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Advisory Announcement
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2026 KOTZEBUE SOUND SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERY

The fishery was initially opened, by regulation, on July 10 for an 8-hour commercial period from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Harvests from this commercial opening were above average and the department scheduled an additional five 8-hour commercial periods the following week maintaining the same hours (7/12-17). Harvests from these openings were generally above average and an additional five 8-hour periods were scheduled for the next week (7/19-24). Harvest continued to improve and the fishery was placed on a schedule of six 8-hour periods per week (48 hours total per week) from 10:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. that continued till the season closed at 6:00 p.m. August 31. There were two registered buyers for the 2026 season.

A total of 38 commercial permits fished during 43 scheduled commercial salmon periods, which was below average participation (Table 1). Harvest for the 2026 commercial salmon season is confidential because less than 3 processors participated in the fishery and chose not to waive confidentiality. Total chum salmon harvest was above the most recent 5-year average but below the recent 10-year average and exceeded the preseason harvest forecast of 50,000–150,000 fish. Average weight for chum salmon harvested in the commercial fishery in 2026 was 7.86 lb., which is below the long-term average weight of 8.10 lb.

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 the subsistence priority. No escapement monitoring occurred in 2026 due to inclement weather and aircraft availability.

SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHERY

Subsistence salmon harvest is not assessed annually in the Kotzebue District. Residents were contacted by the department to gauge subsistence fishermen's success in obtaining chum salmon to meet their needs. Some fishermen reported their needs were being met, though there were indications that fishing was slow. It was generally agreed that subsistence fishing was much better this season than the previous season.

Table 1.– Kotzebue District chum salmon catch and dollar value, 2007–2026.

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
2026	confidential	38	confidential	
Average 2021–2025	150,761	46	2,614	658,199
Average 2016–2025	295,753	67	3,735	1,063,492