

The Weekly Fishing News

September 14, 2018

Cordova

Alaska

The unbelievably good weather has persisted in Southcentral Alaska. The air temperature hit 75 degrees yesterday, setting a new record for the warmest 13th of September in at least 103 years. Along with the warmth, we have had essentially no precipitation this month. This is striking because September is normally our wettest month of the year and we typically receive 15 inches of rain.

Needless to say, the local rivers are running low and clear, producing novel angling conditions. Some anglers have had good success sight-casting to migrating Coho "silver" Salmon in shallow water. I enjoyed a few hours of this type of fishing along Alaganik Slough last weekend. I have a blast timing my casts to drop flies and lures ahead of salmon running over sand bars with their backs out of the water. Anglers who have located schools of fish holding in deep pools are also reporting success. If your favorite "honey hole" isn't producing, consider covering water until you find fish. Lots of dime-bright silver salmon are being caught out there, but they aren't necessarily holding in all the same places as when the water is high. For example, the long runs within view of the Ibeck Bridge have been less productive this season than anglers have come to expect. Here's a hot tip for the fly anglers- Good numbers of silver salmon have been holding within the "fly only" area near the Eyak River Weir. Remember that Eyak Lake is closed to salmon fishing except for within 200 yards of the weir.



As fall progresses, Coho Salmon blush into their spawning hues and their flesh becomes less desirable as table fare. Anglers should be prepared to quickly and efficiently release dark Coho Salmon as these fish are critical to produce the next generation. On the Copper River Delta, Coho Salmon are counted against your bag limit if they are removed from the water. Carrying a landing net can greatly facilitate a quick and gentle release while keeping the fish submerged. Use single siwash barbless hooks. Barbs are designed to hold bait on the hook and pinching the barb will not result in lost fish if you exercise proper fish fighting techniques. Barbless hooks are also easier to remove if you accidentally hook yourself or your buddy, possibly preventing an embarrassing, but surprisingly common, E.R. visit. Speaking of bait, consider putting away the roe if you have already caught your limit or if you are catching and releasing dark Coho Salmon. Catch and release angling is a lot less successful for bait fisherman as salmon tend to take bait deeply, resulting in damage to their fragile gills.

Clouds and showers are finally in the forecast for next week, so get out and enjoy the sun while it lasts. Be ready for a surge of fresh salmon if the water comes up next week.



Proper catch and release includes keeping Coho Salmon submerged at all times. A landing net greatly facilitates the release process. Here Stella, a shepherd/lab mix, directs me as I release a large female, supporting the next generation of Coho Salmon in Alaganik Slough.



A small black bear has been prowling the banks of Alaganik Slough in search of stringers. Wildlife viewing is one of the joys of angling in Alaska, but keep your fish and fish waste securely out of reach of bears for their sake and yours! Todd Dahl Photo.

Would you like to receive the Cordova Weekly Fishing News via e-mail? Please let us know and we will put you on the distribution list. Also, if you have a good photo from a recent Cordova fishing trip, e-mail us a copy and we will try to get it printed in the next edition of the Weekly Fishing News. E-mail me at: ladelfio@fs.fed.us. Thank you! –Luca.



USDA Forest Service is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Reference herein to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government, and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.