

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #19

GILLNET FISHERIES: Gillnet depth restrictions, as specified in 5 AAC 24.331(b)(6), **WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT** until further notice in the Coghill, Eshamy, and Unakwik District fisheries. Deep gear is not allowed in these districts.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open for a 24-hour commercial fishing period starting at 7:00 am on Monday, July 3. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be **OPEN** during this fishing period.

Cumulative sonar count through 6/30 was 529,915 fish whereas the anticipated range for this date is 437,489–684,766. The 0600 count for 7/1 was 1,740 fish. For the week ending June 24, the actual Copper River Delta survey count was 32,070 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 17,627 – 41,665. Period 12, June 27, contributions were estimated as 74% wild and 18% Gulkana Hatchery, and 8% Main Bay Hatchery. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that occurred on Thursday, June 29 are 30 Chinook and 10,400 sockeye salmon with 75 deliveries reported. This compares to an anticipated harvest of 30,000 sockeye salmon for this period.

During the commercial fishing season, subsistence harvest may occur in the Copper River District concurrent in time and area with commercial fishing 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, July 3 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending June 24, the actual Bering River District survey count was 8,120 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 6,092 – 13,402.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Granite Bay Subdistrict within Esther Pass east of a longitude line at 148° 02.94' W., waters of the WNH THA, and waters of Esther Bay north of a latitude line at 60° 48.17' N., will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 14-hour period starting at **6:00 am** on Sunday, July 2, and a **48-hour period** starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 3. The Esther Subdistrict, west of a longitude line at 147° 55.20' W., and north of a latitude line at 60° 46.00' N., and east of a longitude line at 148° 8.30' W., **excluding the WNH SHA**, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 6-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 3. To date, 7,551 sockeye salmon have passed the Coghill River weir and 700 sockeye salmon are estimated below the weir versus an anticipated range of 4,259–12,778 fish. Harvest contribution estimates from the fishing period starting June 26 were 4% wild and 96% hatchery chum salmon, and 22% wild and 78% hatchery sockeye salmon. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 48-hour period that started on Monday, June 26 were 283,000 chum and 11,300 sockeye salmon with 1,000 deliveries reported. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 14-hour period that started on Thursday, June 29 were 117,000 chum and 4,500 sockeye salmon with 430 deliveries reported. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 14-hour period that started on Friday, June 30 were 18,700 chum and 920 sockeye salmon with 125 deliveries reported.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, excluding the Main Bay Subdistrict, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 12-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 3. The Main Bay Subdistrict, **excluding all waters of the AGZ**, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 3. Harvest contribution estimates from the fishing period starting June 26 were 0% wild and 100% hatchery sockeye salmon. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 32-hour period that started on Thursday, June 29 are 67,600 sockeye and 14,900 chum salmon with 396 deliveries reported.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 24-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 3.

SEINE FISHERIES: VFDA began its cost recovery sales program on June 30, and has collected approximately 2% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 1. VFDA reports that pink salmon caught in Port Valdez on Friday, June 30, had an average weight of 4.6 pounds per fish and 28% female. Otolith sampling of cost recovery fish indicated 79% SGH and 21% wild. Cost recovery fishing continues today, initial reports indicate slower fishing than yesterday.

It is estimated that 50,000 pink salmon were harvested in eastern PWS on Thursday, June 29, with 69 deliveries reported. **It is anticipated the earliest a CPF opportunity in portions of the Eastern district could occur is on Thursday, July 7 and will be dependent on VFDA cost recovery progress and wild stock escapements.** Aerial surveys of the Eastern and Northern districts are ongoing. Early season indicators of wild stock pink salmon run entry and escapement in the Eastern district are slightly above anticipated at this time.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict, north of 60°12.56' N. and east a line from 60° 12.56'N., 147° 20.25'W. to 60° 20.00'N., 147° 14.30'W., will open to seine fishing for 12 hours beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 3, with additional 12-hour period to begin at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 6. Due to increasing harvest of salmon destined for other areas of Prince William Sound within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict, shorter duration periods are necessary to focus efforts on enhanced chum salmon returning to Port Chalmers. **Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice.** Preliminary harvest estimates from the 48-hour period that ended on Thursday, June 29 are 11,628 chum with 15 deliveries reported. Preliminary contribution reports from the 48-hour period that ended on Saturday, June 24 indicate that chum salmon harvest was 46% WNH, 46% PC, 3% AFK and 5% wild, and sockeye salmon harvest was 74% MBH and 26% wild.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open for 8:00 am on Monday, July 3, with additional 8-hour period to begin at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 6. Due to increasing sockeye salmon harvest, shorter duration periods are necessary to focus efforts on enhanced chum salmon. **Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice.** Preliminary harvest estimates from the 8-hour period that ended on Thursday, June 29 are 64,299 chum and 2,607 sockeye with 56 deliveries reported. Preliminary contribution reports from the June 24 fishing period indicate that sockeye salmon harvest was 93% MBH and 7% wild.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 5.

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 address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound and Copper River 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.

Esther and Granite Bay Subdistrict Adjusted Open Area for July 1 announcement.

