

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #30

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 remain open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for an additional 48 hours period starting at 8:00 pm on Friday, July 12. As previously announced, the Coghill District, excluding Bettles Bay Subdistrict, excluding Esther Subdistrict waters between a longitude line of 147° 59.56' W and a line from 60° 47.80' N, 148° 8.60' W, to 60° 45.07' N, 148° 7.70' W, and excluding the WNH THA and SHA, opened to commercial salmon fishing for 36 hours, from 8:00 a.m. Thursday, July 11 to 8:00 p.m. Friday, July 11. **Regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B), will not be in effect until further notice. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide.** As of July 11, 20,575 sockeye salmon had passed the Coghill River weir versus a minimum cumulative anticipated of 13,981 fish.

SEINE FISHERIES: Eastern Prince William Sound purse seine fisheries will be closed on Saturday, July 13 and Sunday, July 14 to allow for further evaluation of fishery performance data. A fishing opportunity targeting eastern PWS pink salmon is expected to occur on Monday, July 15. Run entry and acquisition of broodstock have slowed at SGH and VFDA has recommended a closure within Port Valdez and Valdez Arm for Saturday, July 13 and Sunday, July 14. VFDA currently estimates there are approximately 50,000 pink salmon holding within the SHA. VFDA needs approximately 409,000 pink salmon for broodstock. A sex ratio taken by the department on Friday, July 12 from Black Point resulted in 43% female.

An estimated 537,800 pink salmon were harvested in eastern PWS on Thursday, July 11 with 206 deliveries reported. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest in the Eastern District through July 11 is estimated at 5.1 million CPF and 1.2 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 6.3 million fish. The 5-year odd-year average (2009–2017) cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest (cost recovery and CPF fish) through July 11 is 8.3 million fish.

Recent aerial surveys in the Northern, Eastern, and Southeastern districts indicated that wild stock pink salmon escapements are within expected ranges for the date and chum salmon escapements are below expected ranges for the date. Aerial surveys also indicated that wild stock run entry has slowed into the Eastern District and the department does not anticipate that these stocks will sustain a consistent schedule of openings at this time.

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, July 13.

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.