



## Advisory Announcement

**CONTACT: Bob Murphy, Lisa Fox,  
Reid Johnson, Tyler Lawson**

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**(907) 486-1830**

### 2020 ALASKA PENINSULA AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2020 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amlia Islands areas (Figure 1; Area M) commercial salmon fishing season. Total harvest presented from the 2020 commercial salmon fishing season should closely approximate final harvest numbers for all species. The 2020 commercial salmon harvest in Area M totaled 22,757 Chinook, 2,854,932 sockeye, 235,524 coho, 5,164,823 pink, and 971,707 chum salmon (Table 1). Subsistence salmon harvest for 2020 will be reported in the 2021 annual management report (AMR). Data detailed in this report are considered preliminary. Preliminary exvessel value of salmon harvested in Area M totaled \$16,991,990 (Table 2). Exvessel value information was generated from fish tickets and does not include postseason adjustments paid to fishermen.

Table 1.—Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amlia Islands commercial salmon harvest, 2020.

Location	Number of Salmon					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
North Peninsula	1,223	1,780,175	48,176	30,481	56,152	1,916,207
South Peninsula	21,534	1,074,757	187,348	5,134,342	915,555	7,333,536
Aleutian Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Atka-Amlia Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,757</b>	<b>2,854,932</b>	<b>235,524</b>	<b>5,164,823</b>	<b>971,707</b>	<b>9,249,743</b>

Table 2.—Preliminary commercial exvessel values by fishery and species, 2020.

Location	Value					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
South Peninsula	\$15,660	\$3,657,614	\$315,820	\$2,854,358	\$1,120,451	\$7,963,903
Northwestern District	\$25	\$65,089	\$1,065	\$3,608	\$70,884	\$140,671
Northern District	\$28,127	\$8,610,763	\$119,814	\$28,068	\$100,644	\$8,887,416
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,812</b>	<b>\$12,333,466</b>	<b>\$436,699</b>	<b>\$2,886,034</b>	<b>\$1,291,979</b>	<b>\$16,991,990</b>
Aleutian Islands	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Atka-Amlia Islands	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,812</b>	<b>\$12,333,466</b>	<b>\$436,699</b>	<b>\$2,886,034</b>	<b>\$1,291,979</b>	<b>\$16,991,990</b>

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

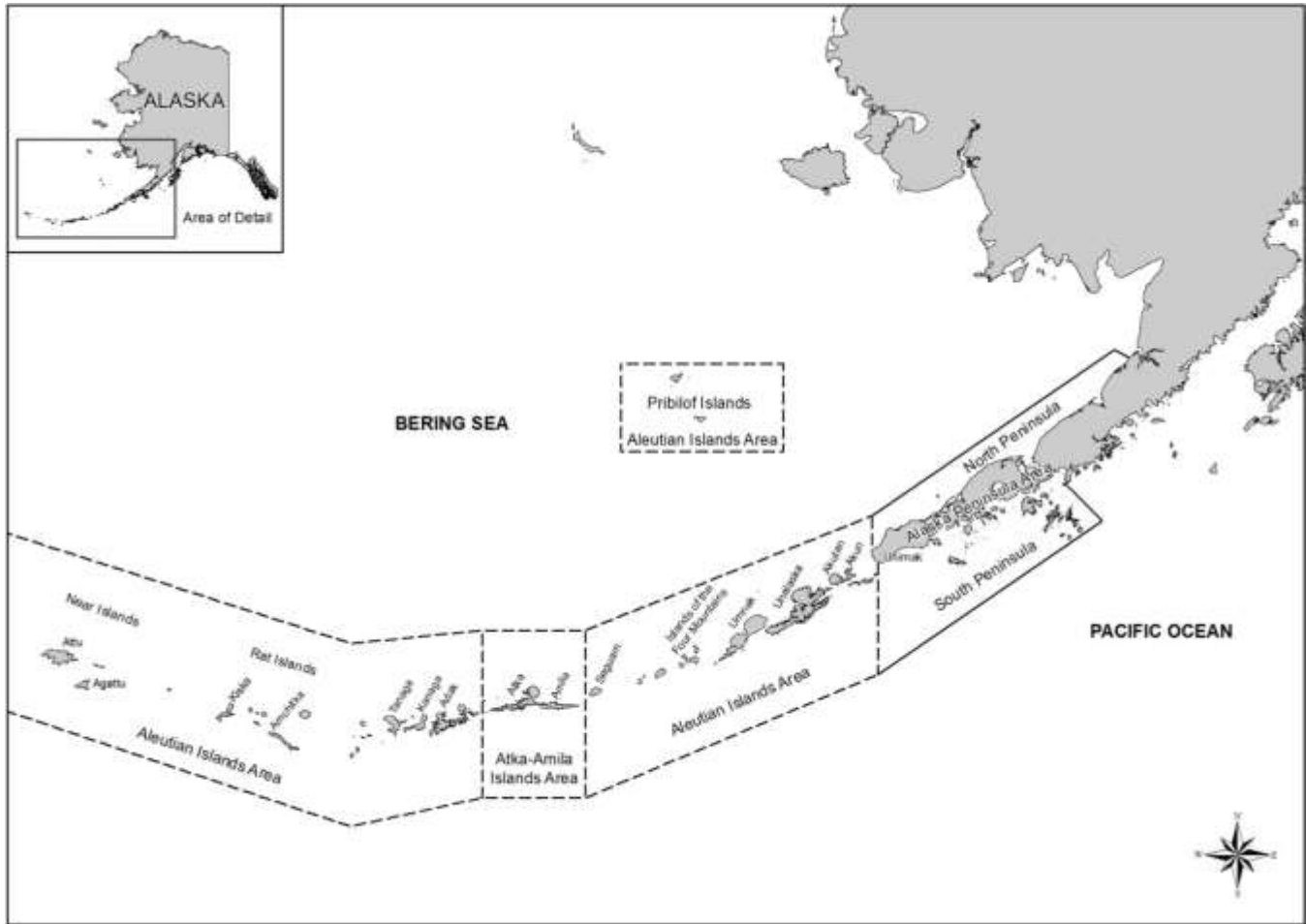


Figure 1.—Map of the Aleutian Islands, Atka-Amlia Islands, and Alaska Peninsula Management areas, also known as Area M.

## SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA

### South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Fisheries

During the February 2019 Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Chignik meeting, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF, board) made changes to the *South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 09.365) by amending subsection (d) that establishes the June fishing schedule. The first commercial fishing period in 2020 began on June 6 at 10:00 a.m. for set gillnet gear only and closed at 10:00 p.m. on June 8. Beginning at 6:00 a.m. on June 10, all gear types began an 88-hour fishing period which ended at 10:00 p.m. on June 13. This fishing period was followed by a closure of 32 hours for all gear types.

On June 12, the sockeye salmon escapement at Chignik River was the second lowest since statehood with an escapement of 5,387 and no signs of fish building in the lagoon or behind the weir. Due to the low escapement at the Chignik River, the “Dolgoi Island area” closed to commercial salmon fishing during the commercial fishing period from 6:00 a.m. Monday, June 15 until 10:00 p.m. Thursday, June 18. The “Dolgoi Island area” includes

waters of the Volcano Bay Section of the Southwestern District south and east of a line from Arch Point to a point on Belkofski Peninsula and the portion of the West Pavlof Bay Section of the South Central District south of Black Point (Figure 2).

On June 16, the Chignik River sockeye salmon escapement continued to be historically low, with only 8,868 sockeye salmon through the weir and no buildup of fish behind the weir or in the lagoon. The escapement objective for June 15 was for 95,000 to 125,000 sockeye salmon. Due to the low escapement at the Chignik River, the “Dolgoi Island area” remained closed and the commercial fishing period in the Shumagin Island Section of the Southeastern District was reduced from 88 hours to 40 hours from 6:00 a.m. Saturday, June 20 until 10:00 p.m. Sunday, June 21. The remaining areas opened for 88 hours from 6:00 a.m. Saturday, June 20 until 10:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, as scheduled in regulation.

Again, on June 21, the Chignik River sockeye salmon escapement continued to be historically low, with only 25,818 sockeye salmon through the weir and no buildup of fish behind the weir or in the lagoon. The escapement objective for June 20 was for 151,000 to 232,000 sockeye salmon. Due to the low escapement at the Chignik River, the “Dolgoi Island area” remained closed and the final commercial fishing period in the Shumagin Island Section of the Southeastern District was reduced from 88 hours to 40 hours from 6:00 a.m. Thursday, June 25 until 10:00 p.m. Friday, June 26. The remaining areas opened for 88 hours from 6:00 a.m. Thursday, June 25 until 10:00 p.m. Sunday, June 28, as scheduled in regulation.

The closure of the subsection of the “Dolgoi Island area” and the reductions of fishing time in the Shumagin Island Section of the Southeastern District were management actions taken outside of the *South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 09.365) in an effort to conserve sockeye salmon that were possibly bound for the Chignik River.

The commercial salmon harvest for the June fishery consisted of 2,607 Chinook, 341,908 sockeye, 705 coho, 1,755,193 pink, and 491,075 chum salmon (Table 3).

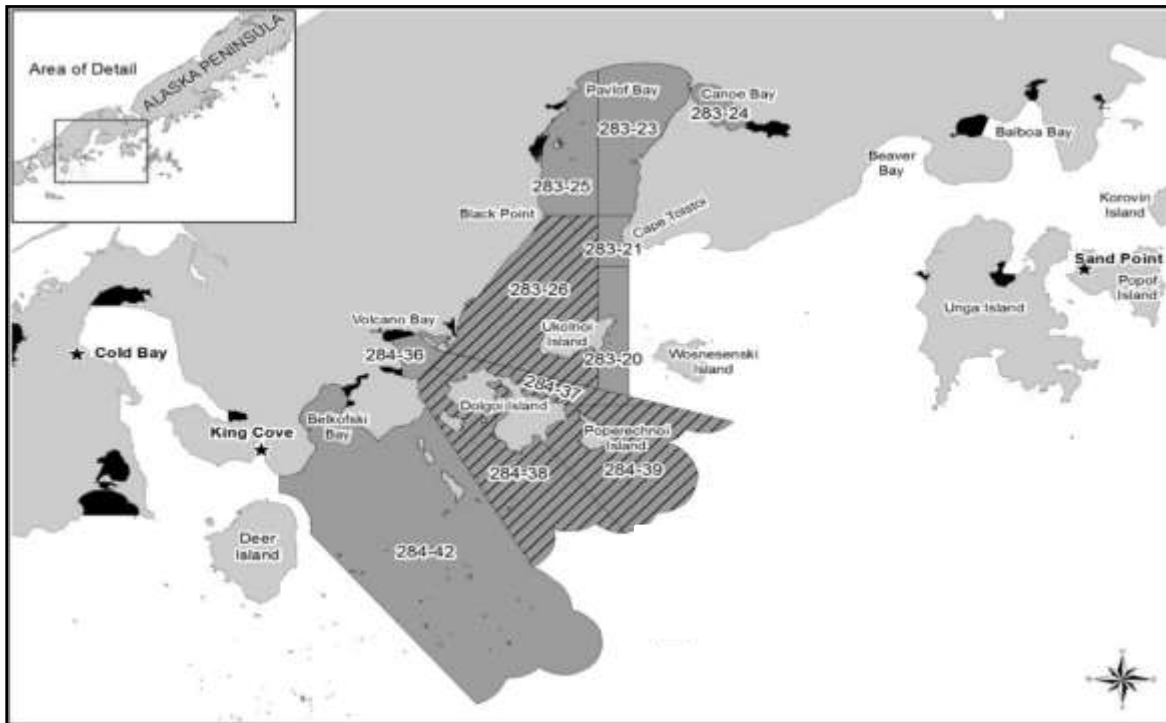


Figure 2. – Map depicting the “Dolgoi Island area.” The area shaded with diagonal lines is the area that closed in 2020 due to conservation concerns of Chignik River sockeye salmon.

Table 3.–Total salmon harvests in numbers of fish for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2020.

	Number of Salmon					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
South Unimak	747	223,312	671	1,577,104	243,273	2,045,107
Shumagin Islands	1,860	118,596	34	178,089	247,802	546,381
Total	2,607	341,908	705	1,755,193	491,075	2,591,488

### 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 SEDM.

Beginning July 1, the NWSS of SEDM is managed on the strength of the Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon run. No commercial fishing occurred in the NWSS due to low escapement at Orzinski Lake. The Orzinski Lake sockeye salmon escapement of 6,819 fish was well below the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 15,000–20,000 sockeye salmon.

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.

From July 26 through August 31, the SEDM is managed based on the abundance of local salmon stocks. This was the first even-year since 2008 where escapement of pink and chum salmon warranted commercial fishing opportunity in the SEDM. Commercial salmon fishing in SEDM in 2020 began on August 24 with a 37-hour fishing period for set gillnet and seine gear from 8:00 a.m. Monday, August 24 until 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 25 in the Beaver Bay, Balboa Bay, Southwest Stepovak, and East Stepovak sections of the Southeastern District. Commercial salmon fishing period was then extended for 48 hours from 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 25 until 9:00 p.m. Thursday, August 27 and extended again for an additional 47 hours from 9:00 p.m. Thursday, August 27 until 8:00 p.m. Saturday, August 29. The Stepovak Flats and the Northwest Stepovak sections remained closed.

In September, the SEDM is managed based on coho salmon harvest strength, although pink and chum salmon escapement is also taken into consideration. There were three openings in September. Total salmon harvest in the SEDM was 2 Chinook, 3,305 sockeye, 1,787 coho, 5,277 pink, and 395 chum salmon (Table 4).

Table 4.—Preliminary Southeastern District Mainland salmon harvest, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2020.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
June 1–June 30	0	0	0	0	0
July 1–July 25 SEDM <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
Total SEDM harvest in allocation	0	0	0	0	0
July 1–July 25 NWSS <sup>b</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
July 26–September 30 <sup>c</sup>	2	3,305	1,787	5,277	395
Total	2	3,305	1,787	5,277	395

<sup>a</sup> Southeastern District Mainland (excluding Northwest Stepovak Section).

<sup>b</sup> Northwest Stepovak Section.

<sup>c</sup> The Northwest Stepovak and Stepovak Flats sections remained closed.

### 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 21, 18, and 12 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. Due to the continued low escapement of sockeye salmon to the Chignik River, the “Dolgoi Island area” remained closed through July.

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 number of pink salmon returning to local streams resulted in limited commercial fishing opportunity in the South Peninsula during August. Coho salmon harvest in September allowed for 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 18,927 Chinook, 732,849 sockeye, 186,643 coho, 3,379,149 pink, and 424,480 chum salmon (Table 5).

In 2020, 245 permit holders participated in commercial salmon fisheries along the South Peninsula, which is slightly lower than the most recent 10-year average of 247 permit holders.

Table 5.—Post-June South Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and the department test fishery, 2020.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
South Peninsula	18,925	729,544	184,856	3,373,872	424,085
SEDM (July 26–October 31)	2	3,305	1,787	5,277	395
Total	18,927	732,849	186,643	3,379,149	424,480

### South Peninsula Escapement

The South Peninsula sockeye salmon escapement of 34,169 fish (Table 6) was below the management objective range of 48,200–86,400 fish. Escapement into Mortensens Lagoon (800 fish) was well below its SEG range of 3,200–6,400 fish. Escapement into Thin Point Lagoon (10,450 fish) was below the SEG range of 14,000–28,000 fish. Pink salmon total indexed escapement of 3,209,750 fish (Table 6) was within the SEG range of 1,750,000–4,000,000 fish. Chum salmon total escapement of 415,750 fish (Table 6) was within the cumulative district escapement goal range of 330,400–660,800 fish. Escapement into chum salmon index streams was within the goal of 218,300–410,600 with a peak index escapement of 285,650 chum salmon. 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 salmon escapement by species and year, 2010–2020.

Year	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
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
2019	0	31,667	no surveys	4,236,700	672,475
2020	0	34,169	no surveys	3,209,750	415,750
2010–2019 average	0	58,165	4,623	2,686,966	613,515

### 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 2020 and no commercial salmon fishing occurred due to lack of interest from the fishing industry.

### NORTH ALASKA PENINSULA

#### Commercial Harvest

In 2020, 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 2020 was greater than the most recent 10-year average of 164 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.

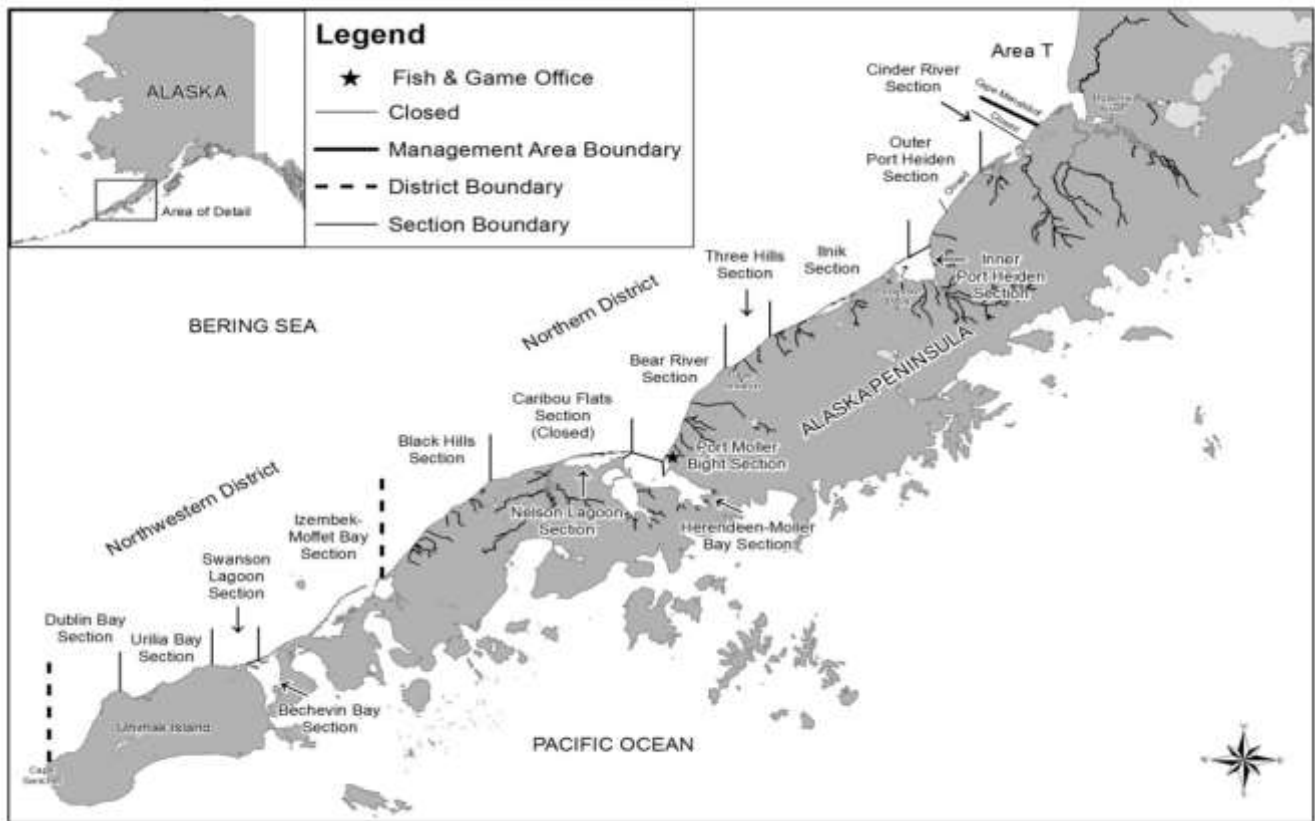


Figure 3. – Alaska Peninsula with North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon fishing districts depicted.

In 2020, the harvest of 1,780,175 million sockeye salmon on the North Alaska Peninsula was below both the projected harvest and the 10-year average of 2.4 million and 2.1 million fish, respectively. The harvest of coho salmon was below both the projected harvest and the 10-year average of 65,000 and 54,000, respectively. The harvests of Chinook, pink, and chum salmon were all below both the projected harvests and the 10-year averages (Table 7).

Table 7.–The total 2020 North Alaska Peninsula commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack and department test fishery, and 2020 projected harvest and 2010–2019 average harvest.

	Number of salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
2020 season total	1,223	1,780,175	48,176	30,481	56,152
Projected harvest	2,800	2,400,000	65,000	50,000	150,000
2010-2019 average	2,090	2,146,231	53,510	78,084	184,696

### Northwestern District

In the Northwestern District during the 2020 commercial salmon fishery, a total of 4 Chinook, 16,630 sockeye, 731 coho, 5,051 pink, and 43,128 chum salmon were harvested (Table 8). A total of 19 permit holders participated in the fishery, consisting of 5 purse seiners, 12 drift gillnetters, and 2 set gillnetters.



Table 8.—Northwestern District commercial salmon harvest, excluding home pack by section, all gear combined, 2020.

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	4	16,630	731	5,051	43,128
Total	4	16,630	731	5,051	43,128
2010–2019 average	14	45,307	1,754	33,110	130,577

In the Northwestern District, the chum salmon escapement of 62,100 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 (the Joshua Green River) in the Northwestern District. The sockeye salmon escapement for 2020 in the Northwestern District was below the escapement objective range of 52,600–106,000 with a total escapement of 51,200 fish (Table 9).

Table 9.—Northwestern District salmon escapement by species and section, 2020.

Location	Number of Salmon				
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum
Urilia Bay Section	0	23,700	*	0	0
Swanson Lagoon Section	0	200	*	0	0
Bechevin Bay Section	0	0	*	34,600	30,300
Izembek-Moffet Bay Section	0	27,300	*	12,100	32,100
Total	0	51,200	*	46,700	62,400

\* 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 opportunity during 2020 in the Bear, Three Hills, and Inik sections of the Northern District, effort by the drift gillnet fleet in the Black Hills Section (Figure 3) was limited, and occurred primarily during the first week of August. A total of 10,687 sockeye salmon (Table 10) and 1,334 chum salmon were harvested in the Black Hills Section in 2020. 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 2020 North Creek salmon escapement of 8,200 sockeye salmon met the escapement goal of 7,500–10,000 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, 2020.

Area <sup>a</sup>	Sockeye salmon harvest	Percent of total
Northwestern District		
311-20 Dublin Bay, 311-32 Uria Bay, 311-52 Swanson Lagoon <sup>b</sup>	0	0
311-60 Bechevin Bay <sup>b</sup>	0	0
312-20 Izembek Lagoon, and 312-40 Moffet Bay	6,214	0.35
311-58, 312-10 Outside Izembek-Moffet	10,416	0.59
Northwestern District total	16,630	0.94
Northern District		
313-10 Black Hills Section	10,687	0.60
313-30 Nelson Lagoon Section	92,040	5.17
314-20, 314-30 Herendeen-Moller bays	216	0.01
314-12, 315-11 Bear River and Port Moller Bight	129,068	7.25
315-20 NE Bear River	68,435	3.84
Bear River total (314-12,315-11,315-20)	197,503	11.09
316-10 Three Hills Section	201,935	11.34
316-20 Ilnik SW of Unangashak Bluffs	133,390	7.49
316-25 Ilnik NE of Unangashak Bluffs	340,003	19.10
Ilnik Section total (316-20,316-22,316-25)	473,393	26.59
317-20 Inner Port Heiden Section <sup>b</sup>	0	0
317-10 Outer Port Heiden Section	787,771	44.25
318-20 Cinder River Section <sup>b</sup>	0	0
Northern District total	1,763,545	99.06
North Peninsula total	1,780,175	100.00

<sup>a</sup> Some statistical areas are combined because the low number of participants makes the information confidential.

<sup>b</sup> No commercial salmon fishing effort in this area.

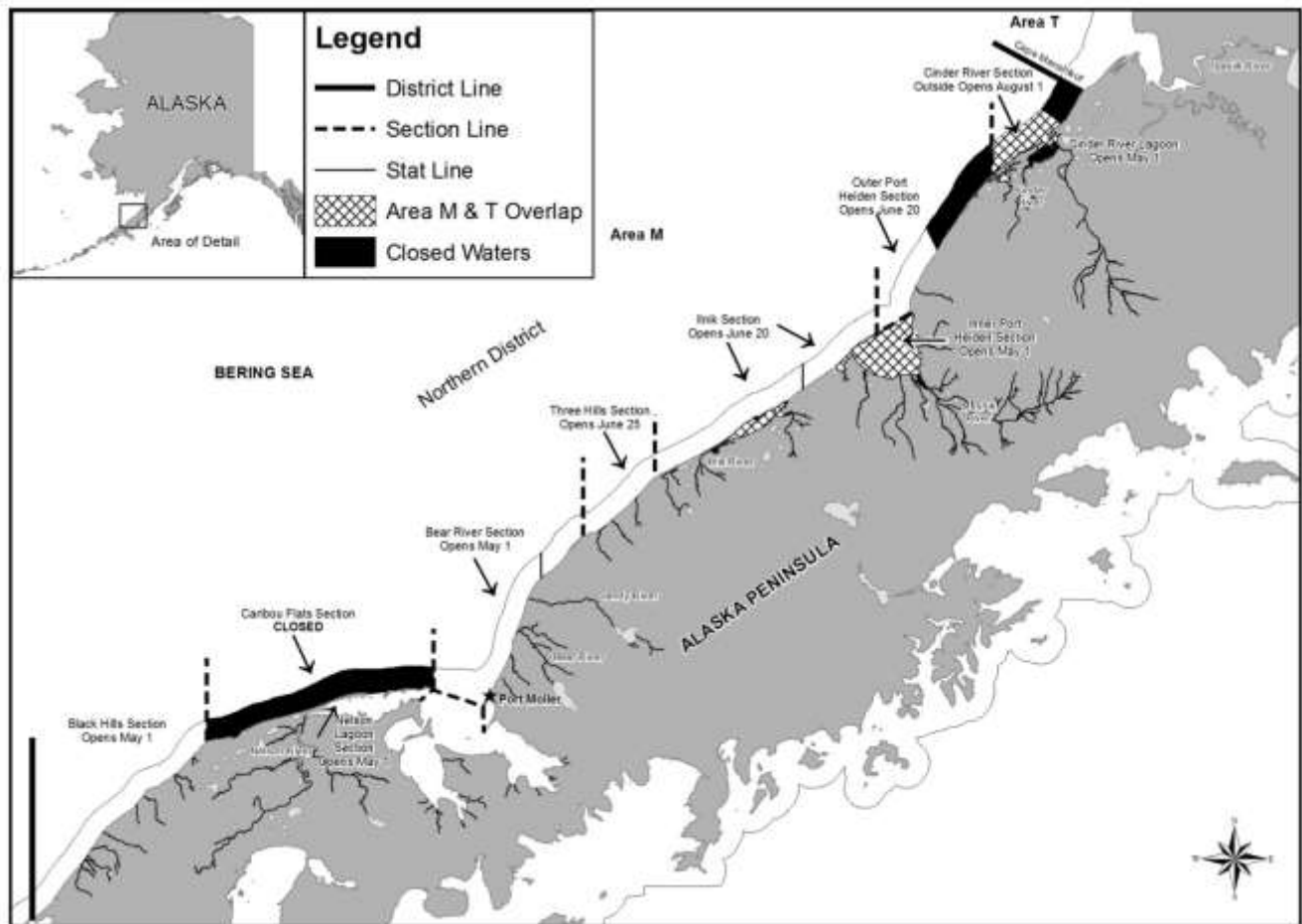


Figure 5.—Northern District commercial salmon fishing sections with earliest opening dates depicted.

### Nelson Lagoon Section

The Nelson Lagoon Section was opened for all weekly fishing periods along with many extensions in fishing time in 2020. The Nelson (Sapsuk) River (Figure 5) total run of 277,040 sockeye salmon (includes harvest and escapement) was well below the estimated forecast of 362,000 sockeye salmon. From the total run, 92,040 sockeye salmon were harvested in Nelson Lagoon (Table 10) and 185,000 fish escaped (Table 11) into the Nelson River. The harvest in Nelson Lagoon was well below the historical 10-year average of roughly 192,000 sockeye salmon. The 2020 sockeye salmon escapement into Nelson River met the biological escapement goal (BEG) of 97,000–219,000 fish (Table 11).

Beginning August 15, the Nelson Lagoon Section is managed based on local coho salmon runs. In 2020, a total of 23,000 coho salmon were observed in Nelson River, exceeding the Nelson River SEG threshold of 18,000 fish. Throughout the 2020 season a total of 18,838 coho salmon were harvested, which is below the recent 10-year average of 28,393 coho salmon.

Table 11.—Northern District sockeye salmon escapements and goals, 2020.

	Escapement <sup>a</sup>	Goal
Nelson (Sapsuk) River	185,000	97,000–219,000
Sandy River	60,000	34,000–74,000
Ilnik River	41,000	40,000–60,000
<i>Bear Lake early run</i>	299,198	176,000–293,000
<i>Bear Lake late run</i>	200,802	117,000–195,000
Bear Lake total	500,000	293,000–488,000
Subtotal for systems with weirs	786,000	464,000–841,000
Subtotal for systems without weirs	241,925	88,400–188,800
Northern District total	1,027,925	552,400–1,029,800

<sup>a</sup> Includes an estimate of sockeye salmon after removal of the weirs.

### Bear River and Three Hills Sections

As defined 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 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 a little over one week later than average, and escapements trended roughly one week late compared to historical averages for the month of June, before trending towards the upper end of weekly interim escapement goals from mid-July onwards. The Bear River Section was closed on June 15, and then opened on July 8 for a weekly fishing period. Extensions to weekly fishing periods occurred for the rest of the month of July, before the section closed on July 29 in preparation for the late run of sockeye salmon.

The late run of sockeye salmon at Bear River, which starts on August 1, was slightly (less than one week) late compared to historical averages. At the start of the late run at Bear River, large amounts of jack sockeye salmon were observed migrating past the weir. When jack sockeye salmon are more than 10 percent of the run, jacks are no longer counted towards escapement goals; the late run of sockeye salmon at Bear River was managed based off of adult sockeye salmon escapement, discounting any jack sockeye salmon that migrated past the weir. Commercial harvest opportunity for late-run sockeye salmon opened on August 13, which was a few days later than what has been typical in past years. No extensive closures during the season were necessary, as interim escapements were met throughout the month of August.

A total of 197,503 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Bear River Section during 2020, and 201,935 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Three Hills Section (Table 10).

The Bear River early-run (through July 31) sockeye salmon escapement of 299,198 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 200,802 fish exceeded the late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 117,000–195,000 fish. The Bear River season total sockeye salmon escapement was 500,000 fish (Table 11), which surpassed the combined early- and late-run sockeye salmon escapement goal of 293,000–488,000 fish.

The 2020 Sandy River sockeye salmon escapement of 60,000 fish (Table 11) met the season ending escapement goal range of 34,000–74,000 fish. Sandy River was the only river system on the North Alaska Peninsula to meet all interim escapement objectives.

### **Ilnik Section**

In 2020 the Ilnik River system sockeye salmon escapement through the weir was 41,000 fish (Table 11), meeting 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 was below interim escapement objectives from June until the start of July, after which escapements trended along the midpoint of interim escapement goals. A total of 473,000 sockeye salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section, below historical averages (Table 10).

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 2020 a total of 18,606 coho salmon were harvested in the Ilnik Section.

### **Inner and Outer Port Heiden Sections**

Aerial escapement surveys of the Meshik River began on June 19. Subsequent surveys occurred throughout the season and the final sockeye salmon escapement into the Meshik River system was 64,550 fish, meeting 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 26 and had openings of no more than 2½ days per week until the section closed on July 29. In 2020, a total of 787,771 sockeye salmon (Table 10) were harvested from the Outer Port Heiden Section. The 2020 sockeye salmon harvest in the Outer Port Heiden Section was well above the 10-year average harvest of 499,117 sockeye salmon.

### **Cinder River Section**

No commercial salmon harvest effort occurred in the Cinder River Section in 2020 despite weekly commercial salmon fishing openers. The total Cinder River (including Mud Creek) sockeye salmon escapement estimate of 124,000 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 1,998 Chinook salmon escaped through the weir, and 500 were observed by aerial survey when the weir was taken out, for a total of 2,498 Chinook salmon, meeting the escapement goal of 2,400–5,000 fish. The total Northern District Chinook salmon escapement of 15,908 fish was above the most recent ten-year average of 11,459 fish.

## **Coho Salmon**

Coho salmon surveys were conducted on major 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 any later in the fall. Coho salmon runs continue through September and into October, therefore escapements tabulated from aerial surveys are considered minimum estimates. The total coho salmon escapement in the Northern District during 2020 was 163,400 fish, below the 10-year average of 186,676 fish. Both the Nelson and Ilnik rivers have coho salmon lower bound escapement goals in the Northern District. The Nelson River escapement of 23,000 coho salmon exceeded the lower bound escapement goal of 18,000 fish. A total of 45,000 fish were observed during early September in the Ilnik River in 2020, 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 42,000 fish, and 33,000 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. The 2020 escapement was 785 fish short of this goal, with 118,815 chum salmon observed by aerial survey, which is below the most recent ten-year average of 185,383 fish. The bulk of the chum salmon escapement occurred in the Herendeen–Moller Bay Section (68,350 fish) and the Inner Port Heiden Section (21,050 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 2020. A total of 57,200 pink salmon were observed in the Northern District during 2020.

***Under Alaska's Health Orders 5, 6, and 8, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Orders. COVID-19 Health Orders may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-order/>.***