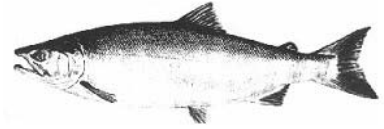


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director*



Contact:
Cordova Management and Research Staff: Jeremy Botz,
Tommy Sheridan, Steve Moffitt, Heather Scannell, Richard Brenner
Phone: (907) 424-3212
Fax: (907) 424-3235

Cordova ADF&G
401 Railroad Avenue
P.O. Box 669
Cordova, AK 99574
Date Issued: 10/24/2011

2011 PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2011 Prince William Sound (PWS) Area commercial salmon season. Fishing has been completed in all districts and preliminary harvest totals should be representative for all species. It should be noted that numbers in the narrative are expressed in rounded terms for simplicity and that all data are considered preliminary.

The 2011 PWS Area commercial salmon harvest was 38.4 million fish. The harvest was composed of 32.7 million pink, 3.5 million sockeye, 1.8 million chum, 343,000 coho, and 18,900 Chinook salmon. The 2011 harvest was composed of 31.5 million commercial common property fishery (CPF) (82%), and 6.88 million (18%) hatchery cost recovery and broodstock fish.

GILLNET FISHERIES

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT

The 2011 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Copper River District was 9,000 Chinook, 1.2 million sockeye, and 293,000 coho salmon. Gulkana Hatchery was expected to contribute 320,000 sockeye salmon to the 2011 CPF harvest. The commercial salmon fishing season in the Copper River District began on Monday, May 16. The 2011 sockeye salmon harvest of 2.0 million fish was almost double the previous 10-year (2001–2010) harvest average of 1.14 million sockeye salmon. The preliminary harvest composition was 1.4 million (69%) wild, 612,000 (30%) Gulkana Hatchery, and 6,000 (0.3%) Main Bay Hatchery (MBH) sockeye salmon. The CPF harvest of 18,000 Chinook salmon was below the previous 10-year (2001-2010) average harvest of 30,000. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 120,000 fish was below the previous 10-year (2001–2010) average harvest of 291,000 coho salmon. The 2011 inriver goal for salmon passing the Miles Lake sonar site was 622,380–822,380 salmon. The 2011 preliminary sonar escapement estimate was 914,231 salmon. Spawning escapement to Copper River delta systems based on aerial survey indices was 77,000 sockeye salmon, and was within the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) range of 55,000-130,000 fish. Coho salmon spawning escapement to the Copper River Delta based on aerial survey indices was 44,000 and was within the SEG range of 32,000–67,000 fish.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT

The Bering River District in 2011 was initially closed to commercial sockeye salmon harvest due to aerial survey counts from 2006–2010 that were below the SEG range of 23,000–35,000 fish. Inseason aerial survey counts below weekly anticipated goals led to continued closure of the district for sockeye salmon fishing. The 2011 aerial escapement index of 21,000 sockeye salmon was below the SEG range. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 20,000 was below the previous 10-year (2001–2010) harvest average of 54,000 coho salmon. Aerial surveys of coho salmon produced an escapement index of 19,000 fish that was within the SEG range of 13,000–33,000 fish.

COGHILL DISTRICT

Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) forecasted a run of 2.6 million chum salmon to Wally Noerenberg Hatchery (WNH) in 2011. Approximately 588,000 chum salmon (23%) of the forecast 2.6 million WNH run were designated for corporate cost recovery and broodstock. The 2011 CPF harvest of chum salmon in the Coghill District was 1.0 million fish. PWSAC harvested 464,000 chum salmon for corporate cost recovery and broodstock. The Coghill River weir passed 98,000 sockeye salmon, well above the SEG range of 20,000–40,000 fish. The total CPF harvest of sockeye salmon in the Coghill District was 195,000 fish, 74% of which were enhanced stock (predominately MBH) origin and 26% were wild stock origin. The total CPF harvest of coho salmon in the Coghill District was 93,000 fish, the majority of which were likely enhanced stock (predominately WNH) origin. Pink salmon CPF harvest in the Coghill District was 2.4 million fish, 92% enhanced stock (predominately WNH) and 8% wild stock.

ESHAMY DISTRICT

The department's preseason forecast for Eshamy Lake was 35,000 wild sockeye salmon and PWSAC forecasted a run of 935,000 MBH enhanced sockeye salmon. The CPF harvest of sockeye salmon in the Eshamy District was 1.2 million fish. Enhanced sockeye salmon contribution to the Eshamy District CPF harvest was 92%. Additionally, MBH sockeye salmon were harvested in the Copper River (6,000) and Coghill (144,000) districts. Sockeye salmon escapement to Eshamy Lake was 23,000 fish when the weir was removed on August 28. This was within the Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) range of 13,000-28,000 fish.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT

The department's 2011 preseason harvest forecast for the Unakwik District was 7,000 sockeye salmon. The Unakwik District CPF harvest was 1,000 sockeye salmon, which was below the 10-year average of 7,000 sockeye salmon.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT, PORT CHALMERS SUBDISTRICT

PWSAC forecasted a run of 624,000 chum salmon to the Port Chalmers remote release site in 2011. The CPF harvest of chum salmon in the Montague District was 94,000 fish. The drift gillnet gear group had access to the Port Chalmers Subdistrict in 2011 under the Prince William Sound Management and Salmon Enhancement Allocation Plan. The 2011 harvest was below the five-year (2006–2010) CPF average of 667,000 chum salmon. Approximately 4% of the chum salmon harvested in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict were of wild stock origin.

PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

CHUM SALMON

The 2011 chum salmon total run forecast for PWS was 3.9 million fish. The majority of the forecast, 3.5 million fish (90%), were projected to be of PWSAC hatchery origin. PWSAC forecasted a run of 2.6 million chum salmon to WNH, 624,000 chum salmon to Port Chalmers, and 280,000 fish to Armin F. Koernig Hatchery (AFK). All Port Chalmers and AFK chum salmon were available for harvest in the CPF. Based on the department's wild chum salmon forecast of 400,000 fish, there was a potential CPF harvest of 200,000 wild stock chum salmon in PWS.

The 2011 chum salmon CPF harvest in PWS was 1.4 million fish, which was 2.5 million fish below the CPF preseason forecast. The 2011 purse seine CPF harvest of 67,000 chum salmon in the Southwestern District was composed of approximately 11% wild and 89% hatchery fish. Purse seine chum salmon harvest in PWS was predominantly from the AFK hatchery terminal harvest area (THA) and special harvest area (SHA).

PINK SALMON

The 2011 pink salmon total return forecast for PWS was 46.9 million fish. This estimate included 5.6 million wild stock fish, 15.5 million Valdez Fisheries Development Association (VFDA) hatchery fish, and 25.8 million PWSAC hatchery fish. Approximately 4.5 million (17%) of the 25.8 million pink salmon return forecast to the PWSAC hatcheries were projected for cost recovery and broodstock. The remaining 21.3 million PWSAC fish were expected to be available for CPF harvest. Approximately 4.8 million (31%) of the projected 15.5 million pink salmon return forecast to VFDA's Solomon Gulch Hatchery (SGH) were projected for cost recovery and broodstock. The remaining 10.7 million VFDA fish were expected to be available for CPF harvest. A total harvest of 3.6 million wild stock pink salmon was forecasted for CPF in 2011 leaving 2.0 million fish for escapement in PWS.

The 2011 CPF harvest of 26.3 million pink salmon, composed of approximately 20% wild stock and 80% enhanced stock fish, was the 10th highest PWS pink salmon harvest since 1971. Total pink salmon harvest for 2011 was 32.7 million fish, including 6.4 million (4.1 million for PWSAC and 2.3 million for VFDA) fish for hatchery cost recovery and broodstock. Enhanced pink salmon contributions by aquaculture associations to total harvest were 38% VFDA and 45% PWSAC. VFDA cost recovery and broodstock harvest represented approximately 16% of the total pink salmon return to SGH. PWSAC cost recovery and broodstock harvest was approximately 25% of the total pink salmon return to PWSAC hatcheries.

Inseason pink salmon aerial survey escapement estimates remained above minimum anticipated escapement thresholds in all districts for much of the season, which allowed for targeted fishing effort on wild pink salmon. The area-under-the-curve estimate of pink salmon escapement used for direct comparison with the SEG range is not yet available, but considering that inseason pink salmon escapement indices were above anticipated aerial survey counts, overall escapement was likely within the even-year SEG range of 1.3–2.8 million pink salmon. The preliminary PWS wild stock pink salmon harvest of 5.5 million fish was the 18th highest wild stock harvest by number since 1960; average annual harvest over this same time frame was 5.4 million fish.

COHO SALMON

The 2011 VFDA coho salmon return was anticipated to be 189,000 fish. VFDA's broodstock objective was 1,000 coho salmon. As of October 4, VFDA harvested 38,000 coho salmon for cost recovery. In 2011 the total CPF harvest of coho salmon in PWS (excluding Copper River and Bering River districts) was 170,000 fish. The majority of CPF coho salmon harvested in the Eastern (32,000) and Coghill (92,000) districts are assumed to be of enhanced stock origin.

Table 1.—Preliminary Prince William Sound Management Area salmon harvest, 2011.

District	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Bering River District	1	6	19,956	8	0	19,971
Copper River Dist.	18,407	2,023,762	120,312	24,664	11,475	2,198,620
Eastern District	29	7,265	31,681	13,062,437	27,377	13,128,789
Northern Dist.	8	2,706	2,489	2,602,142	2,612	2,609,957
Coghill Dist.	202	195,208	93,392	2,364,549	1,038,347	3,691,698
Northwestern Dist.	0	1,556	400	255,328	1,026	258,310
Eshamy Dist.	150	1,174,014	6,263	92,854	115,674	1,388,955
Southwestern Dist.	44	48,358	26,948	6,670,411	67,304	6,813,065
Montague Dist.	74	1,726	1,881	779,721	94,380	877,782
Southeastern Dist.	26	1,974	1,263	476,606	11,235	491,104
Unakwik Dist.	0	1,224	0	1	23	1,248
CPF Total	18,941	3,457,799	304,585	26,328,721	1,369,453	31,479,499
Solomon Gulch H.	0	0	36,994	2,318,204	8,115	2,363,313
Cannery Creek H.	0	0	0	600,009	0	600,009
Wally Noerenberg H.	0	0	1,596	2,311,843	463,836	2,777,275
Main Bay H.	0	8,942	0	0	0	8,942
Armin F. Koernig H.	0	0	0	1,141,169	0	1,141,169
Hatchery Total ^a	0	8942	38590	6371225	471951	6,890,708
PWS Total Harvest	18,941	3,466,741	343,175	32,699,946	1,841,404	38,370,207

^a Hatchery sales harvest for operating costs and broodstock harvest.