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



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### 2009 Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #5 Prince William Sound and Copper River Announcement

Districts Affected: Copper River, Coghill, Eshamy Main Bay, Southwestern, Montague

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, May 25 for a 12-hour period. Waters of the inside closure area described in 5 AAC 24.350(1)(B) will be **CLOSED**. This area is waters north of a line from:

the Steamboat South marker at 60°22.31'N, 145°33.5'W, to  
the west side of Pete Dahl channel, (60°18.89'N, 145°30.99'W), to  
the west end of Grass Island, (60°18.30'N, 145°28.42'W), to  
the east end of Grass Island, (60°15.24'N, 145°17.89'W), to  
the west end of Kokenhenik Bar, (60°15.00'N, 145°16.20'W), to  
the east end of Kokenhenik Bar, (60°13.65'N, 145°09.46'W), to  
the west end of Softuk Bar, (60°13.68'N, 145°05.78'W), to  
the Coffee Creek West marker at 60°14.13'N, 144°58.31'W.

Waters north of a line connecting these points is closed to commercial and subsistence fishing during this opening.

**Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.**

The Miles Lake sonar began counting on Monday, May 18. From May 18-22, a total of 33,744 salmon were counted versus a minimum cumulative inriver goal of 24,040 for May 22. The midnight to 6 am count this morning was 2,676 for an expanded estimate of 10,704 salmon anticipated past the sonar today.

Past May 22 cumulative harvest averages for sockeye salmon are 5-year 145,118, 10-year 157,077, and 20-year 167,726. For Chinook salmon these averages are 9,544, 12,858 and 15,457. In 2008, 72,347 sockeye and 4,748 Chinook salmon were harvested by this date. This is the tenth largest sockeye salmon harvest to date since 1969. This is the smallest Chinook salmon commercial harvest to date since 1980.

Permit holders are reminded that finfish of any species retained for homepack in Alaskan waters from a

commercial harvest must be reported on a fishticket as retained but not sold, (5AAC 39.010).

The southern boundary of the Copper River District is defined in 5AAC 24.301 as, “ a line three miles due south from a line from ...the southernmost tip of Pinnacle Rock to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the tip of Hook Point on Hinchinbrook Island...”. The positions of the two points that define the **outermost line** that is the legal southern boundary of the Copper River District are 146°15.12'W , 60° 17.05'N (3 mi S of Hook Pt.) and 144°36.23'W, 59°44.57'N (3mi S of Pinnacle Rk.).

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet fishing for 60-hours at 8:00 am on Monday, May 25 with an additional 84-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Thursday, May 28. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Pt. Chalmers Subdistrict is a line connecting the following points:

147°26.59'W., 60°20.03'N.,  
147°35.35'W., 60°14.75'N.,  
147°44.41'W., 60°02.50'N.

Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Drift gillnet gear greater than 60 mesh in depth **will be permitted in the Pt. Chalmers Subdistrict ONLY.**

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District excluding the WNH SHA will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 60-hour period from 8:00 am on Monday, May 25 until 8:00 pm on Wednesday, May 27. An 84-hour period is anticipated to begin on Thursday, May 28 at 8:00 am.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District excluding the AGZ will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 60-hour period from 8:00 am on Monday, May 25 until 8:00 pm on Wednesday, May 27. An 84-hour period is anticipated to begin on Thursday, May 28 at 8:00 am.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** A total of 409,000 remote release chum salmon are forecast to return to the Armin F. Koernig (AFK) Hatchery. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27. The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of a line from 60° 03.66'N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.63' N. lat., 148° 01.70' W. long. will open to purse seine fishing for 60-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, May 25 with an additional 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, May 28. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. Additionally, Marsha Bay, on Knight Island, will open in early June to target a forecast run of 8,400 remote release sockeye. These sockeye salmon have an average run timing of June 15 to August 1.

#### **Marine Mammals:**

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 certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. The 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 Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (or visit <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/observers/mmapform.pdf> for a copy).
- 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 [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) 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.” 16 U.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 mammals and regulations concerning them, please call NMFS at 1-907/271-5006.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 1-800/478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, May 27.

Announcement recordings are available at 907-424-7535.

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region2/crhome.php> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region2/pwshome.php> (Prince William Sound 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.

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