

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



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director*



Contact:
Glenn Hollowell, Area Finfish Management Biologist
Ted Otis, Area Finfish Research Biologist
Ethan Ford, Fisheries Biologist
Phone: (907) 235-8191

Homer Area Office
3298 Douglas Place
Homer, AK 99603
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2016 LOWER COOK INLET SALMON FISHERY OUTLOOK

General Information

This outlook is provided to assist the commercial salmon industry in planning for the 2016 season in the Lower Cook Inlet (LCI) Management Area. Preseason forecasts and recent 5 year commercial common property harvest averages are the basis for the information provided. Forecasts for LCI can be found on ADF&G's 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 or through the CIAA web site:

<http://www.ciaa.net.org>

Inseason modifications to harvest projections, season opening dates, and strategies for weekly fishing periods may occur as fisheries develop.

The forecasts for commercial common property fishery (CCPF) harvests by species are summarized in Table 1. The wild stock pink salmon forecast is derived from a spawner-recruit analysis, whereas run projections for other wild stock species are based on recent 5-year average historical production. Projected runs of hatchery-origin salmon are provided by CIAA. These projections of hatchery and wild stock runs will provide the basis for early-season management in all districts, with other management tools such as aerial survey estimates, weir counts, remote video monitoring and anticipated harvest used as the season progresses.

Management of LCI commercial salmon fisheries is based in the Homer area office. All emergency order (EO) announcements of fishery openings and closures are broadcast on VHF channel 10. As was done last year, fishery announcements from the Homer ADF&G office will routinely occur on Fridays at 2:00 PM, or earlier if possible. Announcement recordings will be available for commercial fisheries at 907-235-7307. Emergency order announcement information is also transmitted by email to all registered processors, local radio stations, news media and 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>

In addition, interested individuals may sign up to receive email announcements:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

The first announcement is anticipated to be released at 2:00 PM, Friday, April 29.

CIAA anticipates a total of 300,700 hatchery produced sockeye and 429,500 pink salmon to return to LCI release sites in 2016, valued at 2.7 million dollars excluding broodstock. CIAA anticipates harvesting 2.2 million dollars of returning hatchery produced salmon with the remainder available to the commercial common property fishery. The overall commercial common property harvest from Lower Cook Inlet is anticipated to be 548,000 salmon. Of which, 9.7% of the salmon are anticipated to be of hatchery origin (Table 1).

Set Gillnet Fishery

The **Southern District** is anticipated to open for the 2016 season on Thursday, June 2 at 6:00 a.m. for a 48-hour period. Following periods will likely be 48-hours in length beginning at 6:00 a.m. on Monday and Thursday, as specified in regulation. Harvests for 2016 are anticipated to be similar to the historic average. The 5-year average harvest for this area and gear are 300 Chinook, 1,400 coho and 4,500 chum salmon. The 5-year commercial harvest average for the wild sockeye salmon is 28,100 fish. The department's preliminary pink salmon forecast estimated a harvestable surplus of 47,000 fish from the Southern District; which is to be shared by commercial set gillnet and purse seine permit holders. Fishing time in the Port Graham Subdistrict will be closely linked to escapement levels to English Bay Lakes. Management priority will be to provide for subsistence needs (4,800–7,200 salmon). The Port Graham Subdistrict is anticipated to remain closed to commercial harvest until English Bay River escapement is tracking to meet the overall sockeye salmon spawning escapement goal (6,000–13,500) and hatchery broodstock goals. Further information regarding previous year's hatchery releases and commercial harvests may be found in Annual Management Reports for this area at:

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

Purse Seine Fishery

Portions of the **Southern District** are anticipated to open to purse seine harvest in mid-June coinciding with enhanced returns to Leisure and Hazel lakes. Historically this return peaks from July 10–16 (week 29). CIAA anticipates a return of 22,500 sockeye salmon to Leisure and Hazel lakes combined, as well as 82,700 sockeye salmon to Tutka Bay.

Commercial fishing time after mid-July will be correlated to pink salmon escapement at Humpy Creek, Seldovia Bay, Port Graham and other locations in this district. A total of 414,500 hatchery produced pink salmon are anticipated to return to release sites in the Southern District.

Hatchery sockeye salmon returns to the **Eastern District** are forecasted by CIAA to be 171,100 fish. Of those, 27,000 may be available for commercial common property harvest with the balance required for cost recovery and broodstock 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. In addition, surveys of chum salmon index systems in Resurrection Bay and Day Harbor will be flown weather and time permitting.

Portions of the **Outer District** may open to commercial harvest in mid-July focusing on sockeye salmon returns to McCarty Fjord lakes. Escapement to these systems is monitored by aerial survey (Delight, Desire, and Delusion lakes). In addition, waters in the western portion of this district may be open by this time focusing on pink and chum salmon returns 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 returning chum and pink salmon. In the far west end of this district, systems with the latest return timing: Dogfish Bay, Chugach Bay and Port Chatham will be evaluated for chum and pink salmon harvest potential from August to early September. The previous 5-year harvest average for this district is 14,300 sockeye and 56,800 chum salmon. The department has forecast a harvestable surplus of 194,000 pink salmon from this district. The parent year harvest of pink salmon in this district was 164,000 fish.

While portions of the **Kamishak Bay District** typically open by regulation to commercial harvest on June 1, portions of this district may open on Monday, May 30 targeting sockeye salmon returns to Mikfik Lake. This may occur if significant numbers of sockeye salmon are observed in this area at that time. The Mikfik Creek–McNeil Lagoon Salmon Fishery Management Plan directs fishery managers to prosecute the commercial fishery outside of the McNeil/Mikfik Lagoon to the maximum extent possible. Previous 5-year average harvests for this district (excluding the Kirschner Subdistrict) are 36,800 sockeye and 2,700 chum salmon with the majority of the sockeye salmon harvest attributed to Chenik Lake runs and the chum salmon harvest spread throughout the district. Commercial harvest of pink salmon from this district is anticipated to be 83,000 fish with much of the harvestable surplus in the Bruin Bay area. Hatchery released sockeye salmon to the Kirschner Lake outfall remote release site are anticipated to be 18,200 fish all of which will likely be required for hatchery cost recovery. 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 index streams.

Table 1.—Projected commercial common property harvests and hatchery returns for Lower Cook Inlet, 2016.

SOCKEYE SALMON				Total anticipated harvest =	156,605
Natural stocks, (5-yr average commercial harvest)					
Southern District, (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)					24,500
Southern District, (set gillnet)					28,100
Eastern District, (Aialik Bay)					0
Outer District					14,300
Kamishak Bay District, (excluding Kirschner Lake Subdistrict)					36,800
	Hatchery return	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest	Commercial common property harvest	
Sockeye salmon hatchery programs^a					
Resurrection Bay	171,081	13,000	131,081	27,000	
China Poot and Hazel lakes	22,476	0	22,476	0	
Tutka Bay Lagoon	82,695	12,000	50,695	20,000	
Kirschner Lake	18,158	0	18,158	0	
Port Graham Bay	0	0	0	0	
English Bay Lakes	6,305	400	0	5,905	
PINK SALMON, ADF&G Preliminary Pink Salmon Forecast^b				Total anticipated harvest =	324,000
Southern District (combined gear)					47,000
Eastern District					0
Outer District					194,000
Kamishak Bay District					83,000
	Hatchery return	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest	Commercial common property harvest	
Pink salmon hatchery programs^a					
Tutka Bay Lagoon	348,470	161,000	187,470	0	
Port Graham Bay	66,000	66,000	0	0	
Paint River fish ladder	15,000	0	0	0	
CHUM SALMON - 5-year average harvest				Total anticipated harvest =	65,290
Southern District (purse seine)					1,100
Southern District (set gillnet)					4,500
Eastern District					190
Outer District					56,800
Kamishak Bay District					2,700
COHO SALMON - 5-year average harvest				Total anticipated harvest =	2,040
Southern District (purse seine)					600
Southern District (set gillnet)					1,400
Eastern District					0
Outer District					40
Kamishak Bay District					0
CHINOOK SALMON – 5-year average harvest				Total anticipated harvest =	357
Southern District (purse seine)					55
Southern District (set gillnet)					298
Eastern District					0
Outer District					4
Kamishak Bay District					0
Total LCI anticipated commercial common property harvest- all salmon species =					548,292

^a Provided by Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, based on parent year releases and recent ocean survival.

^b Available online at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#/forecasts>.