



MEMORANDUM

TO: Nick Sagalkin
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Division of Commercial Fisheries, Region IV

DATE: October 24, 2018

THRU: Jeff Wadle
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Division of Commercial Fisheries, Region IV

SUBJECT: Alaska Peninsula
and Aleutian Islands
Salmon Season
Summary

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The following is an overview of the 2018 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amlia Islands areas (Figure 1) commercial salmon fishing season. Total harvest presented from the 2018 commercial salmon fishing season should closely approximate final harvest numbers for all species. The 2018 commercial salmon harvest in the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amlia Islands Management areas totaled 19,065 Chinook, 3,702,822 sockeye, 379,643 coho, 805,639 pink, and 1,157,881 chum salmon (Table 1). Subsistence salmon harvest for 2017 will be reported in the 2018 annual management report (AMR). Data detailed in this report are considered preliminary. Preliminary exvessel value of salmon harvested in Area M totaled \$27,765,693 (Table 2). Exvessel value information was generated from fish tickets and does not include postseason adjustments paid to fishermen.

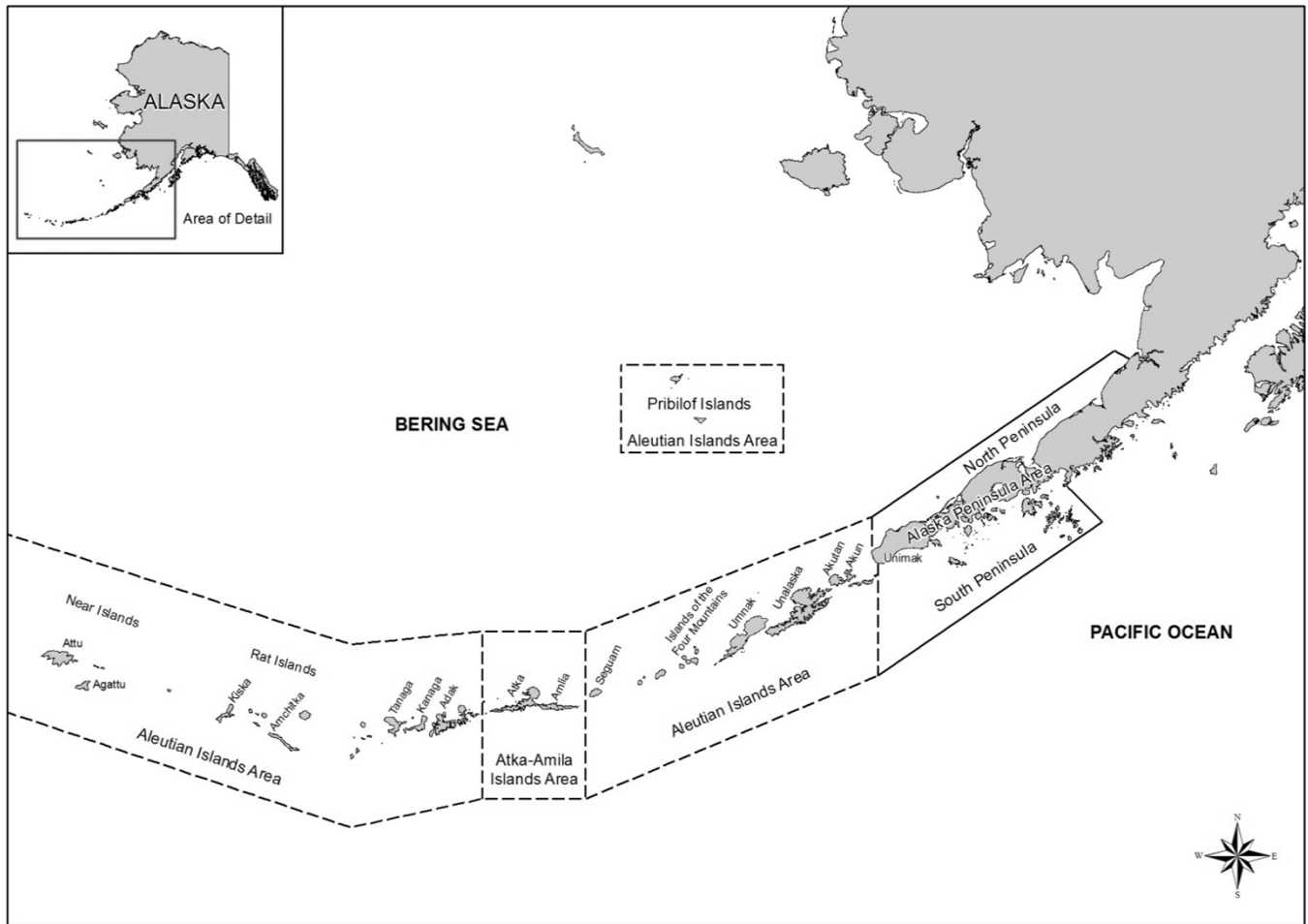


Figure 1.—Map of the Aleutian Islands, Atka-Amlia Islands, and Alaska Peninsula Management areas.

Table 1.—Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amlia Islands commercial salmon harvest, 2018.

Location	Number of salmon					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
North Peninsula	1,761	2,366,324	108,333	32,241	157,435	2,666,008
South Peninsula	17,304	1,336,498	271,310	773,398	1,000,532	3,399,042
Aleutian Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Atka-Amlia Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19,065	3,702,822	379,643	805,639	1,157,881	6,065,050

Table 2.–Preliminary commercial ex-vessel values by fishery and species, 2018.

Location	Value					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
South Peninsula	\$67,811	\$7,542,047	\$616,225	\$671,183	\$2,169,256	\$11,066,521
Northwestern District	\$54	\$49,398	\$34,910	\$3,455	\$343,265	\$431,080
Northern District	\$39,758	\$15,870,118	\$208,215	\$34,081	\$115,921	\$16,268,092
Total	\$107,622	\$23,461,562	\$859,350	\$708,718	\$2,628,442	\$27,765,693
Aleutian Islands total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Atka-Amlia Islands total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$107,622	\$23,461,562	\$859,350	\$708,718	\$2,628,442	\$27,765,693

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

SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA

South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Fisheries

The South Unimak and Shumagin Islands commercial salmon fishery began on June 7 for set gillnet gear and on June 10 for seine and drift gillnet gear. In 2018, due to the historic low sockeye salmon returns to the Chignik River early run, unprecedented restrictions were placed on the South Alaska Peninsula June fishery during the last two weeks of June. There were three 88-hour and two 40-hour fishing periods for set gillnet gear, a reduction of 72 hours of fishing time from the regular schedule. There were two 88-hour and two 40-hour fishing periods for seine and drift gillnet gear, a reduction of 96 hours from the regular fishing schedule. The commercial salmon harvest for the June fishery consisted of 4,158 Chinook, 822,102 sockeye, 51 coho, 345,255 pink, and 537,424 chum salmon (Table 3).

Table 3.–Total salmon harvests in numbers of fish for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries, excluding home pack, 2018.

	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
South Unimak	1,399	415,296	3	132,778	234,297
Shumagin Islands	2,759	406,806	48	212,477	303,127
Total	4,158	822,102	51	345,255	537,424

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, Southwest Stepovak, Balboa Bay and Beaver Bay sections of the SEDM.

Beginning July 1, the NWSS of SEDM is managed on the strength of the Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon run. The Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon record low escapement of 2,817 fish was well below the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 15,000–20,000 sockeye salmon. No commercial salmon fishing occurred in the NWSS in 2018.

From June 1 through July 25, 80% of the sockeye salmon harvested in the SEDM are considered to be Chignik bound, excluding the NWSS beginning July 1. No commercial fishing occurred in the SEDM from June 1 through July 25. On July 17, the Board of Fisheries (BOF) met to hear emergency petitions regarding the Chignik River sockeye salmon escapement. The BOF determined that the Southeastern District Mainland and the “Dolgoi Island area” would remain closed until the Chignik Lake sockeye salmon interim escapement objectives were met, through August 8. No commercial salmon fishing occurred in SEDM through August 8 and no allocation was harvested.

From July 26 through August 31, the SEDM is managed based on the abundance of local salmon stocks. Due to very weak returns of pink salmon into SEDM streams, no commercial salmon fishing occurred in SEDM through August 31. In September, SEDM is managed based on coho harvest strength. There were two 96-hour openings in September that resulted in the harvest of 1,491 sockeye, 1,007 coho, 4 pink, and 277 chum salmon (Table 4).

Table 4.–Preliminary Southeastern District Mainland salmon harvest, excluding home pack, 2018.

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 ^b	0	0	0	0	0
July 26–September 30	0	1,491	1,007	4	277
Total	0	1,491	1,007	4	277

^a Southeastern District Mainland (excluding Northwest Stepovak Section).

^b Northwest Stepovak Section

South Peninsula Post-June Fishery

Prior to the South Peninsula Post-June fishery, the department conducts a test fishery to determine immature salmon abundance in the Shumagin Islands. Test fisheries occurred on July 2, 3, and 5 and resulted in an average of 11, 14, and 10 immature salmon per set, respectively. The average number of immature salmon per set was well below the regulatory threshold of 100 immature salmon gilled per set and the Shumagin Island Section opened to all gear types for the July 6 commercial salmon fishing period.

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, separated by 60-hour closures. In addition to the reduced fishing periods in the June fishery, commercial salmon fishing was closed in the West Pavlof Bay Section south of Black Point and the Volcano Bay Section on July 14 in an attempt to conserve Chignik River sockeye salmon escapement. On July 17, the BOF met to hear emergency petitions regarding the Chignik River sockeye salmon escapement. The BOF determined that the SEDM and the “Dolgoi Island area” would remain closed until the Chignik River sockeye salmon interim escapement objectives were met, through August 8. The “Dolgoi Island area” (Figure 2) remained closed through July 25, and reopened on July 26 when Chignik River escapement objectives were met.

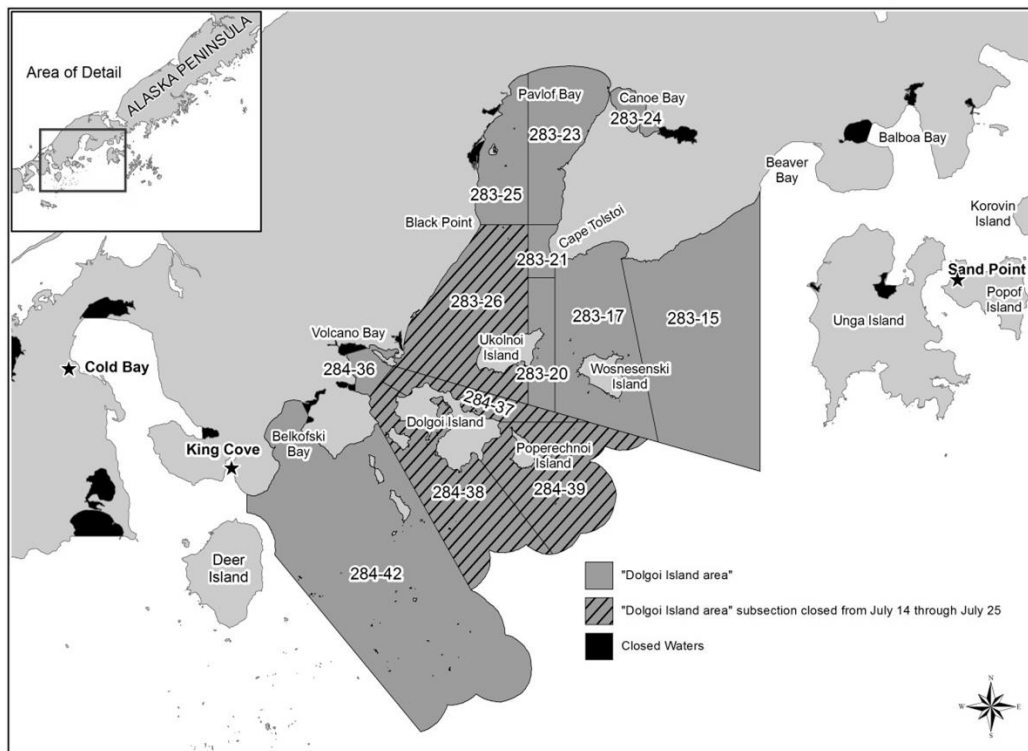


Figure 2. –The “Dolgoi Island area” with statistical areas and closed waters associated with 2018 BOF emergency changes.

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. The very low number of pink salmon returning to local streams resulted in no commercial fishing opportunity in the South Peninsula during August. Below average coho salmon harvest in September allowed for limited commercial fishery openings until participation in the fishery ceased.

The total commercial harvest for the South Peninsula Post-June fishery (including the SEDM from July 26–October 31) was 13,146 Chinook, 514,396 sockeye, 271,259 coho, 428,143 pink, and 428,143 chum salmon (Table 5).

Table 5.–Post-June South Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack, 2018.

Location	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
South Peninsula Post-June harvest	13,146	512,905	270,252	428,139	462,831
Post-June SEDM harvest (July 26– October 31)	0	1,491	1,007	4	277
Total Post-June harvest	13,146	514,396	271,259	428,143	463,108

South Peninsula Escapement

The South Peninsula sockeye salmon escapement of 12,017 fish (Table 6) was well below the management objective range of 48,200–86,400 fish. Escapement into Mortensens Lagoon (1,200 fish) was well below its SEG range of 3,200–6,400 fish. Escapement into Thin Point Lagoon (1,000 fish) was well below the SEG range of 14,000–28,000 fish. Reports of later than average subsistence harvest of sockeye salmon suggest that some sockeye salmon escapement may have occurred after the peak surveys were completed and sockeye salmon escapement is likely slightly higher than was observed. Pink salmon total indexed escapement of 732,422 fish (Table 6) was well below the SEG range of 1,750,000–4,000,000 fish. Chum salmon indexed total escapement of 344,830 fish (Table 6) was within the cumulative district escapement goal range of 330,400–660,800 fish. This escapement estimate represents a minimum; the actual escapement was likely greater but unable to be seen due to exceptionally bad weather in 2018 which limited surveys on the South Alaska Peninsula. There were no coho salmon surveys flown on the South Peninsula streams (Table 6). 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 6.–South Peninsula indexed salmon escapement by species and year, 2009–2018.

Year	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2009	0	128,117	108,855	3,067,000	512,230
2010	0	38,039	260	742,912	291,912
2011	0	59,794	3,100	2,494,950	497,725
2012	0	55,900	7,910	478,910	205,242
2013	0	31,386	no surveys	2,320,790	502,600
2014	0	38,120	9,050	1,340,380	313,545
2015	0	88,010	2,320	7,820,800	906,420
2016	0	120,170	no surveys	1,038,160	626,776
2017	0	106,542	5,100	5,663,637	1,773,626
2018	0	12,017	no surveys	732,422	344,830
2013–2017 Average	0	76,846	3,294	3,636,753	824,593

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. Lack of industry interest resulted in no commercial openings announced. Poor weather limited flying during the 2018 season and no aerial survey was flown of the Aleutian Islands Area.

NORTH ALASKA PENINSULA

Commercial Harvest

In 2018, 173 Area M permit holders participated in commercial salmon fisheries along the North Alaska Peninsula (Figure 3). There was no effort by Area T permit holders. The number of Area M permit holders participating in 2018 was greater than the most recent 10-year average of 162, 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. During even-numbered years, depending on market conditions, pink salmon runs are at times targeted in the Northwestern District.

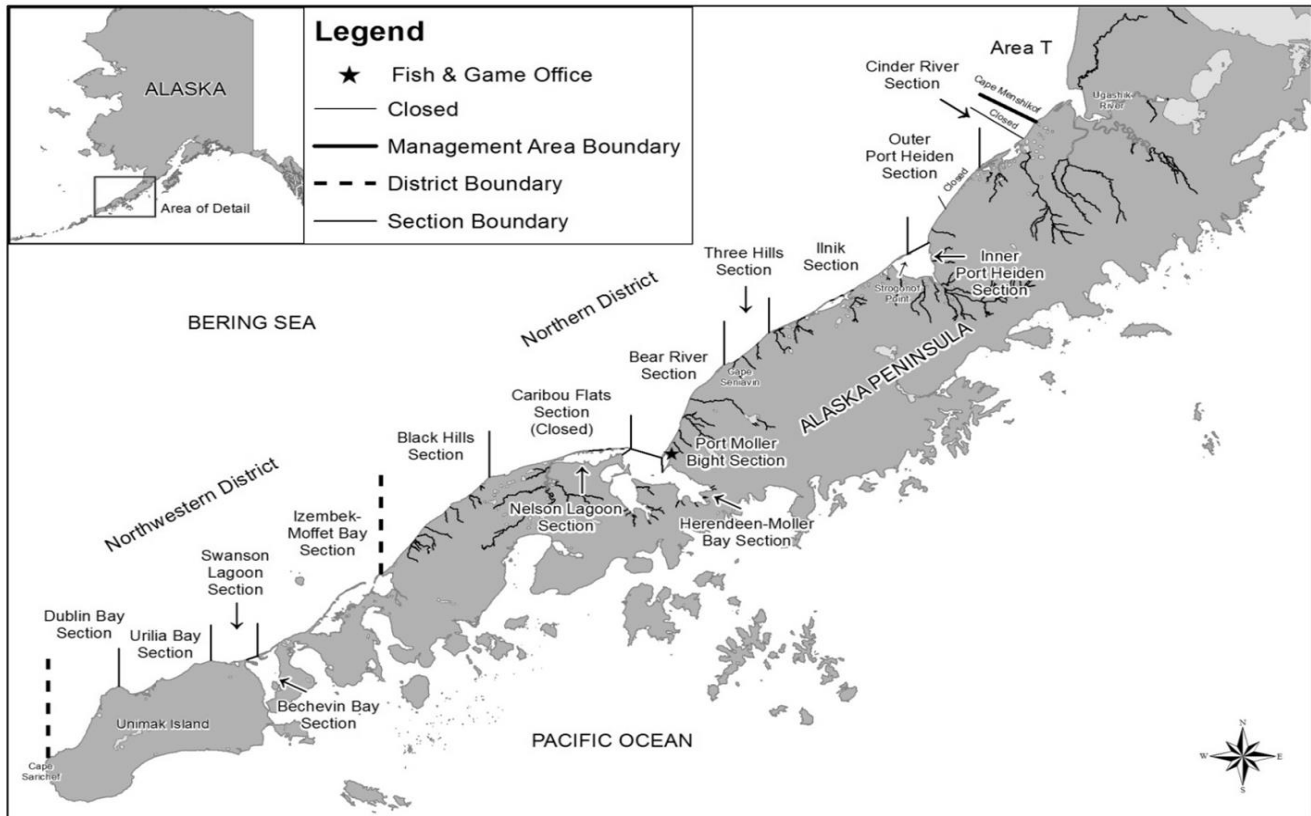


Figure 3.– Alaska Peninsula with North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon fishing districts depicted.

In 2018, the harvest of sockeye and Chinook salmon on the North Alaska Peninsula were both below projected harvest levels, while the harvest of coho, pink, and chum salmon were above projected harvest levels. The North Alaska Peninsula harvests of sockeye and coho salmon were above the previous 10-year (2008–2017) averages for each species, while the harvest of Chinook, pink, and chum salmon were below the 10-year averages (Table 7).

Table 7.–The total 2018 North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, and 2018 projected harvest and 2008–2017 average harvest.

	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2018 season total	1,761	2,366,324	108,333	32,234	157,390
Projected harvest	3,000	2,800,000	75,000	25,000	125,000
2008–2017 average	2,025	2,112,571	57,939	46,678	174,182

Northwestern District

During 2018 in the Northwestern District commercial salmon fishery, a total of 3 Chinook, 7,181 sockeye, 9,683 coho, 2,509 pink, and 105,705 chum salmon were harvested (Table 8). A total of 10 permit holders participated in the fishery, consisting of 4 purse seiners, 5 drift gillnetters, and 1 set gillnetter.

Table 8.—Northwestern District commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, by section, all gear combined, 2018.

Location	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
Dublin Bay Section	0	0	0	0	0
Urilia Bay Section	0	0	0	0	0
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	0	0	0	0
Bechevin Bay Section	0	0	0	0	0
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	3	7,181	9,683	2,509	105,705
2018 Northwestern District Total	3	7,181	9,683	2,509	105,705
2008–2017 NW District Average	14	44,380	1,447	42,492	118,477

In the Northwestern District, the chum salmon escapement of 90,705 fish (Table 9) was below the chum salmon SEG of 100,000–215,000 fish. This escapement estimate represents a minimum; the actual escapement was likely greater due to poor survey conditions in one of the major chum salmon producing streams in the Northwestern District. The sockeye salmon escapement for 2018 in the Northwestern District was below the escapement objective range of 52,600–106,000 with a total escapement of 45,750 fish (Table 9).

Table 9.—Northwestern District salmon escapement by species and section, 2018.

Location	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
Urilia Bay Section	0	30,200	0	0	1,450
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	400	0	0	5
Bechevin Bay Section	0	0	0	2,200	9,200
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	0	15,150	0	8,900	80,050
Northwestern District Total	0	45,750	0	11,100	90,705

Black Hills Section

Due to extensive fishing opportunity during 2018 in the Bear, Three Hills, and Ilnik sections in the Northern District, effort by the drift gillnet fleet in the Black Hills Section (Figure 3) was limited. A total of 2,318 sockeye salmon (Table 10) and 1,101 chum salmon were harvested in the Black Hills

Section in 2018. 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 2018 North Creek salmon escapement of 8,300 sockeye salmon met the escapement goal of 4,400–8,800 fish.

Table 10.—North Alaska Peninsula sockeye salmon commercial harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, by statistical area or combination of statistical areas, 2018.

Area ^a	Sockeye salmon harvest	Percent of total
Northwestern District		
311-20 Dublin Bay, 311-32 Uria Bay, 311-52 Swanson Lagoon ^b	0	0
311-60 Bechevin Bay ^b	0	0
312-20 Izembek Lagoon, and 312-40 Moffet Bay	2,774	0.10
311-58, 312-10 Outside Izembek-Moffet	4,407	0.19
Northwestern District total	7,181	0.30
Northern District		
313-10 Black Hills Section	2,318	0.10
313-30 Nelson Lagoon Section	165,303	6.95
314-20, 314-30 Herendeen-Moller bays	418	0.02
314-12, 315-11 Bear River and Port Moller Bight	293,729	12.35
315-20 NE Bear River	111,974	4.71
Bear River total (314-12,315-11,315-20)	405,703	17.05
316-10 Three Hills Section	361,790	15.21
316-20 Ilink SW of Unangashak Bluffs	534,961	22.49
316-25 Ilink NE of Unangashak Bluffs	532,636	22.39
Ilink Section total (316-20,316-22,316-25)	1,067,597	44.88
317-20 Inner Port Heiden Section ^b	0	0
317-10 Outer Port Heiden Section	356,014	14.97
318-20 Cinder River Section ^c	-	-
Cinder River and Port Heiden total (317-20,317-10,318-20)	356,014	14.97
Northern District total	2,359,143	99.17
North Peninsula total	2,366,324	100.00

^a Some statistical areas are combined because the low number of participants makes the information confidential.

^b No effort occurred in 2018.

^c Confidentiality requirements prohibit reporting of harvest.

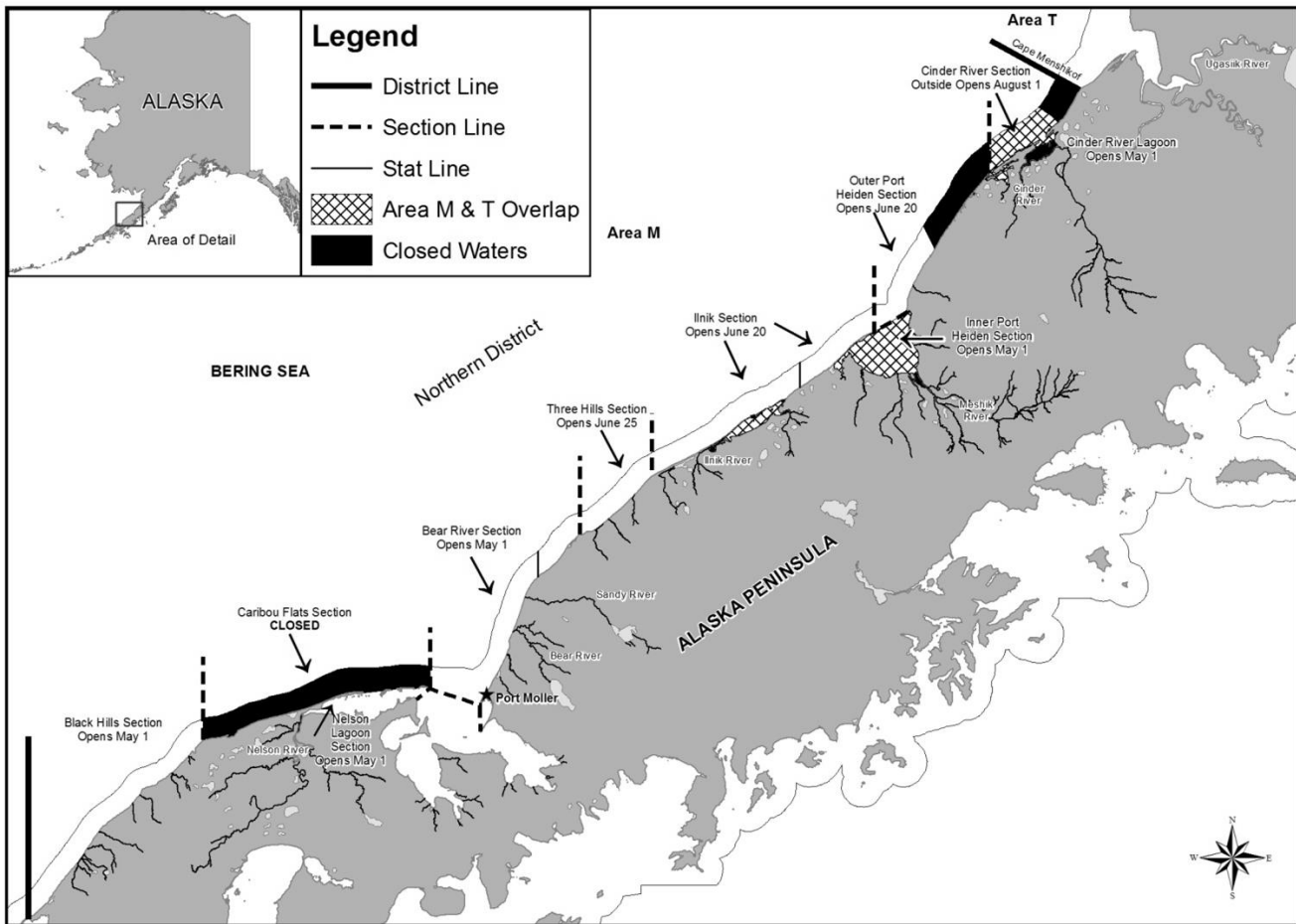


Figure 5.–Northern District commercial salmon fishing sections with earliest opening dates depicted.

Nelson Lagoon Section

The Nelson Lagoon Section was opened for all weekly fishing periods along with many extensions in fishing time in 2018. The Nelson (Sapsuk) River (Figure 5) total run of 386,303 sockeye salmon (includes harvest and escapement) was below the estimated forecast of 428,000 sockeye salmon. From the total run, 165,303 sockeye salmon were harvested in Nelson Lagoon (Table 10) and 221,000 fish escaped (Table 11) in the Nelson River. The 2018 sockeye salmon escapement into Nelson River exceeded the biological escapement goal (BEG) of 97,000–219,000 fish (Table 11).

Beginning August 15, the Nelson Lagoon Section is managed on local coho salmon runs. In 2018, a total of 44,000 coho salmon were observed in Nelson River, exceeding the Nelson River SEG threshold of 18,000 fish. Throughout the 2018 season a total of 31,000 coho salmon were harvested, which is comparable to the recent 10-year average of 33,000 coho salmon.

Table 11.—Northern District sockeye salmon escapements and goals, 2018.

	Escapement ^a	Goal
Nelson (Sapsuk) River	221,000	97,000–219,000
Sandy River	35,000	34,000–74,000
Ilnik River	81,000	40,000–60,000
<i>Bear Lake early run</i>	324,093	176,000–293,000
<i>Bear Lake late run</i>	232,907	117,000–195,000
Bear Lake total	557,000	293,000–488,000
Subtotal for systems with weirs	894,000	464,000–841,000
Subtotal for systems without weirs	389,000	88,400–188,800
Northern District total	1,283,000	552,400–1,029,800

^a Includes an estimate of sockeye salmon after removal of the weirs.

Bear River and Three Hills Sections

By regulation, the Bear River Section (Figure 5) opens to commercial salmon fishing on May 1 while the Three Hills Section opens June 25. Both areas are managed based on the sockeye salmon run strength into Bear and Sandy rivers. The early-run sockeye salmon at Bear River started roughly 1 week later than average, but ultimately was slightly above average in strength. The late-run of sockeye salmon at Bear River was on time and above historical averages. No extensive closures during the season were necessary. During the fishing season large closed water buffers were utilized around streams when needed in order to ensure adequate escapement. A total of 405,703 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Bear River Section during 2018, and 361,790 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Three Hills Section (Table 10).

The Bear River early-run (through July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 324,093 fish exceeded the escapement goal of 176,000–293,000 fish (Table 11). The Bear River late-run (after July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 232,907 fish exceeded the late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 117,000–195,000 fish. The Bear River season sockeye salmon escapement was 557,000 fish (Table 11), which surpassed the combined early- and late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 293,000–488,000 fish.

The 2018 Sandy River sockeye salmon escapement of 35,000 fish (Table 11) met the season ending escapement goal range of 34,000–74,000 fish.

Ilnik Section

In 2018 the Ilnik River system sockeye salmon escapement through the weir was 81,000 fish, exceeding the Ilnik River escapement goal of 40,000–60,000 fish. By regulation, the Ilnik Section can open to commercial salmon fishing on June 20. Sockeye salmon escapement into Ilnik River met or exceeded interim escapement objectives throughout the season. A total of 1.1 million sockeye salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section, above historical averages. A small amount of commercial fishing effort

occurred inside the Ilnik Lagoon in 2018, the harvest was negligible, and confidentiality rules prohibit reporting.

Beginning August 15, the Ilnik Section is managed for coho salmon runs into Ilnik Lagoon, however most fishing effort at this time continues to target sockeye salmon. During 2018 a total of 33,000 coho salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section.

Inner and Outer Port Heiden Sections

Aerial escapement surveys of the Meshik River began on June 18. Subsequent surveys occurred throughout the season and the final sockeye salmon escapement into the Meshik River system was 134,100 fish, exceeding 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 2018, a total of 356,014 sockeye salmon (Table 10) were harvested from the Outer Port Heiden Section. The 2018 sockeye salmon harvest in the Outer Port Heiden Section was below the 10-year average harvest of 519,132 sockeye salmon.

Cinder River Section

In 2018 the commercial fishing effort in the Cinder River Section was minimal, despite weekly fishing periods of 2½ days per week for the entire season. Effort in 2018 in the Cinder River Section targeted coho salmon in August, and the fishery was open continuously after August 25 due to low effort. Confidentiality rules prohibit the reporting of the Cinder River Section harvest because of the low effort. The total Cinder River (including Mud Creek) sockeye salmon escapement estimate of 191,300 fish exceeded 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 5,022 Chinook salmon escaped, exceeding the escapement goal of 2,400–4,400 fish. The total Northern District Chinook salmon escapement of 15,909 fish was above the most recent ten-year average of 12,667 fish.

Coho Salmon

Coho salmon surveys were done on all Northern District streams in early September, which is before the peak of the coho salmon run. Budgetary and logistical constraints do not permit coho salmon surveys to take place later on in the fall. Coho salmon runs continue through September and October, so escapements tabulated from aerial surveys are considered minimum estimates. The total coho salmon escapement in the Northern District during 2018 was 343,300 fish indicating a strong coho salmon run. Both the Nelson and Ilnik rivers have coho salmon lower bound escapement goals in the Northern District. The Nelson River escapement of 44,000 coho salmon exceeded the lower bound escapement goal of 18,000 fish. A total of 122,000 fish were observed during early September in the Ilnik River in 2018, which exceeded the lower bound escapement goal of 9,000 fish. It is expected that more coho salmon entered the Ilnik and Nelson river systems during September and October. The coho salmon escapement into the Cinder River was 66,000 fish, and 63,000 coho salmon escaped into the Meshik River system (Meshik River and Landlocked Creek) as observed by aerial survey.

Chum Salmon

The Northern District has a district wide chum salmon escapement goal of 119,600–239,200 fish. This goal was met with an escapement of 236,109 fish, which is above the most recent ten-year average of 179,396 fish. The bulk of the chum salmon escapement occurred in the Herendeen–Moller Bay Section (85,000 fish) and the Cinder River Section (79,000 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 2018. A total of 39,943 pink salmon were observed in the Northern District during 2018.