

POST JUNE SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
THE SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA, 1997

By

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INTRODUCTION

The South Peninsula consists of Pacific Ocean coastal waters of the Alaska Peninsula Salmon Management Area from Kupreanof Point west to Scotch Cap on Unimak Island and consists of the Southeastern, South Central, Southwestern, and Unimak Districts (Figure 1).

Prior to 1974, post June South Peninsula salmon fisheries were open five days per week, with total season closures on August 10 to provide adequate escapement and maintain product quality. During 1974 and 1975, the fishery was severely restricted to rebuild pink salmon runs. From about 1976 to 1991, the salmon fishery was managed by emergency order based on local stock run strength. Fishing periods from July 6 to about July 18 were based on chum salmon run strength, and from July 18 through about August 20 on pink salmon run strength. Fishing continued into late August in years of strong pink runs. Migratory salmon were also harvested during these openings, and in some years contributed substantially to the total post June harvest. Fishing periods during September and October were based on coho salmon run strength (McCullough 1995). The Southeastern District Mainland (SEDM) fishery was managed through July 25 on a separate management plan (5 AAC 09.360) based on an allocation of Chignik bound sockeye salmon (Campbell 1995).

In November 1991 the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) established the Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula (Table 1). This plan allows for the harvest of local stocks through July 19 only in a few terminal areas and closes the remainder of the South Peninsula formerly open in post June fisheries. The BOF decision was based on the concept that local pink and chum salmon could be caught in terminal areas early in the season without sacrificing product quality, while at the same time allowing migratory salmon to pass through South Peninsula waters. After July 19, the BOF authorized the opening of traditional cape harvest areas to South Peninsula fishers. The BOF concluded that to maintain product quality, allow for available processing capacity, and not risk overharvesting escapement buildups, the traditional cape harvest areas would need to be open. In accordance with an Alaska State Superior Court order issued on July 10, 1992 by Judge Hopwood, an injunction was granted staying the enforcement of the Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula (5 AAC 09.366). On March 2, 1993 Judge Hopwood granted summary judgment in favor of the BOF and this management plan was again in effect.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The South Peninsula post June fishery will be managed according to the Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula as adopted by the BOF (Alaska Department of Fish and Game, ADF&G, 1992) during the November 1991 meeting (Table 1). Under this plan, commercial salmon fishing from July 1-19 will be restricted to terminal fishing areas. Fishing periods will be based on local stock run strength, and measured by harvest and escapement rates. These areas include Zachary Bay, Inner Pavlof Bay, and the Canoe Bay, Cold Bay, Thin Point, and Morzhovoi Bay Sections (Figures 2-4). All fishing periods will be regulated by emergency order.

From July 1-19, Zachary Bay and Inner Pavlof Bay will be managed on chum salmon run strength. The Morzhovoi Bay and Thin Point Sections will be managed on sockeye salmon run strength.

During 1997, Thin Point Cove waters will remain closed during July 6-9 due to minus tides. Fishing periods at Thin Point Cove during minus tides will be avoided to prevent salmon from backing out of the lagoon and into the fishery. The Thin Point Lake sockeye escapement goal is 17,500 fish with a range of 14,000 to 28,000 salmon. There is a long delay between the time sockeye enter Thin Point Lagoon and when they pass through the Thin Point Lake weir. Aerial survey estimates of salmon in Thin Point Lagoon are combined with the weir count to provide the overall estimated escapement. After July 9, Thin Point Cove fishing periods will be based on observed sockeye salmon escapements.

Both sockeye and chum salmon run strength will be considered in managing the Cold Bay Section. Fishing periods will initially be two days or less per week. If salmon runs are strong and effort levels are not excessive, more fishing time may be allowed. The first post June fishing period will be on or shortly after July 6. Whenever possible, openings will coincide with fishing periods in the SEDM.

From July 20-August 31, the South Peninsula may open to commercial salmon fishing by emergency order. Fishing periods will be based on the strength of local pink, chum, and sockeye runs. The initial fishing period is anticipated to be on July 20, and the period should remain open for two days. The July 20 fishing period should provide sufficient data regarding pink salmon run strength and immature salmon concerns to justify subsequent fishing time. Whenever possible, openings in the Southeastern, South Central, Southwestern, and Unimak Districts will be concurrent. The department will work closely with fishermen and processors during the season and may need to adjust fishing periods to enhance product quality.

Beginning September 1, the length of fishing periods will be based on coho run strength, although late pink and chum run strength will be considered when determining fishing periods. No attempt will be made to have concurrent openings between the Southeastern District and the remainder of the South Peninsula.

In an effort to accommodate enforcement activities, with minimum impact on legal fishing activities, the following general opening and closing schedule will be used^a:

Month	Starting Time	Closing Time
June	6:00 a.m.	10:00 p.m.
July	7:00 a.m.	9:00 p.m.
August	8:00 a.m.	9:00 p.m.
September	9:00 a.m.	8:00 p.m.
October	9:00 a.m.	8:00 p.m.

^a Circumstances may create changes in this fishing schedule.

HARVEST PROJECTIONS

The 1997 post June chinook harvest is projected to be approximately 5,000 salmon. This is greater than the 1987-96 average harvest of 3,577 salmon (Table 2). The 1997 post June sockeye salmon harvest is projected to be 500,000 salmon, which is below the 1987-96 average harvest of 583,103 salmon. The 1997 post June coho salmon harvest is projected to be 300,000 salmon, which is similar to the 1987-96 average harvest of 315,766 salmon. The 1997 post June pink salmon harvest is projected to be 7,000,000 salmon, which is similar to the 1987-96 average of 7,040,142 salmon. However, even if large numbers of pink salmon are available, the actual pink harvest may be limited due to lack of markets. The 1997 post June chum salmon harvest is projected to be 800,000 salmon, which is comparable to the 1987-96 average of 870,605 salmon.

Beginning in 1993 when the Post June salmon management plan went into effect, South Peninsula July 1-19 salmon harvest (minus the SEDM catch from July 1-19) has predictably dropped from the 1987-92 average harvest of 553,831 salmon composed of 2,060 chinook, 245,565 sockeye, 36,612 coho, 105,321 pink, and 164,272 chum to the 1993-96 average of 42,007 salmon composed of 17 chinook, 16,451 sockeye, 880 coho, 10,180 pink, and 14,480 chum salmon (Table 3). From 1987-96, the South Peninsula July 20-August 31 harvest (minus the SEDM catch from July 20-25) averaged 8,355,632 salmon, composed of 2,319 chinook, 392,980 sockeye, 268,509 coho, 6,965,994 pink, and 725,829 chum salmon (Table 4). During the past ten years (1987-96), the entire South Peninsula fall fisheries harvest, September 1 through the end of the season, has averaged 108,461 salmon, composed of 15 chinook, 36,204 sockeye, 24,938 coho, 6,883 pink, and 40,421 chum salmon (Table 5).

IMMATURE SALMON

The department will conduct a test fishery in the Shumagin Islands Section prior to July 20 to assess the presence of immature salmon. Immature salmon are not anticipated to be a problem in the terminal fishing areas allowed to open from July 1-19. However, if large numbers of immature salmon are present in any area, either before or after July 19, such locations will be closed to purse seine gear until the number of immature salmon drops to an acceptable level. ADF&G has defined an acceptable harvest of immature salmon during normal purse seine fishing operations, at approximately 100 per set.

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Table 1. Post June salmon management plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula.

5 AAC 09.366. POST JUNE SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SOUTHERN ALASKA PENINSULA.

(a) The department may open the following areas to salmon fishing from July 20 through September 30:

(1) the Shumagin Islands Section of the Southeastern District, excluding all waters of Zachary Bay south of the latitude of 55° 22' 39" N. lat.

(2) the South Central District, excluding the Canoe Bay Section and all waters of the East and West Pavlof Bay Sections north of the latitude of Black Point (55° 24' 34" N. lat.);

(3) the Southwestern District, excluding the Cold Bay, Thin Point, and Morzhovoi Bay Sections, and the Unimak District;

(b) The department may open the following areas to salmon fishing from July 6 through September 30:

(1) in the Shumagin Islands Section of the Southeastern District, all waters of Zachary Bay south of the latitude of 55° 22' 39" N. lat.

(2) in the East and West Pavlof Bay Sections of the South Central District, all waters north of the latitude of Black Point (55° 24' 34" N. lat.);

(3) the Canoe Bay Section of the South Central District;

(4) in the Southwestern District, the Cold Bay, Thin Point and Morzhovoi Bay Sections.

Table 2. South Peninsula July 1- end of the season commercial salmon harvest, (minus Southeastern District Mainland July 1-25 harvest), all gear combined, 1987-96 and the projected 1997 harvest.

Year	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1987	3,881	410,755	224,543	1,189,211	911,414
1988	6,797	635,804	502,960	6,767,066	1,307,053
1989	4,106	825,372	440,171	6,879,878	531,759
1990	5,480	875,237	288,728	2,299,161	672,937
1991	2,423	465,874	311,825	9,952,671	788,955
1992	4,003	765,575	414,809	9,101,628	863,505
1993	3,524	497,933	209,816	9,765,709	504,894
1994	1,642	408,089	249,066	6,640,031	1,591,094
1995	2,000	730,670	252,089	16,067,096	1,154,861
1996	1,914	215,721	263,654	1,738,973	379,578
Average 1987-92	4,448	663,103	363,839	6,031,603	845,937
Average ^a 1993-96	2,270	463,103	243,656	8,552,952	907,607
Average 1987-96	3,577	583,103	315,766	7,040,142	870,605
Projected 1997	5,000	500,000	300,000	7,000,000	800,000

^a Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula in effect for the entire season.

Table 3. South Peninsula July 1-19 commercial salmon harvest, (minus Southeastern District Mainland July 1-19 harvest), all gear combined, 1987-96.

Year	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1987	2,793	247,746	26,273	55,819	166,677
1988	3,896	271,502	52,624	101,318	289,125
1989	847	265,174	40,316	176,816	137,863
1990	3,534	292,505	35,393	80,312	246,935
1991	395	117,170	18,195	66,711	21,773
1992	895	279,293	46,873	150,952	123,259
1993	8	8,220	10	1,524	11,298
1994	15	26,477	348	2,449	1,550
1995	27	20,537	315	29,082	42,244
1996	16	10,569	2,848	7,663	2,826
Average 1987-92	2,060	245,565	36,612	105,321	164,272
Average ^a 1993-96	17	16,451	880	10,180	14,480
Average 1987-96	1,243	153,919	22,320	67,265	104,355

^a Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula in effect for the entire season.

Table 4. South Peninsula July 20-August 31 commercial salmon harvest, (minus Southeastern District Mainland July 20-25 harvest), all gear combined, 1987-96.

Year	Number of Fish				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1987	1,076	139,677	176,230	1,131,893	692,658
1988	2,897	339,667	423,839	6,603,458	998,583
1989	3,247	525,266	384,131	6,702,781	383,838
1990	1,939	515,590	230,017	2,218,265	352,807
1991	2,026	328,648	273,293	9,885,960	750,999
1992	3,050	473,167	332,613	8,949,151	736,760
1993	3,485	473,327	192,841	9,763,670	490,678
1994	1,609	356,131	212,155	6,637,288	1,375,370
1995	1,970	599,476	225,691	16,036,304	1,102,757
1996	1,893	178,851	234,281	1,731,174	373,842
Average 1987-92	2,373	387,003	303,354	5,915,251	652,606
Average ^a 1993-96	2,239	401,946	216,242	8,542,109	835,662
Average 1987-96	2,319	392,980	268,509	6,965,994	725,829

^a Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula in effect for the entire season.

Table 5. The entire South Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, all gear combined, September 1 - end of the season, 1987-96.

Year	Number of Fish				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
1987	12	23,332	22,040	1,499	52,079
1988	4	24,635	26,497	62,290	19,345
1989	12	34,932	15,724	281	10,058
1990	7	67,142	23,318	584	73,195
1991	2	20,056	20,337	0	16,183
1992	58	13,115	35,323	1,525	3,486
1993	31	16,386	16,965	515	2,918
1994	18	25,481	36,563	294	214,174
1995	3	110,657	26,083	1,710	9,860
1996	5	26,301	26,525	136	55,877
Average 1987-92	16	30,535	23,873	11,030	29,058
Average ^a 1993-96	14	44,706	26,534	664	57,466
Average 1987-96	15	36,204	24,938	6,883	40,421

^a Post June Salmon Management Plan for the Southern Alaska Peninsula in effect for the entire season.

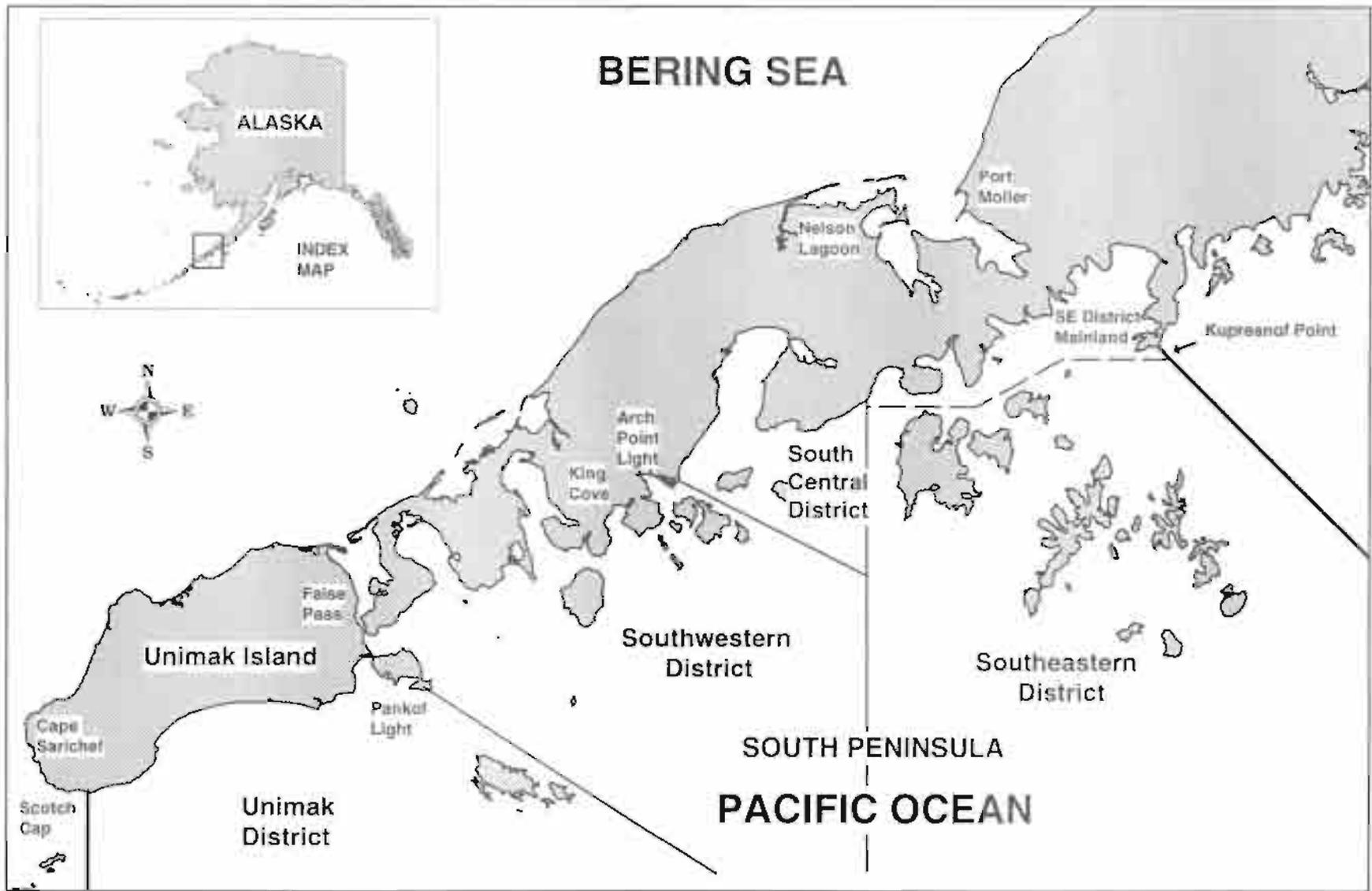


Figure 1. Map of the Alaska Peninsula Management Area with the salmon fishing districts defined.

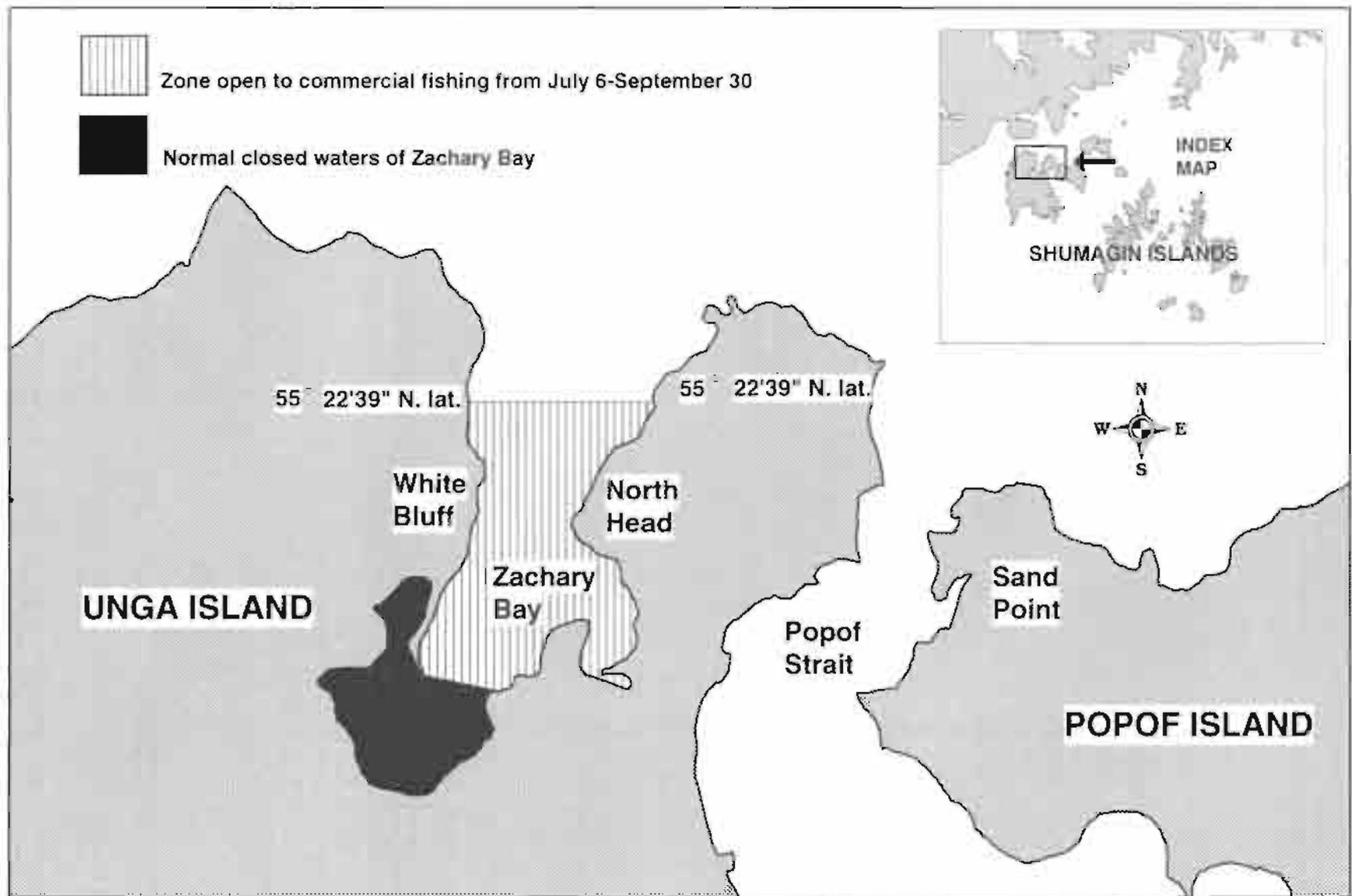


Figure 2. Map of Zachary Bay with closed waters and post June fishing areas defined.

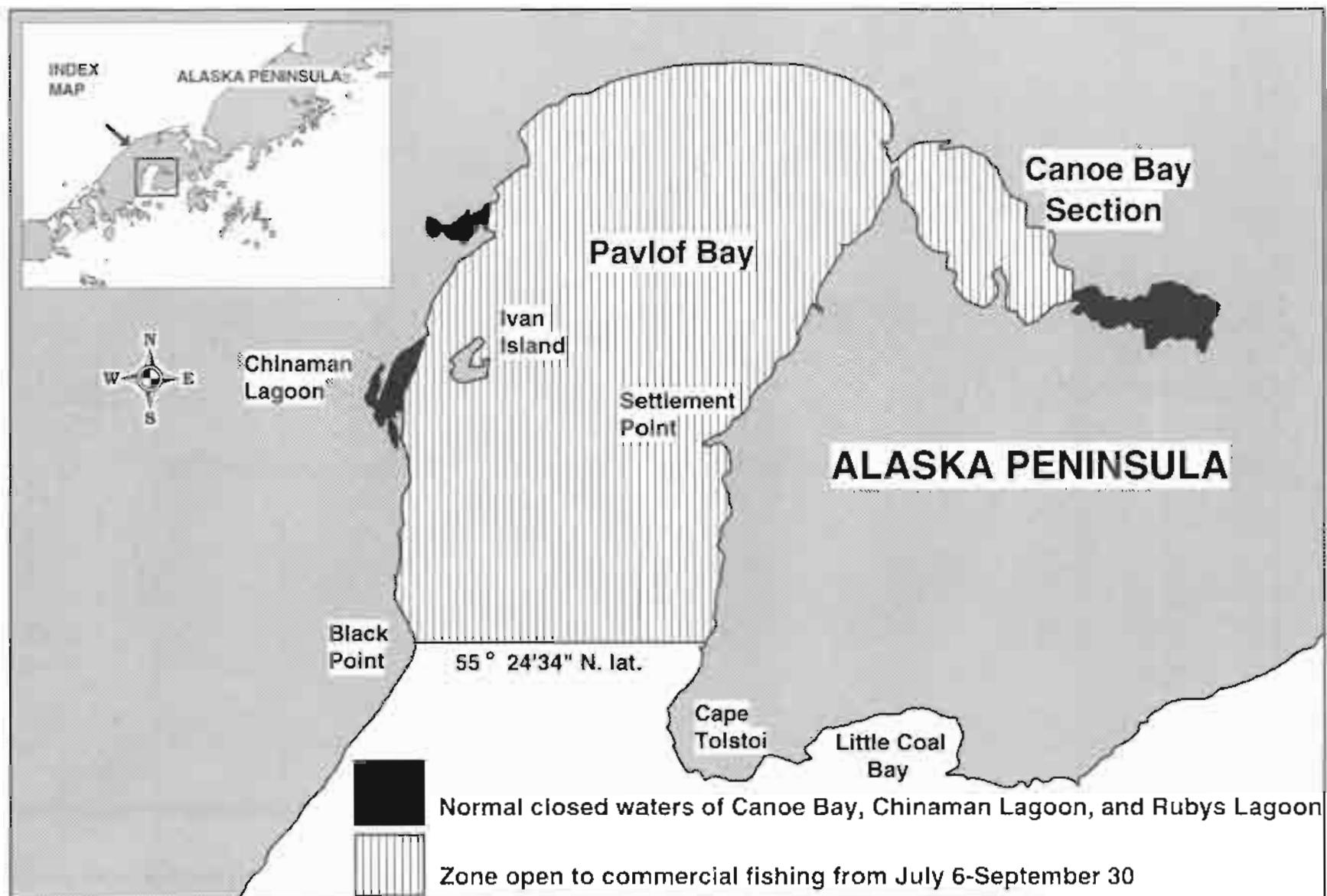


Figure 3. Map of Pavlof and Canoe Bay Sections with closed waters and post June fishing areas defined.

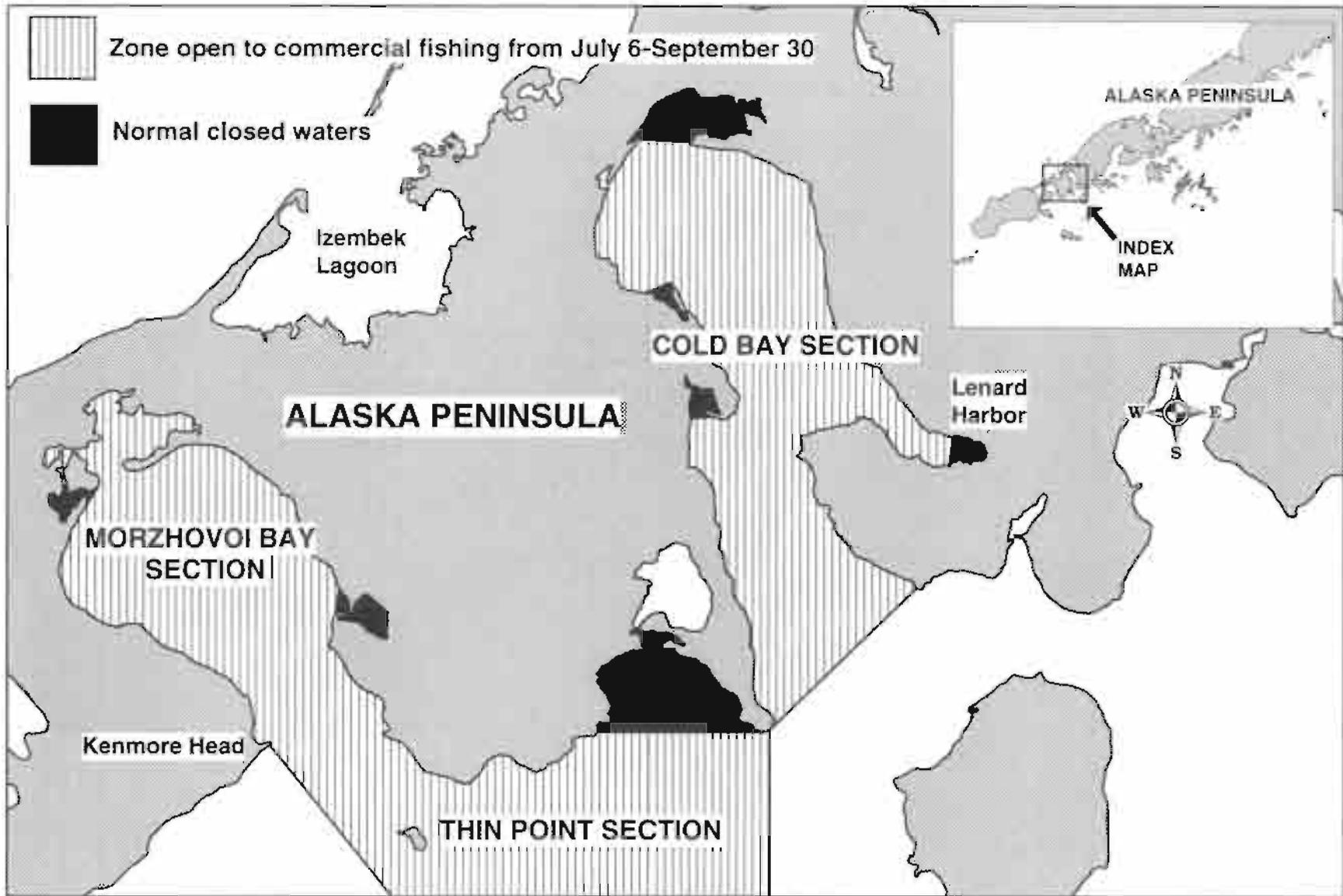


Figure 4. Map of Cold Bay, Thin Point, and Morzhovoi Bay Sections with July 6-September 30 fishing areas and approximate normal closed waters of some terminal areas.

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