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## Advisory Announcement

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### 2021 Lower Cook Inlet Commercial Salmon Fishery Outlook

This outlook is provided to assist the commercial salmon industry in planning for the 2021 season in the Lower Cook Inlet (LCI) Management Area. Information regarding the forecasts used to create this document will soon be available on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) web site:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#forecasts>

Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) manages the Trail Lakes Hatchery (TLH), Port Graham Hatchery (PGH), and Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (TBLH). Hatchery forecasts can be found by contacting CIAA directly.

Inseason modifications to harvest projections, season opening dates, and strategies for weekly fishing periods may occur as fisheries develop. Management of LCI commercial salmon fisheries is based in the Homer ADF&G office. Fishery announcements from the Homer office will routinely occur on Fridays at 2:00 p.m., and at other times as required. Interested individuals may sign up to receive email announcements here: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>. Recorded commercial fisheries announcements will be available at 907-235-7307. Advisory announcement information is also transmitted by email to all interested members of the public. Harvest information and fisheries announcements are located on the ADF&G web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon>. The first advisory announcement is expected to be released at 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 23.

CIAA forecasts a total of 364,400 hatchery-produced sockeye and 1.0 million pink salmon to return to LCI release sites in 2021. CIAA projects to harvest 276,000 sockeye (75%) and 1.0 million pink salmon (100%) for cost recovery and broodstock. All returning hatchery pink salmon will be used for cost recovery and broodstock at both Port Graham and Tutka Bay hatcheries. The overall commercial common property harvest from LCI is forecast to be 2.1 million salmon, of which, 4% are anticipated to be of hatchery origin harvested from special harvest areas (SHAs). Additional hatchery-origin fish are harvested incidentally with wild fish outside of SHAs (Table 1).

#### Set Gillnet Fishery

The **Southern District** is expected to open for the 2021 season on Tuesday, June 1 at 6:00 a.m. for a 24-hour period. Subsequent commercial fishing periods will likely be 48 hours in length beginning at 6:00 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, as specified in regulation. The harvest projections for this district and gear are 400 Chinook, 2,800 coho, 1,700 chum, 26,300 sockeye, and 15,100 pink salmon (Table 1). The Port Graham Subdistrict is anticipated to open to commercial set gillnet harvest on June 1 and remain on a schedule concurrent with other areas in the Southern District for this gear. Fishing time in the Port Graham Subdistrict will be closely linked to escapement levels in English Bay and Port Graham rivers. Further information may be found in Annual Management Reports for this area at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#management>.

### **Purse Seine Fishery**

Portions of the **Southern District** will open to commercial purse seine harvest in mid-June, coinciding with enhanced runs to Leisure and Hazel Lakes. Historically, this run peaks from July 12–18. CIAA forecasts a return of 76,400 sockeye salmon to Leisure and Hazel Lakes combined, as well as 46,300 sockeye salmon to Tutka Bay. Commercial fishing time after mid-July will be based on pink salmon escapement at Humpy Creek, Seldovia Bay, Port Graham, and other locations in this district. No hatchery pink salmon are expected to be available for commercial harvest from SHAs.

Hatchery sockeye salmon runs to the **Eastern District** are forecasted by CIAA to be 211,700 fish (Table 1) of which CIAA has identified 201,800 (95%) for cost recovery and brood stock purposes. Wild stock harvest opportunity in the Eastern District will be linked to aerial survey observations of wild sockeye and pink salmon escapements to Aialik Lake and other spawning systems in this district. Surveys of chum salmon stocks in Resurrection Bay and Day Harbor may be flown, weather, time, and budget permitting.

Portions of the **Outer District** may open to commercial harvest in mid-July focusing on sockeye salmon runs to McCarty Fjord lakes. In recent years, escapement to McCarty Fjord systems (Delight, Desire, and Delusion Lakes) have been monitored by aerial survey and weir at Delight Lake. Sockeye salmon escapement into Delight Lake will be monitored again by CIAA using a weir in 2021.

Waters in the western portion of the Outer District may be open by mid-July, focusing on pink and chum salmon runs to Port Dick, as well as Windy and Rocky bays. There are numerous other smaller systems in the Nuka Passage area that are also monitored for chum and pink salmon. Dogfish Bay, Chugach Bay, and Port Chatham in the western portion of the district will be evaluated for chum and pink salmon harvest potential from August to early September. The harvest projections for the Outer District are 4,000 sockeye, 23,600 chum, and 1.7 million pink salmon (Table 1).

Portions of the **Kamishak Bay District** typically open by regulation to commercial harvest on June 1. Commercial harvest projections for this district are 54,000 sockeye, 7,600 chum, and 63,200 pink salmon (Table 1). The majority of sockeye salmon harvest is expected to come from the Chenik Lake run while the chum salmon harvest has historically been spread throughout the district. The department expects to open Chenik Lagoon in mid-June and remain open throughout much of the season. Hatchery-released sockeye salmon returns to the Kirschner Lake outfall remote release site are forecast to be 30,000 fish, all of which are expected to be required for hatchery cost recovery (Table 1). The department tracks salmon escapement in this district using remote video monitoring sites at Chenik and Mikfik Lakes, as well as regular aerial survey observations of pink and chum salmon index streams.

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>

Table 1.–Projected salmon harvests for Lower Cook Inlet, 2021.

| <b>SOCKEYE SALMON</b>   |                  |                   |                      | Total projected harvest = | <b>221,100</b>    |
|---|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Natural stocks, (area-wide commercial harvest)<sup>a</sup></b> |                  |                   |                      |                           | <b>132,700</b>    |
| Southern District, (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)         |                  |                   |                      |                           | 48,400            |
| Southern District, (set gillnet)                                  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 26,300            |
| Eastern District, (Aialik Bay)                                    |                  |                   |                      |                           | 0                 |
| Outer District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 4,000             |
| Kamishak Bay District, (excluding Kirschner Lake Subdistrict)     |                  |                   |                      |                           | 54,000            |
|   | <b>Hatchery</b>  | <b>Broodstock</b> | <b>Cost recovery</b> |                           | <b>Commercial</b> |
| Resurrection Bay  | 211,700          | 12,800            | 189,000              |                           | 9,900             |
| China Poot and Hazel Lakes  | 76,400           | 0                 | 0                    |                           | 76,400            |
| Tutka Bay Lagoon  | 46,300           | 5,000             | 39,200               |                           | 2,100             |
| Kirschner Lake  | 30,000           | 0                 | 30,000               |                           | 0                 |
| Port Graham Bay   | 0                | 0                 | 0                    |                           | 0                 |
| English Bay Lakes   | 0                | 0                 | 0                    |                           | 0                 |
| <b>Hatchery stocks (area-wide totals)</b>                         | <b>364,400</b>   | <b>17,800</b>     | <b>258,200</b>       |                           | <b>88,400</b>     |
| <b>PINK SALMON</b>  |                  |                   |                      | Total projected harvest = | <b>2,575,700</b>  |
| <b>Natural stocks, (area-wide commercial harvest)<sup>a</sup></b> |                  |                   |                      |                           | <b>1,851,500</b>  |
| Southern District (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)          |                  |                   |                      |                           | 65,100            |
| Southern District (set gillnet)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 15,100            |
| Eastern District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 100               |
| Outer District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 1,708,100         |
| Kamishak Bay District   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 63,200            |
|   | <b>Hatchery</b>  | <b>Broodstock</b> | <b>Cost recovery</b> |                           | <b>Commercial</b> |
| Tutka Bay Lagoon  | 830,500          | 176,800           | 653,700              |                           | 0                 |
| Port Graham Bay   | 178,400          | 108,000           | 70,400               |                           | 0                 |
| <b>Hatchery stocks (area-wide totals)</b>                         | <b>1,008,900</b> | <b>284,800</b>    | <b>724,100</b>       |                           | <b>0</b>          |
| <b>CHUM SALMON - Natural production<sup>a</sup></b>               |                  |                   |                      | Total projected harvest = | <b>33,500</b>     |
| Southern District (purse seine)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 600               |
| Southern District (set gillnet)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 1,700             |
| Eastern District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 0                 |
| Outer District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 23,600            |
| Kamishak Bay District   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 7,600             |
| <b>COHO SALMON - Natural production<sup>a</sup></b>               |                  |                   |                      | Total projected harvest = | <b>6,400</b>      |
| Southern District (purse seine)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 1,300             |
| Southern District (set gillnet)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 2,800             |
| Eastern District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 0                 |
| Outer District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 500               |
| Kamishak Bay District   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 1,900             |
| <b>CHINOOK SALMON – Natural production<sup>a</sup></b>            |                  |                   |                      | Total projected harvest = | <b>600</b>        |
| Southern District (purse seine)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 100               |
| Southern District (set gillnet)                                   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 400               |
| Eastern District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 0                 |
| Outer District  |                  |                   |                      |                           | 0                 |
| Kamishak Bay District   |                  |                   |                      |                           | 0                 |
| <b>Total LCI projected commercial - all salmon species =</b>      |                  |                   |                      |                           | <b>2,113,200</b>  |

Note: Rows and columns may not total exactly due to rounding to the nearest hundred fish.

<sup>a</sup> Area-wide harvest forecasts for natural production were produced by ADF&G using trend forecast models based on historical harvests (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#forecasts>).

<sup>b</sup> Provided by Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, based on parent year releases and recent ocean survival.