

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



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2017 BRISTOL BAY SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2017 Bristol Bay commercial salmon season. All data are preliminary.

The 2017 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of 56.5 million fish ranks 2nd out of the last 20 years (1997–2016) and was 62 % above the 34.9 million average run for the same period. The run to the Nushagak District was the largest in the history of the fishery. This year's Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was 42% above the preseason inshore forecast of 39.9 million fish. The Nushagak, Egegik, Togiak and Ugashik districts were higher than the preseason forecast while Naknek-Kvichak District was less than predicted. The 37.7 million sockeye salmon commercial harvest was 37% above the 27.5 million preseason forecast. All escapement goals were met or exceeded, with a total sockeye salmon escapement of 18.8 million fish. A total of 38,835 Chinook salmon were harvested in Bristol Bay in 2017. The harvests for other species are 1.8 million chum salmon; 239,980 coho salmon; and 35,352 pink salmon. The 2017 sockeye salmon run exhibited two distinct run timings this year; the Nushagak District run began strong on June 22 and stayed that way all season, while the east side districts can be described as compressed and slightly late. The compression exemplified by the seven day span from July 3–9 where bay-wide catch and escapement totaled 24.5 million fish, or an average of 3.5 million fish per day. This compression caused processing capacity to be exceeded and limits or suspensions were in place from July 3 until July 15 depending on processor and/or district. Limits and suspensions contributed to escapements being above the established ranges in the Wood, Nushagak, Igushik, and Egegik rivers. The average sockeye salmon weight of 5.5 pounds was below the 20-year (1997-2016) average of 5.9 pounds.

EXVESSEL VALUE

The Bristol Bay 2017 harvest of all salmon species was 39.8 million fish; ranking second over the last 20 years (1997–2016) and worth a preliminary exvessel value of \$214.6 million almost double the 20-year average of \$108.9 million and ranks second during that time frame. The weights, harvests, and prices listed in Table 1 were used to estimate exvessel value. Prices are an

average of post-season processor final operations reports. This estimate does not include future price adjustments for icing, bleeding, or production bonuses.

Table 1.—Average price, weight, harvest, and value of salmon harvest in Bristol Bay, 2017.

Species	Price/lb	Weight (lb)	Number of Fish	Total Weight	Value
Sockeye	\$1.02	5.5	37,682,774	205,782,567	\$209,898,218
Chinook	\$0.72	11.2	38,835	434,027	\$312,499
Chum	\$0.30	6.4	1,779,888	11,391,783	\$3,417,535
Pink	\$0.16	3.9	35,352	138,602	\$22,176
Coho	\$0.65	6.3	239,980	1,520,578	\$988,376
Totals			39,776,829	219,267,557	\$214,638,805

ALLOCATION

Fisheries are managed to achieve allocation between drift and set gillnet gear groups in four of five districts. Togiak District is excluded from the allocation plan. Table 2 lists current regulatory allocations and harvests by gear group for the 2017 season. Strategies used to achieve allocation between gear groups included varying the amount of fishing time and providing separate gear group openings.

Table 2.—Allocation of Bristol Bay drift and set gillnet harvest, 2017.^a

District	Drift Gillnet Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught	District Set Gillnet Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught	Section Set Gillnet Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught
Naknek/Kvichak	84% / 72%	16% / 28%	Naknek: 8% / 16% Kvichak: 8% / 12%
Egegik	86% / 87%	14% / 13%	Not applicable
Ugashik	90% / 92%	10% / 8%	Not applicable
Nushagak ^a	74% / 75%	26% / 22%	Nushagak: 20% / 18% Igushik: 6% / 4%

^a Harvest in the Wood River Special Harvest area was about 3% of the district total and composed of fish caught by the set gillnet fleet.

SPECIES PERFORMANCE

Sockeye Salmon

This year's Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of 56.5 million fish was 42% above the preseason inshore forecast of 39.9 million fish (Table 3) and harvest was 63% higher than the recent 20-year average bay-wide harvest (Table 4). Sockeye salmon escapement goals were met in Naknek, Kvichak, Alagnak, Togiak and Ugashik rivers. Escapement goal ranges were exceeded in Wood, Nushagak, Igushik, and Egegik rivers (Table 5).

Table 3.—Difference of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon actual run versus forecast, 2017.

District	Inshore Forecast	Inshore Run	% Difference from Forecast
Naknek-Kvichak	15,480,000	15,217,467	2% Below
Egegik	10,260,000	14,466,239	43% Above
Ugashik	5,260,000	6,633,484	26% Above
Nushagak	8,300,000	19,457,962	135% Above
Togiak	630,000	696,000	10% Above
Totals	39,930,000	56,471,152	42% Above

Table 4.—2017 preliminary commercial sockeye salmon harvests and 20-year averages by district.

District	1997–2016 Average Sockeye Harvest	2017 Sockeye Harvest
Naknek-Kvichak	7,631,212	8,112,267
Egegik	6,466,235	11,865,257
Ugashik	2,606,071	5,447,038
Nushagak	5,934,608	11,752,310
Togiak	539,111	505,902
Totals	23,177,237	37,682,774

Table 5.—Bristol Bay sockeye salmon goals and escapement, 2017.

River System	Goal Range	Escapement
Kvichak River	2,000,000–10,000,000	3,163,404
Naknek River	800,000–2,000,000	1,899,972
Alagnak River	320,000 minimum	2,041,824
Egegik River	800,000–2,000,000	2,600,982
Ugashik River	500,000–1,400,000	1,186,446
Nushagak River	370,000–900,000	2,852,308
Wood River	700,000–1,800,000	4,274,224
Igushik River	150,000–400,000	579,120
Togiak River	120,000–270,000	190,098
Total		18,788,378

Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon harvests in Bristol Bay were below average in all districts (Table 6). No directed Chinook salmon fishing periods occurred in the Nushagak District in 2017. Chinook salmon were caught during directed sockeye salmon periods in all commercial districts and 38,835 fish were harvested, 17% below the 20-year average of 46,546 (Table 6). Chinook salmon escapement into the Nushagak River was 56,961, 60% below the inriver goal of 95,000.

The Chinook salmon escapement into the Alagnak River was 435 based on aerial surveys and was below escapement goal of 2,700.

Table 6.—Chinook salmon preliminary harvest data and 20-year averages by district.

District	1997–2016 Average Chinook Salmon Harvest	2017 Chinook Salmon Harvest
Naknek/Kvichak	1,711	1,050
Egegik	700	109
Ugashik	893	782
Nushagak	40,071	32,234
Togiak	6,349	4,660
Totals	46,546	38,835

Chum Salmon

The 2017 preliminary Bristol Bay chum salmon harvest was 1,779,888 fish (Table 7) compared to the 20-year average of 949,842. Harvest was above the 20-year average in all districts; Nushagak District was the largest producer of chum salmon, where 1,158,242 fish were harvested.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon return to Bristol Bay predominantly in even years. The preliminary harvest in 2017 was 35,352 fish. The majority of pink salmon are harvested in the Togiak and Nushagak districts.

Coho Salmon

The preliminary total coho salmon harvest in 2017 was 239,980 fish (Table 7) compared to the 20-year average of 82,014. Typically the Nushagak District is the largest coho salmon producer. The 176,331 fish harvested in the Nushagak District was above the 20-year average.

Acknowledgements

The department would like to thank the Bristol Bay Fisheries Collaborative (BBFC) for funding assistance in 2017. The BBFC began in 2016 and is an agreement between ADF&G and the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute to work together with stakeholders to restore a world-class fishery management system and raise funds to support and maintain it. This agreement is supported by ADF&G, BBSRI, drift and set net fishermen, processors, municipalities, villages, support industries and other stakeholders. A list of organizations that committed financial support to the BBFC in 2017, as well as additional information about this agreement can be found at <https://www.bbsri.org/bbfc>.

Table 7.—Preliminary 2017 Bristol Bay salmon harvest and escapement by district and species

District	Sockeye	Chinook	Chum	Pink	Coho	TOTAL
Naknek-Kvichak Catch	8,112,267	1,050	158,796	147	4,939	8,277,199
Escapement-KvichakTwr.	3,163,404	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	3,163,404
Naknek Twr.	1,899,972	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,899,972
Alagnak	2,041,824	435	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,042,259
NK Subtotal	15,217,467	1,485	158,796	147	4,939	15,382,834
Egegik Catch	11,865,257	109	170,502	184	14,044	12,050,096
Escapement-Egegik Twr.	2,600,982	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,600,982
Egegik Subtotal	14,466,239	109	170,502	184	14,044	14,651,078
Ugashik Catch	5,447,038	782	89,241	1,432	^a	5,538,493
Escapement-Ugashik Twr.	1,186,446	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,186,446
Ugashik Subtotal	6,633,484	782	89,241	1,432		6,724,939
Nushagak Catch	11,752,310	32,234	1,158,242	6,888	176,331	13,126,005
Escapement- Wood Twr.	4,274,224	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4,274,224
Igushik	579,120	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	579,120
Nushagak	2,852,308	56,961	415,487	N.A.	N.A.	3,324,756
Nushagak Subtotal	19,457,962	89,195	1,573,729	6,888	176,331	21,304,105
Togiak Catch	505,902	4,660	203,107	26,701	44,666	785,036
Escapement - Togiak Twr.	190,098	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	190,098
Togiak Subtotal	696,000	4,660	203,107	26,701	44,666	975,134
Bristol Bay Catch	37,682,774	38,835	1,779,888	35,352	239,980	39,776,829
Bristol Bay Escapement	18,788,378	57,396	415,487	N.A.	N.A.	19,260,826
Bristol Bay Total Run	56,471,152	96,231	2,195,375	35,352	239,980	59,038,090

^a Ugashik coho harvest is confidential.