

RUN FORECASTS AND HARVEST PROJECTIONS
FOR 1996 ALASKA SALMON FISHERIES AND REVIEW OF THE 1995 SEASON:
THE SHORT VERSION

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Salmon biologists around Alaska are again forecasting large runs in 1996, although generally smaller than last year's runs. The 1995 all-species salmon harvest reached an incredible 218 million salmon — by far the largest harvest in Alaska's history. In the past, large runs have been good for the salmon industry, but this may not hold true for 1996. Fishermen are concerned about oversupply, high inventory, and low prices. Only slightly lower harvests of chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon are expected, and coho salmon harvests are expected to increase very slightly. We are expecting the pink salmon harvest to drop by about 26 million fish, lowering the catch of this species to 80% of the 1995 level. Table 1 shows specific projection numbers, by species and fishing area.

Once again, uncertainty over pink salmon harvests in Southeast Alaska and anticipated large sockeye salmon runs for Bristol Bay are generating the most interest in the forecast. Biologists in Southeast Alaska are expecting an "excellent run" (meaning a harvest of 58 million or more) but stress that many of their data-gathering projects have been cut over the years. The outlook for Bristol Bay sockeye salmon is for a harvest of 37.7 million (inshore and South Peninsula combined). The pink salmon outlook for Kodiak is for a harvest of only 3.7 million, in contrast to the record 1995 odd-year harvest of nearly 43 million for this area. We also expect a drop from the record pink salmon harvest on the Alaska Peninsula. The outlook for Prince William Sound is 24.7 million pink salmon, of which 7.7 million pink salmon is intended for hatchery cost recovery.

The 1995 harvests of 650 thousand chinook, 63.6 million sockeye, 6.38 million coho, 128 million pink, and 19.0 million chum salmon (Table 2) produced an estimated exvessel value amounting to \$461 million. This estimate is slightly less than the 1994 estimated value of \$468 million. The actual 1995 catch of 218 million was much higher than the harvest outlook of 172 million salmon we called for at this time last year. Last year's catch statistics in numbers of fish, by fishing area, are given in Table 2 and in units of weight in Table 3.

Look for inseason harvest information, postseason statistics, and preseason outlooks on the Worldwide Web at <http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/adfghome.htm>.

Table 1. Preliminary projections of 1996 Alaska commercial salmon harvests by fishing area and species, in units of thousands of fish.

Fishing Area	Species					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
Southeast Region Total	263 ^a	2,400	3,900	60,000	10,000	76,600
Prince William Sound	73	1,943	774	24,700	2,260	29,700
Upper Cook Inlet	15	3,300	400	600	350	4,670
Lower Cook Inlet	2	339	15	2,000	98	2,450
Bristol Bay	75	34,600	120	480	950	36,200
Central Region Total	165	40,200	1,310	27,780	3,660	73,100
Kodiak Area	20	3,560	280	3,700	900	8,500
Chignik	7	1,800	210	1,300	230	3,550
South Peninsula	10	3,600	300	7,500	1,700	13,100
North Peninsula	15	2,600	180	200	200	3,200
Aleutian Islands	0	5	0	1,000	1	1,010
Westward Region Total	52	11,600	970	13,700	3,030	29,400
AYK Region Total	155	163	758	607	1,250	2,900
TOTAL PROJECTION	635	54,400	6,940	102,000	17,900	182,000

^a The chinook harvest quota has yet to be established by the Pacific Salmon Commission.

Columns and rows do not total exactly due to rounding.

Updated February 26, 1996

Table 2. Preliminary 1995 Alaska commercial salmon harvests by fishing area and species, in thousands of fish.

Fishing Area	Species					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
Southeast Region Total	209	1,780	3,310	47,900	10,900	64,100
Prince William Sound	68	1,520	965	16,100	758	19,400
Upper Cook Inlet	17	2,900	400	131	518	3,970
Lower Cook Inlet	2	264	16	2,850	20	3,150
Bristol Bay	100	44,400	45	0	949	45,500
Central Region Total	187	49,100	1,430	19,100	2,250	72,100
Kodiak Area	19	4,500	308	42,800	1,500	49,100
Chignik	5	1,700	280	2,000	380	4,400
South Peninsula	17	3,000	261	16,300	1,720	21,300
North Peninsula	8	3,270	135	12	99	3,520
Aleutian Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Westward Region Total	49	12,500	988	61,100	3,700	78,300
AYK Region Total ^a	205	198	651	82	2,140	3,280
TOTAL ALASKA	650	63,600	6,380	128,000	19,000	218,000

^a The Upper Yukon River catch includes the estimated harvest to produce roe sold.

Columns and rows do not total exactly due to rounding.

Updated January 3, 1996

Table 3. Preliminary 1995 Alaska commercial salmon harvests by fishing area and species, in thousands of pounds.

Fishing Area	Species					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
Southeast Region Total	3,460	10,300	25,100	152,000	89,000	280,000
Prince William Sound	1,690	8,700	8,100	58,800	6,060	83,000
Upper Cook Inlet	538	17,100	2,580	410	3,630	24,300
Lower Cook Inlet	63	1,560	103	8,840	140	10,700
Bristol Bay	1,960	244,000	300	0	6,200	252,000
Central Region Total	4,250	271,000	11,100	68,100	16,000	370,000
Kodiak Area	353	24,400	2,100	146,000	11,200	184,000
Chignik	91	11,700	2,000	7,200	2,940	23,900
South Peninsula	217	16,100	1,620	57,400	12,000	87,300
North Peninsula	102	17,500	836	42	710	19,200
Aleutian Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Westward Region Total	763	69,700	6,560	211,000	26,900	310,000
AYK Region Total	3,600	1,370	4,580	254	15,300	25,100
TOTAL ALASKA	12,100	352,000	47,300	431,000	147,000	985,000

Columns and rows do not total exactly due to rounding.

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