



# Fishing for Mat-Su Valley King Salmon

## Chinook Salmon in the Mat-Su Valley Area

Chinook or king salmon are the largest Pacific salmon species and the first salmon to arrive each summer. Every year, thousands of anglers visit the Northern Cook Inlet area hoping to take home a 25 to 30 pound, maybe even a 50 pound Chinook salmon. However, Chinook salmon production has been on the decline the past 10 years which has led to numerous restrictions in the Matanuska Susitna Valley area including restricting fishing to catch-and-release only or closing certain waterbodies to all king salmon fishing. Please review the current Southcentral Alaska advisory announcements and emergency orders for these waters on the ADF&G website at [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) before your next fishing adventure.



Some of the most popular Chinook salmon fishing systems in the Northern Cook Inlet area include the Talkeetna River, Deshka River, Willow Creek, Montana Creek, Lake Creek in the Yentna River drainage, and Little Susitna River. In addition, anglers like to fish for Chinook salmon at the Eklutna Tailrace. This terminal fishery was added in the Mat-Su Valley to provide relief on the high fishing pressure on native stocks and provide a diverse fisheries in Alaska for all to enjoy.

The sprawling Susitna River drainage is made up of several major glacial tributaries including the Yentna,

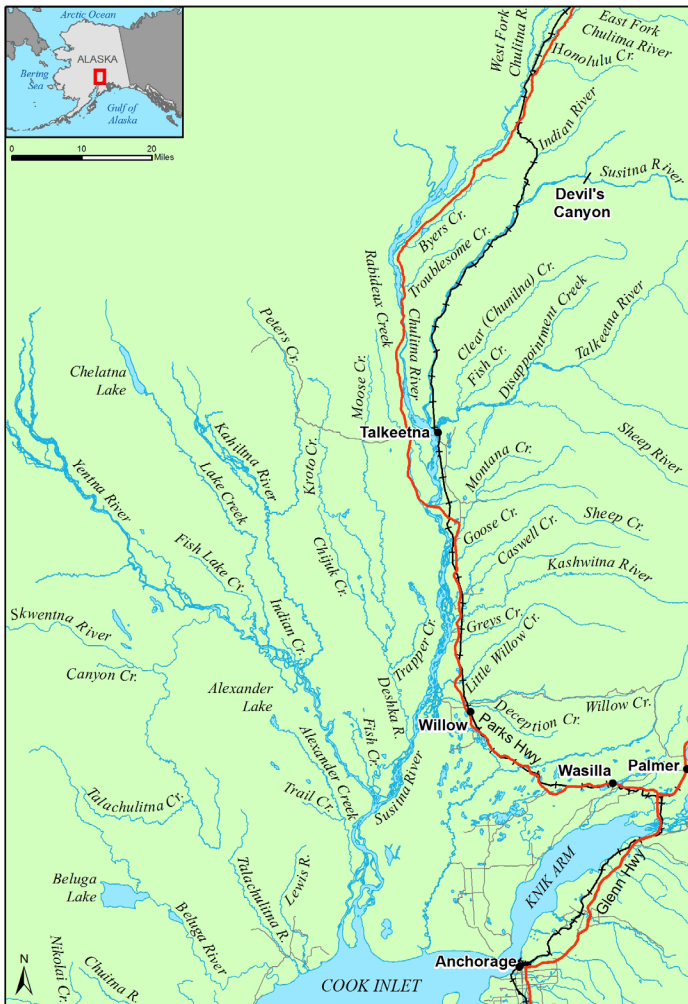
Skwentna, Chulitna, and Talkeetna rivers. These rivers each have dozens of clear water streams flowing into them. The streams that empty into the east side of the Susitna River begin high in the Talkeetna mountains. These streams are generally accessible by vehicle from the Parks Highway. The streams that flow into the west side of the Susitna River begin in the Alaska Range. These streams are more remote and require a boat or small airplane to access.

The Susitna River king salmon run is the fourth largest in the state, behind the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Nushagak rivers runs. Between 100,000 to 200,000 king salmon return every year to the Susitna River drainage, which is about twice the number bound for the Kenai River.

## Managing Alaska's Fisheries

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Division of Sport Fish (DSF) is charged with the management of Alaska's sport fisheries under the sustainable yield principle, through regulations and management plans adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Enforcement of fishing regulations is primarily the responsibility of the Alaska Wildlife Troopers. The ADF&G Palmer office is the management office for the Northern (including the Mat-Su Valley) and West Cook Inlet areas.





During the summer ADF&G posts weekly in-season fishing reports online. Anglers can find these under the Fishing Reports tab under the Fishing Information tab. ADF&G staff records these in-season fishing reports on the Palmer sport fishing hotline at (907) 746-6300. Anglers can also subscribe to receive the notifications via their email. Updates are also posted on the ADF&G - Sport Fishing Southcentral Alaska Facebook page. If you have any questions, please contact the Palmer ADF&G office at (907) 746-6300.



## Eklutna Tailrace

### Chinook Salmon

The Eklutna Tailrace is approximately 34 miles north of Anchorage, near mile 3.5 of the Old Glen Highway. The sport fishery is confined to the ½-mile long tailrace, which extends from the Old Glen Highway down to the Knik River. All waters within a ½-mile radius of its confluence with the Knik River, and to an ADF&G marker located 2 miles downstream of the confluence is open year-round to fishing for Chinook salmon.

The Eklutna Tailrace is stocked with hatchery reared Chinook salmon. While the Eklutna Tailrace is open to fishing year-round, the best king salmon fishing can be had during the month of June and into early July. A few native Chinook salmon from the Knik River or Matanuska River stocks may also be found at the tailrace. The Eklutna Tailrace is not tidally influenced.

A heavy-action spinning rod with 20 or 30 pound test line, or a 9 to 12wt fly rod, are recommended in landing a Chinook salmon in this water system. The recommended tackle to use when fishing the tailrace includes yarn flies in various colors, Pixees, or Vibrax. A majority of anglers will switch their setup to Spin-n-Glo ahead of a quarter-sized chunk of salmon roe in an egg loop knot with a 2 to 3 oz. pyramid weight on a sinker slider or under a slip bobber.



Every year ADF&G releases four sport fishing regulations booklets for the Northern, Southcentral, Southeast, and Southwest areas. Sport fishing regulations specific to the Anchorage Bowl area such as bag and possession limits, seasons, tackle, or bait limits can be found in the current Southcentral Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet.

These booklets are free of charge and are available at ADF&G offices, wherever sport fishing licenses are sold, and online at [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) under the Regulations tab. Before you cast out your line, make sure you read all the regulations for the waters you are fishing. Don't forget to check for advisory announcements and emergency orders on the ADF&G website at [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov). ADF&G may issue an advisory announcement and emergency order to open, liberalize, close, or restrict any fishery at any time due to biological needs.

In the event an advisory announcement and emergency order is issued, ADF&G attempts to release the documents a minimum of 24 to 48 hours before it becomes effective. Anglers can find advisory announcements and emergency orders on the ADF&G website under the Sport Fishing tab. Select the Fishing Information link and then the Emergency Orders and News Releases tab. Once there anglers can select the region and management area they intend to fish.

Coho, sockeye, and chum salmon can also be found in the Eklutna Tailrace. Additional information such as bag and possession limits for all salmon species can be found under the Knik area in the current Southcentral Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet.



### Youth-Only King Salmon Fishery

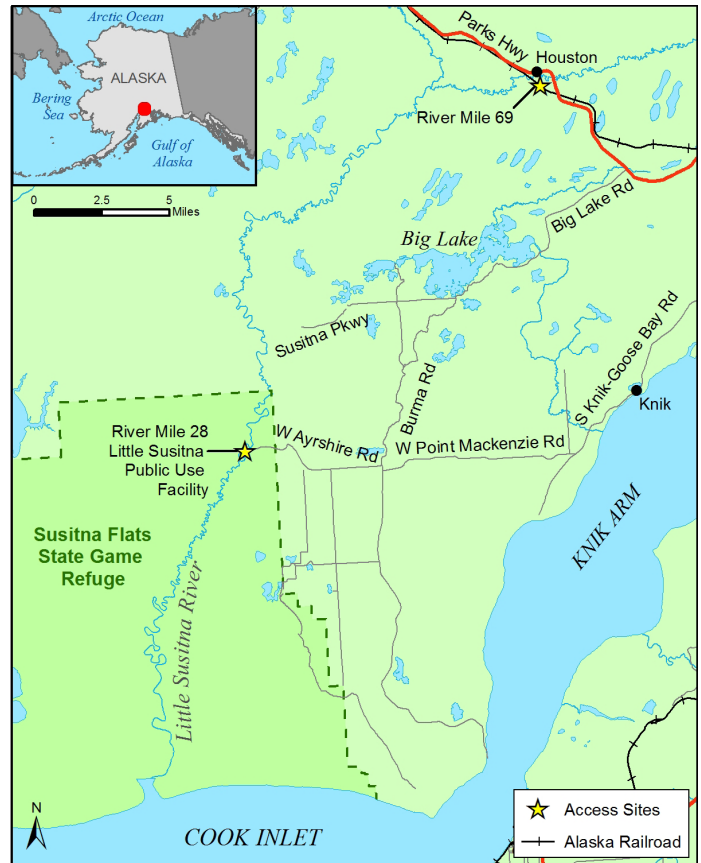
On the third Saturday in June, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. a section of the Eklutna Tailrace is the site of a youth-only fishery for Chinook salmon. During the youth-only fishery, only anglers 15 years old and younger may fish for Chinook salmon from the confluence with the Knik River upstream to the pedestrian bridge. Sections dedicated to this Youth-Only Fishery are closed to anglers 16 years and up, including catch-and-release, during this time but the remainder of the Tailrace will be open to fishing for anglers of all ages.

The bag limit for both Youth-Only Fisheries is one king salmon 20 inches or greater. Bait and multiple hooks are allowed in both locations. Snagging is not allowed. People age 16 and older are encouraged to help the young anglers but remember these are Youth-Only Fisheries for anglers under 16 years-old. So, kids keep your hands on that fishing pole because you must set the hook. And don't forget to have your harvest record card on you to record your catch!!! Be safe and take precautions around the water. Additional information can be found under the Knik Arm area in current Southcentral Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet.

### Eklutna Tailrace Access

From Anchorage drive north on the Glenn Highway and take the Old Glenn Highway exit. Turn right at the stop sign and the follow the winding road. The Eklutna tailrace

is located at mile 3.5 of the Old Glenn Highway on the left. The recently-improved access site includes a paved parking lot, wheelchair-accessible paved trails, paved foot trails, a foot bridge, and public use toilets and dumpster.



### Little Susitna River

After the Eklutna Tailrace, the Little Susitna River is the next Chinook salmon fishing opportunity as you drive north of Anchorage. After the Little Su, the next Chinook salmon fishing opportunity is Willow Creek, which is over 70 miles from the Anchorage area. The Little Su is accessible by foot, boat, canoe, and raft.

### Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon begin migrating up the Little Susitna River in late May with the best fishing during the month of June. King salmon fishing is allowed from the river's mouth upstream to the Park Highway bridge between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. each day. The season ends July 13. Please review the Little Susitna regulations under the Knik Arm area in the current Southcentral Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet.

### Little Susitna River Access

There are three primary ways to access the Little Susitna River. Experienced boaters can gain access through the intertidal reaches of the Little Susitna River by launching from the Port of Anchorage and crossing the Cook Inlet. Boaters are warned to be cautious of this access point as the Northern Cook Inlet can have up to 30-foot tides and strong winds. Definitely not a good place or starting point to being a boating career! However, if you



are experienced and have a properly-equipped 20-foot or longer boat, or have a saltwater-capable inflatable, crossing the inlet is an efficient way to reach the mouth of the Little Susitna River.

Just remember to enter and exit the river's mouth during the hours of high tide. When reading the tide book make certain that you adjust for the difference in time that the high tide arrives at Anchorage and then at the mouth of the Little Su. If the river is running high, power boats can sometimes travel from the mouth up to the Parks Highway bridge. During low water; however, most power boats travel up only as far as river mile 28.

Most anglers access this fishery via the Little Susitna River Public Use Facility (LSPUF) boat launch and campground. In Wasilla, turn west onto Knik-Goosebay Road and follow the signs to the LSPUF or from Big Lake follow the signs on Burma Road. Good fishing can be had on foot downstream of the boat launch. Fishing from boats - four stroke only, is most popular in this lower part of the river. Back trolling plugs or spin-n-glo's on jet divers or fishing out the back of an anchored boat with plugs are two popular and effective ways of fishing.

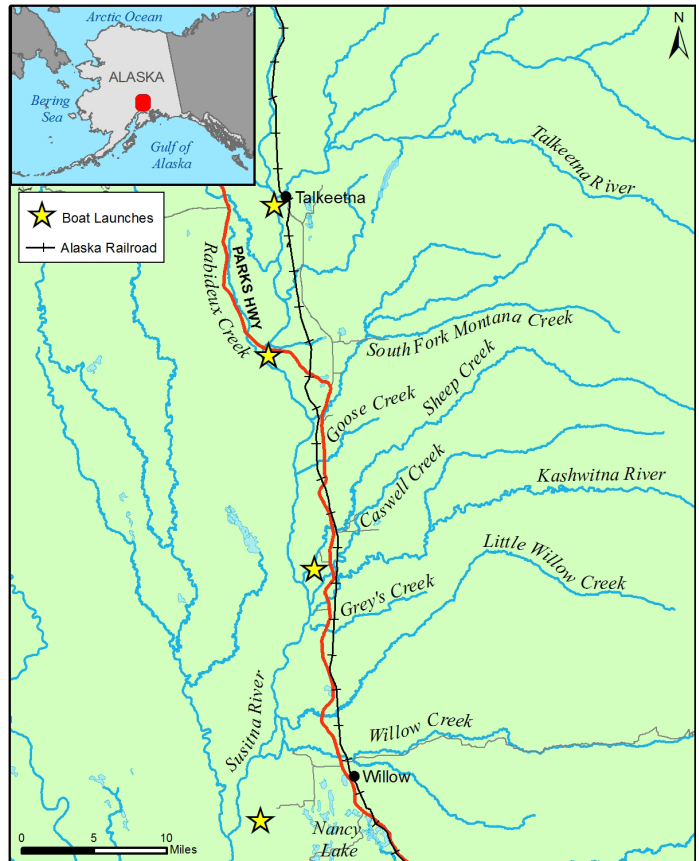
The Parks Highway bridge at mile 58 is located near the community of Houston, offers foot, boat, canoe, and raft access. Many anglers launch rafts and canoes at the bridge, then take out at the LSPUF, about a two to three-day or about a 40 river miles trip.

The Little Susitna wanders through part of the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge, over 300,000 acres of prime waterfowl, moose, coyote, wolf, and bear habitat. Access to the refuge is managed by ADF&G for the protection of fish and wildlife, their habitats, and public use of the area. Use of the state refuge lands area controlled to prevent habitat changes which would be harmful to the wildlife, fish, and habitat.

### Eastside Susitna River

The eastside Susitna River waters are the next Chinook salmon fishing opportunities for anglers as you head north from the Knik area. Eastside Susitna waters include Willow Creek and everything north of it on the eastern

side of the Susitna River. This include Little Willow Creek, Kashwitna River, Caswell Creek, Sheep Creek, Montana Creek, Sunshine Creek, Birch Creek, Rabideux Creek, Talkeetna River, Fish Creek, Clear Creek, and Chulitna River. Willow Creek is the only enhanced Chinook salmon fishery in this area. All the other rivers and creeks are home to native Chinook salmon runs.



### Eastside Streams Access

If you don't have a boat, eastside Susitna waters that cross by the Parks Highway or Talkeetna Spur Road offer anglers the best opportunity to fish from shore. If you enjoy a good hike, the Alaska Railroad 'whistle stop' service provides relatively inexpensive access to the Susitna River Chinook salmon fisheries north of Talkeetna. You can find the whistle stop schedule on the Alaska Railroad webpage [www.alaskarailroad.com](http://www.alaskarailroad.com).

If you have a boat or a raft, you have your choice of four access sites along the Parks Highway to access these water. You can access via Deshka Landing, Susitna Landing at the mouth of the Kashwitna River, the bridge crossing the Susitna River at mile 104 of the Parks Highway, and Talkeetna Landing in Talkeetna. Aside from the Parks Highway bridge, there are fees charged to launch your boat or raft from the other three access sites.

If you operate a jet boat or have a larger boat, the Susitna Landing, Deshka Landing, and Talkeetna Landing are your best bet. Not only because of the excellent launching facilities available for larger boats but also because you can access the main channel of the Susitna River directly from these sites.

The Deshka Landing is located off the Willow Creek Parkway at the Parks Highway mile 71.3. The Susitna Landing is located at Parks Highway mile 82.5. There is also bank fishing and handicapped access. Talkeetna Landing is close to downtown Talkeetna, near the confluence of the Talkeetna, Chulitna, and Susitna rivers. The launch site was initially developed by the community of Talkeetna for public use, and has been upgrade with Federal Aid from sport fish restoration funds.

The Parks Highway mile 104 'boat launch' is basically an unmaintained gravel bar with a road approach. The access road starts from the small state campground on the southeast side of the bridge, then continues through private land to the river. It can be extremely hazardous at high water levels.

### **Parks Highway Streams - Road accessible**

There are multiple road accessible eastside streams for those anglers who do not have access to a boat or a raft.



### **Willow Creek**

Located at mile 71.3 of the Parks Highway, Willow Creek offers easy shore access at the state-operated campground at the mouth. There are also several privately-operated campgrounds upstream near the Parks Highway bridge. Although you will find eager Chinook salmon anglers as early as the first week in June, the best time to fish Willow Creek is mid-June through the season closure. Many anglers fish the mouth of Willow Creek, but keep in mind that Chinook salmon can also be found throughout the lower river upstream to the Parks Highway bridge. Most of the Chinook salmon harvested are 3 or 4-year ocean fish and range from 25 to 30 pounds, although a few 50 to 60 pounders are caught every year.

### **Kashwitna River**

The Kashwitna River crossed the Parks Highway at mile 83.1. This is a semi-glacial river that can become fully glacial after periods of hot weather. Still some good fishing can be had in the mouth area by foot and upriver to the railroad bridge by boat. Some anglers have even

used drift boats from the highway down to the boat launch. Back trolling with plugs can be effective method for catching king salmon. Susitna Landing at mile 82.4 of the Parks Highway offers a boat launch and camping facilities with excellent handicap access right at the mouth of the Kashwitna River. Many fishing guides and charters also use the Susitna Landing as their launch site.

### **Sheep Creek**

The mouth of Sheep Creek is reached by driving west on Resolute Avenue located at mile 86.3 of the Parks Highway. At the mouth of the creek is a seasonally-maintained camping area with public restrooms. A short, hilly unpaved trail from the parking area leads to the confluence of Sheep Creek and the Susitna River. Chinook salmon can arrive as early as mid-June, but fishing improves until the Chinook salmon season closure.

There is a small unmaintained fishing area on the downstream side of the Parks Highway bridge located at mile 88.4, on the north bank of the creek. Chinook salmon generally reach this upstream location by the first week of July.

### **Montana Creek**

Located at mile 96.5 of the Parks Highway, Montana Creek is a popular Chinook salmon fishing destination. Chinook salmon provide good action here by late June through the season closure. Camping and RV parking is available in privately-operated campgrounds at the highway crossing.



## Rabideux Creek

Access to the mouth of Rabideux Creek is just north of where the Parks Highway crosses the Susitna River at mile 105. When the Susitna River is running high, water often floods the road to Rabideux Creek. When this happens, an alternative route is located from a turnout at mile 105.4 on the Parks Highway may be usable. The last week of June until the Chinook salmon season closure offers anglers the best shot of hooking a king salmon.

## Sunshine Creek

A gravel road at mile 102.5 of the Parks Highway offers access to the mouth of Sunshine Creek. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough maintains a parking area near the mouth of the creek. Chinook salmon typically arrive here by late June, and anglers fish here until the Chinook salmon season closure.

## Birch Creek

This creek crosses the Talkeetna Spur Road near mile 9 and this is good Chinook salmon fishing at the mouth from late June until the Chinook salmon season closure.



Parks Highway Streams - Boat accessible

## Little Willow Creek

Access is located at mile 74.8 of the Parks Highway bridge but you'll need a boat to get to its confluence with the Susitna River where the best fishing takes place. There are no facilities at Little Willow Creek and the property along the creek is privately owned. The best fishing takes place at the mouth from mid-June to late June.

## Grey's Creek

Grey's Creek crosses the Parks Highway at mile 81.8. The shoreline is private property and there is no legal public

shoreline access to the mouth from the Parks Highway. Access to the mouth is only accessible by boat. You would need to launch at one of the above described facilities. The best fishing at the mouth is from mid to late June.

## Caswell Creek

There is a large gravel turnout at mile 84 of the Parks Highway that is turns into a 1/2 a mile gravel access road to the mouth. There is a primitive campground with limited public restrooms and trash service. The mouth of Caswell Creek has a wild Chinook salmon run from mid-June through the Chinook salmon season closure.

## Goose Creek

This creek is always closed to fishing for Chinook salmon.



Upriver on the Big Susitna

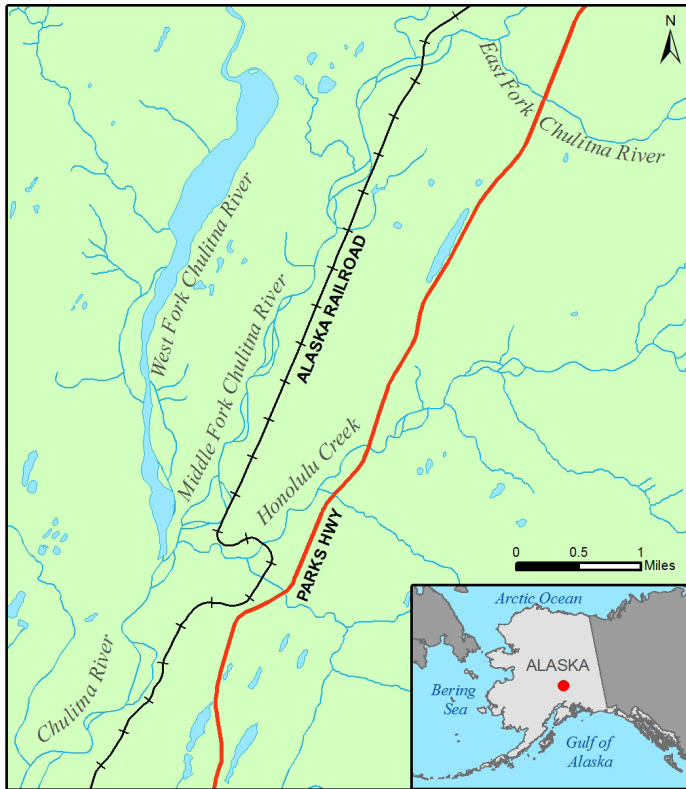
Mainstem of the Susitna River between Talkeetna and Devil's Canyon

Roughly 54 miles of the Susitna River separates Talkeetna from the dangerous waters of Devil's Canyon. These 54 miles offers the skilled river boater some exciting water and great fishing.

There are many stories of the famous and deadly waters of Devil's Canyon. Few have taken the trip up the Susitna River to the canyon's outlet. This section of the river requires a moderately powerful jet boat and the experience to operate in 10-mile-per-hour currents and three to five foot waves. These qualifiers will allow you to access the

mouths of Portage Creek and Indian River. It is not advised that anglers travel beyond Portage Creek.

Chinook salmon typically arrive in this part of the Big Susitna River around June 15 through June 20. The peak of fishing is usually early July through the Chinook salmon season closure.



### Chulitna River

The east and middle forks of the Chulitna River, as well as Honolulu Creek, can be accessed from several points along the Parks Highway. Both forks offer excellent wilderness rafting and Chinook salmon fishing. The final few days of king salmon fishing are generally the most productive for this area.

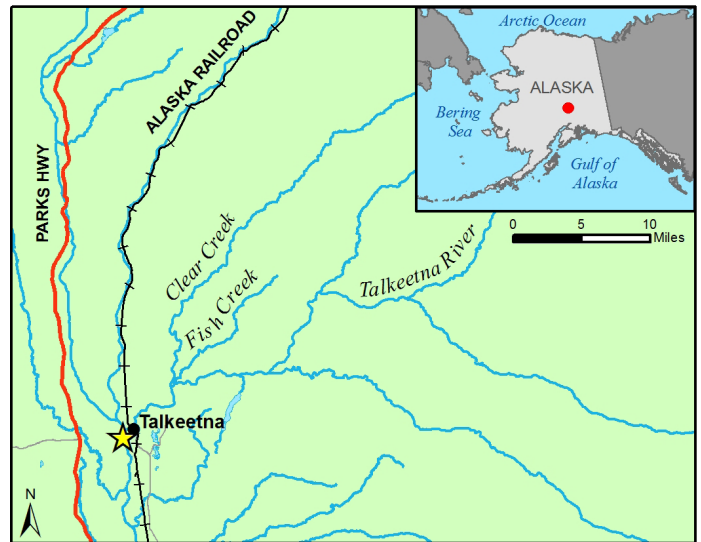
### Talkeetna River

Clear Creek is by far the most popular Chinook salmon stream in the Talkeetna River area. Don't look for much action before June 20. Once fishing does pick up, it gets good and stays that way through the Chinook salmon season closure. In fact, nearly half of the seasonal harvest usually occurs after July 4. A boat is an absolute necessity to fish the Talkeetna River, so either bring your own or charter one. Don't believe anyone who tries to tell you it's a nice walk up to Clear Creek!

In addition to Clear Creek, try any of the areas where clear or iron-colored water mixes with the glacial waters of the Talkeetna River. Chinook salmon hold in these confluences before continuing their journey upstream, and when present, seem particularly anxious to take a lure.

### Westside Susitna River

The westside of the Susitna River area consists of all



waters draining into the westside of the Susitna River downstream of the Deshka River to the Cook Inlet saltwaters. This area includes the Deshka River, Yentna River drainage including Indian Creek, Fish Lake Creek, Moose Creek, and Lake Creek, Kahiltna River drainage including Peters Creek, and Skwentna River drainage including Talachulitna River.

### Access to the Westside Fisheries - Boat or Airplane

If you plan to use your own boat to gain access to westside Susitna River Chinook salmon waters, you can launch from one of the access sites described in the eastside section, or launch at the Port of Anchorage boat launch, cross the Northern Cook Inlet to the Susitna River and then head upstream.

Small planes access to westside Susitna River Chinook salmon waters is quite good. However, even for the experienced pilot, tricycle gear is not recommended. There is only one developed and maintained airport in the area, located in the community of Skwentna, which has a year-round population of 20 people, and the 2,500 foot-long runway is not monitored. Once you land at Skwentna, you will find a roadhouse offering guide services, rooms, meals, and a post office. To find Chinook salmon from Skwentna you must have access to a boat.



Other than the Skwentna airport, unless you have a properly-equipped wheel plane and are familiar with gravel bar landings, a float plane is your best option. Float planes can access the mouths of most tributaries, many of the lakes adjacent to the rivers, or the rivers themselves.

The best advice for pilots is to land only where you feel safe. Call an air charter operator in Anchorage's Lake Hood or Merrill Field and ask where they land. They may not give out any "secret spots," but in the interest of safety they will tell you where the traditional landing areas are.

### **Deshka River**

The Deshka River supports the largest run of Chinook salmon in the Susitna River drainage with run sizes up to 40,000 on strong run years. Good fishing can be had in the mouth area and the first seven miles of river from late May through the season's end on July 13, with peaking fishing occurring from about June 8 through June 20. This fishery is about a 20 minute boat ride out of Deshka Landing.

### **Yentna River**

This river enters into the Susitna River from the west, approximately 30 river miles upstream from Cook Inlet. The river system drains the high peaks of the Alaska Range from Mount McKinley to Rainy Pass.

### **Lake Creek**

This creek is the number one producer of Chinook salmon in the Yentna River drainage. The best fishing is typically between June 10 to June 25. The mouth of Lake Creek can be fished from a boat or shore. Boat rentals are available from the 15 plus local lodges or air charter services, but it is advisable to make reservations ahead of time.

Hiking up Lake Creek is tough. Few people get very far, so boating is the preferred choice. Lake Creek is shallow, rocky, and fast, and there are braided channels and fallen trees. Only experienced boaters should attempt Lake Creek with extreme caution, and only in daylight, with a nimble jet boat. For example a 18-footer jet boat with a 40 or 50 horsepower jet outboard. Even with the suggested rig, because of the current, sweepers, and rocks boaters are limited to a three to five mile section of the creek. Above five creek miles, Lake Creek becomes hazardous and very hard on your valuable equipment.

Lake Creek can also be an exciting float trip, but it is not recommended for beginners. There are stretches of Class III waters, so don't overload your raft. Use at least a 12 or 13-foot self-bailing raft with a rowing frame, and tie down your gear. Start in Chelatna Lake and plan on at least four to five days to complete the trip. There are also private guides offering float trips.

Bulchitna Lake located about two miles upstream of Lake Creek's confluence with the Yentna River, offers an alternative to the fly-in angler who wants to hike



to excellent fishing. Lake Creek is especially fast in the Bulchitna area, so bring heavier gear, and load up with at least 25-pound line if you want to keep one of the 30 to 40 pound Chinook salmon.

### **Skwentna River**

There are small streams supporting modest runs of the Chinook salmon in the Skwentna River area. Fishing is the best at the streams mouths and in those sloughs with clear, iron-colored water. Chinook salmon typically arrive in this area by June 12 through June 15, with the best time fishing time during the last week of June and into July.

### **Talachulitna River**

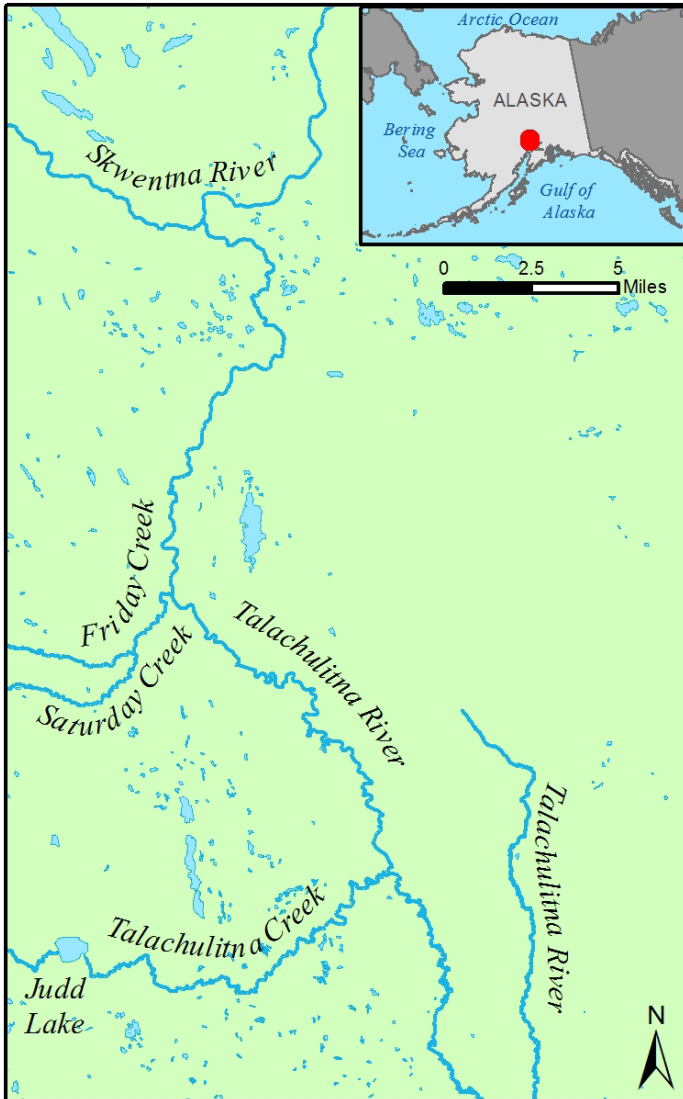
This river is known for its quality rainbow trout and salmon fishing. The Talachulitna River is about 15 river miles upstream of Skwentna, and typically has Chinook salmon between June 15 through June 20. The number of Chinook salmon passing through the mouth peaks around June 25 through June 30, with fish remaining in the area through the end of the king salmon season. Chinook salmon are well-distributed in the Talachulitna River by July 1.

You can boat up from Skwentna River, but be careful. The Skwentna River is very fast, braided glacial river with many deadfalls and overhanging trees. The mouth of the Talachulitna River is not a large area. If water conditions are right only four to six boats can fish the confluence without compromising each other. The fishing in this area can be excellent.

If you want to float the Talachulitna River for Chinook



salmon, wait until at least June 20. Few king salmon will be in the upper reaches by that time, but the rainbow trout and Arctic grayling fishing should be excellent. The Talachulitna River is a five to seven-day float if you choose to float the entire river from Judd Lake to the Skwentna River confluence. The upper third is often shallow, and it is occasionally necessary to walk your raft and make short portages. During high water this section of the river can be very hazardous, as sweepers are abundant. Anglers have died as a result of rafts being pinned against or forced under sweepers.



A spillway through a short canyon is located about halfway down the Talachulitna River from its confluence with Talachulitna Creek. It should provide you with some excitement and unless you have an overloaded raft or the river is very high, you shouldn't have any major problems.

### Peters Creek

Peters Creek flows into the glacial Kahiltna River, which in turn joins the Yentna River. Access to the lower portion of Peters Creek is by float plane to Shulin Lake which has a wheel strip. Peters Creek is approximately three miles from Shulin Lake, along a well-established trail. Chinook salmon typically arrive in Peters Creek around June 10,

with the peak of the run between June 15 through June 25. Fishing remains good into July.

As always, additional information can be found in the current Southcentral Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet for all these water systems. Make sure to read all advisory announcements and emergency orders before you head out fishing on any of the rivers, creeks, or streams listed in this publication.



### Healthy Bank Stewardship

Most people understand healthy river systems are important for strong and healthy salmon populations. However, it is important to ensure that clean, healthy rivers don't stop at the water's edge. In fact, protecting and managing healthy streambanks and adjacent riparian areas are critical components to the overall health of a river system.

Vegetation along streambanks helps keep river water clean by filtering out sediment and pollutants from surface and storm runoff, reduces peak flows during rain and runoff events, slows flood waters, stabilizes streambanks from excessive erosion, and helps moderate stream temperatures. Vegetated streambanks also provide food and nutrients to fish and other aquatic organisms, as well as, provide critical habitat for rearing juvenile salmon. Any alteration to the streambank area reduces its ability to carry out these important functions, this includes repeat trampling of the vegetation while trying to get to your favorite fishing spot. While out on the river, please be respectful and follow any requirements landowners may have. By following the simple steps listed below, you can help maintain important habitat for salmon and be good stewards of the land.

- Use established trails to reach the river.
- Use established entry and exit points to get in and out of the river.
- Respect and abide by signs that close areas to fishing from the bank.
- Stand in the river to fish and don't place your pack or other gear on the vegetation.
- Pack out what you pack in, including discarded fishing line and tackle.
- Use the restroom in the provided facilities.

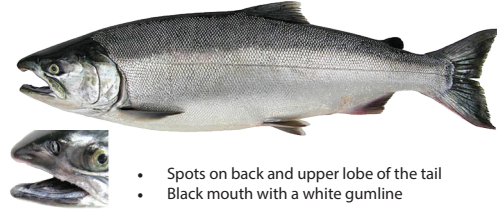
# Pacific Salmon Identification

## Chinook (king) Salmon



- Spots on back and both lobes of the tail
- Black mouth with a black gumline

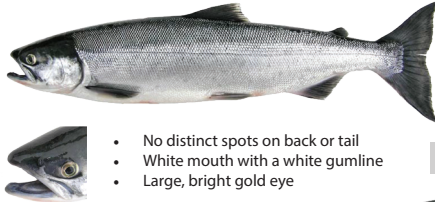
## Coho (silver) Salmon



- Spots on back and upper lobe of the tail
- Black mouth with a white gumline

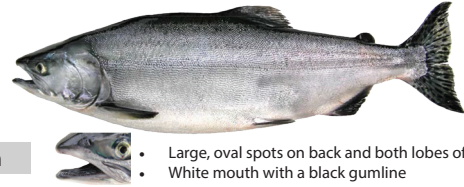
## Marine Phase

## Sockeye (red) Salmon



- No distinct spots on back or tail
- White mouth with a white gumline
- Large, bright gold eye

## Pink (humpy) Salmon



- Large, oval spots on back and both lobes of tail
- White mouth with a black gumline

## Chum (dog) Salmon



- No spots; calico bands on body (often faint in salt water)
- White mouth with a white gumline

Photographs courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## Chinook (king) Salmon



- Spawning adults turn maroon or olive brown
- Spots on body and both lobes of the tail remain

## Coho (silver) Salmon



- Males develop pronounced "kype" (hooked-nose)
- Spots on back and upper lobe of the tail remain
- Male and female turn dark maroon and have dark backs

## Spawning Phase

## Sockeye (red) Salmon



- Spawning adults develop dull-green heads
- Males develop hump on back
- Both female and male turn red

## Pink (humpy) Salmon



- Spawners turn dull gray on their backs and upper sides
- Lower sides appear cream color or white
- Large, oval spots on back and both lobes of tail remain

## Chum (dog) Salmon



- Spawners develop pronounced, vertical calico bands on sides
- Males exhibit large, canine-like teeth



Photographs by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



## Sport Fishing Series Produced By:

Southcentral Region  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Sport Fish

333 Raspberry Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99518

Sport Fish Information Center  
(907) 267-2218  
M-F 8am - 5 pm  
Except on state & federal holidays



These opportunities funded in part by Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration.

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