

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #22

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will remain closed to commercial fishing. Cumulative sonar count through July 10 is 537,168 fish whereas a minimum of 492,641 fish are projected by this date. The 0600 count for July 11 is 649 fish. For the week ending July 7, the actual Copper River Delta survey count was 42,990 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 30,055 – 71,040. Run entry into Delta index systems is low considering the absence of regular commercial fishing effort in the Copper River District. Additional fishing opportunity will need to be supported by ongoing assessment of run entry for both upriver and delta stocks.

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will remain closed. For the week ending July 7, the actual Bering River Delta survey count was 11,400 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range 11,051 – 24,313.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** Waters of the Coghill District, excluding waters of the Esther Subdistrict and waters of WNH SHA and THA, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. **Waters of the Esther Subdistrict west of a longitude line at 148° 07.87' W. (point west of Culross Light) will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. Waters of Port Wells and College Fiord, north of a line from Pakenham Point (61° 00.45' N., 148° 04.85' W.) to 60° 55.81' N., 148° 05.89' W. (north outer point of Granite Bay Subdistrict) and continuing along a latitude line at 60 55.81' N. to the north shore of Esther Pass, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12.** Effective from 8:00 am, Thursday, July 12 to 8:00 pm, Sunday, July 15, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide. Beginning Sunday, June 17, Coghill weir was inoperable due to high water and structural damage. The weir was reinstalled and fish-tight on Saturday, June 30 but, due to an additional high water event, washed out again July 10. Passage to-date is a partial count of 30,954 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 10,833–32,498 fish. It is unlikely that the weir will be reinstalled this season. Harvest estimates from the 84-hour period that started on Thursday, July 5 were 136,000 chum and 28,600 sockeye salmon with 1,000 deliveries reported.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** Per 5 AAC 24.370 (f), the set gillnet fleet will be limited to 36 hours per week starting July 10. The Eshamy District, excluding waters of the AGZ inside a line of buoys in front of the barrier seine, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 16-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. **Waters of the Main Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. Waters of the Main Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial set gillnet harvest for a 16-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12.** The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders for the first 16 hours of the fishing period followed by the DRIFT GILLNET fleet for the remainder of the fishing period. As a reminder, anadromous stream closures in the Main Bay Subdistrict are in effect as of July 8. Harvest estimates from the 36-hour period that started on Thursday, July 5 are 43,000 sockeye and 3,500 chum salmon with 313 deliveries reported.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 36-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An estimated 1.1 million pink salmon were harvested in eastern PWS on Tuesday, July 10. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest in the Eastern District through July 11 is estimated at 1.1 million CPF and 700,000 VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 1.8 million fish. The 5-year even-year average (2008–2016) cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest (cost recovery and CPF fish) through July 11 is 8 million fish.

VFDA began its cost recovery sales program on Monday, July 2 and has collected approximately 59% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 9. Cost recovery pink salmon harvest in Port Valdez on Monday, July 9 resulted in an average weight of 3.67 pounds per fish and 16.3% female. VFDA cost recovery is continuing today.

An aerial survey was conducted in the Eastern and Northern districts on Saturday, July 7, and indicated that chum and pink salmon escapements are currently below the anticipated ranges for the date within the Eastern District. The department does not anticipate that these stocks will sustain a consistent schedule of openings at this time. Aerial surveys of most districts are expected to be conducted this week, weather depending, to further assess the strength of wild stock returns throughout PWS.

A commercial fishing opener is anticipated in portions of the Eastern District as early as Saturday, July 14 dependent on VFDA cost recovery progress and run entry into Port Valdez.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 36-hour period that started on Monday, July 10 are 20,362 chum salmon with 14 deliveries reported. **Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice.**

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict, **north of 60°12.56' N. lat. 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 purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 12. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 36-hour period that started on Monday, July 10 are 37,300 chum and 900 pink salmon with 22 deliveries reported. **Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice.**

**Copies of the updated regulation booklet, *2015-2018 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound*, can be found under the 'Regulations' heading at the following web address:**  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishregulations.commercial>

**The next scheduled seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Friday, July 13.**

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 12:30 pm Saturday, July 14.**

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.