



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: July 28, 2020

CONTACT: Jeremy Botz and Charlie Russell

Finfish Area Management Biologists
(907) 424-3212

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery Announcement #38

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will remain closed to commercial fishing. **Given current indices of escapement, it is likely that the Copper River District will remain closed to commercial fishing until the transition to Coho management in August.** The Copper River District will open to subsistence fishing at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 30 for a 12-hour fishing period.

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.
Little Softuk	60° 13.16' N.	144° 41.38' W.

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 will OPEN to subsistence fishing from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm on Saturday, August 1.** Subsistence users may obtain subsistence permits during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.** Permit holders are encouraged to call the Cordova office at 907-424-3212 or report online (<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/Harvest/>) to provide preliminary harvest reports to assist with inseason harvest tracking.

To date, the sonar count is the 12th lowest on record (1978-2020). Cumulative commercial harvest this year is the 4th lowest harvest to-date in the last 50 years. Cumulative sonar count through 7/27 is 528,593 fish whereas 620,401

fish are projected by this date. The 0600 count for 7/28 is 590 fish. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is being conducted today, July 28.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will remain closed to commercial fishing. An aerial survey of the Bering River District is being conducted today, July 28.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Per 5 AAC 24.370 (f), the set gillnet fleet is limited to 36 hours per week starting July 10. Waters of Eshamy Bay, west of a line from 60° 28.51'N., 147° 59.10'W. to 60° 27.94'N., 147° 57.87'W., and 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, July 30. The AGZ will open to **SET GILLNET** permit holders only for the first 12 hours of this fishing period and then open to **DRIFT GILLNET** permit holders for the last 12 hours of this fishing period. Fishing time and area is being reduced in the Eshamy District based on wild stock abundance indices. Harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, July 27 are not yet available.

SEINE FISHERIES: VFDA is recommending a closure of Port Valdez at this time in order to assess broodstock. Time and area for future commercial fishing periods targeting VFDA pink salmon in Port Valdez will be based on continued run entry and broodstock needs.

PWSAC began its cost recovery sales program on Friday, July 24, and has collected approximately 11% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through Monday, July 27. Sampling of cost recovery pink salmon harvest from Monday, July 27 resulted in an average weight of 3.3 pounds per fish and 29% female at WNH; and 3.4 pounds per fish and 23% female at AFK.

An aerial survey was conducted in the Southeastern District on Monday, July 27, and indicated that pink and chum salmon escapements are within the expected ranges for the date. Aerial surveys of all districts are expected to be conducted later this week, weather dependent, to further assess the strength of wild stock returns throughout PWS. It is anticipated that future fishing opportunity directed on wild stocks will initially be limited to one to two days per week. **Time and area for future commercial fishing periods targeting wild stock pink and chum salmon will be dependent upon escapement, harvest, and effort.**

In response to COVID-19, all PWSAC facilities are closed to the public until further notice.

Copies of the updated regulation booklet, *2019-2021 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound*, are available in the Cordova ADFG office

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 10, 11, 12, and 17 commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

The next scheduled seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Thursday, July 30.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, August 1.

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.