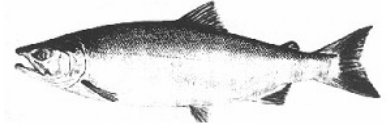


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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2009 PRELIMINARY PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The 2009 Prince William Sound Area commercial salmon harvest was 23.8 million fish. The harvest was composed of 18.4 million pink, 1.9 million sockeye, 3.2 million chum, 300,000 coho, and 10,000 Chinook salmon. The 2009 harvest was composed of 15.9 million commercial common property fishery (CPF) (67%), and 7.9 million (33%) hatchery cost recovery fish.

GILLNET FISHERIES

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT

The 2009 pre-season commercial harvest forecast for the Copper River District was 30,700 Chinook, 509,600 sockeye, and 297,400 coho salmon. Gulkana Hatchery was expected to contribute 150,300 sockeye salmon to the 2009 common property fishery (CPF) harvest. The commercial salmon fishing season in the Copper River District began on Thursday, May 14. The 2009 sockeye salmon harvest of 896,500 was below the previous 10-year harvest average of 1,242,200 sockeye salmon. The preliminary harvest composition was 833,200 (92.9%) wild, 59,900 (6.7%) Gulkana Hatchery, and 3,400 (0.4%) Main Bay Hatchery sockeye salmon. The CPF harvest of 9,500 Chinook salmon was below the previous 10-year average harvest of 37,300, and was the smallest harvest in over 40 years. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 207,800 was below the previous 10-year average harvest of 294,700 coho salmon. The 2009 in-river goal for salmon passing the Miles Lake sonar site was set at 592,051 to 792,051 salmon. The 2009 sonar escapement estimate was 709,748 salmon. Spawning escapement to lower Copper River systems based on aerial survey indices was 69,292 sockeye salmon, and was within the SEG range of 55,000 to 130,000. Coho salmon spawning escapement to the Copper River Delta based on aerial survey indices was 41,294 and was within the SEG range of 32,000 to 67,000.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT

Opening in early June, the Bering River District is managed concurrently with the Copper River District. The 2009 CPF harvest of 4,200 sockeye salmon was below the previous 10-year average of 18,400. The sockeye salmon escapement index based on aerial surveys (17,022) was below the SEG range of 20,000 to 35,000. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 45,500 was below

the previous 10-year harvest average of 48,200 coho salmon. Aerial surveys of coho salmon produced an escapement index of 22,141 fish that was within the SEG range of 13,000 to 33,000.

COGHILL DISTRICT (DRIFT GILLNET)

The CPF harvest of chum salmon in the Coghill District was 1.34 million fish: 1.32 million by drift gillnet gear and 12,900 by purse seine gear. Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) harvested 604,600 chum salmon for corporate cost recovery. The Coghill River weir passed 19,293 sockeye salmon prior to washout on July 22. Adding the 1,000 sockeye salmon estimated below the weir at that time puts escapement within the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) range of 20,000 to 40,000 sockeye salmon. The total CPF harvest of sockeye salmon in the Coghill District was 105,000 fish, of which 54,700 fish were of enhanced stock (predominately Main Bay Hatchery (MBH)) origin and 50,000 fish were of wild stock origin. The majority of the sockeye salmon, 103,000 fish, were harvested by the drift gillnet fleet. The coho salmon harvest of 20,900 fish was below the PWSAC preseason harvest forecast of 130,000 enhanced fish. The majority, 19,200 fish, were harvested by the drift gillnet fleet. A small portion of the Coghill District coho salmon harvest was likely of wild stock origin.

ESHAMY DISTRICT

The department's preseason forecast for Eshamy Lake was 76,000 wild sockeye salmon and PWSAC forecasted a run of 1,050,000 Main Bay Hatchery enhanced sockeye salmon. The CPF harvest of sockeye salmon in the Eshamy District was 692,000. The Eshamy District sockeye salmon harvest was composed of 133,600 (16%) hatchery cost recovery, 8,800 (1%) hatchery broodstock, 152,600 (18%) set gillnet CPF and 539,400 (65%) drift gillnet CPF fish. Enhanced sockeye salmon contribution to the Eshamy District CPF harvest was 91% or 628,000 fish. PWSAC harvested 131,200 MBH enhanced sockeye salmon for corporate cost recovery. Additionally, MBH sockeye salmon were harvested in the Copper River (3,000) and Coghill (55,000) districts. Sockeye salmon escapement to Eshamy Lake was 24,025 fish when the weir was removed on August 28. This was within the new Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) range of 13,000 to 28,000 adopted in 2008.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT

The department's preseason harvest forecast for the Unakwik District was 7,268 sockeye salmon. The Unakwik District CPF harvest was 3,100 sockeye salmon with 2,000 taken by the drift gillnet fleet and 1,200 taken by the purse seine fleet. The harvest was below the 10-year average of 7,382 sockeye salmon.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT, PORT CHALMERS SUBDISTRICT

PWSAC forecasted a run of 1,014,000 chum salmon to the Port Chalmers remote release site. The drift gillnet harvest was 673,000 chum salmon. This was the first year that drift gillnet gear was given access to the Port Chalmers Subdistrict under the existing Allocation Plan. The harvest was above the 5-year CPF average of 600,000 chum salmon. Approximately 1% of the chum salmon harvested in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict were of wild stock origin.

PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

CHUM SALMON

The 2009 chum salmon total run forecast for Prince William Sound (PWS) was 4.6 million fish. The majority of the forecast, 4.3 million fish (92%), were of PWSAC hatchery origin. PWSAC forecasted a run of 2.8 million chum salmon to Wally Noerenberg Hatchery (WNH), 1.0 million fish to Port Chalmers, and 409,000 fish to Armin F. Koernig Hatchery (AFK). Approximately 699,000 chum salmon (25%) of the forecast 2.8 million WNH run were required for corporate cost recovery and broodstock. All Port Chalmers and AFK chum salmon were available for harvest in the CPF. Based on the department's wild chum salmon forecast of 376,000 fish, there was a potential CPF harvest of 176,000 wild chum salmon.

The 2009 chum salmon CPF harvest in PWS was 2.6 million fish, which was 1.1 million fish below the CPF preseason forecast. The 2009 purse seine CPF harvest of 269,000 chum salmon was composed of approximately 4% wild and 96% hatchery fish. Purse seine chum salmon harvest was predominantly from the AFK hatchery terminal harvest area (THA) and special harvest area (SHA; 230,000 enhanced and 4,000 wild chum salmon). Coghill District had a purse seine harvest of 13,000 chum salmon and a drift gillnet harvest of 1.3 million chum salmon. Inseason chum salmon aerial survey escapement estimates were below cumulative anticipated levels in all districts. The 2009 total PWS wild stock chum salmon escapement index of 209,000 in districts with SEGs (237,000 in all districts) was roughly 2.3 times the SEG lower bound of 91,000; however, Northern and Coghill districts had escapement indices below their SEG thresholds.

PINK SALMON

The 2009 pink salmon total run forecast for PWS was 54.9 million fish. This estimate included 14.3 million wild stock fish, 17.9 million Valdez Fisheries Development Association (VFDA) hatchery fish, and 22.7 million PWSAC hatchery fish. Approximately 5.5 million (24%) of the 22.7 million pink salmon run forecast to the PWSAC hatcheries were projected for cost recovery and broodstock. The remaining 17.2 million PWSAC fish would be available for CPF harvest. Approximately 4.0 million (22%) of the projected 17.9 million pink salmon run forecast to VFDA's Solomon Gulch Hatchery were projected for cost recovery and broodstock. The remaining 13.9 million VFDA fish would be available for CPF harvest. A total harvest of 12.3 million wild stock pink salmon was forecasted for CPF leaving 2.0 million fish for escapement.

The 2009 harvest of 18.8 million pink salmon, composed of approximately 5% wild and 95% hatchery fish, was the third lowest PWS pink salmon harvest in twenty years. Overall harvest by gear type was 10.8 million by purse seine, 4,000 by set gillnet, 401,000 by drift gillnet, and 7.6 million (1.2 million VFDA and 6.5 million PWSAC) for hatchery cost recovery and broodstock. Estimated pink salmon contributions by aquaculture associations were 7% VFDA and 93% PWSAC. VFDA cost recovery and broodstock harvest represented approximately 97% of the total pink salmon run to SGH. PWSAC cost recovery and broodstock harvest was approximately 39% of the total pink salmon run to PWSAC hatcheries.

Despite limited fishing opportunity, inseason pink salmon aerial survey escapement estimates were below cumulative anticipated levels in all but Southwestern and Montague districts. The 2009 PWS wild stock pink salmon escapement of 1.8 million was below the odd-year SEG midpoint of 2.0 million fish, but within the SEG range of 1.25 to 2.75 million fish and was the

12th largest escapement in the last 30 years. The preliminary PWS wild stock pink salmon total run of 3.4 million fish, 1.6 million CPF and cost recovery harvest and 1.8 million escapement, was the 13th lowest wild stock total run by number (11th lowest by percent of total run) in the last 50 years.

COHO SALMON

The 2009 VFDA coho salmon run was anticipated to be 238,000 fish and 1,000 salmon were needed to meet VFDA broodstock objectives. VFDA harvested 20,900 coho salmon, of which 3,500 fish were utilized for broodstock and 17,400 fish were sold. In 2009 the purse seine fleet harvested 6,700 coho salmon in the Southwestern (2,600), Coghill (1,800), and Eastern (1,200) districts. The majority of coho salmon harvested in the Eastern and Coghill districts are assumed to be of enhanced stock origin.

Table 1.—Preliminary Prince William Sound Management Area commercial salmon harvest, 2009.

District	Permits	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Bering River District	83	16	4,217	45,522	1	5	49,761
Copper River District	486	9,456	896,469	207,776	16,759	8,622	1,139,082
Coghill District	377	174	103,415	19,168	276,925	1,323,732	1,723,414
Eshamy District	357	67	539,370	1,695	77,539	286,367	905,038
Montague District	202	88	10,210	1,475	29,300	672,860	713,933
Unakwik District	10	1	1,975	0	0	374	2,350
Drift Gillnet Total	511	9,802	1,555,656	275,636	400,524	2,291,960	4,533,578
Eshamy District	27	47	152,642	49	4,251	50,748	207,737
Set Gillnet Total	27	47	152,642	49	4251	50748	207,737
Eastern District	19	0	55	1,221	95,071	4,752	101,099
Northern District	91	0	92	69	2,065,148	15,234	2,080,543
Coghill District	56	3	1337	1,758	1,028,789	12,926	1,044,813
Northwestern District	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern District	144	32	67,802	2,581	7,481,863	233,661	7,785,939
Montague District	10	0	2	927	58,652	0	59,581
Southeastern District	3	0	32	183	36,698	2,887	39,800
Unakwik District	2	0	1,153	0	0	10	1,163
Purse Seine Total	159	35	70,473	6,739	10,766,221	269,470	11,112,938
Solomon Gulch Hatchery	1	0	313	17,424	732,380	3916	754,033
Cannery Creek Hatchery	1	0	0	0	817,985	0	817,985
Wally Noerenberg Hatchery	1	0	0	0	1,396,069	604,625	2,000,694
Main Bay Hatchery	1	0	133,560	0	0	0	133,560
Armin F. Koernig Hatchery	1	0	0	0	4,240,637	0	4,240,637
Hatchery Total^a		0	133,873	17,424	7,187,071	608,541	7,946,909
Donated Fish	35	0	47	0	0	0	47
Educational Permit	2	50	8	0	75	25	158
Personal Use	335	876	6,446	767	61	69	8,219
Sport ^b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subsistence ^b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Total		926	6,501	767	136	94	8,424
PWS Total Harvest		10,810	1,919,145	300,615	18,358,203	3,220,813	23,809,586

^a Hatchery sales for hatchery operating costs.

^b Harvest reporting and analysis not yet completed.