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# Advisory Announcement

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## 2026 CHIGNIK COMMERCIAL SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is a brief overview of the 2026 Chignik Management Area (CMA; Figure 1) commercial salmon season. The numbers provided in this season summary are preliminary.

The Chignik River watershed supports two primary sockeye salmon runs which support the majority of directed harvest opportunities for sockeye salmon within the CMA. The combined sockeye salmon run was estimated at approximately 1.37 million fish. A total of 740,459 sockeye salmon escaped into the Chignik River watershed, including an estimated 352,855 early-run and 387,604 late-run sockeye salmon (Table 1). Chignik River sockeye salmon met the optimal escapement goal (OEG) ranges of 300,000–400,000 for early-run and slightly exceeded the OEG of 240,000–360,000 late-run fish. Chinook salmon escapement totaled 1,923 fish, meeting the biological escapement goal (BEG) for the second consecutive year and exceeding recent 5- and 10-year averages. The pink salmon escapement index was approximately 68,000 fish, substantially below recent even-year averages, while chum salmon escapement was approximately 15,000 fish, also below recent averages (Tables 1 and 2).

Commercial salmon harvest in the CMA totaled approximately 1.33 million fish, including 628,798 sockeye, 500,569 pink, 166,261 chum, 31,811 coho, and 1,001 Chinook salmon (Table 3). Due to weak early-run sockeye salmon escapement, commercial fishing opportunity targeting sockeye salmon was delayed until June 17, later than historical opening dates. Fishing opportunities subsequently expanded as escapement increased and inseason management objectives were met. Consistent with the *Chignik Area King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan*, conservation measures were implemented during the season to reduce harvest pressure on the Chignik River Chinook salmon stock. Preliminary total exvessel value was approximately $9.03 million, with sockeye salmon contributing the largest share at approximately $6.71 million.

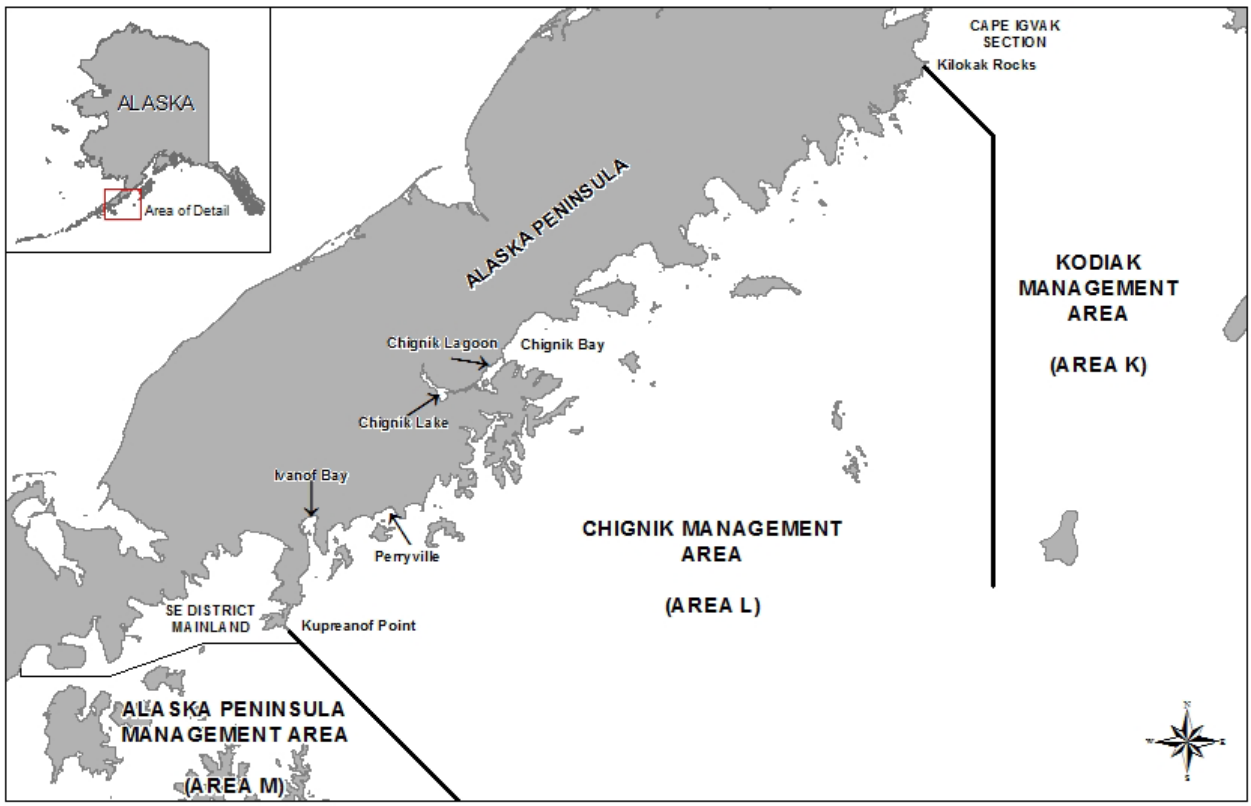



Figure 1.– Map of the Alaska Peninsula illustrating the relative locations of the Chignik, Kodiak, and Alaska Peninsula Management areas.

**2026 Escapement Summary**

Escapement through the Chignik River weir was monitored using underwater digital video equipment from 31 May through 27 August. Two underwater camera gates in the weir were open to provide uninterrupted passage. Fish passing through the weir were counted, by species, for the first 10 minutes of each hour. The counts were expanded to obtain hourly escapement estimates and hourly escapement estimates were summed to estimate daily fish passage. A digital video archive was kept of each 10-minute counting period as well as the following 50-minute period to provide complete coverage throughout the entire monitoring time.

Aerial surveys were flown from late July to early September to monitor pink and chum salmon escapement into CMA streams. Peak survey counts, by index stream and species, were summed and compared to areawide sustainable escapement goals (SEG) established by Schaberg et al. (2019).

**<u>Chinook salmon</u>**

The Chignik River is the only Chinook salmon producing stream within the CMA and supports the largest Chinook salmon stock on the South Alaska Peninsula. The BOF adopted a *Chignik Area King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan* for 2026 due to Chinook salmon failing to reach the lower bound of the BEG in six of the seven years from 2021–2026. The BEG for Chinook salmon into the Chignik River watershed is 1,300–2,700 fish (Schaberg et al. 2019). The management plan includes closed waters within the Chignik Bay District for the month of July and mandatory commercial salmon fishing closures related to Chinook salmon run strength. The 2026 Chignik River Chinook salmon escapement of 1,923 fish (Table 1) was within the escapement goal range for the second consecutive year and was above recent 5- and 10-year escapement averages.

**Sockeye salmon**

Sockeye salmon escapement to the Chignik River in 2026 was managed based on OEG objectives for both early-run and late-run sockeye salmon. During 2026, the commercial salmon fishery targeting sockeye salmon in the CMA was managed based upon inseason escapement information gathered at the Chignik River weir. In addition to daily escapement observations, adult sockeye salmon were sampled each week for age, sex, and length (ASL) information between 10 June and 17 August. Apportionment between early- and late-run sockeye salmon was achieved in season using a historic run timing curve built using a combination of an Expectation-Maximization algorithm and historical genetic information.

Postseason, all sockeye salmon caught in the CMA and, as outlined in regulation, harvest from Southeastern District Mainland (SEDM) of Registration Area M and the Cape Igvak Section of Registration Area K, are apportioned as Chignik-bound sockeye salmon based on genetic stock information (Dann et al. 2012, Shedd et al. 2016). Chignik-bound harvest data are temporally aligned with Chignik River weir escapement counts to the day the harvest would have arrived at the weir had they not been caught based on Conrad (1983). The mixDist package in R is used to identify daily early- and late-run stock proportions for building the run reconstruction by modeling probability density functions with an Expectation-Maximization algorithm. This method employs the best available data, is reproducible, and yields stock proportions not significantly different than those derived using past genetic information. A post-weir estimate of escapement is also calculated to account for sockeye salmon escapement from when the weir is removed through September 30. The total Chignik River sockeye salmon escapement is estimated at 740,459 fish.

Early-run sockeye salmon have an OEG range of 300,000–400,000 fish. The early-run escapement was above the minimum management objectives for the season beginning 20 June, but the overall run strength was below average until late July. The early-run escapement objective was met with an estimated escapement of 352,855 fish (Table 1), which was above the recent 5- and 10-year escapement averages.

Late-run sockeye salmon have an OEG range of 240,000–360,000 fish. The overall late-run strength was weak, but the late-run escapement was above the interim escapement objectives throughout the season. The late-run escapement objective was slightly exceeded with 387,604 fish after including estimated post-weir escapement (Table 1) between 28 August and 30 September.

**Coho salmon**

Coho salmon begin to enter CMA drainages in mid-August and continue through November. In 2026, 2,991 coho salmon were observed passing the weir (Table 1). It should be noted that the weir's last day of counting was August 27, which is early in the coho salmon run.

**Pink salmon**

Pink salmon escapements to CMA streams were estimated via peak aerial surveys to a subset of index streams. The pink salmon SEG range of 260,000–450,000 fish for odd years and 170,000–280,000 fish for even years is based on peak pink salmon escapement observations into eight total index streams from four of the five CMA districts (Schaberg et al. 2019). In 2026, the pink salmon escapement index from seven of the index streams was approximately 68,000 fish, which is just 40% of the lower bound of the SEG range, and the lowest index since 2018 (Table 2).

**Chum salmon**

Chum salmon escapements to CMA streams were estimated via peak aerial surveys to a subset of index streams. The chum salmon SEG range of 45,000–110,000 fish is based on chum salmon escapement of six total index streams within four of the five districts (Schaberg et al. 2019). The 2026 chum salmon escapement index – the lowest in more than 15 years – of approximately 15,000 fish, is well below recent averages and the lower bound of the SEG range (Table 2).

Table 1.– Estimated Chinook, sockeye, coho, pink, and chum salmon, and Dolly Varden escapement to the Chignik River, 2010 to 2026 and 10- and 5-year averages.

| | Escapement | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Chinook[a] | Sockeye[b] | | Coho | Pink | Chum | Dolly Varden |
| Year | | Early-run | Late-run[c] | | | | |
| 2010 | 3,679 | 450,518 | 293,395 | 5,152 | 3,670 | 95 | 17,578 |
| 2011 | 2,728 | 492,557 | 261,259 | 5,293 | 16,298 | 145 | 19,225 |
| 2012 | 1,449 | 360,709 | 351,682 | 2,663 | 2,849 | 73 | 18,032 |
| 2013 | 1,253 | 404,753 | 351,349 | 16,783 | 7,231 | 72 | 17,230 |
| 2014 | 2,895 | 353,798 | 297,812 | 15,572 | 3,171 | 58 | 44,899 |
| 2015 | 2,054 | 421,848 | 702,051 | 60,209 | 4,269 | 54 | 16,346 |
| 2016 | 1,843 | 416,711 | 356,464 | 14,187 | 486 | 114 | 24,625 |
| 2017 | 1,137 | 420,497 | 372,064 | 33,270 | 123,531 | 615 | 7,664 |
| 2018 | 825 | 182,974 | 356,724 | 64,214 | 3,222 | 54 | 4,550 |
| 2019 | 1,517 | 387,110 | 294,889 | 282 | 18,073 | 67 | 6,242 |
| 2020 | 1,278 | 178,785 | 152,192 | 6,964 | 10,614 | 124 | 4,919 |
| 2021 | 1,172 | 295,726 | 345,216 | 0 | 6,057 | 25 | 4,363 |
| 2022 | 761 | 412,228 | 395,858 | 10,903 | 12,558 | 90 | 1,238 |
| 2023 | 267 | 431,283 | 457,071 | 1,366 | 19,696 | 26 | 605 |
| 2024 | 1,166 | 372,831 | 354,749 | 1,082 | 2,836 | 58 | 1,428 |
| 2025 | 1,391 | 399,019 | 659,246 | 5,101 | 260,769 | 54 | 2,174 |
| 2026 | 1,923 | 352,855 | 387,604 | 2,991 | 2,536 | 6 | 2,391 |
| Averages[d] | | | | | | | |
| 2016–2025 | 1,136 | 349,716 | 374,447 | 13,737 | 5,943 | 123 | 5,781 |
| 2021–2025 | 951 | 382,217 | 442,428 | 3,690 | 7,697 | 51 | 1,962 |

[a] No escapement adjustments were made for Chinook salmon that spawn below the weir, or those removed by the sport and subsistence fisheries above the weir.
[b] Escapement values have been retroactively updated with a run timing model implemented in 2022.
[c] Late-run sockeye salmon totals include a weir estimate and post-weir escapement estimate using a time series analysis.
[d] Pink salmon averages include even years only.

## 2026 Commercial Fishery Summary

In early June, commercial salmon fishing is based on the strength of Chignik River early-run sockeye salmon. Fishing periods are determined by daily escapements as well as harvest information. From mid-June through July, the CMA is managed to achieve in season escapement objectives for the Chignik River early- and late-run sockeye salmon, as well as local pink and chum salmon stocks. Beginning in early July, opportunity to target pink and chum salmon may occur in select bays of the Central, Western, Eastern, and Perryville Districts. In August, and for the remainder of the season, management of the CMA is based on achieving the Chignik River late-run sockeye salmon goal or on the department's evaluation of local stocks of pink, chum, and coho salmon. If the Chignik River sockeye salmon late run is not meeting interim escapement objectives and a harvestable surplus of pink, chum, or coho salmon is available, the department may restrict fishing to certain areas in the CMA to allow fishing, while minimizing the harvest of sockeye salmon. To conserve Chinook salmon in the CMA, several management strategies were implemented throughout the region in 2026. The primary strategies included closing the southern half of Chignik Lagoon to all commercial fishing for the month of July and mandatory fishing closures in the Chignik Bay District based on Chinook salmon escapement into the Chignik River. Throughout July, Chignik Bay District had 48-hour openings followed by mandatory closures of 72-, 48-, or 24-hours based on projected Chinook salmon final escapement. Additionally, the CMA had a Chinook salmon harvest cap of

1,000 fish within a 48-hour period which, if triggered, would cause the statistical areas primarily responsible to be immediately closed for one week. If more than 5,000 Chinook salmon were harvested within a commercial fishing period, the statistical areas primarily responsible would be closed through 10 August.

Table 2.– Estimated indexed, peak pink and chum salmon escapement in the Chignik Management Area, 2010 to 2026, showing 10- and 5-year averages.

| | Indexed Escapement | |
|---|---|---|
| Year | Pink | Chum |
| 2010 | 98,400 | 102,625 |
| 2011 | 272,000 | 119,000 |
| 2012 | 111,000 | 93,800 |
| 2013 | 231,800 | 109,900 |
| 2014 | 87,240 | 46,720 |
| 2015 | 404,000 | 123,400 |
| 2016 | 68,100 | 69,900 |
| 2017 | 586,000 | 96,900 |
| 2018 | 41,900 | 33,400 |
| 2019 | 432,373 | 98,000 |
| 2020 | 118,675 | 35,455 |
| 2021 | 392,000 | 107,000 |
| 2022 | 303,600 | 73,200 |
| 2023 | 621,000 | 183,000 |
| 2024 | 262,700 | 83,100 |
| 2025 | 474,900 | 95,000 |
| 2026 | 68,160 | 15,080 |
| Averages[a] | | |
| 2016-2025 | 158,995 | 87,496 |
| 2021-2025 | – | 108,260 |

Note: Peak escapements are calculated using aerial surveys from the eight pink salmon and six chum salmon index streams established in Schaberg et al. 2019.
[a] Pink salmon 10-year average includes even years only, 5-year average only listed for chum salmon.

## Sockeye salmon

In 2026, the department managed the commercial salmon fishery based upon daily escapement levels, and an applied average stock apportionment curve developed using a combination of an Expectation-Maximization algorithm and historical genetic information to apportion sockeye salmon to early or late run stocks.

Early-run sockeye salmon escapement was generally below average but exceeded the lower interim escapement objectives from mid-June throughout the season. As a result of the poor early-run escapement in early June, there were no fishing periods until June 17 after interim objectives began tracking for the midpoint of the OEG.

Typically, in early- to mid-July, late-run sockeye salmon begin to enter the Chignik watershed. Commercial fishing is frequently curtailed during this time for the department to evaluate the strength of the late run. The late run of sockeye salmon met all interim escapement goals throughout the 2026 season, with escapement trending above the midpoint escapement objectives through July and August. Harvest effort ceased after August 21 when processors ended fish purchasing operations.

**Pink and chum salmon**

Aerial surveys to monitor pink and chum salmon escapement began on 29 July and continued through 13 September. Aerial surveys for each district were flown approximately once a week during this time as weather and staffing allowed. Starting 17 June, commercial salmon fishing was allowed in all districts. This decision was based upon increasing numbers of sockeye salmon observed escaping into the Chignik River. Due to low observed pink and chum salmon survey counts (Table 2), commercial salmon fishing in Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts was closed 26 July and was mostly closed for the remainder of the season. Similarly, Inner Kujulik Bay in the Central District closed 30 July and remained closed through the end of the fishing season to protect local chum salmon.

## 2026 Commercial Harvest Summary

**Chinook salmon**

A total of 1,001 Chinook salmon was harvested during the 2026 season, below recent historical averages (Table 3). The majority of harvest occurred in the Western District (Table 4) and was incidental to fisheries targeting local sockeye, pink, and chum salmon. The CMA Chinook salmon action plan requires closing statistical areas for one week for any area that exceeds the 1,000 fish harvest cap, and if more than 5,000 Chinook salmon are harvested within a commercial fishing period, the statistical areas responsible will be closed through 10 August. No Chinook salmon harvest caps were exceeded during the 2026 fishing season.

**Sockeye salmon**

A total of 628,798 sockeye salmon was harvested within the CMA during 2026, just above recent historical averages (Table 3). The majority of the harvest occurred in the Central District (Table 4).

Both the SEDM and Cape Igvak fisheries are dependent upon CMA sockeye salmon biological and allocative criteria. Generally, no commercial salmon fishing will occur in Cape Igvak or SEDM unless the department estimates at least 300,000 sockeye salmon will be harvested by 5 July within the CMA, and 600,000 sockeye salmon will be harvested by 25 July for SEDM. The Cape Igvak fishery was not opened during the 1 June to 5 July allocation period. Similarly, there were no fisheries openings in SEDM during the 1 June to 25 July allocation period.

**Coho salmon**

Coho salmon harvest in the CMA totaled 31,811 fish, below recent historical averages (Table 3). The majority of the coho salmon harvest occurred in the Western District (Table 4).

**Pink salmon**

A total of 500,569 pink salmon was harvested in the CMA during 2026, which is similar to the most recent even year average (2022 and 2024), but less than the even 10-year average pink salmon harvest (Table 3). Most of the pink salmon harvest occurred in the Western District in July (Table 4). Pink salmon escapement into CMA systems begins in late July and peaks in August. To protect these stocks, the Western, Perryville, and Eastern Districts remained closed from late July through August, and the Central District was closed for much of August.

**Chum salmon**

A total of 166,261 chum salmon was harvested in the CMA during 2026, above the recent 5- and 10-year historical averages (Table 3). Most of the chum salmon harvest occurred in the Central District in June and early July (Table 4). Similar to pink salmon, chum salmon escapement into CMA systems begins in late July and peaks in August. To protect these stocks, the Western, Perryville, and Eastern Districts remained closed from late July through August, and the Central District was closed for much of August.

Table 3.– Total commercial salmon harvests, including home pack and department test fishery, from the Chignik Management Area by species and year, 2016 through 2026.

| | | | Chignik Management Area Harvest | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Permits[a] | Landings | Chinook | Sockeye | Coho | Pink | Chum | Total |
| 2016 | 69 | 2,554 | 20,719 | 1,394,091 | 94,397 | 140,913 | 118,435 | 1,768,555 |
| 2017 | 67 | 2,408 | 3,946 | 897,489 | 226,829 | 7,077,924 | 609,236 | 8,815,424 |
| 2018 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 128 | 1 | 6 | 924 | 1,059 |
| 2019 | 51 | 1,503 | 4,312 | 638,784 | 248,282 | 2,452,838 | 157,517 | 3,501,733 |
| 2020 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2021 | 31 | 439 | 1,422 | 118,839 | 84,453 | 1,321,454 | 43,187 | 1,569,355 |
| 2022 | 35 | 582 | 3,630 | 334,704 | 40,099 | 1,043,282 | 70,886 | 1,492,601 |
| 2023 | 35 | 951 | 2,302 | 1,069,712 | 52,644 | 2,143,701 | 109,695 | 3,378,054 |
| 2024 | 54 | 693 | 12,172 | 281,080 | 68,020 | 892,098 | 61,316 | 1,314,686 |
| 2025 | 38 | 810 | 2,962 | 823,419 | 50,940 | 1,975,146 | 86,649 | 2,939,116 |
| 2026 | 47 | 879 | 1,001 | 628,798 | 31,811 | 500,569 | 166,261 | 1,328,440 |
| Averages[b,c] | | | | | | | | |
| 2016–2025 | 43 | 1,105 | 5,718 | 617,583 | 96,185 | 519,075 | 139,761 | 2,753,398 |
| 2021–2025 | 39 | 695 | 4,498 | 525,551 | 59,231 | – | 74,347 | 2,138,762 |

[a] Includes the department's test fishery permit.
[b] Averages do not include 2020 due to no fishing opportunity.
[c] Pink salmon 10-year average includes even years only, 5-year not listed.

Table 4.– Chignik Management Area commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, by district, 2026.

| | Chinook | | Sockeye | | Coho | | Pink | | Chum | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Number | Pounds | Number | Pounds | Number | Pounds | Number | Pounds | Number | Pounds |
| Chignik Bay | 28 | 161 | 230,476 | 1,288,345 | 510 | 3,100 | 2,169 | 6,628 | 1,654 | 11,804 |
| Central | 293 | 1,502 | 301,565 | 1,572,318 | 10,013 | 54,191 | 140,571 | 454,930 | 76,903 | 581,046 |
| Eastern | 94 | 442 | 36,409 | 184,863 | 125 | 493 | 3,865 | 12,860 | 17,966 | 134,346 |
| Western | 586 | 3,189 | 57,455 | 294,800 | 21,043 | 131,899 | 351,148 | 1,196,406 | 66,889 | 513,984 |
| Perryville | 0 | 0 | 2,893 | 15,834 | 120 | 777 | 2,816 | 8,049 | 2,849 | 22,104 |
| Total | 1,001 | 5,294 | 628,798 | 3,356,159 | 31,811 | 190,460 | 500,569 | 1,678,873 | 166,261 | 1,263,284 |

## Exvessel value

The total 2026 exvessel value in the CMA without any postseason adjustments was approximately $9.03 million, or about $192,215 per active participant in the fishery (Table 5). The majority of the exvessel value ($6.71 million) was made up of sockeye salmon, followed by chum and pink salmon ($1.14 and $1.01 million respectively; Table 5).

## Test Fishery

The department did not conduct any test fisheries in the CMA during the 2026 season.

## Subsistence

State and Federal subsistence fishing was open for sockeye, pink, chum, and coho salmon the entire season in the CMA.

To conserve Chignik River Chinook salmon, in light of low escapements from 2022 and 2023, state subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon was restricted on June 3. The department closed the Chignik Lagoon and Chignik

River watershed to the harvest of Chinook salmon to all users through December 31, 2026. Subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon on all Federal public waters was closed June 20 through August 18, 2026.

State subsistence harvest totals for 2026 will not be known until the spring of 2027 when all permits have been returned.

Table 5.– Total value[a], by species, and average value per active permit, in dollars, in the Chignik Management Area, 2016 to 2026.

| Year | Chinook | Sockeye | Coho | Pink | Chum | Total | Permits[b] | Value per permit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 | $176,800 | $8,044,321 | $158,010 | $95,776 | $161,028 | $8,635,935 | 69 | $125,158 |
| 2017 | $51,611 | $7,182,853 | $546,586 | $6,579,390 | $1,439,418 | $15,799,858 | 67 | $235,819 |
| 2018 | $0 | $860 | $1 | $3 | $1,235 | $2,099 | 6 | $350 |
| 2019 | $31,628 | $5,062,351 | $506,047 | $2,047,651 | $363,019 | $8,010,696 | 51 | $157,072 |
| 2020 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | 0 | $0 |
| 2021 | $2,807 | $867,612 | $143,434 | $1,332,609 | $120,000 | $2,466,462 | 31 | $79,563 |
| 2022 | $4,193 | $2,259,129 | $51,567 | $1,193,624 | $176,974 | $3,685,488 | 35 | $105,300 |
| 2023 | $3,816 | $3,849,293 | $26,009 | $1,086,898 | $161,174 | $5,127,190 | 35 | $146,491 |
| 2024 | $1,598 | $1,758,954 | $309,423 | $724,904 | $123,492 | $2,918,370 | 53 | $55,064 |
| 2025 | $13,719 | $5,600,806 | $68,620 | $1,567,171 | $190,089 | $7,440,405 | 37 | $201,092 |
| 2026 | $6,088 | $6,712,318 | $171,414 | $1,007,324 | $1,136,956 | $9,034,100 | 47 | $192,215 |
| Averages[c] | | | | | | | | |
| 2016-2025 | $31,797 | $3,847,353 | $201,077 | $1,625,336 | $304,048 | $6,009,611 | 46 | $122,879 |
| 2021-2025 | $5,227 | $2,867,159 | $119,811 | $1,181,041 | $154,346 | $4,327,583 | 39 | $117,502 |

*Note:* Values do not include home pack or department test fishery.

[a] Values represent the initial price paid, and do not include any postseason adjustments by any processor. The average 2026 prices per pound were: Chinook - $1.15, sockeye - $2.00, coho - $0.90, pink - $0.60, chum - $0.90.

[b] Includes the number of commercial permits that received income from the harvest. These figures do not include department test fishery harvests.

[c] Average values do not include 2020 due to no fishing opportunity.

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