The Copper River District will open to commercial salmon fishing for a 24-hour period from 7:00 a.m. Thursday, July 18 to 7:00 a.m. Friday, July 19.

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:

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

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 7/16 is 901,783 fish, whereas 531,404 fish are projected by this date. The 0600 count for 7/17 is 6,168 fish. For the week ending 7/13, the actual Copper River Delta survey count was 32,945 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 30,055 – 71,040. Preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, July 15 was 23,304 sockeye, 524 pink, and 25 Chinook salmon with 142 deliveries reported. Period 16, the 24-hour period that started on July 8, sockeye salmon contributions were estimated as 81% wild and 19% Gulkana Hatchery.
BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open to commercial salmon fishing for a 24-hour period from 7:00 a.m. Thursday, July 18 to 7:00 a.m. Friday, July 19. For the week ending July 13, the actual Bering River District survey count was 16,150 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 11,051 – 24,313.

COGHLH DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding Bettles Bay Subdistrict and excluding waters of the SHA inside the barrier seine, will open to commercial salmon fishing for a 36-hour period from 8:00 a.m. Thursday, July 18 to 8:00 p.m. Friday, July 19. Additionally, waters of the WNH THA and SHA, excluding waters of the SHA inside the barrier seine, and waters of Port Wells and College Fiord, north of 60° 55.81’ N., and east of a line from Pakenham Point (61° 00.45’ N., 148° 04.85’ W.) to 60° 55.81’ N., 148° 10.92’ W., will remain open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for an additional 48 hours starting at 8:00 pm on Friday, July 19. Regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect during this fishing period. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide. As of July 16, 27,014 sockeye salmon had passed the Coghill River weir versus a minimum cumulative anticipated of 16,504 fish. Preliminary harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that started on Thursday, July 11 was 26,066 sockeye, 82,017 chum, and 17,267 pink salmon with 328 deliveries reported.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, excluding the Main Bay Subdistrict, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18. The Main Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18. 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 Thursday, July 15 was 47,885 sockeye, 11,645 chum, and 18,926 pink salmon with 220 deliveries reported.

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 commercial drift gillnet fishing for a 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 22. A regular schedule of two fishing periods per week is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. 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, July 11 was 131,157 chum and 311 pink salmon with 159 deliveries reported.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will remain closed to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest.

SEINE FISHERIES: An estimated 675,000 pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Monday, July 15. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through July 16 is estimated at 6.2 million CPF and 1.2 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 7.4 million fish. The 5-year odd-year average (2009–2017) cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest (cost recovery and CPF fish) through July 16 is 13.3 million fish.

VFDA currently estimates there are approximately 200,000 pink salmon in the SHA. VFDA needs approximately 409,000 pink salmon for broodstock.

Aerial surveys of the Eastern and Northern districts were flown on Tuesday, July 16 and indicated that pink and chum salmon escapements are within expected ranges for the date, but wild stock run entry and harvest data currently indicate a below average wild stock return. The department does not
expect that these stocks will sustain more than one or two openers a week at this time. Aerial surveys of all districts are currently ongoing to further assess the strength of wild stock returns throughout PWS. Additional wild stock fishing opportunities will be dependent on aerial survey assessments and continued run entry of wild stocks.

A fishing opportunity targeting PWS pink salmon is anticipated for Saturday, July 20 or Sunday, July 21.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District, north of a line at 60°54.00’ N. and west of a line from a point on shore at approximately 61°03.40’ N., 146°41.75’ W. (Potato Point) to a point on shore at approximately 61°02.10’ N., 146°40.05’ W. (Tongue Point), will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 18.

Waters inside of the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be CLOSED for this period to ensure early season escapement:

1. **Galena Bay:** 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.;
2. **Sawmill Bay:** 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.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period at 6:00 am until 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 18. Due to increasing sockeye salmon harvest, shorter duration periods are necessary to focus efforts on enhanced chum salmon returning to AFK. A regular schedule of three fishing periods per week (Monday, Thursday, and Saturday) is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. **Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice.** Preliminary harvest estimate from the 14-hour period that started on Monday, July 15 was 20,673 chum and 5,033 sockeye salmon, with 12 deliveries reported.

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 seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 p.m. Friday, July 19.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, July 20.

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:

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.