

Weekly Fishing News

Cordova, Alaska

August 26, 2015



Local subsistence fishermen have some bright, fresh coho to enjoy this winter. They had a pretty good hike, but it appears the catch was worth it.

Ibeck Creek Still the Best Game in Town

The fishing around Cordova isn't exactly red hot, but it's not ice cold if you're willing to put in some time and hike around.

Most of the coho salmon limits have been taken downstream from the bridge of Ibeck Creek. That's at mile 7 of the Copper River Highway for those of you who are new to the area. Anglers have been systematically hitting the deeper holes as they move downstream, maybe a half mile to a mile downstream.

Ibeck was a little cloudy after last week's rain, but the water's running clear now. The rain that we're getting as I write this on Wednesday doesn't look like it'll be enough to muddy the water. So I'd be careful about spooking the fish.

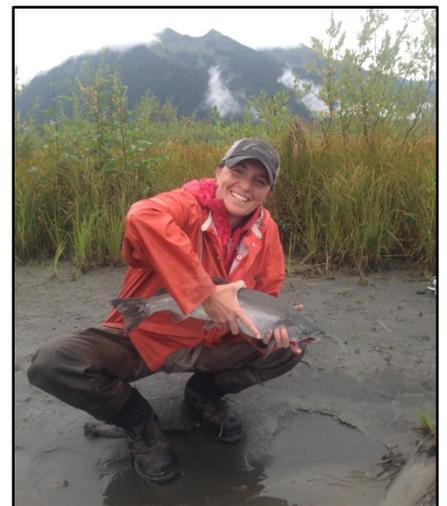
The water in Ibeck is getting low and shallow, and it's easy to wade out and find yourself

standing where you should be fishing – I know, I've done it plenty of times. The coho can be moving or holding just out of the fastest current, so they're not always in the deepest area. Take a few casts in an area before you wade there if it's any deeper than a few feet.

Visitor from Maryland Nails First Coho

OK, OK, it's not huge, but it is a wild Alaska salmon and it's plenty big enough for a good dinner. I bet it tasted absolutely delicious (certainly better than anything you could pull out of the weird waters of Chesapeake Bay).

Most of these early fish have been smaller males running 4 to 5 lbs, but today I saw some bigger fish averaging 7 or 8 lbs. The largest was about 10 lbs from Eyak River. Salmon throughout Alaska have been



running a bit small this year. The coho salmon derby winner at Seward was 16+ lbs, but usually the winner is 17 to 19 lbs. The runners up were smaller than usual too.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game just issued the following announcement:

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Copper River District is closed to commercial salmon fishing. The standard management strategy for coho salmon is one or two 24-hour periods per week depending on escapement and harvest levels. For the week ending August 29, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 19,800 coho salmon versus an anticipated range of 9,298 – 19,468. Harvest from the fishing period that closed Tuesday, August 25 was 13,000 coho and 2,200 sockeye salmon with 216 deliveries reported.

Although the aerial index count is slightly above the anticipated range, that may be due to last week's rain bringing fish into the streams. The commercial fishermen I've talked to say there haven't been many fish on the flats and those have been small. On the other hand, recreational fishers trolling in Orca Bay have been getting quick limits. At this point it's hard to tell whether it's going to be a big year or not, but the run seems a little late and small.



What the Heck ??? Mitch Michaud took this photo of an ocean sunfish basking at the surface off the coast of Montague Island yesterday. They can grow to 10 ft or larger and weigh more than a ton. Sunfish are usually found in warm waters, like off the coast of California, but the surface waters of the Gulf of Alaska have been warmer this year. They mostly feed on jellyfish, and the seiners will tell you there have been huge schools of jellyfish throughout Prince William Sound. A second sunfish was spotted farther south by Jeannie Cove.

Eyak River: The river still hasn't cleared up from the heavy rains awhile back. The water levels have dropped, however, and the river should be more fishable by the weekend. Just because the water is murky, it doesn't mean the fish can't see your lure. A guy told me the fish can see a silhouette against the sky, so he just used larger, darker lures. The fish are more scattered in the higher waters, but as the river drops, they'll be concentrated in the deeper holes. The fish below were caught this afternoon (Wednesday). The largest one is about 10 lbs, and the small fish are Dolly Varden.

Alaganik Slough: Early in the season I like Alaganik, if for no other reason, just to get away from the crowds on Ibeck and Eyak. I fished there last Saturday, but the tide was low, and there were only a few fish hanging in the main channel. At this time of the year the fish move up with the high tide, but as the tide goes out and the water drops, most of them will move back downstream. This weekend will have some higher tides in the middle of the day, so I'll give it a try then. We caught one small coho – about 4 lbs – and another about 8 lbs, and had a few others on. One larger one broke my friend's line – so remember to check your drag and feel your line for any nicks, or just cut off the first 10 or 20 ft and start fresh.



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