

## Sand Point Fishermen Looking For A Good Season

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Erik Wander/KMXT

With the 2009 commercial salmon season set to open in Sand Point in a few days, the fishery is looking forward to another good year. And after last year's unexpectedly positive returns, there's always hope in Sand Point of exceeding preseason projections.

KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Sand Point does not have the resources to produce a formal forecast for its commercial salmon fishery, according to Fish and Game area biologist Aaron Poetter. He made a distinction between a forecast and a projection, which Fish and Game does make for Sand Point each year. The projection is based on an average of total commercial harvest over the past five years. Poetter said this year's projection is slightly over two-million sockeye and about eight-million pink salmon.

-- (Poetter  
1 40 sec. "Those will kind of be our ... to  
work out for everybody.")

Poetter said it's too early to tell if things will work out quite as well this year or to predict whether or not similar conditions will produce similar results as last year. However, he said some early signs could be positive indicators.

-- (Poetter  
2 20 sec. "We do have some more ... quality  
that they were getting.")

Poetter expects effort  
this season to be similar to that of last year, but he said  
that the more promising forecasts for pink salmon in Southeast  
Alaska this year compared with last could affect effort in Sand  
Point.

-- (Poetter  
3 15 sec. "We did see a few boats ... talking  
about five, ten boats.")

The  
Sand Point area will see few changes in its management strategy this year from  
previous years. Poetter said June openings are on schedule, and that after  
that, Fish and Game will evaluate local stocks and escapements for post-June  
plans.

-- (Poetter  
4 33 sec. "We'll see how our local ... some good harvests over there.")

The test fishery will  
begin the first week of July, during which Fish and Game will charter a vessel  
and test the threshold for immature salmon, which is set at 100 immature salmon  
per set that are caught in a three-and-a-half inch seine web. The test fishery  
determines whether certain areas will re-open to seiners and set-netters, or  
remain closed.

-- (Poetter  
5 44 sec. "Basically, we go out and ... do not go into the threshold.")

Fish and Game will hold a  
preseason fishery stakeholders' meeting Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Aleutians  
East Borough building in Sand Point. Poetter said the  
open-forum meeting is an opportunity to discuss the upcoming salmon season.  
Included on the agenda will be 2009 projections, management strategy and the  
test fishery. Poetter said fishermen, industry representatives and interested  
members of the community are encouraged to attend.

I'm  
Erik Wander.

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