

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



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KOTZEBUE CHUM SALMON HARVEST SEVENTH HIGHEST IN HISTORY

The commercial chum salmon harvest this year in Kotzebue ranks seventh highest in history and was the second highest harvest in over 30 years. The catch is now over 394,000 chum salmon and with four fishing periods remaining will need to surpass 418,000 fish to finish sixth highest.

The major buyer, Copper River Seafoods, has completed buying operations for the season. Although this year's run was not as strong as the last few years, the buyer was often able to secure enough cargo space on airplanes to keep the catch moving out of Kotzebue without any backups. Less than one-quarter of the 41 fishing periods this year required catch limits. Congratulations to the buyer and the crews and the fishermen.

A second buyer, Arctic Circle Wild Salmon, began buying in mid-August and plans to continue buying through the season end date of August 31. At the request of the buyer commercial salmon fishing will be open for 12 hours daily from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. beginning Sunday, August 28 through Wednesday, August 31 in the Kotzebue District.

The buyer has notified the department that they intend to buy from all permit holders and fishermen have the choice of delivering fish in the round or gutting their catch for a higher price.

There have been 87 permit holders that have fished so far this season compared to 105 permit holders that fished last season.

The Kobuk River test fish catch index ranked tenth highest in the 24-year project history.

If you have any questions concerning the fishery you can call the Kotzebue office at 442-3420, or the Commercial Fisheries office in Nome at 1-800-560-2271.