

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #52

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

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 32,200 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated weekly range of 24,976 – 59,034. Preliminary contribution estimates for the period ending 7/27 resulted in 8% Gulkana Hatchery and 92% wild. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 12-hour period that began on Thursday, August 3 are 4,000 sockeye and 1,000 coho salmon with 71 deliveries reported.

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** Bering River District will open at 7:00 am Monday, August 7 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 Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, August 7. 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, August 3 are 4,400 sockeye, 1,200 chum, and 26,600 pink salmon with 75 deliveries reported.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An estimated 1.7 million pink salmon were harvested in PWS on August 4 with 238 deliveries reported. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through August 4 is estimated at 23.3 million CPF, 1 million VFDA cost recovery fish, and 730,000 PWSAC cost recovery fish, for a total of 25 million pink salmon. The 5-year odd-year average (2007–2015) cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest (cost recovery and CPF fish) through August 4 is 33 million fish.

Preliminary contribution estimates from the 14-hour period that began on Tuesday, August 1 in the Eastern District are 44% SGH, 5% CCH, and 51% wild pink salmon; Southwestern District are 41% AFK, 8% SGH, 3% WNH, and 49% wild pink salmon; Northern District are 43% SGH, 11% CCH, 1% AFK, and 45% wild pink salmon.

**Run entry and acquisition of broodstock have slowed at SGH and VFDA has recommended a closure within Port Valdez and a portion of Valdez Arm until sufficient broodstock is attained.** VFDA currently estimates there are approximately 250,000-300,000 pink salmon holding within the SGH SHA. VFDA needs approximately 450,000 pink salmon; 50,000 for cost recovery and 400,000 for broodstock.

PWSAC began its cost recovery sales program on Wednesday, July 26 at AFK and has collected approximately 40% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through August 3. PWSAC reports cost recovery is continuing today at AFK and WNH. Run entry at AFK, WNH, and CCH is behind the anticipated for the date.

**All regulatory closed waters and all anadromous stream closures are in effect unless otherwise stated. Additionally, fishermen are prohibited from driving or attempting to drive salmon from closed waters as stated in 5AAC 39.190.**

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8.

**Waters of Port Valdez and Valdez Arm 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. will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods.**

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District, **excluding Perry Island Subdistrict and CCH SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8. **Anadromous stream closures within the CCH THA will not be in effect during these fishing periods.**

**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 14-hour periods from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8.

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

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

- (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.;

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southwestern District, **east of 147° 46.27'W.**, waters of the eastern shore of Latouche Island **south** of Pt. Grace and east of the southernmost tip of the Latouche Island, and **waters south of Pyke Point and west of 148°18.97 W.** will be open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour periods from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 8.

**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 salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated on Wednesday, August 9.**

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.