



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
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Federal Subsistence Board News Release



Forest Service

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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERY FOR SOCKEYE SALMON CLOSED IN FEDERAL WATERS OF THE HATCHERY CREEK DRAINAGE

CRAIG, Alaska - The Craig Ranger District Ranger, as in-season manager, is closing the Federal subsistence sockeye fishery to all users in Federal public waters of the Hatchery Creek drainage due to a low adult sockeye return in 2008. The closure will be effective 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 9, 2008 and continue until 11:59 p.m., September 7, 2008.

Ranger Greg Killinger has announced that he is acting immediately to protect sockeye salmon in the Hatchery Creek drainage on Prince of Wales Island. The Federal Subsistence Board has delegated to him this in-season management authority.

From July 10 to July 31, 2008, the Hatchery Creek drainage will be closed to all Federal subsistence fishing. Beginning August 1, 2008, the drainage will open to allow subsistence harvest of coho salmon and will be limited to the use of rod and reel or dip net gear. Any sockeye caught must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

Based on current stream and weir counts, the Hatchery Creek sockeye return is low in abundance in 2008. Although it is possible that the run may be later than normal this year, indications are that the run is extremely low. A weir is located approximately one mile upstream from the falls. The weir count to date is 90 sockeye. The weir count in 2007, as of the same date, was 2765 which was also 60 percent of the total run. The current estimate of sockeye seen at the Hatchery Falls is approximately 200. The falls impact sockeye migration, and make sockeye highly vulnerable to both the rod and reel and dip net fisheries. Surveys below the falls to Sweetwater Lake reveal few sockeye.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is also taking emergency action to close the drainage to sport fishing for sockeye due to the low numbers of sockeye. This closure will last through the month of July. If sockeye numbers still appear to be low, further emergency action may be taken.

The USDA Forest Service manages subsistence fisheries in fresh waters of the Tongass National Forest. The ADF&G continues to manage sport fisheries in fresh waters of Prince of Wales Island. This special action has been coordinated with, and parallels actions being taken by ADF&G as they apply to the sport fishery on the Hatchery Creek drainage. Both USDA Forest Service and ADF&G managers will continue to monitor Hatchery Creek sockeye. If numbers of sockeye improve, both agencies may take action to supersede these emergency actions.

For additional information, please contact Maureen Clark, Office of Subsistence Management, toll-free at 800-478-1456 or (907) 786-3888; Greg Killinger or Jeff Reeves at (907) 826-3271; or Phil Sammon at (907) 228-6201. Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program can be found on the web at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/home.html>.

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