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Advisory Announcement
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SOUTHEAST ALASKA/YAKUTAT SUMMER TROLL FISHERY

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announces the following information concerning the status of winter and summer commercial troll Chinook salmon, and the directed coho and chum salmon summer troll fisheries.

The Wild Fish Conservancy legally challenged the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) over the Biological Opinion for the Southeast Alaska salmon fishery, which is the document that gives Endangered Species Act “incidental take” coverage and allows Southeast Alaska Pacific Salmon Treaty salmon fisheries to operate. On May 2, District Court Judge Jones remanded the Biological Opinion to NMFS to fix its errors and vacated the incidental take statement (ITS) for the Southeast Alaska winter and summer commercial Chinook salmon troll fisheries until NMFS new documents are enacted. With the recent denial of an appeal to U.S District Court, the State of Alaska has filed an appeal to the Ninth Circuit and a motion for a stay of the district court’s vacatur order of the ITS. The State has requested a decision by June 23 so fishermen have adequate time to prepare for the summer season, which opens July 1.

Unless the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals grants a stay of the vacatur order or NMFS has the required documents completed and approved, Alaska will not have ITS coverage for Chinook salmon during the summer troll fishery. Accordingly, the Southeast Alaska commercial troll fishery will be closed to the retention of Chinook salmon throughout the summer fishing season. Any update on the pending appeal or the amended Biological Opinion will be issued in a future advisory announcement.

Directed summer troll fisheries for coho and chum salmon will proceed by regulation with retention of Chinook salmon prohibited. Fishery details will be provided in a late June summer troll fishery advisory announcement.

Advisory Announcement web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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