

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



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**2011 BRISTOL BAY SALMON SEASON SUMMARY**

The following is an overview of the 2011 Bristol Bay commercial salmon season. Fishing has been completed in all districts and preliminary harvest totals should be representative for all species. It should be noted that numbers in the narrative are expressed in rounded forms for simplicity and that all data are considered preliminary.

The 2011 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of approximately 30.3 million fish and catch of 21.9 million sockeye rank 14<sup>th</sup> over the last 20 years (1991–2010) and was 18% below the average run of 37.1 million for those years. This year's run to the Bay was 21% below the preseason forecast of 38.5 million fish. Togiak was the only district to exceed preseason expectations with a run that was 9% higher than forecast, while Naknek–Kvichak District was 8% below; Egegik 35% below; Ugashik District 28% below; and Nushagak 27% below forecast. The commercial harvest of sockeye salmon was 27% below the 28.5 million preseason forecast. Total Bristol Bay escapement was 8.5 million sockeye salmon.

Approximately 37,800 Chinook salmon were harvested in Bristol Bay in 2011; 59% of the average harvest for the last 20 years. The chum salmon harvest of 739,000 fish was 27% below the 20-year average of 1 million fish. Coho salmon harvest of 13,700 fish was 84% below the 20-year average of 88,000. Reported pink salmon harvest was 811 fish.

***EXVESSEL VALUE***

The 2011 harvest of all salmon species in Bristol Bay was approximately 22.7 million fish. To derive an estimate of the exvessel value of the fishery, the figures listed in the following table were used. These figures represent an estimate since the contribution of future price adjustments, loyalty bonuses, and differential prices for refrigerated versus non-refrigerated fish were not included. The calculated preliminary exvessel value of the 2011 Bristol Bay salmon fishery is approximately \$137.7 million, which is 17% above the 20-year average, and ranks 6<sup>th</sup> over that same period. The following table summarizes catch and values by species.

Species	Average price/Lb.	Average Weight	Number of Fish	Total Weight	Value
Sockeye	\$1.00	6.2	21,879,776	135,654,611	\$135,654,611
Chinook	\$0.86	13.0	37,829	491,777	\$429,928
Chum	\$0.31	7.0	739,052	5,173,049	\$1,603,743
Pink	\$0.10	3.2	811	2,595	\$259
Coho	\$0.40	6.8	13,655	92,854	\$37,141
Total			22,671,123	141,415,201	\$137,725,682

### ***ALLOCATION***

The 2011 season was the 14<sup>th</sup> year of managing drift and set gillnet sockeye salmon harvest allocation in four of the five districts in Bristol Bay. Togiak District is excluded from the allocation plan. The following table lists the allocations adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in November, 1997 and the resulting harvests by gear group, from June 1 to July 17, for the 2011 season.

District	Drift Gillnet	Set Gillnet	Set Gillnet
	Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught	Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught	Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught
<i>Naknek / Kvichak</i>	84% / 84%	16% / 16%	<i>Naknek:</i> 8% / 9.5% <i>Kvichak:</i> 8% / 6.5%
<i>Egegik</i>	86% / 83%	14% / 17%	Not applicable
<i>Ugashik</i>	90% / 87%	10% / 13%	Not applicable
<i>Nushagak</i>	74% / 76 % <i>WRSHA:</i> 74% / <i>NA</i>	26% / 23.3% <i>WRSHA:</i> 26% / <i>NA</i>	<i>Nushagak:</i> 20% / 16.3% <i>Igushik:</i> 6% / 7%

Strategies used to achieve allocation percentages between gear groups included varying the amount of fishing time and providing separate gear group openings.

### ***SPECIES PERFORMANCE***

#### Sockeye Salmon

The 2011 inshore sockeye salmon run of 30.3 million fish was 21% below the preseason forecast of 38.5 million. Runs versus forecasts by district with deviations from forecast are listed below.

District	Forecast	Inshore Run	Deviation from Forecast
Naknek-Kvichak	14,380,000	13,220,742	8% less
Egegik	8,740,000	5,664,282	35% less
Ugashik	5,030,000	3,631,027	28% less
Nushagak	9,500,000	6,900,848	27% less
Togiak	860,000	938,697	9% more
Totals	38,500,000	30,334,456	21% less

2011 preliminary commercial sockeye harvests compared to the 20-year averages by district:

District	1991–2010 Average Sockeye Harvest	2011 Sockeye Harvest
Naknek-Kvichak	7,908,000	8,895,522
Egegik	8,565,000	4,682,082
Nushagak	5,718,000	4,953,271
Ugashik	2,757,000	2,601,174
Togiak	538,000	747,727
Totals	25,532,000	21,879,776

Sockeye salmon escapements by river system are listed below. Escapement into the Igushik was above the established range. All other systems were within established ranges.

River System	SEG Range	Escapement
Kvichak River	2,000,000–10,000,000	2,264,352
Naknek River	800,000–1,400,000	1,177,074
Alagnak River <sup>a</sup>	320,000 minimum	883,794
Egegik River	800,000–1,400,000	961,200
Ugashik River	500,000–1,200,000	1,003,753
Nushagak River <sup>b</sup>	340,000–760,000	428,191
Wood River	700,000–1,500,000	1,098,006
Igushik River	150,000–300,000	421,380
Togiak River <sup>c</sup>	120,000–270,000	190,970

<sup>a</sup> Alagnak River lower bound SEG is 320,000 with no upper bound since the stock is not actively managed.

<sup>b</sup> Nushagak River optimal escapement goal (OEG) is 235,000–760,000.

<sup>c</sup> Togiak River has a biological escapement goal (BEG) of 120,000–270,000. All other escapement goals for sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay are Sustainable Escapement Goals (SEG).

The 2011 Bristol Bay sockeye run can be characterized as early and weaker than forecast. However, in comparison to patterns dating back to statehood the run was close to long term averages. Temperatures in the Bering Sea were slightly warmer earlier in the spring than the last several years. Entry patterns into fishing districts in the Bay were atypical in that in most districts there was a strong early component followed by a rapid decline in abundance in early July. Given the projected harvest of 28.5 million sockeye, the department planned to allow more fishing time early in the run. At the December 2009 Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting the board also changed regulations with the goal of encouraging early season fishing. The board adopted regulations allowing fishermen to fish eastside districts prior to June 25 without having to register their permit or vessel, which allows fishermen a chance to participate early in the run without the penalty of having to wait 48 hours to transfer between districts. The effort to encourage early participation seemed successful in 2011, particularly in Egegik. The total sockeye harvest was 27% below and total inshore run was 21% below forecast. Also of significance in 2011, both the Naknek River Special Harvest Area (NRSHA) and the Wood

River Special Harvest Area (WRSHA) were not utilized; only the fourth time since 1995 that the NRSWA was not opened to commercial fishing.

### Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon harvests in Bristol Bay were below average in every district. No directed Chinook fishing periods were permitted in the Nushagak District, but incidental harvest of Chinook during directed sockeye periods did occur with a preliminary total of 29,811 fish. Over the course of the season, the sport fishing seasonal bag limit was reduced to 2 fish greater than 20 inches in the Nushagak River. Chinook salmon escapement into the Nushagak River was 59,728, surpassing the minimum escapement goal of 40,000.

2011 Chinook salmon preliminary harvest data by district.

District	1991–2010 Average Chinook Harvest	2011 Chinook Harvest
Naknek-Kvichak	3,099	897
Egegik	939	58
Ugashik	1,462	226
Nushagak	52,306	29,811
Togiak	9,302	6,837
Totals	64,869	37,829

### Chum Salmon

The 2011 preliminary Bristol Bay chum salmon harvest was approximately 739,000 fish. Naknek-Kvichak District produced a harvest above the 20-year average, while Egegik, Ugashik, Nushagak and Togiak Districts produced less chum salmon than their 20-year averages. The Nushagak District was the largest producer of chum salmon, where over 340,000 fish were harvested.

### Pink Salmon

Pink salmon runs are strong during even years in Bristol Bay. 2011 was an off cycle year for pinks with a reported harvest of 811 fish.

### Coho Salmon

The bay-wide harvest of 13,655 coho salmon was 85% below the recent 20-year average of 88,000. Over half of the coho harvest was in the Togiak District, where most fish were caught from mid July to mid August.

Preliminary 2011 Bristol Bay salmon harvest and escapement by district and species.

District	Sockeye	Chinook	Chum	Pink	Coho	TOTAL
Naknek-Kvichak Catch	8,895,522	897	205,790	13	633	9,102,855
Escapement-Kvichak Tower	2,264,352	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,264,352
Naknek Tower	1,177,074	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,177,074
Alagnak Tower	883,794	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	883,794
NK Subtotal	13,220,742	897	205,790	13	633	13,428,075
Egegik Catch	4,682,082	58	41,401	138	248	4,723,927
Escapement-Egegik Tower	961,200	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	961,200
Other <sup>a</sup>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0
Egegik Subtotal	5,643,282	58	41,401	138	248	5,685,127
Ugashik Catch	2,601,174	226	37,525	51	452	2,639,428
Escapement-Ugashik Tower	1,003,753	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,003,753
Other <sup>b</sup>	26,100	67	31	N.A.	N.A.	26,198
Ugashik Subtotal	3,631,027	293	37,556	51	452	3,669,379
Nushagak Catch	4,953,271	29,811	340,881	257	4,613	5,328,833
Escapement- Wood Tower	1,098,006	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,098,006
Igushik Tower	421,380	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	421,380
Nushagak Sonar	428,191	59,728	248,278	N.A.	N.A.	736,197
Nushagak Subtotal	6,900,848	89,539	589,159	257	4,613	7,584,416
Togiak Catch	747,727	6,837	113,455	352	7,709	876,080
Escapement - Togiak Tower	190,970	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	190,970
Togiak R. & Trib.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0
Kulukak	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0
Togiak Subtotal	938,697	6,837	113,455	352	7,709	1,067,050
Bristol Bay Catch	21,879,776	37,829	739,052	811	13,655	22,671,123
Bristol Bay Escapement	8,454,820	59,795	248,309	N.A.	N.A.	8,762,924
Bristol Bay Total Run	30,334,596	97,624	987,361	811	13,655	31,434,047

*Note:* Escapement data for coho are incomplete (in most cases the data are escapement index counts). Total run data do not include sport or subsistence harvests.

<sup>a</sup> Includes aerial surveys of King Salmon River drainage and Shosky Creek.

<sup>b</sup> Includes aerial surveys of King and Dog Salmon Rivers.