



Advisory Announcement

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SOUTHEAST ALASKA SALMON PURSE SEINE FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

This announcement is intended to provide information on salmon run size expectations and management actions for the 2023 Southeast Alaska (SEAK) salmon purse seine fishery. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has completed a management plan for the 2023 season, but it will likely not be published prior to the start of the season. A general overview of the management approach and objectives for the SEAK purse seine fishery may be referenced in the *2022 Southeast Alaska Purse Seine Management Plan* located on the ADF&G website at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.salmon.managementplans>. The public is cautioned that the 2022 management plan may contain outdated information regarding fishery area descriptions, maps, dates, and to refer to 2023 advisory announcements for current information. For detailed information on hatchery terminal harvest area (THA) openings, refer to hatchery THA announcements released from April 12 to April 24, 2023, subsequent announcements, and hatchery organization's websites.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA SALMON RUN EXPECTATIONS

The SEAK pink salmon harvest forecast for 2023 is 19 million fish, with a range of 12 to 29 million fish. The majority of the pink salmon harvest for the region is typically taken by purse seine gear. The Southern SEAK Subregion includes the area from Sumner Strait south to Dixon Entrance (Districts 1–8). The escapement index value of 9.81 million in 2021 was above the escapement goal range of 3.0 to 8.0 million index fish. Escapement indices were within or exceeded management targets for all 7 districts and all 18 pink salmon stock groups within this subregion. The Northern SEAK Inside pink salmon escapement index value of 3.91 million fish was within the escapement goal range of 2.5 to 6.0 million index fish. Escapement indices were within or above management target ranges for 7 of the 7 districts, and for 17 of the 21 pink salmon stock groups within this subregion. The Northern Southeast Outside Subregion, which includes Sections 13-A and 13-B, escapement index value of 1.94 million pink salmon was within the escapement goal range of 0.75 to 2.50 million index fish. Escapement indices were within or above management targets for 5 of the 7 pink salmon stock groups within this subregion. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Southeast Alaska Coastal Monitoring (SECM) survey has been one of the best indicators of adult returns to Northern Southeast Inside waters the following year. The 2022 juvenile pink salmon abundance index was the second lowest even-year juvenile index in the 26 years of SECM surveys. It is possible that cool to near average sea surface temperatures along the Southeast Alaska coast and substantial portions of the eastern Gulf of Alaska in late fall 2022 through spring 2023, may improve marine survival for adult returns to the northern districts and moderate the impact of low juvenile pink salmon numbers.

SEAK Chinook salmon stocks trend of low abundance continues. Over the past 5 years (2018–2022), the 11 monitored Chinook salmon index systems did not meet escapement goals 47% of the time. In 2022, 6 of the 11 monitored Chinook salmon index systems were below their escapement goal ranges. Of the 11 monitored stocks, ADF&G has more detailed stock assessment that allows for annual run forecasts for 5 of those stocks to be produced. In 2023, the ADF&G forecasted 4 of those 5 stocks total runs to be within their respective escapement goal ranges. Detailed Southeast Alaska Chinook salmon forecast information was released in an advisory announcement on December 9, 2022 (<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dfnewsrelease/1447493979.pdf>). The 2023 all-gear Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) Chinook salmon allocation is 201,900 Treaty Chinook salmon (non-Alaska hatchery-produced Chinook salmon that fall under the terms of the PST). This year's all-gear harvest limit includes a 2% reduction that will serve as a buffer to avoid exceeding the all-gear limit and payback provisions within the PST.

The 2023 SEAK forecast of hatchery-produced summer chum salmon runs is 9.2 million fish. This includes 2.8 million fish to 5 Douglas Island and Pink and Chum locations, 3.3 million fish to 6 Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Seine

Association locations, and 3.1 million fish to 6 Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association locations. A portion of these runs will be harvested in traditional purse seine fisheries and in THA purse seine fisheries in Kendrick Bay, Anita Bay, Southeast Cove, Thomas Bay, Hidden Falls, Deep Inlet, and Amalga Harbor.

EXPECTED FISHING REGIME

The 2023 forecast indicates a weak pink salmon run throughout SEAK and a conservative fishing regime is expected. Areas around the region will open as described in this plan and are subject to inseason adjustments. The Hidden Falls THA will open for common property harvest to target hatchery-produced chum salmon in late June. The first pink salmon openings will begin in late June in District 12 and early July in Districts 1, 2, 4, and 7. Subsequent openings will be based on aerial survey observations and fishery performance data. The department will carefully monitor inseason information and will manage the fishery to ensure escapement goals are met, obtain district and stock group escapement targets, and distribute escapements throughout the run while providing maximum fishing opportunity. The department is prepared to provide additional fishing opportunity as run strength and fleet distribution allows by expanding fishing opportunity from one to two 15-hour periods per week, to 39-hour periods, to 2-days-on/2-days-off, or a more continuous fishing schedule. The department may have to reduce fishing opportunity after initially expanding opportunity depending on how runs develop and fleet distribution. Specific areas may warrant more, or less fishing time than the regional schedule depending on run strength and effort in those areas.

SOUTHERN SOUTHEAST ALASKA PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

District 4 time and/or area restrictions during the treaty period may be necessary to achieve PST obligations. In 2023, the District 4 purse seine fishery may open, by regulation, on Sunday, July 2. District 4 will be managed under Annex IV of the PST through July 29, 2023 (SWs 27-30). The inseason forecast will be analyzed prior to the July 2 opening and if run size warrants an opening, the district will open on July 2. The initial opening on July 2 will be for a yet to be determined length and will be based on the best available data at the time of the announcement. The duration of following openings will be based on sockeye salmon escapement estimates through the Tyee test fishery at the mouth of the Skeena River, harvest and catch per unit effort (CPUE), effort levels, and pink salmon run strength. The amount of effort and harvest of sockeye salmon in the district will be monitored to stay within PST sockeye salmon allocations. As part of the 2019 Chapter 2 agreement, ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) have set up an information exchange protocol that is intended to enhance inseason communication between both management agencies. This will allow the department to closely follow the runs to the Skeena and Nass Rivers so inseason adjustments can be made. Formal fishery summaries will also be exchanged on a weekly basis. In addition, the Tyee test fishery, at the mouth of the Skeena River, can be tracked daily from a web-based database. This protocol has worked in recent years and allowed managers to provide additional fishing opportunities or reduce time to stay within treaty obligations.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has a preseason expectation of approximately 3,650,000 sockeye salmon to the combined Nass and Skeena Rivers in 2023. This is a combined forecast of 3,192,000 Skeena River sockeye salmon and 459,000 Nass River sockeye salmon. If the 2023 forecast is accurate, and the combined escapement is 1.1 million sockeye salmon, then the Annual Allowable Harvest for District 4 will be approximately 62,500 Nass and Skeena Rivers sockeye salmon.

ADF&G will communicate with DFO on a weekly basis to monitor the sockeye salmon runs to the Skeena and Nass Rivers so inseason adjustments can be made to the sockeye salmon cap. Starting on Sunday, July 30 when historically, the majority of Canadian origin sockeye salmon have moved through the fishery, the district will be managed on the strength of returning Southern SEAK wild salmon. Regardless of the strength of pink salmon runs after SW 30, it is the department's intent to manage the District 4 in terms of boat-days and overall effort similar to levels since the signing of the PST. Weekly fishing periods in August will be decided only after the department assesses the distribution of the fleet and the run strength of pink salmon. In recent years, District 4 has been open a similar amount of time as inside waters after the treaty period.

Inside Fishing Areas

As in past years, aerial surveys of early-run pink salmon producing areas, primarily Boca de Quadra, East Behm Canal, and Ernest Sound, will begin in early July. Seining is expected to begin initially in District 1, lower District 2, and District 4 on Sunday, July 2. Section 7-A may open on Sunday, July 2 or Sunday, July 9.

Kendrick Bay Spring Fishery

The lower portion of District 2 outside of the Kendrick Bay THA that has opened in June to target enhanced Kendrick Bay summer chum salmon will not open in 2023. This action is being taken to conserve SEAK wild Chinook and sockeye salmon.

NORTHERN SOUTHEAST PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

The Northern SEAK purse seine fishery management plan consists of separate segments for the outside areas (Sections 13-A and 13-B), the inside areas, the fall chum salmon fishery, and hatchery THA fisheries.

Inside Fishing Areas, Early Runs

The 2023 purse seine season will begin on Sunday, June 18, with initial open periods of 15 hours to harvest hatchery summer chum and to index the strength of early pink salmon runs. During the first open period, seining will be allowed in a portion of District 12 at the Point Augusta index area in Chatham Strait and within the Hidden Falls THA. Purse seine opportunity in Tenakee Inlet, Peril Strait, and Hoonah Sound will depend on the observed development of pink salmon escapements to local streams. During July, the department will manage the Hawk Inlet shoreline fishery in accordance with the *Northern Southeast seine fishery salmon management plans* (5 AAC 33.366) that stipulates that any portion of the area north of Point Marsden may be opened when a harvestable surplus of pink salmon is observed.

Inside Fishing Areas, Middle and Late Runs

Any openings in Districts 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 will be based on inseason assessment of pink salmon run strength and consideration of surrounding pink salmon stock groups.

Outside Fishing Areas (Sections 13-A and 13-B)

Management of Sections 13-A and 13-B, along the outer coasts of Baranof and Chichagof Islands, is distinct from the management of the northern inside areas. Openings can be expected to begin around the third week in July depending on observed pink salmon abundance.

Test Fishing

Test fishing will be conducted at Point Gardner and Kingsmill Point to assess the strength and timing of the pink salmon runs entering Frederick Sound. The Point Gardner test fishery will start on or about June 28 and the Kingsmill Point test fishery will start on or about July 5. Both test fisheries are scheduled to occur weekly through the month of July. Test fishing will also occur along the Hawk Inlet shoreline beginning on or about June 30 to assess the strength of pink salmon runs entering the northern inside waters of Districts 11 and 15.

EFFORT LEVELS

The size of the purse seine fleet will have some impact on management decisions as the season progresses. Purse seine effort in 2022 was 194 permits fished, 2021 was 208 permits fished, in 2020, 200 permits were fished, and in 2019, 240 permits fished. Effort levels are generally higher in odd years and lower in even years reflecting the current odd-year cycle of stronger pink salmon runs; effort in 2023 is anticipated to be similar to 2021. Since 2007, the number of total permits has decreased from 415 to 279 due to permit buyback programs. The average effort in the purse seine fishery is 242 permits fished.

DAILY START TIMES

For the 2023 season, the fishery opening and closing times will be:

1. 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. from the start of the purse seine season (June 18) through approximately August 16;
2. 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. from approximately August 17 through the end of the pink salmon season; and
3. 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. from the start of the fall chum salmon season until the season closes.

CHINOOK SALMON HARVEST

ADF&G is required to manage the SEAK purse seine fishery for a maximum harvest of 4.3% of the annual all-gear Chinook salmon harvest ceiling determined under the terms of the PST (5 AAC 29.060 [b][1]). For 2023, the all-gear PST Chinook salmon allocation is 201,900 Treaty Chinook salmon. This year's all-gear harvest limit includes a 2% reduction that will serve as a buffer to avoid exceeding the all-gear limit and payback provisions within the PST. The all-gear harvest limit for SEAK is determined by the CPUE metric from the SEAK early winter power troll fishery. The 2023 purse seine Treaty Chinook salmon allocation is 8,700 fish. The need for management measures to comply with the purse seine allocation will depend on inseason evaluation of Chinook salmon harvest.

Chinook Salmon Nonretention

Management actions taken in the purse seine fishery to conserve SEAK Chinook salmon and stay within the harvest limits outlined in the PST will be highly restrictive in 2023. Nonretention of Chinook salmon 28 inches or larger will be in place through at least July 22 for the 2023 purse seine season. Chinook salmon retention after July 22 will be dependent on areas open to directed pink salmon fisheries and the magnitude of pink salmon harvests. Chinook salmon harvests will be monitored closely, and the purse seine fishery will return to nonretention in advance of exceeding the purse seine allocation of the annual PST harvest ceiling. Beginning in 2021, Chinook salmon retention was allowed in outside and northern districts of SEAK, while nonretention remained in effect in the inside waters of southern SEAK. This approach was taken to further conserve returning Unuk and Chickamin Rivers Chinook salmon and may be implemented again in 2023.

There may be specific terminal areas in which all Chinook salmon may be, or must be, retained. ADF&G intends to implement full retention (5 AAC 39.265) from the beginning of the season for net fisheries in the Deep Inlet THA. Specific retention and nonretention periods will be announced in each purse seine fishery advisory announcement. Additional areas may also be announced via advisory announcement.

Chinook Salmon Reporting

Chinook salmon less than 28 inches in length may be harvested by purse seine fishermen but not sold. All retained Chinook salmon must be reported on fish tickets as personal use (harvest code 95).

When under nonretention of Chinook salmon 28 inches or larger, purse seine fishermen are encouraged to quickly release Chinook salmon in a manner that minimizes mortality. If, during nonretention, Chinook salmon greater than 28 inches are retained, the fisherman is in violation and may be issued a citation. Retained Chinook salmon will be donated, and the fisherman may be subject to the cost associated with processing the fish for donation. On the fish ticket, the number and weight of the fish must be recorded and the disposition code "86-Donated" must be used.

DISTRICT 6 PURSE FISHING AREAS

At the 2022 Southeast Alaska and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Board of Fisheries (BOF) meeting, changes were made to District 6 section definitions. There was no change to the overall purse seine fishing area. Section 6-D was amended to only include the area along the Etolin Island shoreline from Point Harrington to Point Stanhope, commonly referred to as the "Screen Islands" portion of District 6. The remainder of the former Section 6-D, Stikine Strait and south of a line drawn between Point Stanhope and Luck Point to the southern district boundary, was designated as a new section, Section 6-E. Figure 1 below gives general reference for District 6 sections: detailed descriptions can be found in 5 AAC 33.200(f). For net gear: Section 6-A in Sumner Strait and Section 6-B are drift gillnet only areas; Section 6-E is a purse seine only area; and Section 6-C is a purse seine and drift gillnet area. Section 6-D is also a purse seine and drift gillnet area but drift gillnet fishing time in Section 6-D is limited after the first Saturday in August and before the first Sunday in September. In addition, drift gillnet fishing time is subject to 5 AAC 33.359 *Section 6-D Pink Salmon Management Plan*. At the same meeting the BOF also readopted 5 AAC 33.359 which gives the department direction on management of the drift gillnet fishery of Section 6-D after the first Saturday in August and before the first Sunday in September.

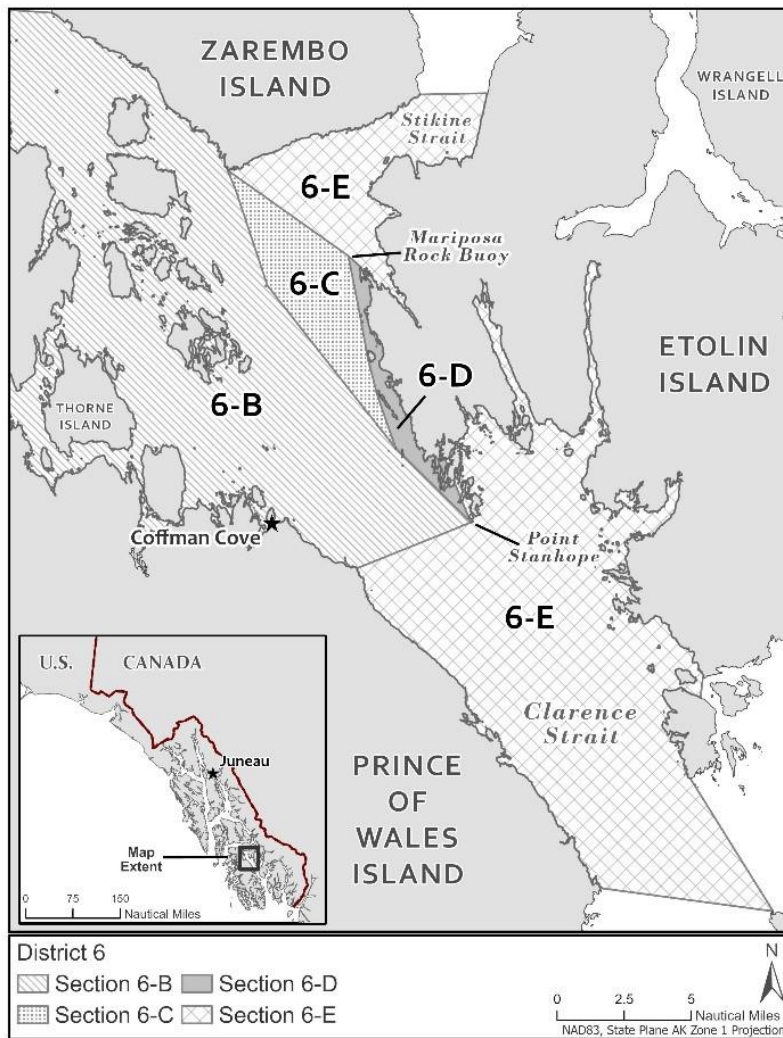


Figure 1.–District 6 sections.

Table 1.–Statistical week calendar for 2023 purse seine season.

Week	Beginning Date	Ending Date	Week	Beginning Date	Ending Date
23	4-Jun	10-Jun	32	6-Aug	12-Aug
24	11-Jun	17-Jun	33	13-Aug	19-Aug
25	18-Jun	24-Jun	34	20-Aug	26-Aug
26	25-Jun	1-Jul	35	27-Aug	2-Sep
27	2-Jul	8-Jul	36	3-Sep	9-Sep
28	9-Jul	15-Jul	37	10-Sep	16-Sep
29	16-Jul	22-Jul	38	17-Sep	23-Sep
30	23-Jul	29-Jul	39	24-Sep	30-Sep
31	30-Jul	5-Aug	40	1-Oct	7-Oct

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