

Weekly Fishing News

Cordova, Alaska

September 11, 2015



Eyak River is producing limits of coho salmon for those who brave the stormy weather and cover a lot of water. The big fish here was about 11 pounds.

Streams are Rising But so are the Fish

The weather's wet and cold, but the high water is telling the coho salmon that it's time to move upstream. So forget about the rain, now is the time to be out there fishing.

Over the past three days we've had a bit over 4 inches of rain. Yes, the high water means that the fish can be scattered, and you might think that it's like looking for a needle in a haystack. But from the number of fish I saw being caught this Friday afternoon, there must be plenty of needles out there. Put on a big Pixee that you can cast a mile, and you can cover a lot of water.

Eyak River: High but Clear

I talked with two anglers returning with limits after a longer than usual day of fishing. They're happy to say the fish are bigger now than they were in the earlier part of the season. They had to search a little harder for the fish, however.

The coho seem to be resting out of the main current around the fallen trees about a mile downstream. You might also find them resting in eddies and backwaters where smaller streams enter the river. If they're on the move, they'll be close to the bottom, but not where the current is strongest. The water is still surprisingly clear, but there's enough color so that you can't see them in water that's more than 3 or 4 ft deep. I'd be sure to cover those areas and especially any seams where the water changes color. The coho will be using the murkier water to hide in.

Fish Cleaning Tables to be Removed; Please use Tables at Harbor or Hippie Cove

The tables at the Eyak River boat launch and Ibeck Creek are going to be removed next week. These were set up as part of the recommendations made by local residents for the Cordova Angler Management Plan. Besides providing a solid surface for filleting fish, users could toss the carcasses in the stream where the nutrients would return to the ecosystem. However, with all the fish being caught, the carcasses are piling up and may be attracting bears. So, for safety, please clean your fish elsewhere.



Murky Water No Excuse at Ibeck

A little muddy water isn't keeping anglers from catching limits just upstream from the bridge at Ibeck Creek. ADF&G Sportfish Biologist Jay Baumer reports seeing a number of folks going home with limits, Friday afternoon. He says anglers are using almost anything – bait, spinners, flies, “They're all happy.”

Anglers in the photo are fishing the seam where slower, somewhat murky water from the east meets the swifter glacially tinged flow from the main channel of Ibeck Creek.

Fish headed upstream seem to be resting in the slower water after just having battled their way through the fast water under the bridge. The murky water also provides some cover where the fish can't be seen – except when they run into the shallow water and jump. I saw five fish on the bank when I took this photo, and saw two others caught in the 10 minutes I was there.

Alaganik Slough – You can have the place to yourself

As much as I like to fish Alaganik Slough, I can't recommend going there. Not a soul was there Friday afternoon and probably for a good reason. The heavy rain and high tide have flooded the area, and from past experience I know the fish can be anywhere. Unlike Eyak River, in the lower slough there are no log jams where fish will rest. There could be some fish at the mouths of the tributaries if they haven't already bolted upstream to the spawning grounds. But you'll need a boat to get around. The best bet may be around mile 21 of the Copper River Highway, where the road runs close to the upper slough. There are some logs and a few backwaters there and also near the picnic area at mile 22.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: ADF&G reports for the week ending September 5, the actual Copper River delta aerial survey count was 21,880 coho salmon versus an anticipated range of 16,147 – 33,807. The drift gillnet harvest to date is 91,950 coho salmon.

The aerial survey is not an exact count, but it gives ADF&G biologists an idea of the run strength, timing, and escapement compared to the historical data. The commercial fishers I've talked to say fishing has been slow, and the rough weather has lowered the amount of fishing effort.

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