

Kodiak Salmon Season Underway

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Erik Wander/KMXT

The Kodiak area commercial salmon season starts today (Tuesday), and while its early for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to gauge how the season will play out in terms of effort levels and harvest, there is cause for optimism.

KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

Fish and Game doesn't yet have enough information upon which to base a reliable forecast for the Kodiak area commercial salmon season, but area management biologist Jeff Wadle said the department will soon. Wadle said he expects effort to remain similar to that of last year, at least with regard to set-netters.

-- (Wadle
1 17 sec. "We don't have any requirements ...
big pick up in seiners.")

Wadle
said Fish and Game starts managing for pink salmon in July at the very beginning of the run, adding that pink numbers are expected to build up by the end of July and into August. He said last year was a particularly disappointing year for both sockeye and pinks.

-- (Wadle
2 13 sec. "Last year was a weak year ... for pretty much all species.")

Early indications suggest that this year will be similarly weak, at least for sockeye. But Wadle said Fish and Game has high hopes for pinks this season. He said last year about eight-point-seven million pink salmon were harvested, and that this year those numbers should rise dramatically.

-- (Wadle
3 23 sec. "The Karluk run at this point ... pinks
this year, hopefully.")

Wadle
said Fish and Game will be able to gather significant information regarding run
strength and effort levels during the initial 33-hour fishing
period, which begins at noon in the Central and North Cape sections of the Northwest Kodiak district and in the Alitak
district. He said that information will
in turn go a long way toward predicting the course of the rest of the season.

-- (Wadle
4 32 sec. "I'll be able to look at the ... waiting
and seeing right now.")

Fish and Game's preliminary
forecast for the pink salmon harvest in the Kodiak Management Area is about 22-point-one
million fish, a number well above last year's total harvest and just above the
10-year average. Sockeye numbers are expected to be about the same as last
year, when roughly 1.8 million sockeye were harvested, significantly below the
10-year average. Also opening at noon today and remaining open until further
notice, are the Inner Kitoi, Outer Kitoi, Duck Bay and Izhut (IZH-you-wit) sections
of the Afognak district, as well as the Foul Bay and Waterfall Bay special
harvest areas.

I'm
Erik Wander.

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