

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



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2015 BRISTOL BAY SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2015 Bristol Bay commercial salmon season. All data are preliminary.

The 2015 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of 58 million fish ranks 2nd out of the last 20 years (1995–2014) and was 70% above the 34.2 million average run for the same period. This year's Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was 12% above the preseason inshore forecast of 52 million fish. The Naknek-Kvichak, Nushagak and Ugashik districts were higher than the preseason forecast while Egegik and Togiak districts were less than predicted. The 35.7 million sockeye salmon commercial harvest was 5% below the 37.6 million preseason forecast. All escapement goals were met or exceeded, with a total sockeye salmon escapement of 22.4 million fish. A total of 52,584 Chinook salmon were harvested in Bristol Bay in 2015. The harvests for other species are 929,335 chum salmon; 30,282 coho salmon; and 2,179 pink salmon. The 2015 sockeye run timing was one of the latest on record, approximately 7 days late. Overall fish weights and lengths were smaller than average, especially in Egegik. The baywide average sockeye salmon weight of 5.2 pounds (Table 1) is the smallest average weight in the last 20 years.

EXVESSEL VALUE

The Bristol Bay 2015 harvest of all salmon species was 36.7 million fish, ranking second over the last 20 years (1995-2014) and worth a preliminary exvessel value of \$94.8 million, 15% below the 20-year average of \$111.0 million. 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, 2015.

Species	Price/lb	Weight (lb)	Number of Fish	Total Weight	Value
Sockeye	\$0.50	5.2	35,672,859	184,791,660	\$92,395,829
Chinook	\$0.50	15.1	52,584	791,339	\$395,669
Chum	\$0.30	6.1	929,335	5,699,727	\$1,994,904
Pink	\$0.20	3.7	2,179	7,989	\$1,598
Coho	\$0.25	6.7	30,282	205,113	\$51,278
Totals			36,687,239	191,437,905	\$94,839,279

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 2015 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, 2015.^a

District	Drift Gillnet	District Set Gillnet	Section Set Gillnet
	Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught	Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught	Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught
Naknek/Kvichak	84% / 84%	16% / 16%	Naknek: 8% / 8%
			Kvichak: 8% / 8%
Egegik	86% / 81%	14% / 19%	Not applicable
Ugashik	90% / 91%	10% / 9%	Not applicable
Nushagak ^a	74% / 69 %	26% / 31%	Nushagak: 20% / 22%
			Igushik: 6% / 9%

^a Harvest opportunity within Wood River Special Harvest Area is determined by inseason allocation within the full district.

SPECIES PERFORMANCE

Sockeye Salmon

This year's Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was 14% above the preseason inshore forecast of 52 million fish (Table 3). The 2015 harvest was 53% higher than the recent 20 year average for all districts (Table 4). Sockeye salmon escapements were met or exceeded in all systems (Table 5). The Egegik, Ugashik, Wood, and Igushik rivers were above the established escapement goal ranges while all other systems were within ranges. Limitations in processing capacity also affected the department's ability to control sockeye salmon escapements into several river systems in Bristol Bay.

Table 3.—Difference of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon actual run versus forecast, 2015.

District	Inshore Forecast	Inshore Run	% Difference from Forecast
Naknek/Kvichak	27,730,000	31,337,939	14% Above
Egegik	12,040,000	10,446,366	13% Below
Ugashik	3,560,000	6,876,156	93% Above
Nushagak	8,070,000	8,806,424	9% Above
Togiak	590,000	572,650	3% Below
Totals	51,970,000	58,039,535	12% Above

Table 4.—2015 preliminary commercial sockeye salmon harvests and 20-year averages by district.

District	1995–2014 Average Sockeye Harvest	2015 Sockeye Harvest
Naknek/Kvichak	7,554,674	16,304,723
Egegik	6,909,307	8,285,574
Nushagak	5,755,941	5,417,094
Ugashik	2,456,097	5,311,518
Togiak	541,678	353,950
Totals	23,217,697	35,672,859

Table 5.—Bristol Bay sockeye salmon goals and escapement, 2015.

River System	Goal Range	Escapement
Kvichak River	2,000,000–10,000,000	7,341,612
Naknek River	800,000–2,000,000	1,920,954
Alagnak River	320,000 minimum	5,770,650 ^a
Egegik River	800,000–2,000,000	2,160,792
Ugashik River	500,000–1,400,000	1,564,638
Nushagak River	370,000–900,000	796,684
Wood River	700,000–1,800,000	1,941,474
Igushik River	150,000–400,000	651,172
Togiak River	120,000–270,000	218,700
Total		22,366,676

^a Expanded aerial survey estimate.

Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon harvests in Bristol Bay were below average in every district except the Nushagak (Table 6). No directed Chinook salmon fishing periods occurred in the Nushagak District in 2015. Chinook salmon were caught during directed sockeye periods in all commercial districts and approximately 52,584 fish were harvested, 4% below the 20-year average of 54,507 (Table 6). Chinook salmon escapement into the Nushagak River was 98,019 and within the escapement goal range of 55,000 to 120,000.

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

District	1995–2014 Average Chinook Salmon Harvest	2015 Chinook Salmon Harvest
Naknek/Kvichak	1,889	740
Egegik	687	52
Ugashik	917	93
Nushagak	43,967	48,803
Togiak	7,046	2,896
Totals	54,507	52,584

Chum Salmon

The 2015 preliminary Bristol Bay chum salmon harvest was 929,335 fish (Table 7). Togiak, Egegik and Ugashik districts were below their 20-year average harvest. Nushagak District was the largest producer of chum salmon, where 542,422 fish were harvested.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon return to Bristol Bay in even years. The harvest in 2015 was 2,179 fish.

Coho Salmon

The total coho salmon harvest was 30,282 fish (Table 7). Typically the Nushagak District is the largest coho salmon producer. In 2015, there was no commercial interest in coho salmon and the 5,635 fish harvest was incidental to the sockeye fishery. Togiak District led the bay in coho salmon harvest in 2015 with 21,999 fish.

Table 7.—Preliminary 2015 Bristol Bay salmon harvest and escapement by district and species.

District	Sockeye	Chinook	Chum	Pink	Coho ^a	TOTAL
Naknek-Kvichak Catch	16,304,723	740	210,104	100	1,164	16,516,831
Escapement- KvichakTwr.	7,341,612	NA	NA	NA	NA	7,341,612
Naknek Twr.	1,920,954	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,920,954
Alagnak survey	5,770,650	NA	NA	NA	NA	5,770,650
NK Subtotal	31,337,939	740	210,104	100	1,164	31,550,047
Egegik Catch	8,285,574	52	40,382	0	730	8,326,738
Escapement-Egegik Twr.	2,160,792	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,160,792
Egegik Subtotal	10,446,366	52	40,382	0	730	10,487,530
Ugashik Catch	5,311,518	93	36,185	2		5,348,552
Escapement-Ugashik Twr.	1,564,638	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,564,638
Ugashik Subtotal	6,876,156	93	36,185	2		6,913,190
Nushagak Catch	5,417,094	48,803	542,422	937	5,635	6,014,891
Escapement- Wood Twr.	1,941,474	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,941,474
Igushik	651,172	NA	NA	NA	NA	651,172
Nushagak	796,684	98,019	289,107	NA	NA	1,183,810
Nushagak Subtotal	8,806,424	146,822	831,529	937	5,635	9,791,347
Togiak Catch	353,950	2,896	100,242	1,140	21,999	480,227
Escapement - Togiak Twr.	218,700	NA	NA	NA	NA	218,700
Togiak R. & Trib.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0
Kulukak	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0
Togiak Subtotal	572,650	2,896	100,242	1,140	21,999	698,927
Bristol Bay Catch	35,672,859	52,584	929,335	2,179	30,282	36,687,239
Bristol Bay Escapement	22,366,676	98,019	289,107	NA	NA	22,753,802
Bristol Bay Total Run	58,039,535	150,603	1,218,442	2,179	30,282	59,441,041

^a Ugashik coho harvest is confidential.