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Advisory Announcement

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2023 Lower Cook Inlet Commercial Salmon Fishery Outlook

This outlook is provided to assist the commercial salmon industry in planning for the 2023 season in the Lower Cook Inlet (LCI) Management Area. Information regarding the forecasts used to create this document will soon be available on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) 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.

Inseason modifications to harvest projections, season opening dates, and strategies for weekly fishing periods may occur as fisheries develop. Fishery announcements from the Homer office will routinely occur on Fridays at 2:00 p.m., and at other times as required. Interested individuals may sign up to receive email announcements here: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>. Recorded commercial fisheries announcements will be available at 907-235-7307. Harvest information and fisheries announcements are located on the ADF&G web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon>. The next advisory announcement is expected to be released at 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 28.

The commercial harvest from LCI is forecast to be 2.2 million salmon, of which 176,700 fish (8%) are anticipated to be of hatchery-origin harvested from special harvest areas (SHAs) (Table 1). Additional hatchery-origin fish are harvested incidentally with wild fish outside of SHAs. CIAA forecasts a total of 197,300 hatchery-produced sockeye and 1.6 million pink salmon to return to LCI release sites in 2023. Of those, CIAA projects to harvest 167,700 sockeye (85%) and 1.5 million pink salmon (91%) for cost recovery and broodstock.

Set Gillnet Fishery

The Southern District is expected to open for the 2023 season on Thursday, June 1 at 6:00 a.m. for a 48-hour period. Subsequent commercial fishing periods will likely be 48 hours in duration beginning at 6:00 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, as specified in regulation. Harvest projections for this district and gear are 200 Chinook, 500 coho, 2,900 chum, 25,600 sockeye, and 12,900 pink salmon. The Port Graham Subdistrict is anticipated to open to commercial set gillnet harvest on June 1 and remain on a schedule concurrent with other areas in the Southern District for this gear. Fishing time in the Port Graham Subdistrict will be closely linked to escapement levels in English Bay and Port Graham rivers.

Purse Seine Fishery

Portions of the Southern District will open to purse seine harvest in mid-June, coinciding with hatchery-produced returns to Leisure and Hazel lakes. Historically, this return peaks in mid-July. CIAA forecasts a return of 38,300 sockeye salmon to Leisure and Hazel lakes combined, as well as 37,100 sockeye salmon to Tutka Bay. Of those, 30,600 (80%) of the fish returning to Leisure and Hazel lakes, and 33,900 (91%) of the sockeye salmon returning

to Tutka Lagoon will be used for cost recovery and broodstock purposes. A total of 1.6 million hatchery-produced pink salmon are forecast to return to release sites in the Southern District. Of those, 1.5 million pink salmon (91%) will be required for cost recovery and broodstock purposes. Commercial fishing time after mid-July will be based on wild pink salmon escapement levels in this district.

Hatchery sockeye salmon returns to the Eastern District are forecasted by CIAA to be 89,900 fish of which CIAA has identified 74,400 (83%) 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 in this district.

Portions of the Outer District may open to commercial harvest in mid-July focusing on sockeye salmon returns to McCarty Fjord lakes. In recent years, escapement to McCarty Fjord systems (Delight, Desire, and Delusion lakes) have been monitored by aerial survey and weir. The weir at Delight Lake will not be operated in 2023, consequently escapement monitoring for this system will be done via aerial surveys.

Waters in the western portion of the Outer District may be open by late-July, focusing on pink and chum salmon runs 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 chum and pink salmon. Dogfish Bay, Chugach Bay, and Port Chatham in the western portion of the district will be evaluated for chum and pink salmon harvest potential from August to early September. The harvest projections for the Outer District include 9,000 sockeye, 23,500 chum, and 1.7 million pink salmon.

Portions of the Kamishak Bay District typically open to commercial harvest on June 1. Commercial harvest projections for wild stocks in this district are 59,200 sockeye, 8,900 chum, and 63,600 pink salmon. The majority of sockeye salmon harvest is expected to come from Chenik Lake, while the chum salmon harvest has historically been spread throughout the district. Hatchery-released sockeye salmon returns to Kirschner Lake are forecast to be 32,000 fish, of which 28,800 (90%) are expected to 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 surveys of pink and chum salmon index streams. The department intends to monitor the Chenik run using streaming video from the lake and will consider opening Chenik Lagoon once escapement into the lake is adequate.

Table 1.–Projected salmon harvests for Lower Cook Inlet, 2023. Hatchery cost recovery goals are preliminary.

SOCKEYE SALMON					Total anticipated harvest =	176,000
Wild stocks, (area-wide commercial harvest)^a						146,400
Southern District, (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)						52,600
Southern District, (set gillnet)						25,600
Eastern District, (Aialik Bay)						0
Outer District						9,000
Kamishak Bay District, (excluding Kirschner Lake Subdistrict)						59,200
	Hatchery run	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest	Commercial harvest		
Sockeye salmon hatchery programs^b						
Resurrection Bay	89,900	12,200	62,200	15,500		
China Poot and Hazel lakes	38,300	0	30,600	7,700		
Tutka Bay Lagoon	37,100	5,200	28,700	3,200		
Kirschner Lake	32,000	0	28,800	3,200		
Port Graham Bay	0	0	0	0		
English Bay Lakes	0	0	0	0		
Hatchery stocks (area-wide totals)	197,300	17,400	150,300	29,600		
PINK SALMON					Total anticipated harvest =	1,948,100
Wild stocks, (area-wide commercial harvest)^a						1,801,000
Southern District (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)						62,100
Southern District (set gillnet)						12,900
Eastern District						0
Outer District						1,662,400
Kamishak Bay District						63,600
	Hatchery run	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest	Commercial harvest		
Pink salmon hatchery programs^b						
Tutka Bay Lagoon	1,542,600	96,000	1,301,900	144,700		
Port Graham Bay	63,100	38,500	22,200	2,400		
Hatchery stocks (area-wide totals)	1,605,700	134,500	1,324,100	147,100		
CHUM SALMON - Wild production^a					Total anticipated harvest =	36,500
Southern District (purse seine)						1,200
Southern District (set gillnet)						2,900
Eastern District						0
Outer District						23,500
Kamishak Bay District						8,900
COHO SALMON – Wild production^a					Total anticipated harvest =	1,700
Southern District (purse seine)						500
Southern District (set gillnet)						500
Eastern District						0
Outer District						100
Kamishak Bay District						600
CHINOOK SALMON – Wild production^a					Total anticipated harvest =	290
Southern District (purse seine)						90
Southern District (set gillnet)						200
Eastern District						0
Outer District						0
Kamishak Bay District						0
Total LCI anticipated commercial harvest- all salmon species =						2,162,590

Note: Rows and columns may not total exactly due to rounding to the nearest hundred fish.

^a Area-wide harvest forecasts for wild production were produced by ADF&G using trend forecast models based on historical harvests (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyarealci.salmon#forecasts>).

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