

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



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2016 LOWER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The preliminary estimate of the 2016 Lower Cook Inlet Area commercial salmon harvest, based on current fish ticket data, was 434,311 salmon. The harvest was composed of 919 Chinook, 260,465 sockeye, 1,632 coho, 97,144 pink, and 74,151 chum salmon (Table 1). The harvest was comprised of 234,363 (53.9%) commercial common property fishery (CPF) fish, and 199,948 (46.1%) hatchery cost recovery fish. The estimated exvessel value of the 2016 common property harvest of approximately \$1.0 million was half of the previous 10-year average annual exvessel value of \$2.0 million. The 2016 hatchery cost recovery exvessel value of \$1.7 million was nearly double the previous 10-year average of \$927,000. Generally sockeye salmon represent the most valuable species in the 10-year average harvest, except in several odd-numbered years where their value is surpassed significantly by that of pink salmon.

In September 2016, Governor Bill Walker requested that the Secretary of Commerce declare fishery disasters for the 2016 pink salmon fisheries in Prince William Sound, Kodiak Management Area, Chignik Management Area, and Lower Cook Inlet Management Areas. In Lower Cook Inlet, the 2016 pink salmon commercial harvest of approximately 97,000 fish was ~13% of the 753,000 pink salmon forecast and ~17% of the five year average harvest of even-year pink salmon.

Southern District

The 2016 preseason commercial common property harvest forecast for natural production in the Southern District was 52,600 sockeye and 47,000 pink salmon. Hatchery salmon runs were anticipated to contribute to Southern District commercial common property harvest in 2016 only if hatchery salmon runs to Resurrection Bay were sufficient to fully meet cost recovery needs. The commercial salmon fishing season in the Southern District began on Thursday, June 2. The preliminary purse seine harvest estimate for the 2016 season was 113 Chinook, 47,235 sockeye, 169 coho, 43,637 pink, and 165 chum salmon. This compares to a previous 10-year average harvest of 49 Chinook, 37,279 sockeye, 785 coho, 53,606 pink, and 736 chum salmon. The preliminary set gillnet harvest estimate was 731 Chinook, 19,383 sockeye, 687 coho, 20,376 pink, and 2,032 chum salmon. The previous 10-year average harvest for this gear type was 277 Chinook, 26,314 sockeye, 1,288 coho, 6,512 pink, and 3,108 chum salmon. In addition, 23,708

sockeye and 23,783 pink salmon were harvested by Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) from the Tutka Lagoon Special Harvest Area (SHA) for cost recovery purposes. Preliminary passage estimate at the English Bay River weir was 7,673 sockeye salmon, which was within the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 6,000–13,500 for this system (Table 2). There are seven streams in the Southern District that have a total of 8 SEGs. Of those goals, six are for pink salmon, one is for chum and one is for sockeye salmon. Escapement for both the chum and sockeye goals was within the SEG range for those systems. However, two streams, Seldovia River and China Poot Creek, did not achieve their pink salmon SEG and two streams, Tutka Creek and Humpy Creek, exceeded the upper end of their pink salmon SEG.

Kamishak Bay District

The 2016 preseason wild stock commercial harvest forecast for the Kamishak Bay District was 36,800 sockeye and 2,700 chum salmon. CIAA forecasted a run of 18,158 sockeye salmon to the Kirschner Lake remote release site. Total preliminary estimated common property harvest was 18,218 sockeye, 578 coho, 350 pink, and 10,984 chum salmon. This compares to a previous 10-year average of 65,091 sockeye, 2,487 coho, 32,342 pink, and 25,080 chum salmon harvested in the common property fishery. In addition, 44,765 sockeye salmon were harvested by CIAA from the Kirschner Lake SHA for cost recovery purposes. There are 12 systems in the Kamishak District that have a total of 13 SEGs. Of those goals, seven are for chum, three are for sockeye, and three are for pink salmon. Escapement for sockeye salmon was within SEGs at two systems, Mikfik Lake, and Amakdedori Creek, and exceeded the SEG at Chenik Lake. Chum salmon escapement was below the SEG at three systems, Big Kamishak River, Cottonwood Creek, and Iniskin River. The chum salmon SEG was exceeded at the Bruin River. Pink salmon escapement was below the SEG range at Sunday Creek, and Brown's Peak Creek. Escapement levels for salmon in the Kamishak District may have been underestimated due to poor weather conditions that prevented regular aerial surveys of that area.

Outer District

The 2016 preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Outer District was 14,300 sockeye, 194,000 pink, and 56,800 chum salmon. The commercial salmon fishing season began in this district on Monday, July 11. Overall preliminary harvest, from 13 permit holders that participated, was 7 sockeye, 5,369 pink, and 60,800 chum salmon. This harvest compares to previous 10-year averages of 11,180 sockeye, 956,481 pink, and 45,515 chum salmon. There are 11 streams in the Outer District that have a total of 15 SEGs. Of those goals, nine are for pink salmon, four are for chum and two are for sockeye salmon. Pink salmon escapement to all but one of the systems (Dogfish Lagoon) was below their respective SEG ranges. Chum salmon escapement exceeded SEGs at 2 systems, Dogfish Lagoon, and Port Dick Creek, and sockeye salmon escapement was below the SEG at both Delight and Desire lakes. Escapement levels for salmon in the Outer District may have been underestimated due to poor weather conditions that prevented regular aerial and ground surveys of that area.

Eastern District

Due to small runs in the last 10 years, no wild stock sockeye or pink salmon were forecast to be available for commercial common property harvest from the Eastern District in 2016. CIAA forecasted a total run of 171,081 sockeye salmon to Resurrection Bay facilities with all of these fish intended for broodstock or cost recovery purposes. Total cost recovery harvest from this district was 102,776 sockeye salmon with 1,484 donated at the weir to members of the public.

Commercial common property harvests occurred from July 5–15. Commercial common property harvest is confidential due to fewer than 3 permit holders delivering fish to processors. Total sockeye salmon passage through the Bear Creek weir was 12,775 fish. From those 3,764 fish were harvested by CIAA for use as hatchery broodstock. This is fewer than the broodstock goal of 4,452 from this system. The remaining 9,011 fish were allowed to spawn naturally in Bear Lake. This was above the SEG range of 700–8,300 sockeye salmon for this system. The only other SEG in the Eastern District is for sockeye salmon at Aialik Lake, which did not return in sufficient abundance to meet the SEG.

Table 1. Lower Cook Inlet commercial salmon harvest based on preliminary fish ticket data, 2016.

District (or hatchery)	Permits	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Southern District	19	113	47,235	169	43,637	165	91,319
Outer District	13		7	2	5,369	60,800	66,178
Eastern District	^a		^a		^a	^a	^a
Kamishak Bay District	5		18,218	578	350	10,984	30,130
Purse seine preliminary total	19	113	67,965	749	49,363	71,979	190,169
Southern District	21	731	19,383	687	20,376	2,032	43,209
Set gillnet preliminary total	21	731	19,383	687	20,376	2,032	43,209
Commercial home pack		75	384	196	284	46	985
Commercial common property preliminary total		919	87,732	1,632	70,023	74,057	234,363
Hatchery cost recovery preliminary harvests							
Tutka Lagoon SHA			23,708		23,783	12	47,503
Port Graham SHA					2,647		2,647
Resurrection Bay SHA			41,350			40	41,390
Bear Lake SHA			61,426			1	61,427
Kirschner Lake SHA			44,765		287	41	45,093
donated - Tutka Lagoon SHA					404		404
donated - Bear Lake SHA			1,484				1,484
Hatchery preliminary total		0	172,733	0	27,121	94	199,948
LCI preliminary total harvest		919	260,465	1,632	97,144	74,151	434,311

^a Confidential data. Fewer than 3 permits reporting.

Table 2. Lower Cook Inlet salmon escapements and sustainable escapement goal (SEG) ranges, 2016.

Stock	2016 Escapement	SEG range			Monitoring Method				Comments
		Lower	Mid-Point	Upper	Aerial	Ground	Video	Weir	
Chum Salmon (12 with goals)									
Port Graham River	2,391	1,450	3,125	4,800		X			
Dogfish Lagoon	11,260	3,350	6,250	9,150	X	X			used ground index
Rocky River	4,620	1,200	3,300	5,400	X	X			used aerial index
Port Dick Creek	9,323	1,900	3,175	4,450	X	X			used aerial index
Island Creek	8,210	6,400	11,000	15,600	X	X			used aerial index
Big Kamishak River	9,104	9,350	16,675	24,000	X				
Little Kamishak River	11,991	6,550	15,175	23,800	X				
McNeil River	26,262	24,000	36,000	48,000	X				
Bruin River	26,598	6,000	8,125	10,250	X				
Ursus Cove	7,032	6,050	7,950	9,850	X				
Cottonwood Creek	1,850	5,750	8,875	12,000	X				
Iniskin Bay	1,089	7,850	10,775	13,700	X				
Pink Salmon (17 with goals)									
Humpy Creek	89,673	21,650	53,600	85,550		X			
China Poot Creek	698	2,900	5,550	8,200		X			
Tutka Creek	33,242	6,500	11,750	17,000		X			
Barabara Creek	2,813	1,900	5,425	8,950		X			
Seldovia Creek	15,694	19,050	29,000	38,950		X			
Port Graham River	14,629	7,700	13,775	19,850		X			
Dogfish Lagoon Cks.	2,307	1,200	4,800	8,400		X			
Port Chatham	1,140	7,800	14,400	21,000		X			
Windy Creek Right	1,400	3,350	7,150	10,950		X			
Windy Creek Left	500	3,650	16,800	29,950		X			
Rocky River	4,300	9,350	31,800	54,250		X			
Port Dick Creek	4,819	18,550	38,425	58,300	X	X			used ground index
Island Creek	1,735	7,200	17,750	28,300	X	X			used aerial index
S. Nuka Island Creek	10	2,700	8,475	14,250	X	X			used ground index
Desire Lake	169	1,900	11,050	20,200	X				
Bruin River	86,632	18,650	87,200	155,750	X				
Sunday Creek	2,130	4,850	16,850	28,850	X				
Brown's Peak Creek	1,378	2,450	10,625	18,800	X				

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Stock	2016 Escapement	SEG range			Monitoring Method			Comments
		Lower	Mid-Point	Upper	Aerial	Ground	Video	
Sockeye Salmon (8 with goals)								
English Bay	7,673	6,000	9,750	13,500			X	used weir count
Delight Lake	5,110	5,950	9,250	12,550	X			
Desire Lake	6,740	8,800	12,000	15,200	X			
Bear Lake	9,011	700	4,500	8,300				
Aialik Lake	400	3,700	5,850	8,000	X			
Mikfik Lake	10,180	3,400	8,200	13,000	X		X	used video count
Chenik Lake	19,510	3,500	8,750	14,000	X		X	used video count
Amakdedori Creek	2,240	1,250	1,925	2,600	X			