

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #49 \*Revised\***

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open for a 12-hour commercial fishing period starting at 7:00 am on Monday, July 31.

The last day of data collection at the Miles Lake sonar project was 7/28. The season cumulative Miles Lake sonar count was 723,426 fish whereas the anticipated range for this date is 638,158–998,857. The cumulative Copper River Delta escapement index to-date is below the target long term average of 84,000 sockeye salmon. However, the most recent Copper River Delta survey count was 36,235 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated weekly range 32,059 – 75,775. Preliminary contribution estimates for the period ending 7/21 resulted in 14% Gulkana and 86% wild. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that began on Thursday, July 27 were 8,800 sockeye salmon with 105 deliveries reported.

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 31 for a 12-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending July 22, the actual Bering River District survey count was 15,530 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 9,401 – 20,683.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Main Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 31. The MBH AGZ will open to SET GILLNET only during this fishing period. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that began on Thursday, July 27 are 20,242 sockeye, 3,223 chum, and 26,611 pink salmon with 143 deliveries reported.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** This announcement will provide time and area specifics for commercial purse seine fishing opportunity throughout PWS on Sunday, July 30.

Run entry and acquisition of broodstock have slowed at SGH and VFDA has recommended a closure within Port Valdez for Sunday, July 30. VFDA currently estimates there are approximately 350,000–400,000 pink salmon holding within the SHA. VFDA needs approximately 525,000 pink salmon; 75,000 for cost recovery and 450,000 for broodstock. VFDA began its cost recovery sales program on June 30, and has collected approximately 95% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 28.

PWSAC began its cost recovery sales program on Wednesday, July 26 at AFK, and has collected approximately 5.7% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 28. PWSAC reports cost recovery is continuing today at AFK and WNH. PWSAC recommends the AFK, CCH, and WNH SHAs, THAs, and corresponding hatchery subdistricts remain closed to help facilitate cost recovery.

An estimated 1.5 million pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Friday, July 28 with 280 deliveries reported, of which 420,000 were harvested in the Eastern District and 570,000 were harvested in the Northern District. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through Friday, July 28 is estimated at 17.8 million CPF and 1 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 18.8 million fish.

Recent aerial surveys of all districts, except the Southwestern, have indicated escapement levels within the anticipated range based on the survey date. An aerial survey of the Northwestern, Coghill, and Eshamy districts is currently underway. Aerial surveys of Southwestern, Montague, and Southeastern districts are expected to occur tomorrow.

**As a reminder, all regulatory closed waters and all anadromous stream closures are in effect unless otherwise stated.**

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 30.

**Waters of Port Valdez north of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.**

**Waters inside the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed to commercial fishing during this period:**

- (1) **Galena Bay:** east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.87' N. lat., 146°39.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.55' N. lat., 146°39.65' W. long.;
- (2) **Jack Bay:** south and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.34' N. lat., 146°35.27' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.17' N. lat., 146°39.77' W. long.;
- (3) **Sawmill Bay:** north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.71' N. lat., 146°46.44' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.58' N. lat., 146°47.07' W. long.
- (4) **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.;
- (5) **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;**
- (6) **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.;
- (7) **Port Fidalgo Subdistrict:** waters east of 146°24.12' W. long.

**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 30.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District, **excluding Perry Island Subdistrict and CCH SHA and THA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 30.

**Waters inside of the following Northern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers are closed to commercial fishing during this period:**

- (1) **Granite Bay:** north and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°55.02' N. lat., 147°27.61' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°54.66' N. lat., 147°26.72' W. long.;
- (2) **Cedar Bay:** north and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.46' N. lat., 147°27.03' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.03' N. lat., 147°26.39' W. long.;
- (3) **Siwash Bay:** west of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°58.26' N. lat., 147°37.32' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.96' N. lat., 147°36.02' W. long.;
- (4) **Jonah Bay:** west of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°01.17' N. lat., 147°35.07' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°00.40' N. lat., 147°35.93' W. long.;

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** Waters of the Coghill District, **excluding Esther Subdistrict and WNH THA and SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 30.

**NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour fishing period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 30.

**Waters inside of the following Northwestern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers are closed to commercial fishing during this period:**

- (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.;
- (2) **Port Nellie Juan:** south and west of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°30.36' N. lat., 148°15.03' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°32.36' N. lat., 148°19.42' W. long.;

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 30.

**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 3:00 pm Monday, July 31.**

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

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](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](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.