

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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NORTON SOUND COMMERCIAL FISHING TIME EXPANDED

Silver catches have been above average in the commercial fishery. Some of the bigger catches during the latest 48-hour fishing period were 1,200 silvers caught in Elim, 6,100 silvers caught in Unalakleet and a record 9,000 silvers caught in Shaktoolik.

The buyer reports that with chum salmon catches now dropping off they will have the capacity to allow for additional fishing time for silvers. In Subdistricts 2 through 6, Golovin, Elim, Norton Bay, Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, commercial salmon fishing will be open for 48 hours from 6 p.m. Tuesday until 6 p.m. Thursday and for 72 hours from 6 p.m. Friday until 6 p.m. Monday. Gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or smaller.

The counting tower crews in southern Norton Sound have been unable to count because of high water and the Shaktoolik River tower crew has switched to using the sonar. At this time all weirs are operational and counts indicate an above average silver run. And at Pilgrim River the sockeyes still won't quit with four consecutive days of over 1,100 passing through the weir daily. In the previous 14 years there was only one day in August when more than 1,000 sockeyes were counted through the weir and that was back in 2006. This year 53,000 sockeyes have passed through the weir and we're only tracking behind the 2005 run of 56,000 sockeyes and 2004 run of 85,000 sockeyes.

Here are the cumulative silver escapement counts in Norton Sound:

Unalakleet River: 9,000 silvers

North River tower crew hasn't counted since August 1 and the count was at 1,000 silvers

Shaktoolik River tower crew has switched to sonar last week and the count was at 3,600 silvers

Inglutalik River tower crew hasn't counted since July 30 and the count was at 2,200 silvers

Kwiniuk River: 2,000 silvers

Fish River: 5,000 silvers

Solomon River: 120 silvers

Nome River: 300 silvers

Snake River: 30 silvers

Pilgrim River: 40 silvers