



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: July 4, 2026

CONTACT: Todd Johnson and Jeremy Botz
Finfish Area Management Biologists
(907) 424-3212

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery Announcement #16

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will remain closed to commercial drift gillnet fishing. The Copper River District will open to subsistence fishing at 7:00 am on Monday, July 6 for a 12-hour fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon expanded inside closure area will be **OPEN** during this subsistence fishing period. **Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements providing additional fishing opportunity based on Miles Lake sonar passage trends may occur at any time inseason.**

The grass bank marker line is defined in 5 AAC 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.

Sockeye salmon abundance trends at the sonar indicate a smaller than forecast run with passage projections through the end of sonar operation suggesting that the inriver goal is likely to be met. Continued closure of the commercial fishery is warranted until abundance indices suggest there is likely to be a harvestable surplus of Upper Copper River sockeye salmon.

Forecast, harvest, sonar apportionment, and fish wheels indicators of Chinook salmon abundance all suggest a weak Copper River Chinook salmon run. Chinook salmon abundance in the commercial fishery peaks during the end of May through early June. Miles Lake Sonar project apportionment data (Figure 1) indicate that the cumulative count of large Chinook salmon is low for the date. The escapement goal was met in 4 out of the last 7 years. The current trend in large Chinook salmon passage indicate that count levels at the end of sonar operation are likely to be around the lower end of the escapement goal.

Cumulative sonar count through 7/3 is 396,740 fish whereas 444,991 fish would be expected by this date based on historical timing applied to the 2026 inriver goal. The 0600 count for 7/4 is 4,134 fish. For the week ending

July 4, the actual Copper River Delta survey count was 44,600 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 28,229- 66,722. The cumulative commercial harvest to date is 4,172 Chinook and 228,277 sockeye salmon.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: Bering River District will remain closed. For the week ending July 4, the Bering River Delta survey count was 14,175 sockeye salmon versus the anticipated range of 11,015-24,232.

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND GILLET FISHERIES: Gillnet depth restrictions, as specified in 5 AAC 24.331(b)(6), **WILL NOT BE IN EFFECT** in the Coghill District, Eshamy District, Montague, and Unakwik District fisheries starting **8:00 am, Monday, July 6.**

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding the Granite Bay and Esther Subdistricts and the WNH THA and SHA, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 24-hour fishing period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6. Through Friday, July 3, the Coghill River weir had passed a total of 3,373 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated cumulative total of 8,056 fish. Fishing time remains reduced in general district waters to decrease the harvest of Coghill Lake sockeye salmon. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 24-hour period that started on Thursday, July 2 were 5,350 chum and 3,100 sockeye salmon with 71 deliveries reported.

PWSAC requests that the Granite Bay and Esther Subdistricts remain closed for the entirety of this commercial fishing period. Cost recovery harvests will continue at WNH as run entry and hatchery escapement warrants. An estimated 20,000 fish available as brood of the 228,000 goal have been collected to date.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, excluding the MBH THA, SHA, and AGZ, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6. Preliminary harvest estimates from the 36-hour period that started on Thursday, July 2 were 36,400 sockeye and 7,900 chum salmon with 362 deliveries reported.

PWSAC recommends excluding the MBH THA, SHA, and AGZ for this fishing period to facilitate additional brood collection. Fish are being collected behind the barrier seine for brood and 3,218 of the 12,000 fish goal have been moved into the holding pond. PWSAC's cumulative gillnet revenue goal is 74% complete.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6.

SEINE FISHERIES: An aerial survey of Eastern and Northern districts was conducted on Wednesday, July 1. Fish observations from this survey were minimal.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict, **north of 60°12.56' N. lat. and east of a line from 60° 12.56'N., 147° 20.25'W. to 60° 20.00'N., 147° 14.30'W.,** will open to purse seine fishing for 48 hours starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6, for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 9, and a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Saturday, July 11. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. The estimated harvest for the 48-hour period ending on July 1 was 11,800 chum salmon with 41 reported deliveries. A total of 840,000 chum salmon are forecast to return to Port Chalmers Subdistrict.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing for 48 hours starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 6, for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 9, and a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Saturday, July 11. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The estimated harvest for the 48-hour period ending on

July 1 was 8,100 chum and 429 sockeye salmon with 26 reported deliveries. A total of 330,000 chum salmon are forecast to return to AFK Hatchery. Historical harvest timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

Copies of the regulation booklet, *2025-2028 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound*, are available in the Cordova and Anchorage ADFG office. [2025-2028 Prince William Sound Area Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations](#)

ALL buyers purchasing fish in the PWS Management Area are required to complete a Processor Registration Form. Contact the Cordova office for any questions regarding registration.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be released by 2:00 pm on Wednesday, July 8.

Announcement recordings are available for gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345.

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.

Figure 1.- Miles Lake Sonar large salmon apportionment, 2019-2026.

