

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #12

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open to commercial salmon fishing for a **36-hour** period from 7:00 a.m. Thursday, June 20 to 7:00 p.m. Friday, June 21. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be **OPEN** for the entire fishing period.

The grass bank marker line is defined in 5AAC 24.350(1)(A) with the exception of this year's extension of the closure line across Little Softuk (**see bold font below**). This closure line is defined with the following points:

| <i>Point</i> | <i>Latitude</i> | <i>Longitude</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Point Whitshed South | 60° 26.49' N. | 145° 52.86' W. |
| Alaganik Slough North | 60° 24.65' N. | 145° 36.70' W. |
| Pete Dahl East | 60° 20.44' N. | 145° 29.14' W. |
| West Kokenhenik | 60° 14.88' N. | 145° 10.01' W. |
| East "East Side" | 60° 14.83' N. | 145° 03.36' W. |
| Coffee Creek East | 60° 14.19' N. | 144° 58.01' W. |
| Charlie Mohr North | 60° 15.15' N. | 144° 56.43' W. |
| Martin River North | 60° 15.29' N. | 144° 52.52' W. |
| Strawberry Reef | 60° 13.93' N. | 144° 50.66' W. |
| Little Softuk | 60° 13.16' N. | 144° 41.38' W. |

Waters north of this line, within sloughs, and in Boswell Bay within the bay (5 AAC 24.350(1)(A)) are closed to commercial and subsistence salmon fishing during all periods.

During the commercial fishing season, subsistence harvest may occur in the Copper River District concurrent in time and area with commercial fishing periods until the Copper River District is closed at the end of the season. **Additionally, waters of the Copper River District, including the Chinook salmon inside closure area, will open to subsistence fishing from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on all Saturdays between June 15 and October 31.** Subsistence permits may be obtained at the Cordova ADF&G office during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.). **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

Cumulative sonar count through 6/18 is 546,251 fish whereas 358,647 fish are projected by this date. The 0600 count for 6/19 is 3,828 fish. For the week ending June 15, the actual Copper River Delta survey count was 3,675 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 7,270 – 17,184. Preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, June 17 was 39,100 sockeye and 430 Chinook salmon with 268 deliveries reported.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will remain **CLOSED** to commercial salmon fishing. Bering River sockeye salmon run timing overlap has increased and the district is being closed until escapement indices support additional fishing opportunity. For the week ending June 15, the actual Bering River District survey count was 310 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 3,251 – 7,153.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding the Granite Bay Subdistrict, the Esther Subdistrict, and the WNH THA and SHA, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for an **84-hour** period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. Waters of Granite Bay east of a line from 60°53.89'N., 148°05.95'W. to 60°52.83'N., 148°06.23'W. (see map below), and Shoestring Cove west of a longitude line at 147°57.14'W. (see map below), will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for an **84-hour** period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. Anadromous stream closures within Granite Bay and Shoestring Cove will not be in effect during this fishing period. Preliminary harvest estimate from the 60-hour period that started on Monday, June 17 is not yet available. The Coghill River weir is expected to start operations by 6/20. Many thanks to PWSAC for weir panel transport and logistics from Anchorage to the mouth of Coghill River. Additionally, the Division of Sport Fisheries was instrumental in transporting weir materials and supplies to the field camp. This will be the inaugural year of resistance board weir operation on the Coghill River. This type of weir adapts to changes in water level and should withstand the high flows that have damaged past weirs.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: 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 **36-hour** period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. **The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period.** Preliminary harvest estimate from the 36-hour period that started on Monday, June 17 was 67,400 sockeye and 23,700 chum salmon with 449 deliveries reported.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet fishing for an **84-hour** period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20 with an additional **60-hour** period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 24. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. **Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice.** Preliminary harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that started on Thursday, June 13 was 158,500 chum salmon with 456 deliveries reported. Preliminary contribution estimate from this fishing period indicates that the chum salmon harvest was 100% Port Chalmers released fish.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a **36-hour** period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for a **48-hour** period at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until mid-June. **Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice.** Preliminary harvest estimate from the 48-hour period that started on Thursday, June 13 was 37,100 chum and 1,000 sockeye salmon with 41 deliveries reported. Preliminary contribution estimate from this fishing period indicates that the chum salmon harvest was 87% AFK, 11% WNH, and 1% PC released fish.

Copies of the updated regulation booklet, *2019–2021 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound*, are available in the Cordova ADFG office.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, June 22.

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 (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/75366778>).
- 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 <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/endangered-species-conservation/endangered-threatened-and-candidate-species-alaska> 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 NOAA at 907-586-7221.

