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Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: September 11, 2025

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2025 KOTZEBUE SOUND SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERY

In 2025, the commercial salmon season opened in the Kotzebue District by regulation on July 10 and the last scheduled commercial fishing period was on August 27. A total of 33 commercial permits fished during 24 scheduled fishing periods for a total chum salmon harvest of 34,488 fish, falling short of the preseason harvest forecast of 50,000–150,000 fish. There were two registered buyers for the 2025 season: Copper River Seafoods and Arctic Circle Wild Salmon.

The fishery was initially open for 8 hours from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the first 10 commercial periods. Fishing time was increased to 9 hours per period from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., except that on August 1, August 17, and August 18 periods were scheduled for 12 hours from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Fishing was slow and the department responded by limiting the commercial fishing time to 4 days per week, except for the week of July 27 when fishing was scheduled for 3 periods, one of which was a 12-hour opening on August 1. Commercial fishing was further restricted to two days on August 17 and August 18 to two 12-hour periods and reduced to two 9-hour periods on August 26 and 27.

The 2025 commercial harvest of 34,488 chum salmon was below the recent 10-year average harvest of 322,829 chum salmon (2015–2024) and the fourth lowest harvest since the state started managing the Kotzebue District in 1962 (Table 1). Additionally, 2 Chinook salmon, 8 sockeye, and 7 coho salmon were sold. There were 2 Chinook, 13 sockeye, 27 chum, 15 pink, 38 coho salmon, 28 Dolly Varden, and 62 sheefish kept for personal use.

There were 33 permit holders that sold fish in 2025, which is well below the recent 10-year average of 74 (Table 1). The highest daily fishing effort occurred on August 4 when 22 permit holders fished. Chum salmon had an average weight of 7.8 pounds in 2025, near last year's average weight of 7.7 pounds.

A total of 268,095 pounds of chum salmon was sold at an average price of \$0.35 per pound. This year's average price was significantly less than the 2024 price of \$0.60 per pound. The total exvessel value for 2025 was \$93,248, less than the recent 10-year average of \$1.1 million, but better than last year's \$25,091 (Table 1).

ESCAPEMENT

Primary commercial fishery management objectives are to provide adequate escapement throughout the duration of the chum salmon run to ensure sustainability of the fishery and to provide for subsistence priority. No escapement monitoring occurred in 2025 due to staff and budget constraints.

SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHERY

Subsistence salmon harvest is not assessed annually. Residents of the Kotzebue District were contacted by the department to gauge subsistence fishermen's success in obtaining chum salmon to meet their needs. There were indications that subsistence fishing was slow, however it was reported to be better than the previous season and fishermen were meeting their subsistence needs.

Table 1.– Kotzebue District chum salmon catch and dollar value, 1962–2025.

Year	Total Catch	Number of Permits	Average Catch per Permit Holder	Gross Value of Catch to Permit Holders
1962	129,948	84	1,547	\$4,500
1963	54,445	61	893	\$9,140
1964	76,449	52	1,470	\$34,660
1965	40,025	45	889	\$18,000
1966	30,764	44	699	\$25,000
1967	29,400	30	980	\$28,700
1968	30,212	59	512	\$46,000
1969	59,335	52	1,141	\$71,000
1970	159,664	82	1,947	\$186,000
1971	154,956	91	1,703	\$200,000
1972	169,664	104	1,631	\$260,000
1973	375,432	148	2,537	\$925,000
1974	627,912	185	3,394	\$1,822,784
1975	563,345	267	2,110	\$1,365,648
1976	159,796	220	726	\$580,375
1977	195,895	224	875	\$1,033,950
1978	111,494	208	536	\$575,260
1979	141,623	181	782	\$990,263
1980	367,284	176	2,087	\$1,446,633
1981	677,239	187	3,622	\$3,246,793
1982	417,790	199	2,099	\$1,961,518
1983	175,762	189	930	\$420,736
1984	320,206	181	1,769	\$1,148,884
1985	521,406	189	2,759	\$2,137,368
1986	261,436	187	1,398	\$931,241
1987	109,467	160	684	\$515,000
1988	352,915	193	1,829	\$2,581,333
1989	254,617	165	1,543	\$613,823
1990	163,263	153	1,067	\$438,044
1991	239,923	142	1,690	\$437,948
1992	289,184	149	1,941	\$533,731
1993	73,071	114	641	\$235,061
1994	153,452	109	1,408	\$233,512
1995	290,730	92	3,160	\$316,031
1996	82,110	55	1,493	\$56,310
1997	142,720	68	2,099	\$187,978
1998	55,907	45	1,242	\$70,587
1999	138,605	60	2,310	\$179,781
2000	159,802	64	2,497	\$246,786
2001	211,672	66	3,207	\$322,650
2002	8,390	3	2,797	\$7,572
2003	25,763	4	6,441	\$26,377
2004	51,077	43	1,188	\$64,420
2005	75,971	41	1,853	\$124,820
2006	137,961	42	3,301	\$229,086

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Year	Total Catch	Number of Permits	Average Catch per Permit Holder	Gross Value of Catch to Permit Holders
2007	147,087	46	3,198	\$243,149
2008	190,550	48	3,970	\$385,270
2009	187,562	62	3,025	\$376,554
2010	270,343	67	4,035	\$860,125
2011	264,321	89	2,970	\$867,085
2012	227,965	83	2,747	\$567,664
2013	319,062	66	4,834	\$689,163
2014	636,187	94	6,768	\$2,879,016
2015	305,383	105	2,908	\$867,583
2016	400,417	86	4,656	\$1,123,248
2017	463,749	98	4,732	\$1,839,637
2018	695,153	95	7,317	\$2,279,477
2019	494,593	92	5,376	\$1,559,260
2020	149,808	68	2,203	\$542,308
2021	96,492	52	1,856	\$332,064
2022	475,624	65	7,317	\$2,107,610
2023	141,781	54	2,626	\$733,061
2024	5,392	24	225	\$25,091
2025	34,518	33	1,046	\$93,167
Average 2020–2024	173,819	53	2,845	\$748,027
Average 2015–2024	322,839	74	3,922	\$1,140,934

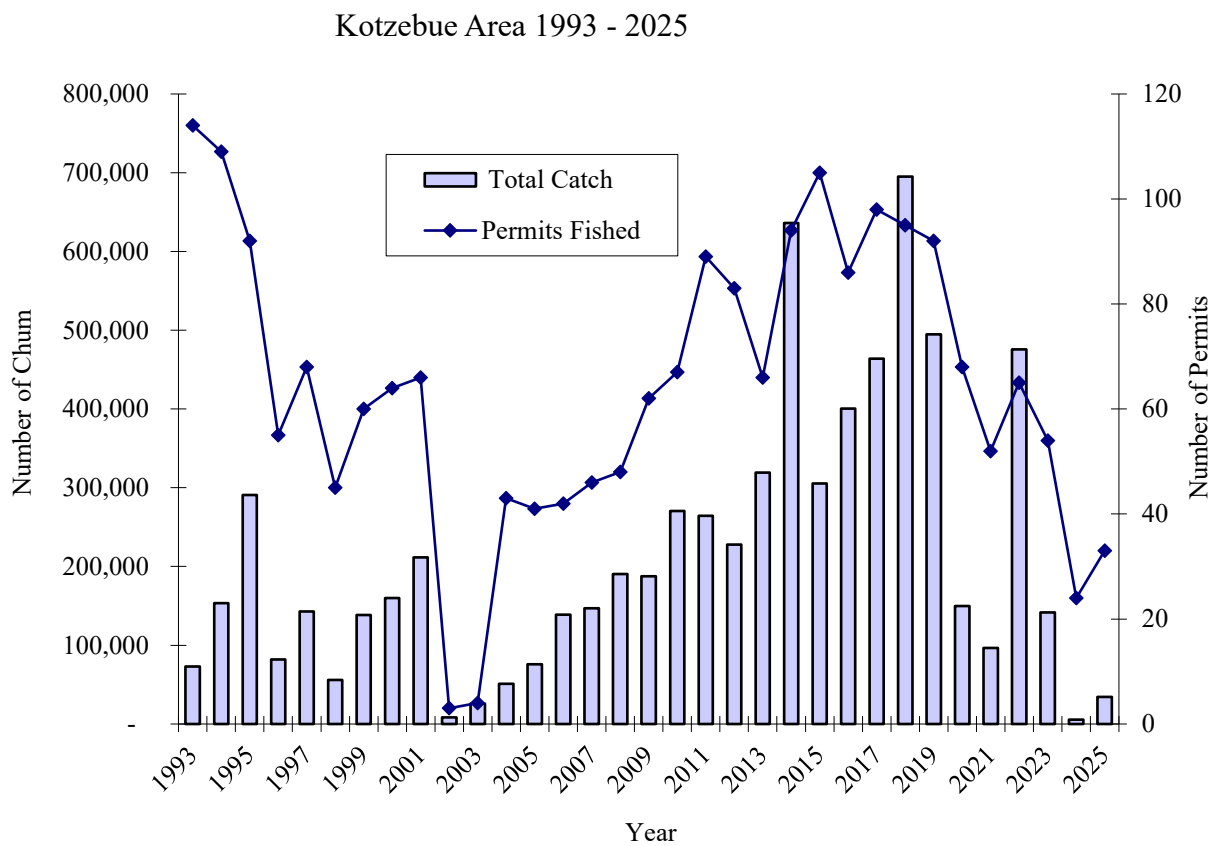


Figure 1.— Kotzebue Area commercial chum salmon harvest and number of permits fished, 1993–2025.