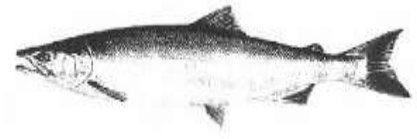


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**



NEWS RELEASE

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Lower Cook Inlet Salmon Fishery News Release #27

The Outer, Eastern, Southern and Kamishak Bay districts will close to purse seine harvest for the 2014 season at 12:01 AM on Sunday, September 14. The set gillnet fishery in the Southern District remains open through September 30 as per 5AAC 21.310. There have been no commercial deliveries reported since August 29 for purse seine, and August 15 for set gillnet. Subsistence harvest in the Port Chatham and Windy Bay subdistricts closed on August 1, however subsistence harvest remains open through September 30 in the Port Graham and Dogfish Bay (Koyuktolik) subdistricts, per 5AAC 01.560.

The preliminary estimate of the 2014 Lower Cook Inlet Area commercial salmon harvest based on current fish ticket data was 651,000 salmon. The harvest was composed of 298,000 pink, 278,000 sockeye, 73,500 chum, 791 coho, and 368 Chinook salmon. The harvest was comprised of 444,000 (68.2%) commercial common property fishery (CPF) fish, and 207,000^a (31.8%) hatchery cost recovery and broodstock fish.

Southern District

The 2014 preseason commercial common property harvest forecast for natural production in the Southern District was 800 sockeye and 79,000 pink salmon. Hatchery returns were not anticipated to contribute to Southern District commercial common property harvest in 2014 due to hatchery cost recovery and broodstock needs. The commercial salmon fishing season in the Southern District began on Monday, June 2. The preliminary purse seine harvest estimate for the 2014 season was 18 Chinook, 23,191 sockeye, 269 coho, 58,890 pink and 3,360 chum salmon. This compares to a previous 10-year harvest average of 66 Chinook, 30,722 sockeye, 609 coho, 26,283 pink, and 164 chum salmon. The preliminary set gillnet harvest estimate was 330 Chinook, 33,090 sockeye, 521 coho, 3,549 pink, and 5,372 chum salmon. The previous 10-year harvest average for this gear type is 362 Chinook, 22,593 sockeye, 1,245 coho, 3,534 pink and 1,675 chum salmon. Preliminary estimates show that pink salmon escapement in index streams was within the cumulative sustainable escapement goal (SEG) range of 59,700–178,500 fish. The weir at the English Bay River passed 7,876 sockeye salmon, which was within the SEG of 6,000–13,500 for this system.

Kamishak Bay District

The 2014 preseason wild stock commercial harvest forecast for the Kamishak Bay District was 49,300 sockeye and 23,200 chum salmon. CIAA forecasted a return of 8,200 sockeye salmon to the Kirschner Lake remote release site of which all would be required for cost recovery. Total preliminary estimated common property harvest was 12,137 sockeye, 44,227 pink and 4,449 chum salmon. In addition, 16,555 sockeye salmon were harvested by CIAA from the Kirschner Lake Special Harvest Area (SHA) for cost recovery purposes. This compares to a previous 10-year average of 72,408 sockeye, 26,422 pink and 50,707 chum salmon harvested in the common property fishery. Preliminary escapement survey indices for both chum and pink salmon show escapement levels within the respective SEG ranges of 65,550–141,600 for chum, and 25,950–203,400 for pink salmon. Video enumeration at Chenik Lake was used to document a minimum of 9,225 sockeye salmon. This was within the SEG range of 3,500–14,000 fish. Video documentation of returns to Mikfik Lake for this species estimated 16,678 fish. This was above the SEG range of 3,400–13,000 sockeye salmon for this lake.

Outer District

The 2014 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Outer District was 9,900 sockeye, 102,000 pink, and 36,700 chum salmon. The commercial salmon fishing season began in this district on Monday, June 30. Overall preliminary estimated harvest from 15 permit holders that participated was 24,264 sockeye, 163,938 pink and 59,702 chum salmon. This harvest compares to previous 10-year averages of 9,801 sockeye, 545,712 pink and 33,791 chum salmon. Preliminary escapement survey indices for chum salmon were within the SEG range of 12,850–34,600. Pink salmon were also within their SEG range of 54,500–237,200. Aerial surveys of Desire Lake were used to document 11,480 sockeye salmon. This was within the SEG range of 8,800–15,200 fish for Desire Lake. The Delight Lake weir was used to count 22,289 sockeye salmon. This was above the SEG range of 7,500–17,650 fish for this system.

Eastern District

Due to minimal returns in the last 10 years, no wild stock sockeye or pink salmon were forecast to be available for commercial common property harvest from the Eastern District in 2014. Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) forecasted a total return of 66,000 sockeye salmon to Resurrection Bay facilities. Total cost recovery harvest from this district was 126,071 sockeye salmon with 1,641 donated at the weir to members of the public. Escapement of 13,117 sockeye salmon through the weir at Bear Creek was sufficient to meet the “desired inriver passage” of 5,620–13,220 sockeye salmon. This goal is the combination of the SEG (700–8,300) as well as the estimated 4,920 sockeye salmon required for broodstock for the CIAA sockeye salmon program at Trail Lakes Hatchery. Aerial surveys of Aialik Lake were confounded by high levels of suspended silt and algae and documented only 450 sockeye salmon. This is below the SEG range of 3,700–8,000 fish for this system.

Table 1. Lower Cook Inlet commercial salmon harvest per preliminary fish ticket data, 2014.

District (or hatchery)	Permits	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Southern District	16	18	23,191	269	58,890	3,360	85,728
Outer District	15	0	24,264	0	163,938	59,702	247,904
Eastern District	<3 ^a	conf. ^a	conf. ^a	conf. ^a	conf. ^a	conf. ^a	conf. ^a
Kamishak Bay District	8	0	12,137	0	44,227	4,449	60,813
Purse seine total	20	18	64,898	269	267,808	67,865	400,858
Southern District	18	330	33,090	521	3,549	5,372	42,862
Set gillnet total	18	330	33,090	521	3,549	5,372	42,862
Commercial common property total		348	98,056	790	271,357	73,237	443,720
Hatchery cost recovery harvests							
Tutka Lagoon SHA			30,404		32	12	30,448
Resurrection Bay SHA		20	110,174	1	25	260	110,480
Bear Lake SHA			15,897				15,897
Kirschner Lake SHA			16,555		104	6	16,665
Hatchery broodstock harvests							
Tutka Lagoon SHA			5,202		25,062		30,264
Port Graham Subdistrict and SHA combined					6,098 ^b		6,098
English Bay River			na				
Bruin River					2,305 ^b		2,305
Bear Lake SHA			na	na			
donated- Bear Lake SHA			1,641				1,641
Hatchery total		20	179,873	1	26,723	278	206,895
LCI Total Harvest		368	277,861	791	298,080	73,515	650,615

^a Confidential data. Fewer than 3 permits reporting.

^b A total of 4,598 pink salmon were harvested in the Port Graham Subdistrict, and 2,305 from the Bruin River Subdistrict in common property fisheries and sold live to CIAA for use as broodstock. These fish were reported as CPF harvests and are included in the CPF total harvest. These fish are not included in the hatchery total harvest.