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Advisory Announcement

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2025 Lower Cook Inlet Commercial Salmon Fishery Outlook

This outlook is provided to assist the commercial salmon industry in planning for the 2025 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, Port Graham Hatchery, and Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery. 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 25.

The commercial harvest from LCI is forecast to be 1,323,410 salmon, of which 100,400 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. Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association forecasts a total of 224,900 hatchery-produced sockeye and 883,800 pink salmon to return to LCI release sites in 2025. Of those, CIAA projects to harvest 204,000 sockeye (91%) and 804,300 pink salmon (91%) for cost recovery and broodstock.

Set Gillnet Fishery

The Southern District is expected to open for the 2025 season on Monday, June 2 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 150 Chinook, 150 coho, 1,300 chum, 25,000 sockeye, and 9,000 pink salmon. The Port Graham Subdistrict is anticipated to open to commercial set gillnet harvest on June 2 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 gear in mid-June, coinciding with hatchery-produced runs to Leisure and Hazel lakes. Historically, these returns peaks in mid-July. Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association forecasts a run of 25,400 sockeye salmon to Leisure and Hazel lakes combined, as well as 88,200 sockeye salmon

to Tutka Bay. Of those, 22,800 (90%) of the fish returning to Leisure and Hazel lakes, and 79,900 (91%) of the sockeye salmon returning to Tutka Lagoon will be used for cost recovery and broodstock purposes. A total of 883,800 hatchery-produced pink salmon are forecast to return to release sites in the Southern District. Of those, 804,300 pink salmon (91%) will be required for cost recovery and broodstock purposes. Commercial fishing time after mid-July will be primarily based on wild pink salmon escapement levels in this district.

Hatchery sockeye salmon runs to the Eastern District are forecasted by CIAA to be 83,600 fish of which CIAA has identified 76,400 (91%) 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. The department anticipates commercial purse seine fishing opportunity to occur in late June and/or early July in the Eastern District targeting the sockeye salmon run to Aialik Lake. Commercial salmon deliveries from the Aialik Subdistrict last occurred in 2006.

Portions of the Outer District may open to commercial harvest in early to mid-July focusing on sockeye salmon runs 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 2025, 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. Harvest projections for the Outer District include 26,800 sockeye, 12,800 chum, and 920,000 pink salmon. Pink salmon harvest in numbers of fish for the three most recent odd years from this district are 1,788,090 (2019), 1,579,168 (2021), and 158,341 (2023). In 2023, of the nine pink salmon sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for the Outer District, three systems had escapements within the SEG range, and six were above the SEG range.

Portions of the Kamishak Bay District are anticipated to open to commercial harvest in early July targeting sockeye salmon returning to Chenik Lake. Additional areas may open based on escapement levels. Commercial harvest projections for wild stocks in this district are 50,000 sockeye, 1,400 chum, and 47,800 pink salmon. The majority of the sockeye salmon harvest is expected to come from Chenik Lake, while the chum salmon harvest has historically been spread throughout the district. The hatchery sockeye salmon run to Kirschner Lake is forecast to be 27,700 fish, of which 24,900 (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 satellite streamed 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, 2025. Hatchery cost recovery goals are preliminary.

SOCKEYE SALMON		Total anticipated harvest =		177,700
Wild stocks, (area-wide commercial harvest)^a				156,800
Southern District, (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)				55,000
Southern District, (set gillnet)				25,000
Eastern District, (Aialik Bay)				NA
Outer District				26,800
Kamishak Bay District, (excluding Kirschner Lake Subdistrict)				50,000
		Hatchery run	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest
Sockeye salmon hatchery programs^b				Commercial harvest
Resurrection Bay		83,600	12,200	64,200
China Poot and Hazel lakes		25,400	0	22,800
Tutka Bay Lagoon		88,200	5,300	74,600
Kirschner Lake		27,700	0	24,900
Hatchery stocks (area-wide totals)		224,900	17,500	186,500
				20,900
PINK SALMON		Total anticipated harvest =		1,129,500
Wild stocks, (area-wide commercial harvest)^a				1,050,000
Southern District (purse seine, excluding hatchery SHAs)				73,000
Southern District (set gillnet)				9,100
Eastern District				0
Outer District				920,100
Kamishak Bay District				47,800
		Hatchery run	Broodstock harvest	Cost recovery harvest
Pink salmon hatchery programs^b				Commercial harvest
Tutka Bay Lagoon		883,800	89,000	715,300
Port Graham Bay		0	0	0
Hatchery stocks (area-wide totals)		883,800	89,000	715,300
				79,500
CHUM SALMON - Wild production^a		Total anticipated harvest =		15,800
Southern District (purse seine)				300
Southern District (set gillnet)				1,300
Eastern District				0
Outer District				12,800
Kamishak Bay District				1,400
COHO SALMON – Wild production^a		Total anticipated harvest =		250
Southern District (purse seine)				100
Southern District (set gillnet)				150
Eastern District				0
Outer District				0
Kamishak Bay District				0
CHINOOK SALMON – Wild production^a		Total anticipated harvest =		160
Southern District (purse seine)				10
Southern District (set gillnet)				150
Eastern District				0
Outer District				0
Kamishak Bay District				0
Total LCI anticipated commercial harvest- all salmon species =				1,323,410

^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.