

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #69

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 7:00 am on Thursday, September 7. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that began on Monday, September 4 are 35,000 coho salmon with 250 deliveries reported.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 7:00 am on Thursday, September 7. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that began on Monday, September 4 are 22,500 coho salmon with 86 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: As previously announced, the Coghill District, **excluding waters of the SHA**, will open to commercial **drift gillnet** fishing for a 48-hour commercial fishing period starting at 8:00 am, Thursday, September 7.

SEINE FISHERIES: This announcement will provide time and area specifics for continued commercial purse seine fishing opportunity throughout PWS.

An estimated 138,000 pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Tuesday, September 5 with 79 deliveries reported. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through September 5 is estimated at 43.5 million CPF, 1 million VFDA cost recovery fish, and 1.9 million PWSAC cost recovery fish, for a total of 46.4 million pink salmon.

PWSAC began egg takes on Sunday, August 27 at all facilities and is approximately 58% complete at CCH, 89% complete at AFK, and 88% complete at WNH. **It is anticipated a CPF within the AFK SHA and THA could occur as early as Friday, September 8 or Saturday, September 9 dependent upon completion of egg takes and PWSAC recommendation.**

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, **south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point**, to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7.

Waters of Port Valdez north of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point will also open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7. **Waters of Port Valdez inside of a line from the brown oil boom container van located between Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Allison Point, along the OUTERMOST yellow SERVS buoys around Solomon Gulch Hatchery to the brown oil boom container east of the hatchery between VFDA and PetroStar will be CLOSED to commercial fishing during these periods.**

Waters within 200 yards of the AMHS Valdez Ferry Terminal are closed to commercial fishing when the ferry is arriving and departing. All waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor are closed to commercial fishing. Waters within the Alyeska Marine Terminal (Trans-Alaska Pipeline System) Security Zone are closed to commercial fishing. **Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect during this fishing period.**

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding waters of the CCH THA and SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7.

The Northern District Priority Stream list will be in effect within waters of Unakwik Inlet during all of the aforementioned fishing periods.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, **excluding waters of the AFK SHA and THA**, will be open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7.

The Southwestern District Priority Stream list will be in effect within waters of Bainbridge Passage, Prince of Wales Passage, San Juan Subdistrict, and Elrington Subdistrict during these fishing periods.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 60-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, September 7.

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 Saturday, September 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 (MMAV) 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 (MMAV) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAV 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 MMAV 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 MMAV 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.