are closed due to reports of illegal fishing.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District are closed due to reports of illegal fishing.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District are closed due to reports of illegal fishing.

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 fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, August 27.

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.