

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #32

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will remain closed to commercial fishing. The Copper River District will open to subsistence fishing from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on Mondays and Thursdays through August 16. Additionally, waters of the Copper River District will open to subsistence fishing from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm on all Saturdays between June 16 and October 31.

For the week ending July 21, the actual Copper River Delta survey count was 33,090 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 32,059 – 75,775. This week's Copper River Delta aerial survey was flown under poor observational conditions in some index systems. Peak counts from delta index systems to date show **52,540** sockeye salmon versus and escapement goal range of 55,000 to 130,000 fish and a season total escapement target of 84,400 fish. Additional fishing opportunity will need to be supported by ongoing assessment of run entry for both Copper River and delta stocks.

Cumulative sonar count through July 20 is 664,249 fish whereas a minimum of 556,602 fish are projected by this date. The 0600 count for July 21 is 2,154 fish.

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will remain closed. For the week ending July 21, the actual Bering River Delta survey count was 8,150 sockeye salmon versus a management goal range of 9,401 – 20,683. Bering Lake observational conditions were poor in areas of expected fish concentration.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** 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 **purse seine and drift gillnet** harvest for two 14-hour periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 22 and Monday, July 23. Effective from 6:00 am, Sunday, July 22 to 8:00 pm, Monday, July 23, 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. Harvest estimates from the 60-hour period that began on Thursday, July 19 were 5,270 chum, 3,786 sockeye, and 19,916 pink salmon with 136 deliveries reported.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 23. **The AGZ will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during this period.** As a reminder, anadromous stream closures in the Main Bay Subdistrict are in effect as of July 8. Harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that started on Thursday, July 19 are 9,400 sockeye, 26,000 pink, and 2,900 chum salmon with 164 deliveries reported.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District is CLOSED for the remainder of the 2018 season.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** This announcement will detail PWS purse seine fishing periods commencing on Sunday, July 22 and Monday, July 23. An estimated 650,000 pink salmon were harvested in eastern PWS on Friday, July 20. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest in the Eastern District through July 20 is estimated at 5.6 million CPF and 1.1 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 6.7 million fish. The 5-year even-year average (2008–2016) cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest (cost recovery and CPF fish) through July 20 is 12.62 million fish. Preliminary contribution estimates from the 14-hour period that started on Tuesday, July 17 in the Eastern District were 95% SGH and 5% wild pink salmon. ADF&G sampling of pink salmon harvested in Port Valdez on Thursday, July 19, resulted in 55% female.

VFDA currently estimates there are approximately 300,000 pink salmon holding within the SHA and needs approximately 410,000 pink salmon for brood stock.

Aerial surveys of Eastern PWS were flown on July 20 and indicated that pink and chum salmon bay and stream mouth counts are within expected ranges for the date. **Stream escapements within the Eastern District are well below the anticipated for the date and Salmon Harvest Task Force area closures will continue to be used to protect pink and chum salmon holding within these areas.** The department does not anticipate that these stocks will sustain a consistent schedule of openings at this time.

**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 a 14-hour period at 6:00 am on Sunday, 22.

**Waters of Port Valdez east of 146°34.00 W. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.**

**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.**

**Waters inside of all applicable Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed for this period to ensure early season escapement. Waters closed for this period include the following areas:**

- (1) **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.;
- (2) **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;**
- (3) **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.;
- (4) **St. Matthews Bay:** north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.36' N. lat., 146°19.07' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°43.61' N. lat., 146°21.17' W. long.;
- (5) **Irish Cove:** south of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°46.73' N. lat., 146°26.62' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°46.27' N. lat., 146°27.12' W. long.;
- (6) **Landlocked Bay:** waters north of 60°50.76' N. lat.;
- (7) **Galena Bay:** waters 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.;
- (8) **Jack Bay:** waters 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.;
- (9) **Sawmill Bay:** waters 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.;
- (10) **Port Fidalgo Subdistrict:** waters east of 146°24.12' W. long.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District east of Granite Point will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Sunday, July 22. **Waters of Long Bay north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°57.63' N. lat., 147°13.50' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°57.01' N. lat., 147°15.47' W. long. will be closed to commercial fishing during this period.**

**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 22.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period at 8:00 am on Sunday, July 22. **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 within 0.5 miles of Montague Island,** will open to purse seine fishing for a 12-hour period at 8:00 am on Sunday, July 22. **Anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice.** Preliminary harvest estimates from the 12-

hour period that began on Thursday, July 19 are 4,200 chum and 120,300 pink salmon with 14 deliveries reported. Preliminary contribution reports from the 36-hour period that started on Thursday, July 19 indicate that pink salmon harvest was 55% SGH, 42% Wild, 1% CCH, and 1% AFK.

**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 Sunday, July 22.**

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 25.**

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.