

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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**Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #47**

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open to commercial salmon fishing for a **24-hour** period from 7:00 a.m. Thursday, August 1 to 7:00 a.m. Friday, August 2.

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.
<b>Little Softuk</b>	<b>60° 13.16' N.</b>	<b>144° 41.38' W.</b>

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 July 28, the last day of counting this season, is 1,039,354 fish. For the week ending July 20, the Copper River Delta survey count was 25,431 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 31,424 – 74,276. Preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, July 29 was 16,600 sockeye and 18,200 pink salmon with 118 deliveries reported.

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open to commercial salmon fishing for a **24-hour** period from 7:00 a.m. Thursday, August 1 to 7:00 a.m. Friday, August 2. For the week

ending July 20, the Bering River District survey count was 16,140 sockeye salmon; within the range of 11,004 – 24,208.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** Waters of the Main Bay Subdistrict will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a **24-hour** period starting at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 1. The AGZ will open to **SET GILLNET** permit holders only during this fishing period. Fishing time and area is being reduced in the Eshamy District based on wild stock abundance indices. Preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, July 29 was 9,200 sockeye and 6,300 pink salmon with 65 deliveries reported.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** This announcement will detail purse seine fishing periods commencing on **Thursday, August 1 and Friday, August 2.** Run entry has remained steady in the Valdez Arm and VFDA is recommending an opener within Port Valdez. VFDA began egg takes on July 29 and has completed approximately 3.5% of their pink salmon egg-take goal. VFDA surveyed Port Valdez on July 31 and currently estimates there are 400,000-450,000 pink salmon holding within the SHA.

It is estimated that 400,000 pink salmon were harvested in PWS on Tuesday, July 30. The cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest through July 30 is estimated at 10.9 million CPF and 1.2 million VFDA cost recovery fish, for a total of 12.1 million fish. The 5-year odd-year average (2009–2017) cumulative PWS pink salmon harvest (cost recovery and CPF fish) through July 30 is 25.1 million fish.

PWSAC began its cost recovery sales program on Tuesday, July 30, and has collected approximately 1% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through July 30. The most recent cost recovery fisheries had a 3.5 pound average weight and 19% female at AFK. ADF&G sampling of AFK cost recovery harvest from July 30 was 20.0% female (n=977), which is below average for the date. Cost recovery fishing continues today at WNH and early reports indicate run entry remains slow at all facilities.

PWSAC cost recovery was expanded to include the Pt. Ellrington Subdistrict on July 30 in order to gauge run entry and contribution estimates. A twenty minute set was conducted at Squirrel Bay, Middle Cape, and Fox Farm and averaged 3,350 pink salmon per haul. The female percentage as of July 30 was 5 2%. The preliminary composition of pink salmon from sets made was 73% wild and 27% hatchery stock. The hatchery portion was composed of 13% SGH, 8% AFK, 3% CCH, and 2% WNH pink salmon.

**Current indices of escapement and run entry do not support a purse seine CPF targeting wild stocks in PWS.** Currently the lower end of the SEG is not expected to be met within the Northern, Eastern, and Southeastern district. Daily wild stock pink salmon escapement, as of July 30, was **behind** expected levels by the following percentages: Eastern (-47.8%), Northern (-29.8%), Coghil (-19.8%), Northwestern (-12.5), Southwestern (-68.9%), Montague (-86.6%), Eshamy (-83.4%) and Southeastern (-35.5%). Aerial surveys of all districts are ongoing to further assess the strength of wild stock returns throughout PWS.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters in the Eastern District, **north of a line from 61° 02.855' N., 146° 44.204' W. to 61° 02.373' N., 146° 43.407' W. to 61° 02.992' N., 146° 39.165' W.,** will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period, from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., Thursday, August 1, and, from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., Friday, August 2.

**Waters of Port Valdez east of a line from a point on shore at approximately 61°04.90' N., 146°30.62' W. to a point on shore at approximately 61°07.45 N., 146°23.00' 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.**

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, August 2.**

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, August 3.**

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.