



Advisory Announcement:
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2024 Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Salmon Season Summary

The following is an overview of the 2024 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amliia Islands Areas (Figure 1; Area M) commercial salmon fishing season.

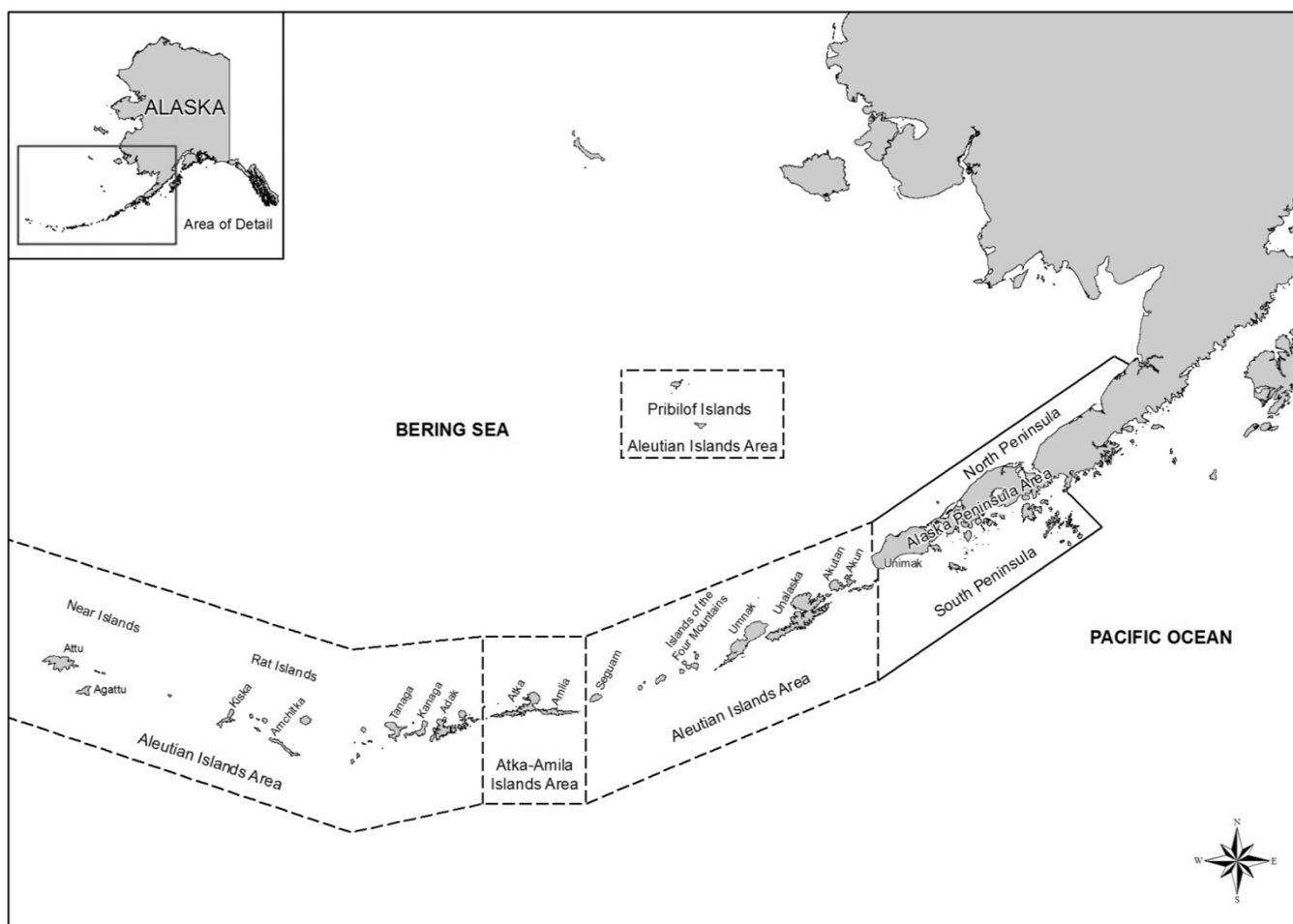


Figure 1.–Map of the Aleutian Islands, Atka-Amliia Islands, and Alaska Peninsula Management Areas, also known as Area M.

Commercial fishing effort in 2024 was below average compared to recent years. Of the 390 eligible commercial salmon permits, 235 (60%) made commercial landings. By gear type, a total of 55 purse seine, 123 drift gillnet,

and 57 set gillnet permit holders made deliveries in 2024. Participation rates for purse seine permit holders was below the 10-year average of 61 permits, participation of drift gillnet permit holders was below the 10-year average of 143 permits, and participation set gillnet permit holders was below the 10-year average of 80 permits (Table 1).

Table 1.–Commercial salmon fishery 2024 limited entry permit activity and 10-yr. averages, by gear type, Area M.

Gear Type	2024 Permits			2014-2023 Average Permits		
	Available	Fished	% of Permits Fished	Available	Fished	% of Permits Fished
Purse Seine	118	55	47%	119	61	51%
Drift Gillnet	161	123	76%	161	143	89%
Set Gillnet	111	57	51%	111	80	72%
Total	390	235	60%	391	284	73%

Total preliminary harvest presented from the 2024 commercial salmon fishing season should closely approximate final harvest numbers for all species. The data detailed in this report are considered preliminary. The 2024 commercial salmon harvest in Area M totaled 4,721,936 fish, comprised of 7,970 Chinook, 2,456,140 sockeye, 87,648 coho, 1,527,846 pink, and 642,332 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, 2024.

Location	Number of Salmon					
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
North Peninsula	690	1,173,532	7,937	16,878	66,819	1,265,856
South Peninsula	7,280	1,282,608	79,711	1,510,968	575,513	3,456,080
Total	7,970	2,456,140	87,648	1,527,846	642,332	4,721,936

Preliminary exvessel value of salmon harvested in Area M totaled \$15,348,639 (Tables 3 and 4). This was below the recent 10-year average exvessel value of \$36,905,251 (Table 4). Purse seine fishermen averaged \$119,395 per permit fished, drift gillnet fishermen averaged \$59,605 per permit fished, while set gillnet fishermen averaged \$25,447 per permit fished (Table 4). Exvessel value information was generated from fish tickets and does not include postseason adjustments paid to fishermen.

Table 3.–Preliminary commercial exvessel values by fishery and species, 2024.

Location	Value					
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
North Peninsula	\$15,547	\$6,221,585	\$26,578	\$11,130	\$138,236	\$6,413,076
South Peninsula	\$4,266	\$6,750,382	\$66,918	\$1,112,305	\$1,001,691	\$8,935,562
Total	\$19,813	\$12,971,967	\$93,496	\$1,123,436	\$1,139,927	\$15,348,639

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

Table 4.—Estimated commercial salmon harvest and value, by gear type, 2014-2024.

Year	Total Catch	Total Value	Average Exvessel Value		
			Purse Seine	Drift Gillnet	Set Gillnet
2014	5,288,925	\$27,652,179	\$143,970	\$112,946	\$57,598
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	\$15,348,639	\$119,395	\$59,605	\$25,447
2014-2023 Avg.	17,537,866	\$36,905,251	\$283,888	\$108,289	\$44,249

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 2024 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 2024 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 2024.

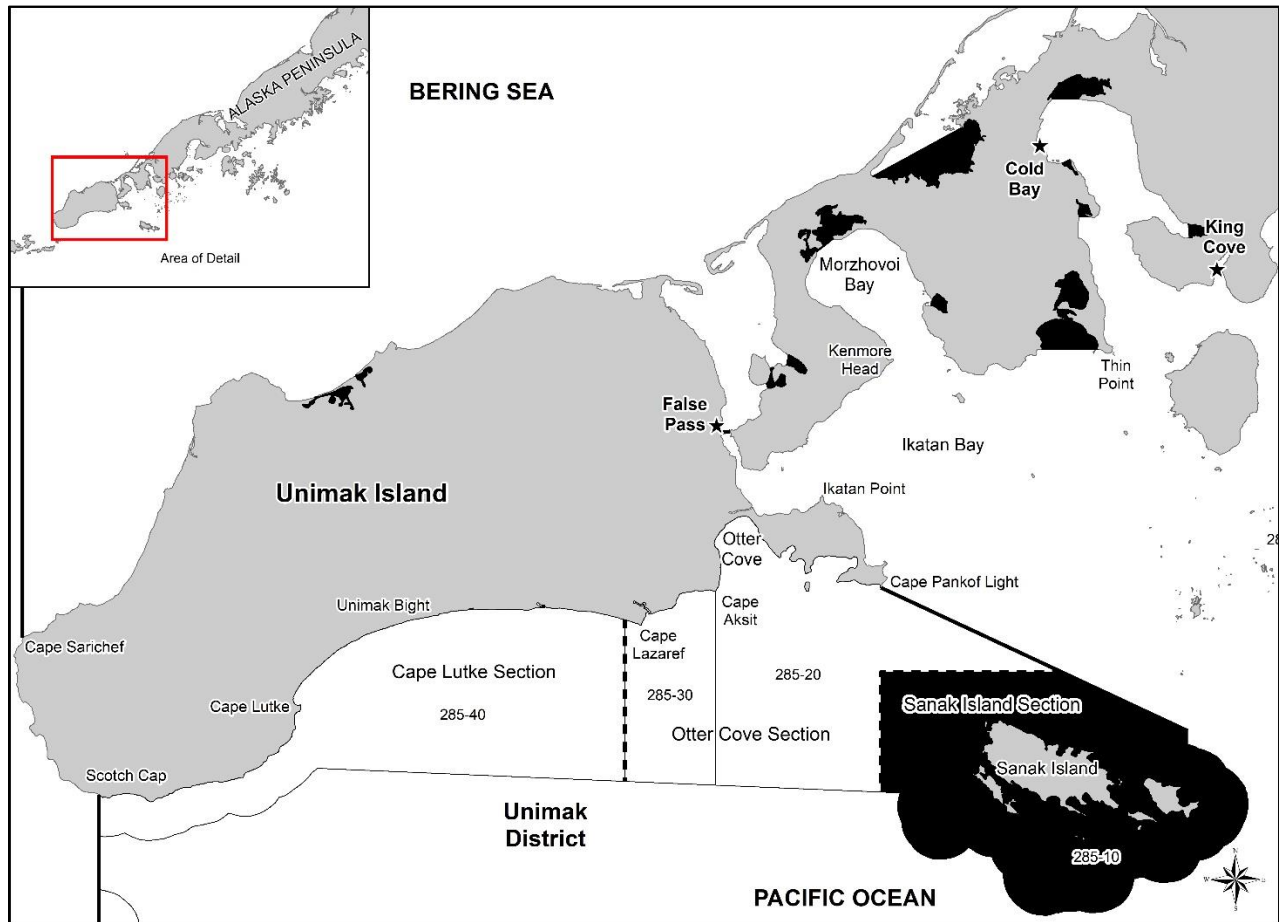


Figure 2.—Closed waters of the Sanak Island Section to all gear types during the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery.

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 fishermen 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 2024. A total of 3,555 sockeye salmon were harvested in the “Dolgoi Island Area” in June and a total of 21,427 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 fleet 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 497,419 fish during the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishing periods.

In 2024, the seine fleet and processors attempted to curtail their overall harvest of chum salmon. Continuous communication enabled the fleet to relay catch information to one another in real time. The fleet communicated daily with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) to inform the department of seine fleet closures. Except for the fishing periods in the Shumagin Islands that began on June 16, 20, and 25 that were reduced by 50% to conserve Chignik River early run sockeye salmon, all other reductions in fishing time within the regulatory fishing periods were voluntarily instituted by the fleet. There were full fleet closures for either the Shumagin Islands Section and/or the entire South Unimak area, which encompasses waters within the Southwestern and Unimak Districts, and there were area-specific standdowns by the fleet. It is the department’s understanding that the full fleet closures were enacted to reduce the fleet’s overall harvest of chum salmon and to stay below the triggers that would reduce fishing in all areas by 50% for seine gear if the first chum salmon trigger was met on June 18 and close the South Alaska Peninsula for seine gear if the second chum salmon trigger was met on June 23. The area-specific standdowns were a method that the fleet used to react quickly when a high abundance of chum salmon was in a specific area and attempted to keep harvest ratio of sockeye to chum above the 2:1 ratio.

Table 5.—South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June regulatory fishing period start date and number of hours per period for seine gear; number of hours that were mandatory closures in the Shumagin Islands Section and South Unimak (includes Unimak and Southwestern Districts); and voluntary standdown hours in the Shumagin Islands, East Anchor, Cape Laref, and Cape Lutke.

Period Start	Regulatory Hours	Full Fleet Closure Hours		Area-Specific Standdown Hours			
		Shumagins	South Unimak	Shumagins	East Anchor	Cape Lazaref	Cape Lutke
10-Jun	68	23	23	31.9	26.5	18	19.75
16-Jun	66	33 ¹	—	—	11.75	14.75	20.85
20-Jun	88	44 ²	—	—	—	—	—
25-Jun	88	44 ²	—	11	—	30.5	13.25
Total	310	144	23	42.9	38.25	63.25	53.85

¹ Shumagin Islands Section 50% reduction to 33 hours for conservation of Chignik early-run sockeye salmon

² Shumagin Islands Section 50% reduction to 44 hours for conservation of Chignik early-run sockeye salmon

The commercial salmon harvest for the June fishery consisted of 1,257 Chinook, 1,069,829 sockeye, 136 coho, 276,379 pink, and 450,839 chum salmon (Table 6). The sockeye and chum salmon harvest in the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries were below the most recent 10-year average of 1,621,969 sockeye salmon and 497,419 chum salmon.

Table 6.—Total salmon harvests in numbers of fish for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2024.

	Number of salmon					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
South Unimak	782	749,815	50	235,956	308,326	1,294,929
Shumagin Islands	475	320,014	86	40,423	142,513	503,511
Total	1,257	1,069,829	136	276,379	450,839	1,798,440

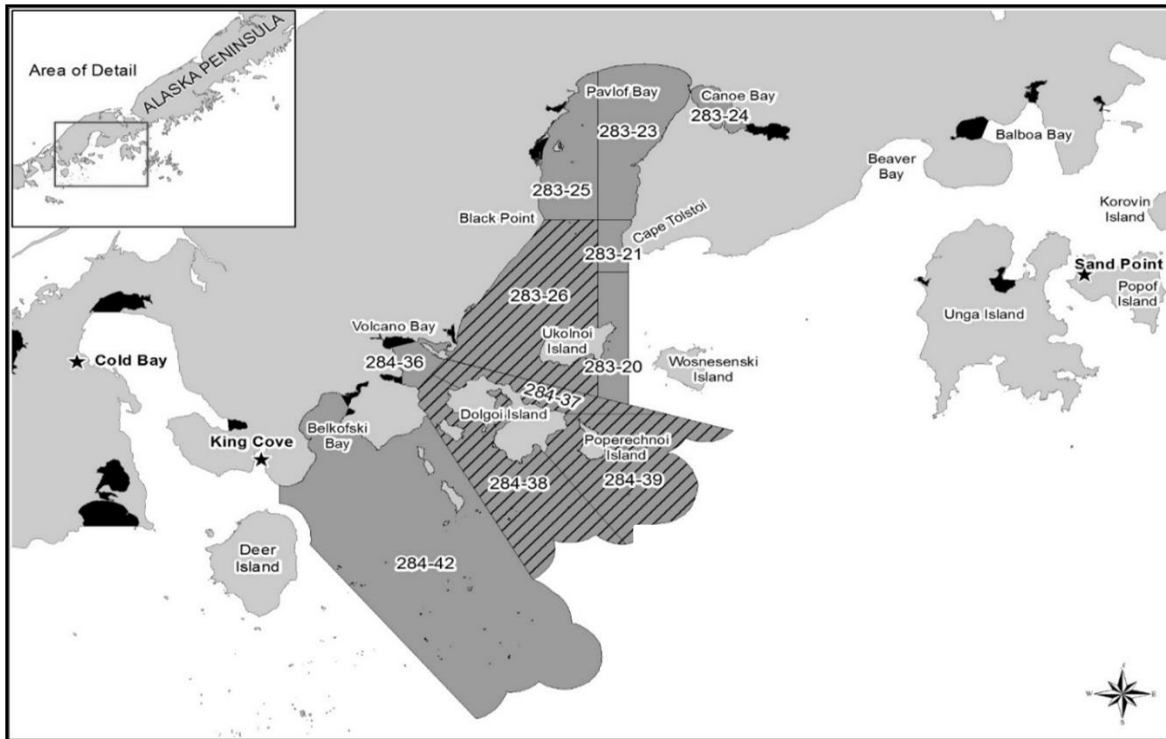


Figure 3.—Map depicting the “Dolgoi Island Area” for the June Management Plan and the areas that close after 191,000 sockeye salmon have been harvested. This area is closed to seine gear in June as per the 2019 BOF regulatory changes.

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. However, in 2024, the early run for sockeye salmon returning to Chignik River developed late and harvest over 600,000 fish did not occur before the allocation period ended on July 25th.

Beginning July 1, the NWSS of SEDM is managed on the strength of the Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon run. In 2024, the overall escapement of sockeye salmon into Orzinski Lake was sufficient with 14,563 fish escaping past the weir. This passage was within the range of the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 14,000–28,000 sockeye

salmon. The sockeye salmon escapement into Orzinski Lake was slow to develop and only achieved the escapement goal during the final day of counting at the weir.

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. Commercial salmon fishing within the Northwest Stepovak Section remained closed during these two fishing periods to conserve sockeye salmon returning to Orzinski Lake. The next fishing period occurred from August 15 to August 17 after aerial surveys indicated adequate escapement. After additional aerial surveys were conducted, SEDM was extended for an additional 48 hours on August 17. By regulation, there shall be at least one closed 36-hour period within a seven-day period in SEDM (5 AAC 09.360 (l)(2)). Commercial salmon fishing continued on this maximum fishing time of ~132 hours of fishing followed by a 36-hour closure beginning on August 22 until the end of September.

Table 7.–Preliminary Southeastern District Mainland salmon harvest, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2024.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
June 1-June 30	0	0	0	0	0
July 1-July 25 SEDM ^a	0	0	0	0	0
Total SEDM harvest in allocation	0	0	0	0	0
July 1-July 25 NWSS	0	0	0	0	0
July 26 - September 30	283	22,609	5,926	348,298	29,230
Total	283	22,609	5,926	348,298	29,230

^a Southeastern District Mainland (excluding 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, and the Shumagin Island Section opened to purse seine gear for the July 6 commercial salmon fishing period.

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. Adequate pink and chum salmon escapement was observed and allowed for commercial fishing periods beginning August 15. Escapement of pink and chum salmon were being carried by a few major systems and only those sections and districts with adequate escapement were provided with opportunity to harvest salmon. By the end of August, a majority of the seine and drift fleet had either ceased fishing or switched their gear to fish for other species. There were only a handful of deliveries by set gillnets during the end of August/early September. 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 6,023 Chinook, 212,779 sockeye, 79,575 coho, 1,234,589 pink, and 124,674 chum salmon (Table 8).

Table 8.—Post-June South Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2024.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
South Peninsula Post-June harvest	5,764	190,407	73,732	888,533	97,233
Post-June SEDM harvest (July 26– October 31)	259	22,372	5,843	346,056	27,441
Total Post-June harvest	6,023	212,779	79,575	1,234,589	124,674

South Peninsula Escapement

The South Peninsula sockeye salmon escapement of 46,283 (Table 9) was slightly below the management objective range of 48,200–86,400 fish. Escapement into Orzinski Lake of 14,563 sockeye salmon was within the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 14,000–28,000 fish. Sockeye salmon were not observed in Mortensen’s Lagoon, which was due to poor survey conditions and limited surveying opportunity during the 2024 season. Escapement into Thin Point Lagoon (21,800 sockeye salmon) was above the SEG range of 8,850–19,000 fish. Pink salmon total indexed escapement of 2,481,157 fish (Table 9) was within the SEG range of 1,750,000–4,000,000 fish. Chum salmon total escapement of 382,107 fish (Table 9) was within the cumulative district escapement goal range of 330,400–660,800 fish. Escapement into chum salmon index streams was within the escapement goal range of 218,300–410,600 with a peak index escapement of 365,840 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 9.—South Peninsula salmon escapement by species and year, 2014–2024.

Year	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2014	0	37,670	9,050	1,340,380	313,545
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
2014–2023 average	0	63,468	10,711	3,952,190	684,715

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 2024. One commercial salmon fishing period was provided from August 25 through August 27 to provide opportunity and to help with assessing the abundance of pink salmon since no aerial surveys could be flown. 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 we were 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 2024, 140 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 2024 season. The number of Area M permit holders participating in 2024 was below the most recent 10-year average of 165 but 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.

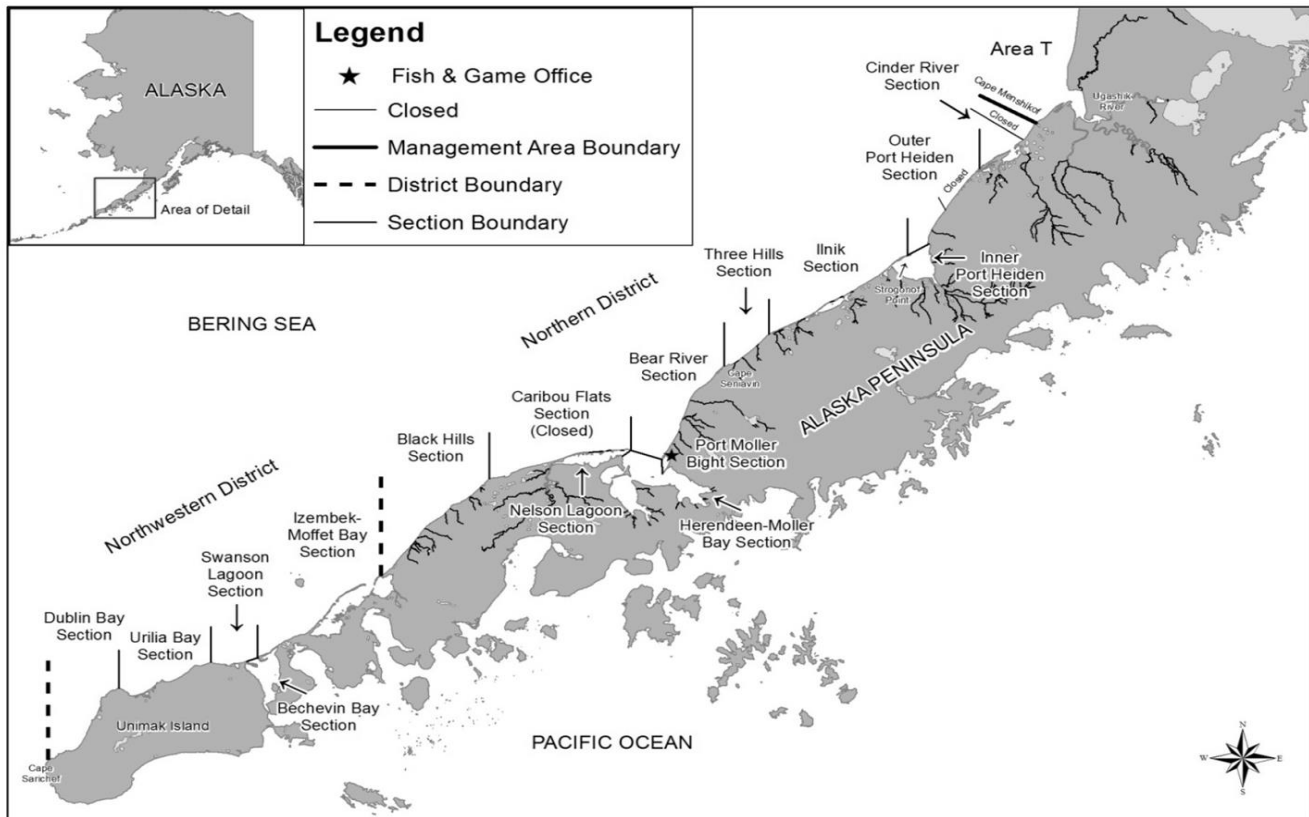


Figure 4.—Alaska Peninsula with North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon fishing districts depicted.

In 2024, the harvest of 1,173,432 million sockeye salmon on the North Alaska Peninsula was below both the projected harvest of 2,363,000 sockeye and the 10-year average of 2,623,291 sockeye (Table 10). The harvest of 7,937 coho salmon was below both the projected harvest and the 10-year average of 26,000 and 47,659, respectively. The harvests of Chinook, pink, and chum salmon were all below both the projected harvests and the 10-year averages (Table 10).

Table 10.—The total 2024 North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, and 2024 projected harvest and 2014–2023 average harvest.

	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2024 season total	690	1,173,532	7,937	16,878	66,819
Projected harvest	2,000	2,363,000	26,000	20,000	84,000
2014-2023 average	1,926	2,623,291	47,659	75,140	106,781

Northwestern District

In the Northwestern District, during the 2024 commercial salmon fishery, approximately 0 Chinook, 23,114 sockeye, 1,667 coho, 16,242 pink, and 59,070 chum salmon were harvested (Table 11). A total of 22 permit holders participated in the fishery, consisting of four purse seiners, 17 drift gillnetters, and one set gillnet.

Table 11.—Northwestern District commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack by section, all gear combined, 2024.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
Dublin Bay Section	0	0	0	0	0
Urilia Bay Section	0	579	9	14	74
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	0	0	0	0
Bechevin Bay Section	0	0	1	52	50
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	0	22,535	1,657	16,176	58,946
2024 Northwestern District total	0	23,114	1,667	16,242	59,070
2014–2023 NW District average	7	34,188	2,576	55,814	81,407

In the Northwestern District, the chum salmon escapement of 126,405 fish (Table 12) was within the chum salmon SEG of 100,000–215,000 fish. This escapement estimate represents a minimum; the actual escapement was likely greater, but survey conditions were poor throughout the season in one of the significant chum salmon-producing streams (the Joshua Green River) in the Northwestern District. The sockeye salmon escapement for 2023 in the Northwestern District was within the escapement objective range of 52,600–106,000 fish, with a total escapement of 68,410 fish (Table 12).

Table 12.–Northwestern District salmon escapement by species and section, 2024.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
Urilia Bay Section	0	55,080	0	0	0
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	0	0	0	0
Bechevin Bay Section	0	0	0	68,200	42,100
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	0	13,330	0	4,610	84,305
Northwestern District total	0	68,410	0	72,810	126,405

* 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 usually occurs when other sections are not open. Due to fishing opportunities in the Ilnik Section and Outer Port Heiden Section of the Northern District, effort by the drift gillnet fleet in the Black Hills Section (Figure 4) was limited and occurred primarily during late July. Approximately 612 sockeye salmon (Table 13) were harvested in the Black Hills Section in 2024. 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 2024 North Creek salmon escapement of 500 sockeye salmon was below the escapement goal of 7,500–10,000 fish. However, weather conditions and poor water conditions limited our ability to conduct a peak escapement survey of North Creek during 2024.

Table 13.—North Alaska Peninsula sockeye salmon commercial harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, by statistical area or combination of statistical areas, 2024.

Area ^a	Sockeye salmon harvest	Percent of total
Northwestern District		
311-20 Dublin Bay, 311-32 Uria Bay, 311-52 Swanson Lagoon	579	0.05%
311-60 Bechevin Bay	0	0.00%
312-20 Izembek Lagoon, and 312-40 Moffet Bay	6,914	0.59%
311-58, 312-10 Outside Izembek-Moffet	15,621	1.33%
Northwestern District total	23,114	1.97%
Northern District		
313-10 Black Hills Section	612	0.05%
313-30 Nelson Lagoon Section	204,516	17.43%
314-20, 314-30 Herendeen-Moller bays ^a	5,490	0.47%
314-12, 315-11 Bear River and Port Moller Bight	72,118	6.15%
315-20 NE Bear River	19,406	1.65%
Bear River total (314-12,315-11,315-20)	91,524	7.80%
316-10 Three Hills Section	20,782	1.77%
316-20 Ilnik SW of Unangashak Bluffs	254,926	21.72%
316-25 Ilnik NE of Unangashak Bluffs	385,396	32.84%
Ilnik Section total (316-20,316-22,316-25)	640,322	54.56%
317-20 Inner Port Heiden Section	0	0.00%
317-10 Outer Port Heiden Section	187,008	15.94%
318-20 Cinder River Section ^b	164	0.01%
Northern District total	1,150,418	98.03%
North Peninsula total	1,173,532	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.

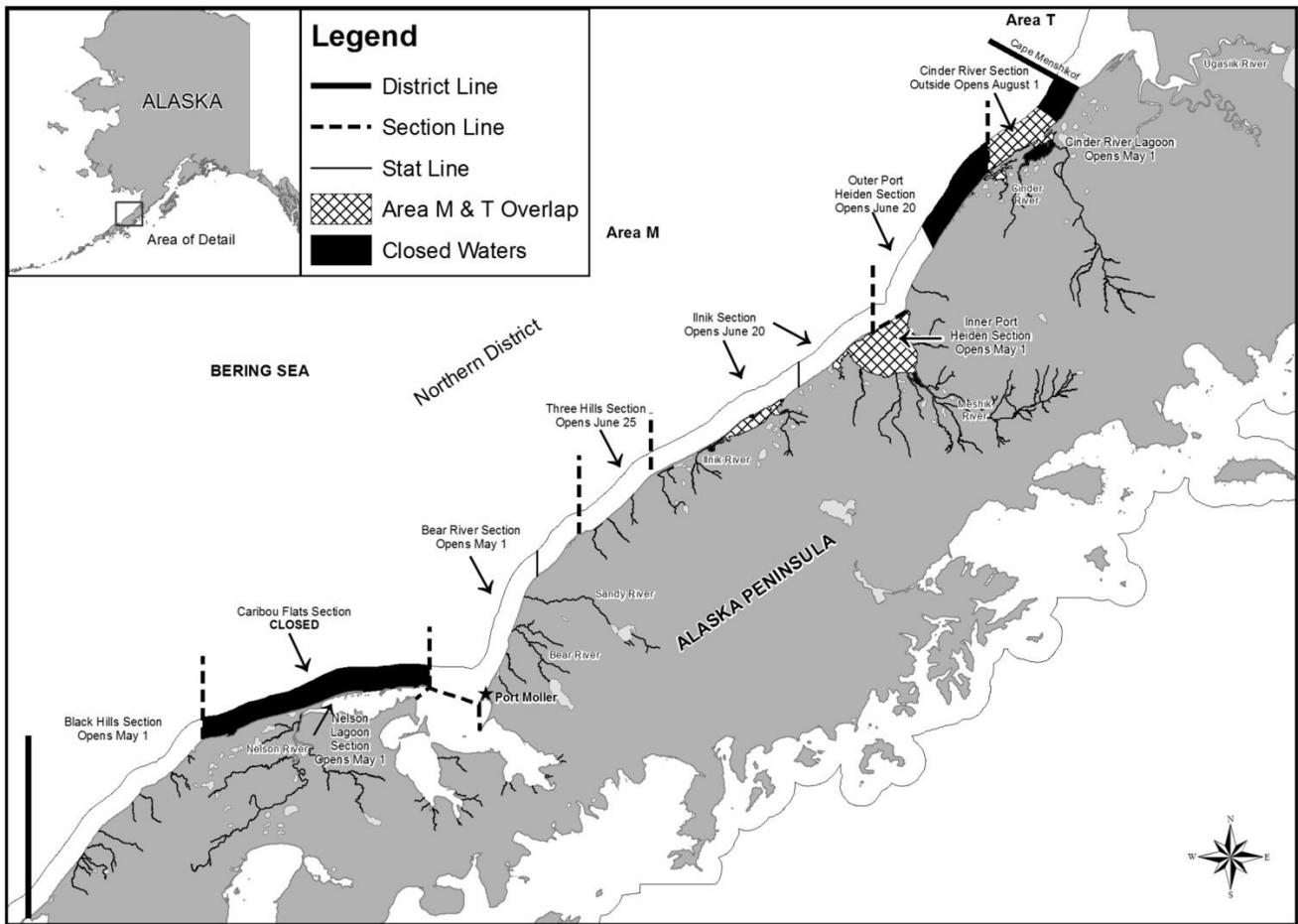


Figure 5.—Northern District commercial salmon fishing sections with earliest opening dates depicted.

Nelson Lagoon Section

The Nelson Lagoon Section was opened for all weekly fishing periods and was open continuously starting on June 24 during the 2024 season. The Nelson (Sapsuk) River (Figure 5) total run of 980,082 sockeye salmon (includes harvest and escapement) was well above the estimated forecast of 444,000 sockeye salmon. From the total run, 204,516 sockeye salmon were harvested in Nelson Lagoon (Table 13), and 754,766 fish escaped (Table 14) into the Nelson River, 19,300 escaped into the Caribou River, and 1,500 escaped into the David River. The harvest in Nelson Lagoon was slightly above the historical 10-year average of roughly 192,000 sockeye salmon, but sockeye salmon escapement into Nelson River was the largest escapement on record and well above the biological escapement goal (BEG) of 97,000–219,000 fish (Table 14).

Beginning August 15, the Nelson Lagoon Section is managed based on local coho salmon runs. Nelson River has a SEG threshold of 18,000 fish. However, due to poor weather conditions and logistical constraints in August and September our 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 then the coho salmon fishery within Nelson Lagoon has been limited due to lack of industry interest and market conditions. During 2024 a total of 59 coho salmon were harvested, which is below the recent 10-year average of 20,116 coho salmon.

Table 14.—Northern District sockeye salmon escapements and goals, 2024.

	Escapement ^a	Goal
Nelson (Sapsuk) River	754,766	97,000–219,000
Sandy River	38,007	37,000–69,000
Ilnik River	99,694	40,000–75,000
<i>Bear Lake early run</i>	208,459	176,000–293,000
<i>Bear Lake late run</i>	245,768	117,000–195,000
Bear Lake total	454,227	293,000–488,000
Subtotal for systems with weirs	1,347,235	467,000–851,000
Subtotal for systems without weirs	114,500	88,400–188,800
Northern District total	1,461,735	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 extremely 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.

The late run of sockeye salmon at Bear River, which starts on August 1, was robust and came on strong. Commercial harvest opportunity for late-run sockeye salmon opened on August 3. No extensive closures were necessary during August, as interim escapements were met throughout the month. Approximately 91,524 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Bear River Section during 2024, and 20,782 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Three Hills Section (Table 13).

The Bear River early-run (through July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 208,459 fish met the escapement goal of 176,000–293,000 fish (Table 14). The Bear River late-run (after July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 245,768 fish was above the late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 117,000–195,000 fish. The Bear River season total sockeye salmon escapement was 454,227 fish (Table 14), which met the combined early- and late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 293,000–488,000 fish.

The 2024 Sandy River sockeye salmon escapement of 38,007 fish (Table 14) met the escapement goal range of 37,000–69,000 fish. Heavy rains and high winds caused the Sandy River weir to wash out on June 25 and it was finally reinstalled on July 2. The final escapement includes an estimate of sockeye that passed the weir while it was washed out as well as an estimate of sockeye that were holding downriver before the weir removal on July 26.

Ilnik Section

In 2024, the Ilnik River system sockeye salmon escapement through the weir was 99,694 fish (Table 14), 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 interim escapement objectives during both June and July. However, the Ilnik Section was closed from June 25 to June 30 due to poor escapement

into the Ilnik River. Between July 20 and August 15, fishing time in the entire Ilnik Section is based on Bear River sockeye salmon run strength, due to poor escapement at the Bear River weir, the Ilnik Section closed on July 22. However, the Ilnik Section was reopened on August 3, once the Bear River escapement had improved. Approximately 640,322 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section, below the recent ten-year average of 1.1 million fish (Table 13).

Beginning August 15, the Ilnik Section is managed for coho salmon runs into Ilnik Lagoon. However, most fishing efforts continue to target sockeye salmon during this time. During 2024, a total of 3,032 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 52,500 fish, within 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.

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 27 and had openings of no more than 2½ days per week until the section closed on July 31. In 2024, a total of 187,008 sockeye salmon (Table 13) were harvested from the Outer Port Heiden Section. The 2024 sockeye salmon harvest in the Outer Port Heiden Section was below the 10-year average harvest of 504,512 sockeye salmon.

Cinder River Section

Limited effort occurred in the Cinder River Section during 2024 despite weekly commercial salmon fishing openers throughout the season, and a total of 164 sockeye were harvested. The total Cinder River (including Mud Creek) sockeye salmon escapement estimate of 37,700 fish and was within the escapement goal of 36,000–94,000 fish.

Northern District Escapement for Other 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 3,542 Chinook salmon escaped through the weir, meeting the escapement goal of 2,400–5,000 fish. The total Northern District Chinook salmon escapement of 4,833 fish was below the recent ten-year average of 12,243 fish.

Coho Salmon

Due to weather and lack of industry interest coho salmon surveys were not conducted on Northern District streams in August. Additionally, budgetary and logistical constraints do 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 2024 zero coho salmon were observed during aerial surveys conducted during August in the Northern District. Both the Nelson

and Ilnik Rivers have coho salmon lower-bound escapement goals in the Northern District, 18,000 and 9,000 fish respectively. It is unknown if these goals were achieved, however no directed fishery occurred in these locations.

Chum Salmon

The total chum salmon escapement in the Northern District during 2024 was 51,300 below the district-wide chum salmon escapement goal of 119,600–239,200 fish and below the most recent ten-year average of 190,770 fish. Most of the chum salmon escapement occurred in the Herendeen–Moller Bay Section (33,600 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 2024. A total of 7,500 pink salmon were observed in the Northern District during 2024.