



Advisory Announcement:
For Immediate Release: November 3, 2025

Time: 12:00 p.m.

CONTACT: Matt Keyse and Charles Russell
Area M Management Biologists
Geoff Spalinger, Annie Brewster,
and William Middleton
Assistant Area M Management Biologists

2025 Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Salmon Season Summary

The following is an overview of the 2025 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amliia Islands Areas (Figure 1; Area M) commercial salmon fishing season.

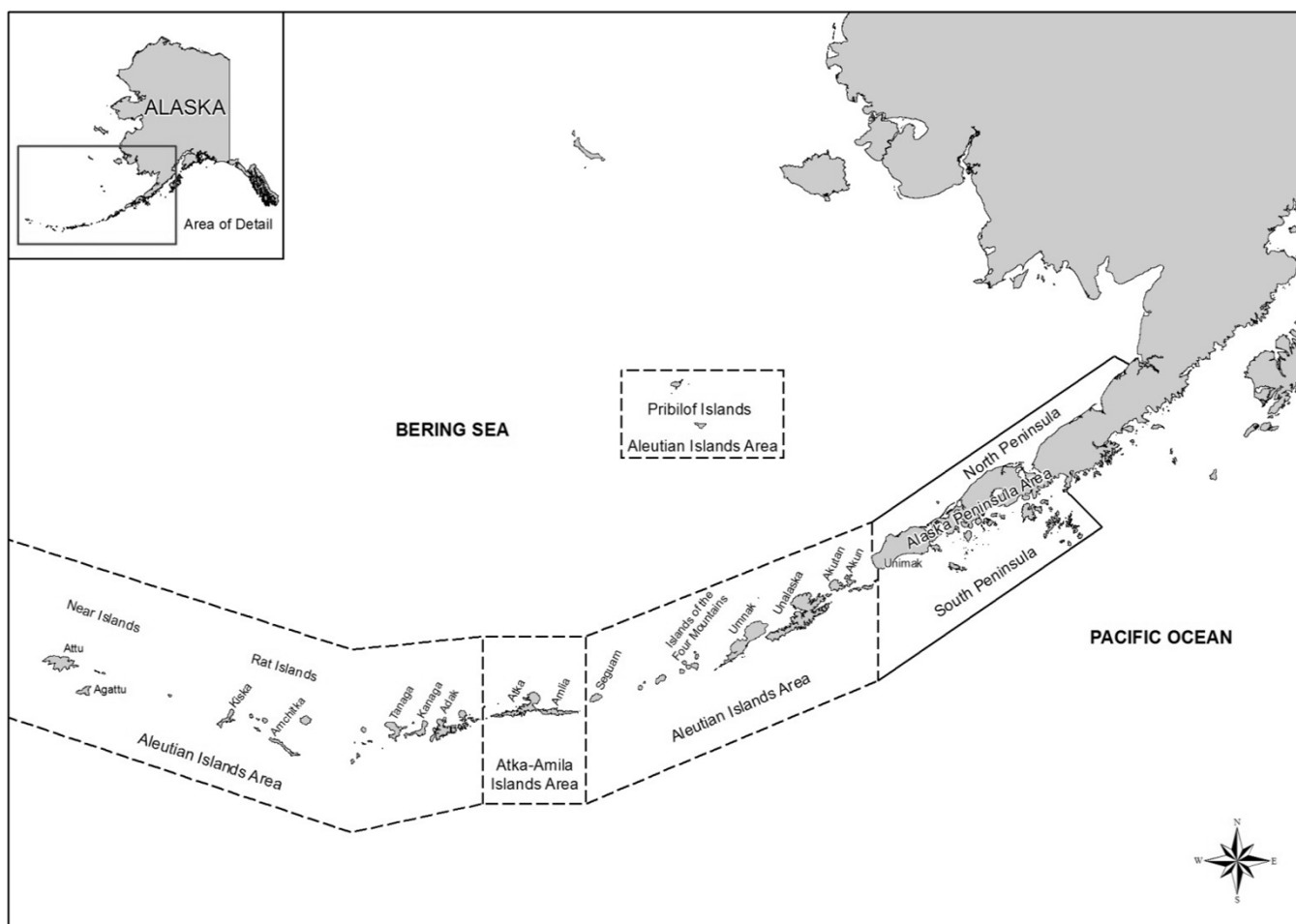


Figure 1.–Map of the Aleutian Islands, Atka-Amliia Islands, and Alaska Peninsula Management Areas, also known as Area M.

Commercial fishing effort in 2025 was below average compared to recent years. Of the 389 eligible commercial salmon permits, 224 (58%) made commercial landings. By gear type, a total of 49 purse seine, 117 drift gillnet,

and 58 set gillnet permit holders made deliveries in 2025. Participation of purse seine permit holders was below the 10-year average of 62 permits, participation of drift gillnet permit holders was below the 10-year average of 142 permits, and participation of set gillnet permit holders was below the 10-year average of 77 permits (Table 1).

Table 1.—Commercial salmon fishery 2025 limited entry permit activity and 10-yr. averages, by gear type, in Area M.

Gear Type	2025 Permits			2015-2024 Average Permits		
	Available	Fished	% of Permits Fished	Available	Fished	% of Permits Fished
Purse Seine	117	49	42%	119	62	52%
Drift Gillnet	161	117	73%	161	142	88%
Set Gillnet	111	58	52%	111	77	69%
Total	389	224	58%	391	281	72%

Total preliminary harvest presented from the 2025 commercial salmon fishing season should closely approximate final harvest numbers for all species. The data detailed in this report is considered preliminary. The 2025 commercial salmon harvest in Area M totaled 21,113,873 fish, comprised of 17,857 Chinook, 2,886,231 sockeye, 246,537 coho, 16,674,178 pink, and 1,289,070 chum salmon (Table 2). There was no commercial harvest in the Aleutian Islands and Atka-Amlia Islands Areas.

Table 2.—Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, 2025.

Location	Number of Salmon					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
North Peninsula	560	1,184,834	48,619	192,656	119,724	1,546,393
South Peninsula	17,297	1,701,397	197,918	16,481,522	1,169,346	19,567,480
Total	17,857	2,886,231	246,537	16,674,178	1,289,070	21,113,873

Preliminary exvessel value of salmon harvested in Area M totaled \$35,222,827 (Tables 3 and 4). This was near the recent 10-year average exvessel value of \$35,665,252 (Table 4). Purse seine gear averaged \$472,824 per permit fished, drift gillnet gear averaged \$72,668 per permit fished, while set gillnet gear averaged \$61,246 per permit fished (Table 4). Exvessel value information was generated from fish tickets and does not include postseason adjustments paid to permit holders.

Table 3.—Preliminary commercial exvessel values by fishery and species, 2025.

Location	Value					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
North Peninsula	\$8,978	\$7,943,605	\$142,404	\$139,572	\$268,303	\$8,502,862
South Peninsula	\$19,662	\$11,464,176	\$645,871	\$12,371,898	\$2,218,358	\$26,719,965
Total	\$28,640	\$19,407,781	\$788,275	\$12,511,470	\$2,486,661	\$35,222,827

Note: Due to rounding of cents, totals may differ by small amounts.

Table 4.—Estimated commercial salmon harvest and value, by gear type, 2015-2025.

Year	Total Catch	Total Value	Average Exvessel Value		
			Purse Seine	Drift Gillnet	Set Gillnet
2015	23,875,739	\$30,763,822	\$280,629	\$67,506	\$59,743
2016	9,654,544	\$26,266,222	\$137,766	\$107,587	\$57,373
2017	31,328,829	\$63,014,340	\$618,771	\$161,222	\$73,688
2018	6,030,310	\$27,632,532	\$161,799	\$110,945	\$30,429
2019	27,172,788	\$44,189,560	\$323,769	\$113,936	\$48,372
2020	9,152,962	\$14,547,225	\$102,791	\$44,823	\$17,112
2021	26,742,829	\$56,683,207	\$511,534	\$126,482	\$38,813
2022	14,686,489	\$57,719,223	\$342,637	\$208,782	\$36,283
2023	21,445,242	\$20,584,195	\$215,217	\$28,665	\$23,083
2024	4,721,936	\$15,252,193	\$119,393	\$59,436	\$24,121
2025	21,113,873	\$35,222,827	\$472,824	\$72,668	\$61,246
2015-2024 Avg.	17,481,167	\$35,665,252	\$281,431	\$102,938	\$40,902

SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA

South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Fisheries

During the February 2023 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Chignik meeting, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) made changes to the *South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 09.365) by amending subsection (2)(a) that establishes the June fishing schedule for seine gear. The first commercial fishing period for seine gear will begin June 10 at 6:00 a.m. and run 68 hours, closing at 2:00 a.m.; the second commercial fishing period will begin 76 hours later at 6:00 a.m. and close after 66 hours at 11:59 p.m.; the third commercial fishing period will begin 32 hours later at 8:00 a.m. and close after 88 hours at 11:59 p.m.; the final commercial fishing period in June will begin 32 hours later at 8:00 a.m. and close after 88 hours at 11:59 p.m.

Additionally, the board added a new subsection (h) to the *South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 09.365) such that if chum salmon harvest equals or exceeds 300,000 fish by June 18, based on fish ticket information, the commissioner shall reduce commercial fishing time in the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands by 44 hours during each of the remaining fishing periods in June for purse seine gear. If chum salmon harvest equals or exceeds 450,000 fish by June 23, based on fish ticket information, the commissioner shall close the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June commercial salmon fishery for the remainder of June for purse seine gear. No closures or reductions in fishing time occurred in 2025 as the chum harvest was below harvest triggers.

The board amended 5 AAC 09.330. *Gear*, subsection (c) to close the Sanak Island Section of the Unimak District to commercial salmon fishing for all gear types from June 1 through June 30 (Figure 2). Due to the actions taken by the board during the 2023 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Chignik meeting on South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries, enforcement was greatly increased by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) during the month of June. While patrolling the fishing grounds AWT did not issue any citations for not retaining salmon in June of 2025.

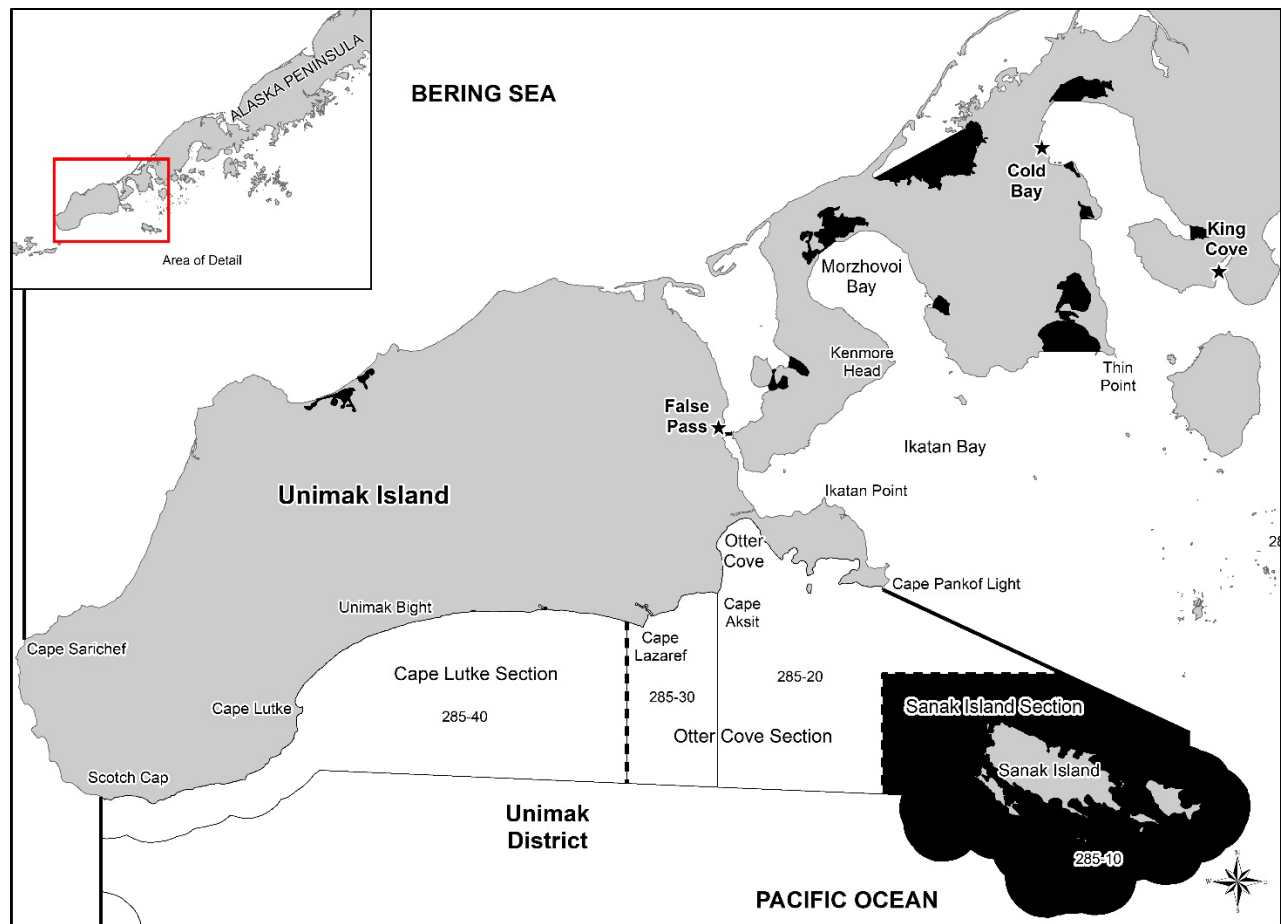


Figure 2.—Closed waters of the Sanak Island Section to all gear types during the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery.

In addition to the scheduled fishing periods during the month of June, the harvest of sockeye salmon in the “Dolgoi Island Area” as described by the Western Alaska Salmon Stock Identification Program (WASSIP) was monitored through fish ticket information. By regulation, once the harvest of sockeye salmon reaches 191,000 fish, the waters of the West Pavlof Bay Section south of Black Point and the waters of the Volcano Bay Section close to commercial salmon fishing for the remainder of the June fishery and through July 25 (Figure 3). Commercial fishers operating in the South Central and Southwestern Districts during June are advised that short notice closure of the designated “Dolgoi Island Area” will occur in the likely event the harvest of sockeye salmon approaches the 191,000 fish. The department will, to the extent practical, give a minimum of 6 hours’ notice of closure to all gear types. In 2019, the board closed the “Dolgoi Island Area” to purse seine gear in June. The harvest limit was not reached in the June fishery in 2025. A total of 4,399 sockeye salmon were harvested in the “Dolgoi Island Area” in June and a total of 116,832 sockeye salmon were harvested from July 1 through July 25.

Due to concerns of low forecasted chum salmon returns to systems within the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) region, test fisheries were conducted on June 8, 9, and 10 by the commercial purse seine fleet in the Unimak District and Shumagin Islands Section of the Southeastern District. The purse seine and drift gillnet fleets voluntarily stood down during the first day of the commercial opening on June 10 to conduct the test fishery and reduced fishing time in subsequent openings during June to ensure that the chum salmon harvest was near or below the historical harvest of 503,595 fish during the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishing periods.

The commercial salmon harvest for the June fishery consisted of 1,371 Chinook, 432,202 sockeye, 243 coho, 128,954 pink, and 156,136 chum salmon, for a total of 718,906 salmon (Table 5). The sockeye and chum salmon harvest in the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries were below the most recent 10-year average of 1,553,040 sockeye salmon and 503,595 chum salmon.

Table 5.—Total salmon harvests in numbers of salmon for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2025.

	Number of salmon					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
South Unimak	481	296,466	8	73,309	88,530	458,794
Shumagin Islands	890	135,736	235	55,645	67,606	260,112
Total	1,371	432,202	243	128,954	156,136	718,906

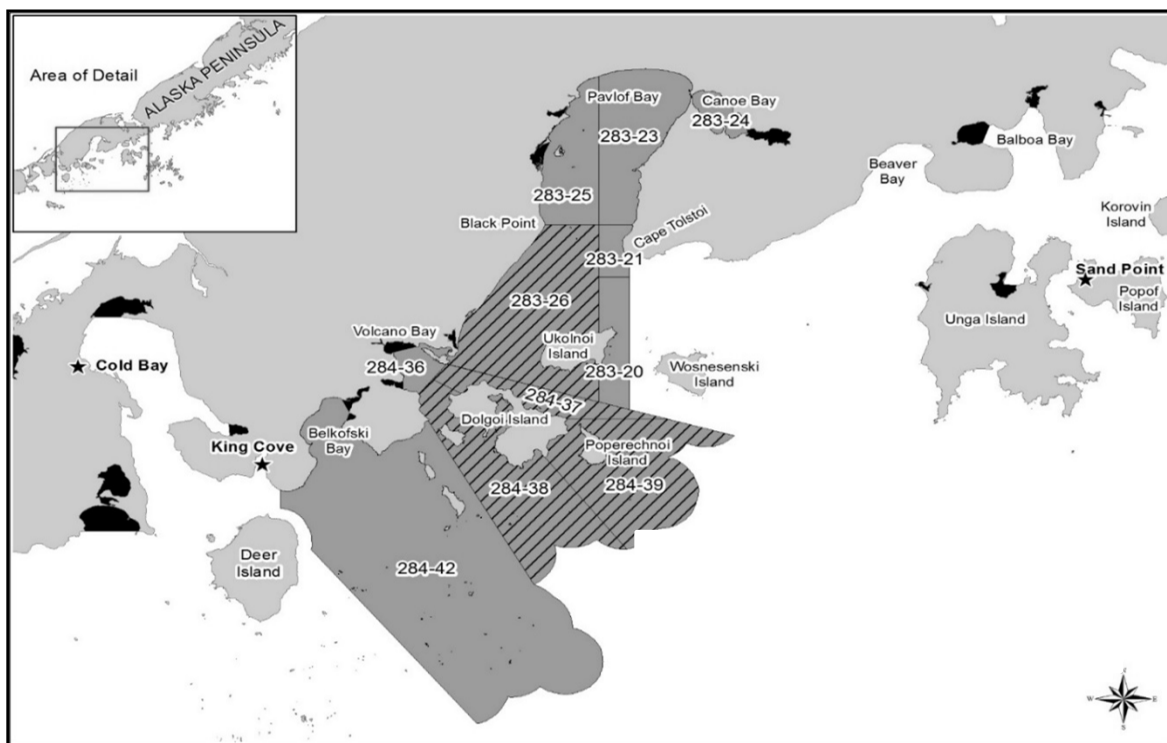


Figure 3.—Map depicting the “Dolgoi Island Area” for the June Management Plan and the areas that close after 191,000 sockeye salmon have been harvested. This area is closed to seine gear in June as per the 2019 BOF regulatory changes.

Southeastern District Mainland Fisheries

From June 1 to July 25, the Southeastern District Mainland (SEDM; excluding the Northwest Stepovak Section [NWSS] beginning July 1) is managed based on the strength of the Chignik sockeye salmon run. During years in which it appears that sockeye salmon harvest will be greater than 600,000 fish in the Chignik Management Area (CMA), and the first run begins to develop as anticipated followed by a commercial salmon opening in the CMA, commercial salmon fishing can be allowed in the East Stepovak, Stepovak Flats, Northwest Stepovak, Southwest

Stepovak, Balboa Bay and Beaver Bay Sections of the Southeastern District. Commercial salmon fishing opened for 36 hours from 6 a.m. July 22 until 6 p.m. July 23. A total of 860 Chinook, 35,196 sockeye, 1,356 coho, 54,268 pink, and 4,639 chum salmon were harvested during the allocation period (June 1 – July 25; Table 6).

Beginning July 1, the NWSS of SEDM is managed on the strength of the Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon run. In 2025, the Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon escapement of 16,394 fish was within the range of the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 14,000–28,000 sockeye salmon. The run appeared early and strong and the first commercial fishing period in the NWSS began on July 2. The total harvest in the NWSS from July 1 through July 25 was 1 Chinook, 44,126 sockeye, 55 coho, 2,301 pink, and 3,304 chum salmon (Table 6).

From July 26 through August 31, SEDM is managed based on the abundance of local salmon stocks. Commercial salmon fishing in the Beaver Bay, Balboa Bay, Southwest Stepovak, Stepovak Flats, and East Stepovak Sections of the Southeastern District began on July 26 with a 36-hour fishing period for set gillnet and seine gear. The second fishing period was for 36 hours beginning on July 30. Aerial surveys indicated adequate escapement and the next commercial fishing period occurred on August 3 for 61 hours. Subsequent aerial surveys indicated strong escapement and SEDM was opened August 8 to the maximum amount of fishing permitted during this timeframe. By regulation, there shall be at least one 36-hour closed period within a seven-day period in SEDM (5 AAC 09.360 (l)(2)). Commercial salmon fishing then continued on this maximum fishing time of ~132 hours of fishing followed by a 36-hour closure beginning on August 16 until the end of September.

Table 6.—Preliminary Southeastern District Mainland salmon harvest, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2025.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
June 1–June 30	0	0	0	0	0
July 1–July 25 SEDM ^a	860	35,196	1,356	54,268	4,639
Total SEDM harvest in allocation	860	35,196	1,356	54,268	4,639
July 1–July 25 NWSS ^b	1	44,126	55	2,301	3,304
July 26–September 30	4,425	336,221	30,625	2,988,641	188,684
Total	5,286	415,543	32,036	3,045,210	196,627

^a Southeastern District Mainland (excluding Northwest Stepovak Section).

^b Northwest Stepovak Section

South Peninsula Post-June Fishery

For the Post-June fishery, from July 6 through July 31, there was one 33-hour fishing period, followed by a 63-hour closure, followed by six 36-hour fishing periods that were separated by 60-hour closures.

Prior to the South Peninsula post-June fishery, the department conducts a test fishery to determine immature salmon abundance in the Shumagin Islands. The test fisheries that occurred on July 2, 3, and 5 resulted in an average of 19.2, 2.8, and 8.3 immature salmon per set, respectively. The average number of immature salmon per set was below the regulatory threshold of 100 immature salmon gilled in the seine, and the Shumagin Island Section opened to purse seine gear for the July 6 commercial salmon fishing period.

Because of concerns for Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon stocks, the department took unprecedented steps to conserve Chinook salmon by restricting numerous fisheries in 2025. After reviewing past harvest of Chinook salmon in the South Alaska Peninsula Area, it was determined that the majority of the harvest occurred during the end of June through the end of July. It was also determined that a high percentage of the South Alaska

Peninsula harvest? occurred within the Shumagin Islands in statistical area 282-11 (Unga Cape-East Popof (Delarof Harbor), Popof Head, Red Bluff, Elephant Head (Dark Cliffs), Fox Hole, Pirate Cove, Dangerous Point, East Head, Andronica Island, and Salmon Ranch).

The department set a harvest threshold of 1,000 Chinook salmon harvested in the Shumagin Islands Section of the Southeastern District. If more than 1,000 Chinook salmon were harvested during a regulatory fishing period in July, then the next 36-hour fishing period would close to purse seine gear in statistical area 282-11. This would effectively close fishing for approximately six and one-half days.

The management action of monitoring the harvest of Chinook salmon in the Shumagin Island Section of the Southeastern District was implemented in July 2025. Two scheduled fishing periods in July were not opened in the Shumagin Islands section due to Chinook salmon harvest in the statistical area 282-11 that surpassed the threshold of 1,000 fish. The eliminated fishing periods were July 14-15 and July 22-23.

During August, the post-June fishery is managed based on the abundance of local pink and chum salmon stocks. In September and October, management focuses on coho salmon returns, though the status of late pink and chum salmon returns may also be taken into consideration. It was apparent in early August that the majority of pink and chum salmon systems were on track to meet or exceed escapement objectives and this allowed for commercial fishing periods beginning August 3. The last delivery occurred on September 7. The total commercial harvest for the South Peninsula post-June fishery (including SEDM from July 26–October 31) was 15,065 Chinook, 1,189,873 sockeye, 196,264 coho, 16,295,999 pink, and 1,005,267 chum salmon (Table 7).

Table 7.–Post-June South Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2025.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
South Peninsula Post-June harvest	10,640	853,652	165,639	13,307,358	816,583
Post-June SEDM harvest (July 26– October 31)	4,425	336,221	30,625	2,988,641	188,684
Total Post-June harvest	15,065	1,189,873	196,264	16,295,999	1,005,267

South Peninsula Escapement

The South Peninsula sockeye salmon escapement of 35,894 (Table 8) was slightly below the management objective range of 48,200–86,400 fish. Escapement into Orzinski Lake of 16,395 sockeye salmon was within the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 14,000–28,000 fish. The number of sockeye salmon observed in Mortensen’s Lagoon (1,100 fish) was below the SEG range of 1,400–5,700. Escapement into Thin Point Lagoon (10,300 sockeye salmon) met the management objective of 9,000–19,000 fish. The pink salmon total indexed escapement of 4,471,350 fish (Table 8) was above the SEG range of 1,750,000–4,000,000 fish. Chum salmon total escapement of 528,400 fish (Table 8) was within the cumulative district escapement goal range of 330,400–660,800 fish. Escapement into chum salmon index streams exceeded the escapement goal range of 218,300–410,600 with a peak index escapement of 513,850 chum salmon. Coho salmon surveys were conducted during the last week of August. These surveys do not represent peak aerial survey counts and would be considered a minimum at best. A lack of escapement information for coho salmon is due to the departure of management staff from the South Peninsula region prior to peak coho salmon runs and poor weather conditions preventing aerial surveys from being conducted during peak coho salmon runs.

Table 8.—South Peninsula salmon escapement by species and year, 2015–2025.

Year	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2015	0	96,110	2,320	7,820,800	906,420
2016	0	120,170	no surveys	1,038,160	626,776
2017	0	113,042	5,100	5,663,637	1,773,626
2018	0	15,617	no surveys	732,422	344,830
2019	0	31,667	no surveys	4,236,700	672,475
2020	0	34,169	no surveys	3,209,750	415,570
2021	0	59,699	no surveys	4,388,100	483,200
2022	0	56,723	26,375	5,177,350	398,302
2023	0	69,811	no surveys	5,914,600	912,410
2024	0	46,283	no surveys	2,481,157	382,107
2025	0	35,894	no surveys	4,471,350	528,400
2015–2024 average	0	64,329	11,265	4,066,268	691,572

Aleutian Islands Fishery and Escapement

The Aleutian Islands Area may open to commercial salmon fishing by emergency order if adequate escapement is observed and there is interest from the fishing industry. No surveys were flown in 2025. One commercial salmon fishing period occurred from August 4 through August 6 to provide opportunity and to help with assessing the abundance of pink salmon since no aerial surveys were conducted. No commercial salmon seine vessels traveled to Unalaska to participate in that fishing period. The McLees River weir, which is located northwest of Dutch Harbor and used to monitor sockeye salmon returning to McLees Lake and to manage the local subsistence fishery, was not operated this year due to funding. Subsistence was managed based on regulations and the department was unable to reduce closed waters during the mandatory 500 yards closed waters markers that are in place from July 1 through July 9 to help protect the peak of the sockeye salmon run.

NORTH ALASKA PENINSULA

Commercial Harvest

In 2025, 134 Area M permit holders participated in commercial salmon fisheries along the North Alaska Peninsula (Figure 4). The North Alaska Peninsula has an overlap area which allows Area T (Bristol Bay) permit holders to fish in areas that they historically did prior to statehood during certain times of the year. There were two Area T permit holders that fished the overlap area during the 2025 season. The number of Area M permit holders participating in 2025 was below the most recent 10-year average of 164, and was below historical numbers observed during the 1990s, which peaked at 364 permits in 1992.

The North Alaska Peninsula fishery is predominantly a sockeye salmon fishery; although, depending on market conditions, directed Chinook, coho, and chum salmon fisheries occur in some locations.

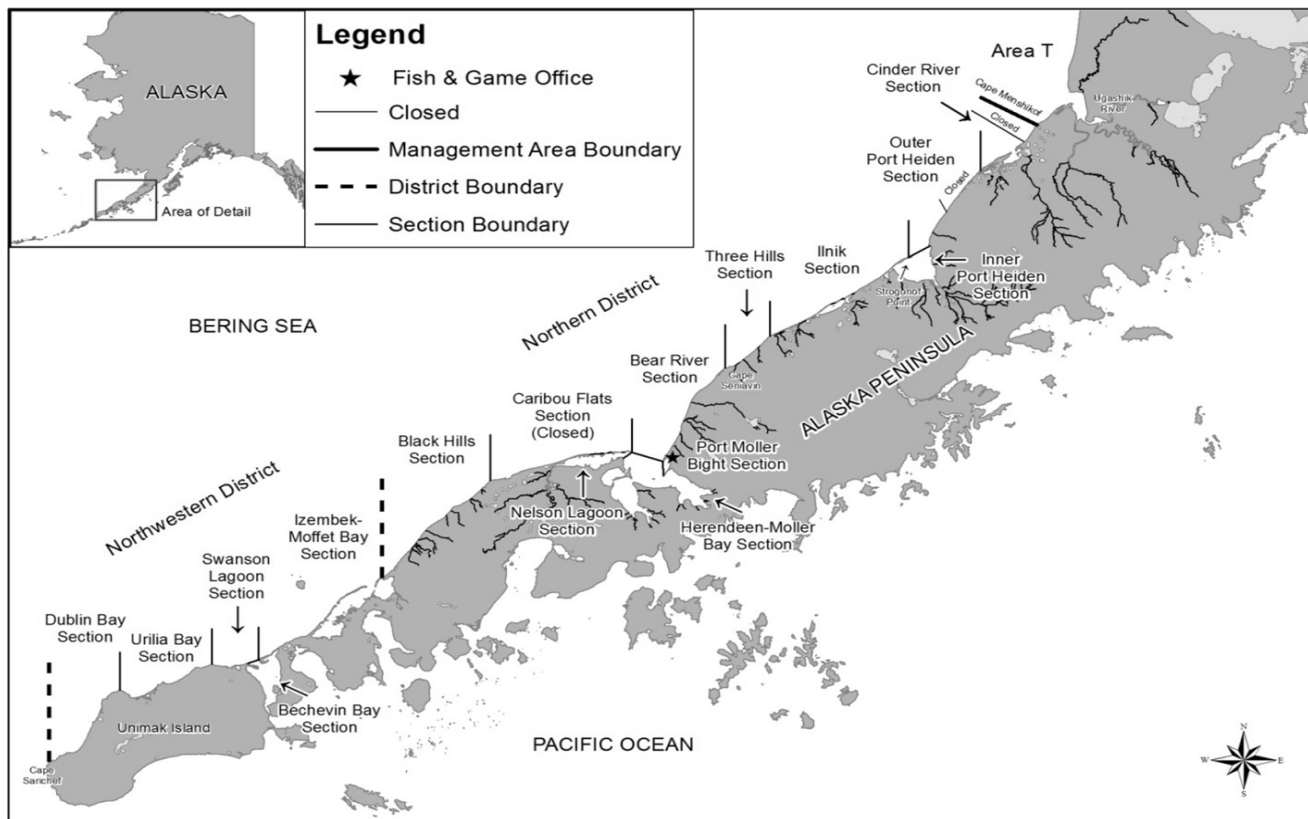


Figure 4.—Alaska Peninsula with North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon fishing districts depicted.

In 2025, the harvest of 1,184,532 sockeye salmon on the North Alaska Peninsula was below both the projected harvest of 2,117,000 sockeye salmon and the 10-year average of 2,544,821 sockeye salmon (Table 9). The 2025 harvest of 48,560 coho salmon was above both the projected harvest of 19,000 coho salmon and the 10-year average harvest of 38,016 coho salmon. The 2025 harvest of 40,914 pink salmon was above the projected harvest of 25,000 pink salmon but was below the 10-year average harvest of 77,310 pink salmon. The 2025 harvest of 111,225 chum salmon was above both the projected harvest of 51,000 chum salmon and the 10-year average harvest of 100,595 chum salmon.

Table 9.—The total 2025 North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, 2025 projected harvest, and 2015–2024 average harvest.

	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2025 season total	558	1,184,532	48,560	40,914	111,225
Projected harvest	1,200	2,117,000	19,000	25,000	51,000
2015-2024 average	1,924	2,544,821	38,016	77,310	100,595

Northwestern District

In the Northwestern District, during the 2025 commercial salmon fishery, approximately 25 Chinook, 24,891 sockeye, 958 coho, 156,309 pink, and 66,022 chum salmon were harvested (Table 10). A total of 24 permit holders participated in the fishery, consisting of two purse seiners, 21 drift gillnetters, and one set gillnet.

Table 10.—Northwestern District commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack by section, all gear combined, 2025.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
Dublin Bay Section	0	0	0	0	0
Urilia Bay Section	4	563	31	320	223
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	0	0	0	0
Bechevin Bay Section	2	302	59	151,742	8,499
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	19	24,026	868	4,247	57,300
2025 Northwestern District total	25	24,891	958	156,309	66,022
2015–2024 Northwestern District average	5	34,008	2,112	57,282	78,201

In the Northwestern District, the chum salmon index escapement of 121,750 fish (Table 11) was within the chum salmon SEG of 49,000–133,000 fish. This escapement estimate represents a minimum; the actual escapement was likely greater, but survey conditions were poor throughout the season, particularly in one of the significant chum salmon-producing streams (the Joshua Green River) in the Northwestern District. The sockeye salmon escapement for 2025 in the Northwestern District was within the escapement objective range of 52,600–106,000 fish, with a total escapement of 67,280 fish (Table 11).

Table 11.—Northwestern District salmon escapement by species and section, 2025.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho*	Pink	Chum
Urilia Bay Section	0	54,300	0	0	0
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	2,600	0	0	0
Bechevin Bay Section	0	0	0	260,900	37,400
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	0	10,380	0	0	142,220
Northwestern District total	0	67,280	0	260,900	179,620

* No coho salmon survey information due to departure of department staff prior to coho salmon arrival in streams.

Black Hills Section

Harvest effort in the Black Hills Section typically occurs when other sections are closed. Because of limited fishing opportunities in the Ilnik, Bear River, and Three Hills Sections during 2025, effort by the drift gillnet fleet in the Black Hills Section (Figure 5) was higher than usual. Approximately 10,555 sockeye salmon (Table 12) were harvested in the Black Hills Section in 2025. Weekly fishing periods occurred throughout the season in the Black Hills Section. North Creek is the only system in the Black Hills Section with a sockeye salmon escapement goal. The 2025 North Creek salmon escapement of 7,200 sockeye salmon was below the escapement goal of 7,500–10,000 fish. However, weather conditions and poor water visibility conditions limited the department's ability to conduct a peak escapement survey of North Creek during 2025.

Table 12.—North Alaska Peninsula sockeye salmon commercial harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, by statistical area or combination of statistical areas, 2025.

Area ^a	Sockeye salmon harvest	% of total harvest
Northwestern District		
311-20 Dublin Bay, 311-32 Uria Bay, 311-52 Swanson Lagoon	563	0.05%
311-60 Bechevin Bay	302	0.03%
312-20 Izembek Lagoon, and 312-40 Moffet Bay	10,516	0.89%
311-58, 312-10 Outside Izembek-Moffet	13,510	1.14%
Northwestern District total	24,891	2.10%
Northern District		
313-10 Black Hills Section	10,555	0.89%
313-30 Nelson Lagoon Section	230,080	19.42%
314-20, 314-30 Herendeen-Moller bays ^a	0	0.00%
314-12, 315-11 Bear River and Port Moller Bight	40,152	3.39%
315-20 NE Bear River	13,004	1.10%
Bear River total (314-12,315-11,315-20)	53,156	4.49%
316-10 Three Hills Section	41,490	3.50%
316-20 Ilnik SW of Unangashak Bluffs	193,051	16.29%
316-25 Ilnik NE of Unangashak Bluffs	218,042	18.40%
Ilnik Section total (316-20,316-22,316-25)	452,583	38.20%
317-20 Inner Port Heiden Section	0	0.00%
317-10 Outer Port Heiden Section	413,569	34.91%
318-20 Cinder River Section ^b	0	0.00%
Northern District total	1,159,943	97.90%
North Peninsula total	1,184,834	100.00%

^a Some statistical areas are combined because the low number of participants makes the information confidential.

^b No commercial salmon fishing effort in this area.

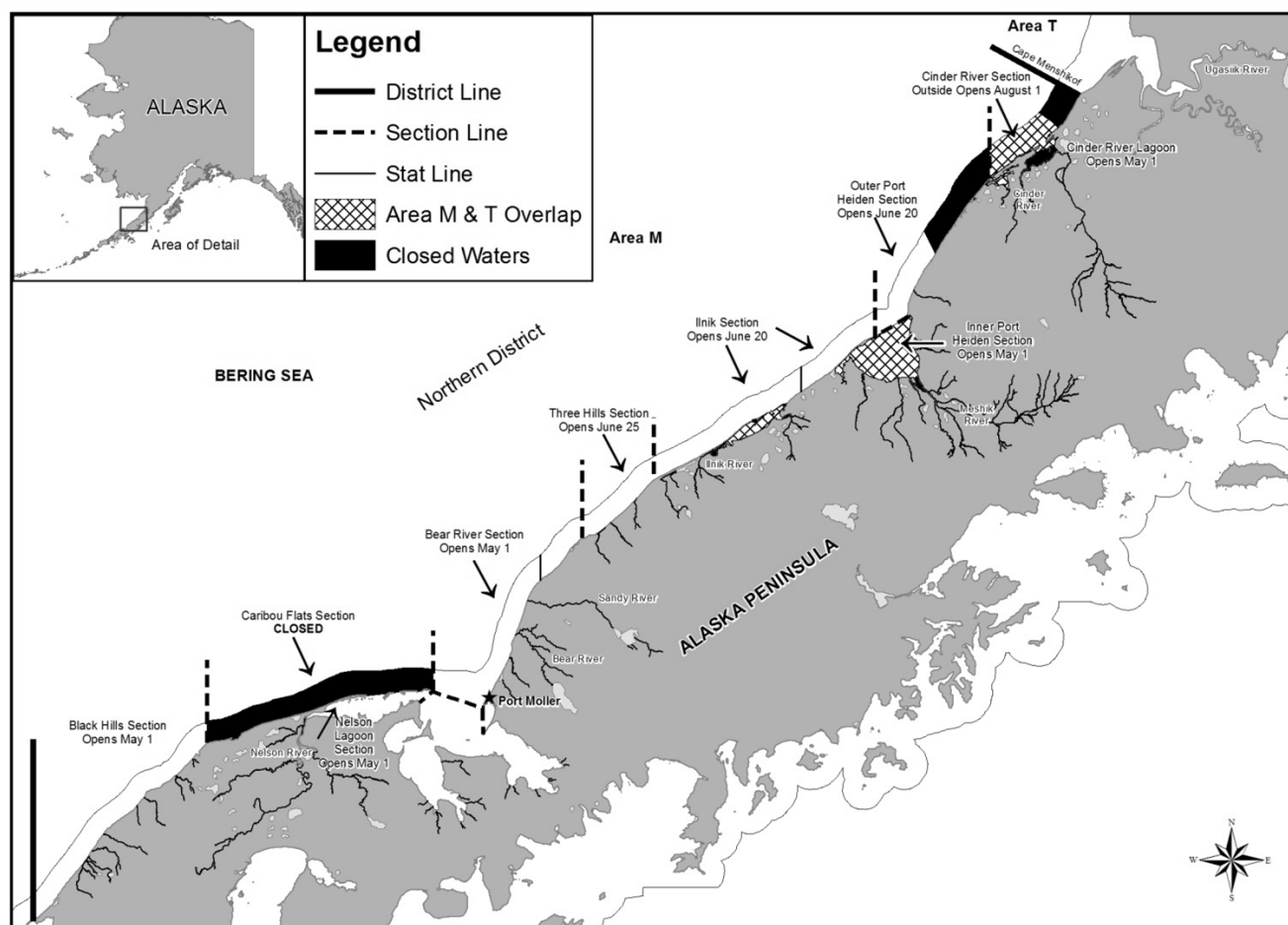


Figure 5.—Northern District commercial salmon fishing sections with earliest opening dates depicted.

Nelson Lagoon Section

The Nelson Lagoon Section was opened for all weekly fishing periods and was open continuously starting on June 16 during the 2025 season. The Nelson (Sapsuk) River (Figure 5) total run of 819,504 sockeye salmon (includes harvest and escapement) was well above the estimated forecast of 430,000 sockeye salmon. From the total run, 230,080 sockeye salmon were harvested in Nelson Lagoon (Table 12), and 552,224 fish escaped (Table 13) into the Nelson River, 32,200 escaped into the Caribou River, and 5,000 escaped into the David River. The harvest in Nelson Lagoon was slightly above the historical 10-year average of 192,000 sockeye salmon, but sockeye salmon escapement into Nelson River was the second largest escapement since 1975 and well above the biological escapement goal (BEG) of 97,000–219,000 fish (Table 13).

Beginning August 15, the Nelson Lagoon Section is managed based on local coho salmon runs. Nelson River has a SEG range 19,000–29,000 fish. However, due to poor weather conditions and logistical constraints in August and September, the department's ability to conduct aerial surveys was limited. The last significant coho salmon fishery within Nelson Lagoon occurred in 2020 when 18,838 coho salmon were harvested. Since 2020, the coho salmon fishery within Nelson Lagoon has been limited due to a lack of industry interest and market conditions. During 2025, a total of 0 coho salmon were harvested, which is below the recent 10-year average of 15,817 coho salmon.

Table 13.—Northern District sockeye salmon escapements and goals, 2025.

	Escapement ^a	Goal
Nelson (Sapsuk) River	552,224	97,000–219,000
Ilnik River	40,810	40,000–75,000
Bear Lake early run	212,355	176,000–293,000
Bear Lake late run	126,401	117,000–195,000
Bear Lake total	338,756	293,000–488,000
Subtotal for systems with weirs	931,790	430,000–782,000
Subtotal for systems without weirs	138,155	125,400–257,800
Northern District total	1,069,945	555,400–1,039,800

^a Includes an estimate of sockeye salmon after removal of the weirs.

Bear River and Three Hills Sections

As specified by the Northern District Salmon Fisheries Management Plan (5 AAC 09.369), the Bear River Section (Figure 5) opens to commercial salmon fishing on May 1, while the Three Hills Section opens on June 25. Both areas are managed based on the sockeye salmon run strength into Bear and Sandy Rivers. The early sockeye salmon run at Bear River was weak, and weekly interim escapement objectives were not met in June and most of July. During this time, the Bear River and Three Hills Sections were closed to commercial fishing. Sockeye escapement at Bear River improved towards the end of July, leading to the opening of the Bear River, Three Hills, and Ilnik Sections for commercial fishing from July 21 to July 31.

The late-run of sockeye salmon at Bear River, which starts on August 1, was weak and arrived later than usual. Commercial harvest opportunity for late-run sockeye salmon opened on August 11. Once the fishery was opened, a large closure area around the mouth of the Bear River was used to ensure the escapement goal was met while still providing fishing opportunities within the Northern District. Approximately 53,156 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Bear River Section during 2025, and 41,490 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Three Hills Section (Table 12).

The Bear River early-run (through July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 212,355 fish met the escapement goal of 176,000–293,000 fish (Table 13). The Bear River late-run (after July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 126,401 fish met the late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 117,000–195,000 fish. The Bear River season total sockeye salmon escapement was 338,756 fish (Table 13), which met the combined early- and late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 293,000–488,000 fish.

The 2025 Sandy River sockeye salmon escapement of 15,000 fish (Table 13) was below the escapement goal range of 37,000–69,000 fish. Due to budgetary constraints, the Sandy River weir was not operated in the 2025 season, leaving escapement to be estimated by aerial survey. High winds and a significant flooding event that occurred before peak aerial surveys likely affected the number of fish observed in the Sandy River drainage.

Ilnik Section

In 2025, the Ilnik River system sockeye salmon escapement through the weir was 40,810 fish (Table 13), which was above the Ilnik River escapement goal of 40,000–75,000 fish. By regulation, the Ilnik Section can open to commercial salmon fishing on June 20. Sockeye salmon escapement into Ilnik River was above expected

escapement objectives during most of June. However, escapements started to decline during the last week of June and the Ilnik Section was closed on June 29 due to poor escapement into the Ilnik River. Escapements remained poor into July with the lower end of the escapement goal not being achieved until July 20, and the Ilnik Section remained closed until July 21. Between July 21 and August 15, fishing time in the entire Ilnik Section is based on Bear River sockeye salmon run strength. The Bear River weir was on track to achieve the lower end of the escapement goal, and the Ilnik Section was reopened on July 21. Approximately 452,583 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section, below the recent ten-year average of 1.3 million fish (Table 12).

Beginning August 15, the Ilnik Section is managed for coho salmon runs into Ilnik Lagoon. However, most fishing efforts continued to target sockeye salmon during this time. During 2025, a total of 35,477 coho salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section.

Inner and Outer Port Heiden Sections

Aerial escapement surveys of the Meshik River began on June 20, and subsequent surveys occurred weekly throughout the season. The final sockeye salmon escapement into the Meshik River system was 45,900 fish, below the escapement goal of 48,000–86,000 sockeye salmon. This includes escapement into the Meshik River and tributaries, as well as Red Bluff and Yellow Bluff Creeks. A significant flooding event occurred just before peak aerial surveys, likely affecting the number of fish observed with poor visibility in the Meshik River drainages.

Fishing time in the Outer Port Heiden Section (Figure 5) is based on Meshik River sockeye salmon abundance unless management actions are taken for the conservation of Ugashik River sockeye salmon in the Egegik District. By regulation, the Outer Port Heiden Section may open to commercial salmon fishing from June 20 to July 31. The weekly fishing periods in the Outer Port Heiden Section are scheduled from 6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday. The Outer Port Heiden Section opened on June 23 and had openings of no more than 2.5 days per week until the section closed on July 31. In 2025, a total of 413,569 sockeye salmon (Table 12) were harvested from the Outer Port Heiden Section. The 2025 sockeye salmon harvest in the Outer Port Heiden Section was below the 10-year average harvest of 568,534 sockeye salmon.

Cinder River Section

No effort occurred in the Cinder River Section during 2025 despite weekly commercial salmon fishing openers throughout the season. The total Cinder River (including Mud Creek) sockeye salmon escapement estimate of 30,650 fish was below the escapement goal of 36,000–94,000 fish. A significant flooding event occurred just before peak aerial surveys, likely affecting the number of fish observed in the Cinder River drainages.

Northern District Escapement for Other Salmon Species

Chinook Salmon

Nelson River is the only river in Area M with a Chinook salmon escapement goal. At the Nelson River weir, a total of 4,551 Chinook salmon escaped, meeting the escapement goal of 2,400–5,000 fish. The total Northern District Chinook salmon escapement of 7,551 fish was below the recent ten-year average of 11,868 fish.

Coho Salmon

Due to weather and lack of industry interest, coho salmon surveys were limited in August. Additionally, budgetary and logistical constraints did not permit coho salmon surveys to occur in September during the peak of the return.

Coho salmon runs continue through September and into October, therefore escapements tabulated from aerial surveys are considered minimum estimates. During 2025, 4,400 coho salmon were observed during aerial surveys conducted during August in the Northern District. The coho escapement goal of Nelson River has a SEG of 19,000–29,000 fish and Ilnik River has a SEG of 9,000–24,000 fish. It is unknown if these goals were achieved, however no directed fishery occurred in these locations.

Chum Salmon

The North Alaska Peninsula has two aggregated chum salmon escapement goals for the Northern and Northwestern Districts. The Northern District escapement goal is determined by an aggregate of 18 index streams. In 2025, 78,050 chum salmon were observed in these streams, above the escapement goal of 49,000–132,000 fish. A total of 110,277 chum salmon escaped into Northern District streams in 2025. Most of the chum salmon escapement occurred in the Herendeen–Moller Bay Section (70,600 fish).

Pink Salmon

There are no escapement goals for pink salmon in the Northern District. In some years, depending on market conditions, a directed pink salmon fishery may occur; however, this did not happen in 2025. A total of 28,724 pink salmon were observed as escapement in the Northern District during 2025.