



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: Oct 31, 2025

CONTACT: Heather Scannell and Jeremy Botz
Finfish Area Management Biologists
(907) 424-3212

2025 PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

This summarizes the 2025 Prince William Sound (PWS) Area commercial salmon season. Numbers in this summary are rounded for simplicity, all data are preliminary, and 10-year averages are for 2015 through 2024. The 2025 PWS Area salmon harvest was 51.56 million fish composed of 6,380 Chinook, 1.24 million sockeye, 380,000 coho, 45.04 million pink, and 4.89 million chum salmon. The 2025 harvest included 41.75 million (81%) commercial, and 9.81 million (19%) hatchery cost recovery and broodstock fish (Table 1).

The estimated value of salmon harvest, commercial, and hatchery cost recovery was approximately \$90.88 million and 3% less than the 10-year average of \$93.73 million. This near average value can largely be attributed to Eastern District hatchery pink salmon, Copper River District sockeye salmon, and Port Chalmers Subdistrict remote release hatchery chum salmon commercial fisheries, along with hatchery cost recovery chum and pink salmon fisheries. During the 2025 season, 410 drift gillnet, 27 set gillnet, and 216 (177 primary and 39 secondary) purse seine commercial permit holders fished in at least one fishing period. Drift gillnet exvessel harvest value was an estimated \$29.93 million (average permit earnings of \$73,000 compared to a 10-year average of \$64,300); set gillnet exvessel harvest value was an estimated \$1.03 million (average permit earnings at \$38,200 compared to a 10-year average of \$73,700); and purse seine exvessel harvest value was an estimated \$38.85 million (average permit earnings at \$223,000 compared to a 10-year average of \$190,000). Revenue generated for hatchery operations was approximately \$20.90 million.

GILLNET FISHERIES

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT

The 2025 Copper River sockeye salmon total run forecast was 2.64 million fish. Gulkana Hatchery represented 80,000 sockeye salmon in this total run forecast. The preseason commercial harvest forecast for the Copper River District sockeye salmon was 1.92 million fish. Overall, the 2025 Copper River sockeye salmon run was below forecast for both hatchery and wild stocks. The 2025 Chinook salmon total run forecast was 36,000 fish, and the actual run was below forecast. Early in the season, the Copper River sockeye and Chinook salmon harvest were below average and in-river passage tracked near anticipated, leading to short-duration fishing periods and expanded fishing area closures until late June. The sockeye salmon commercial harvest of 840,000 fish was 2% greater than the 10-year average harvest of 824,000 fish.

The sockeye salmon season was open for 834 hours compared to a 10-year average of 622 hours despite short-duration fishing periods early in the season. Sockeye salmon average weight of 5.3 pounds was 0.5 pounds smaller than the 20-year average (2005-2024) of 5.8 pounds. The number of wild sockeye salmon in the Copper River District commercial harvest was 729,000, or 87% of the total. Gulkana Hatchery commercial harvest was the fourth highest in the last 10 years, contributing 98,300 sockeye salmon, or 12% of the total commercial harvest. Main Bay Hatchery (MBH) contributed 12,800 sockeye salmon or 2% of the Copper River sockeye salmon

harvest. The commercial harvest of 5,780 Chinook salmon was 54% below the 10-year average harvest of 12,660 fish. The commercial harvest of 162,000 coho salmon was 11% below the previous 10-year average of 182,000 coho salmon.

The 2025 preliminary Miles Lake sonar passage estimate of 895,308 salmon exceeded the inriver goal of 633,400 salmon by 41%. The Copper River sockeye salmon sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 360,000 – 750,000 fish was achieved based on preliminary projections of inriver harvest. Preliminary Chinook salmon inriver abundance estimates suggest escapement near the lower bound of the 21,000–31,000 fish SEG. The Copper River delta sockeye salmon escapement estimate of 87,197 sockeye salmon was within the SEG range of 55,000–130,000 fish. Copper River Delta coho salmon spawning escapement estimate was 47,925 fish and within the SEG range of 32,000–50,000 fish.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT

During the initial 2025 season, the Bering River District was opened concurrent with the Copper River District only along the western edge of the district. At first, there was no directed commercial sockeye salmon harvest due to the recent trend in poor annual escapement. Inseason aerial survey escapement estimates trended near the average anticipated inseason weekly index, and the fishery remained restricted through mid-July. Starting July 21, due to improving escapement and minimal participation, the department elected to keep the Bering River District open to commercial harvest on a twice-weekly basis until the start of coho salmon season in mid- August. The sockeye salmon commercial harvest of 9,220 fish was 17% less than the previous 10-year harvest average of 11,100 fish. Virtually all sockeye salmon harvest occurred on the western edge of the district in association with Copper River District harvest near the Martin Islands. The aerial survey escapement index of 22,340 sockeye salmon was within the SEG range of 15,000–33,000 fish. The coho salmon commercial harvest of 33,100 fish was 28% below the previous 10-year harvest average of 52,300. Commercial fishing effort in the coho salmon fishery was high, coinciding with productive fishing in the eastern portion of the Copper River Delta. Bering River District coho salmon spawning escapement estimate was 19,100 fish and within the SEG range of 13,000–33,000 fish.

COGHILL DISTRICT

The 2025 sockeye salmon forecast for Coghill Lake was 331,000 fish, with 301,000 available for commercial harvest. The Coghill River weir operated from June 21 to July 27, passing 82,019 sockeye salmon, above the SEG range of 20,000–75,000 fish. The Coghill District drift gillnet sockeye salmon commercial harvest of 117,000 fish was 31% below the 10-year average. Due to cost recovery needs, conservative management was implemented in hatchery subdistricts, allowing for increased fishing time to target Coghill Lake sockeye salmon in College Fiord but reducing overall fleet participation.

The 2025 PWSAC hatchery chum salmon run was well above forecast. The PWSAC forecast for the 2025 hatchery chum salmon run to Wally Noerenberg Hatchery (WNH) was 1.45 million fish. PWSAC projected approximately 948,000 fish for cost recovery and broodstock, leaving 502,000 for commercial harvest. In total, PWSAC harvested 1.44 million chum salmon for cost recovery and broodstock. The drift gillnet harvest of chum in the Coghill District totaled 671,000, 34% above the forecast and 42% below the 10-year average, with wild chum comprising 1% of this commercial catch.

Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) projected a total run of 6,000 coho salmon to WNH. The commercial drift gillnet coho harvest was 17,100 fish, all assumed to be WNH origin. This harvest was 4.75 times the forecast but marked the eighth time in the last ten years that fewer than 20,000 coho salmon were harvested by the drift gillnet fleet.

ESHAMY DISTRICT

The 2025 PWSAC hatchery sockeye salmon run was weak. PWSAC projected a total run of 1.0 million hatchery sockeye salmon to MBH in 2025, with 275,000 required for broodstock and cost recovery, leaving 728,000 for commercial harvest. The MBH harvested 60,500 sockeye salmon for cost recovery and broodstock, 63% below

the 10-year average of 163,000. In the Eshamy District, 139 drift gillnet permit holders harvested 63,100 sockeye, 41,100 chum, and 30,000 pink salmon, while 27 set gillnet permit holders harvested 86,800 sockeye, 44,100 chum, and 23,200 pink salmon. The total sockeye, chum, and pink salmon harvest in Eshamy District were all well below 10-year averages, in large part due to limited fishing time and effort associated with the MBH sockeye salmon run coming in at only 25% of forecast. There was no 2025 Eshamy Lake sockeye salmon total run forecast due to the limited escapement monitoring in recent years. The Eshamy River weir passed 7,443 sockeye salmon, below the SEG range of 13,000–28,000 fish and 71% below the long-term average.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT

The Unakwik District fishery primarily targets sockeye salmon returning to Miners Lake; commercial harvest in 2025 was 3,820 sockeye salmon, well below the 10-year average harvest of 7,660 sockeye salmon.

PORT CHALMERS SUBDISTRICT

The drift gillnet gear group had exclusive access to the forecasted Port Chalmers chum salmon run of 780,000 fish. The Montague District drift gillnet chum salmon harvest was 1.93 million fish, 147% above forecast. The proportion of wild chum salmon in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict drift gillnet fishery was 1% of the harvest.

PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

CHUM SALMON

The 2025 chum salmon total forecast was 3.05 million fish, with an estimated commercial harvest of 1.94 million fish. Most of the total run, 2.44 million (80%), was from PWSAC hatchery production, with 210,000 fish returning to the Armin F. Koernig hatchery (AFK) and 780,000 fish returning to Port Chalmers. Based on the department's wild chum salmon forecast of 613,000 fish and subtracting the 10-year average escapement, 170,000, there was a potential harvestable surplus of 443,000 wild chum salmon.

Chum salmon commercial harvest in PWS was 3.45 million fish, 78% above the preseason harvest forecast. The commercial purse seine fleet harvested 740,000 chum salmon in 2025. Approximately 588,000 AFK chum salmon were harvested in the PWS commercial fishery, 175% above the preseason forecast of 210,000 fish. A total of 21,600 sockeye salmon were harvested in the AFK chum salmon commercial fishery, composed of 14,200 MBH and 7,400 wild fish. The preliminary wild stock chum salmon harvest was 243,000 fish compared to the preseason harvest estimate of 443,000 fish. Chum salmon escapement was met in Eastern, Northern, and Southeastern Districts and was below the SEG in Coghill and Northwestern Districts.

PINK SALMON

The 2025 pink salmon forecast estimated a total run of 66.70 million fish, comprised of 20.07 million VFDA, 28.00 million PWSAC, and 18.63 million wild fish. Approximately 3.61 million (18%) of VFDA's pink salmon preseason forecast was projected for cost recovery and broodstock, with the remaining 16.46 million VFDA fish expected to be available for commercial harvest. Approximately 5.12 million (18%) of PWSAC's pink salmon preseason forecast was projected for cost recovery and broodstock, with the remaining 22.88 million PWSAC fish expected to be available for commercial harvest. Based on the department's wild stock pink salmon forecast, there was a potential commercial harvest of 16.79 million fish. Considering both VFDA and PWSAC's cost recovery, broodstock needs, and a median escapement of 1.84 million wild pink salmon, approximately 56.12 million pink salmon were expected to be available for commercial harvest.

The 2025 commercial harvest of 36.72 million pink salmon was 35% below the 56.12 million commercial harvest forecast. The pink salmon commercial harvest comprised an estimated 24.28 million VFDA fish, 6.50 million wild fish, and 5.93 million PWSAC fish. The PWS purse seine commercial salmon harvest was 37.47 million fish composed of 36.51 million pink, 740,000 chum, 55,100 sockeye, 166,000 coho, and 206 Chinook salmon. The total pink salmon harvest was 45.04 million fish, including 8.31 million for hatchery cost recovery and broodstock (6.44 million for PWSAC and 1.87 million for VFDA). The VFDA pink salmon run of 26.13 million fish was 30% above the forecast of 20.07. The PWSAC pink salmon run of 12.35 million fish was 56% below the forecast of 28.00 million. The PWS wild pink salmon harvest of 6.56 million fish was 65% below the forecast of 18.63 million fish. The egg-take goals for VFDA and PWSAC were achieved.

The number of purse seine vessels (174) reporting at least one delivery was the lowest since 2010. Of those vessels, 144 were single permit operations, and 33 were dual permit operations. Some dual permit operations use different secondary permit holders throughout the season. In 2025, there were 39 secondary permits involving at least one delivery. In total, including both primary and secondary permits, there were 216 seine permits accounted for in 2025.

Aerial surveys in PWS were flown from mid-June through early September. Preliminary aerial survey escapement estimates were within or above escapement objectives for pink salmon in all districts except Eshamy, Southwestern, and Montague. Wild stock pink salmon escapement indices supported limited openings outside hatchery subdistricts starting mid-July and running through late August.

COHO SALMON

The 2025 Solomon Gulch Hatchery coho salmon forecast was 57,000 fish, with a projected commercial harvest of 17,000. Data for the VFDA coho salmon run is unavailable, and they are in the process of conducting their egg-take. The overall purse seine harvest of coho salmon in PWS was 166,000 fish, primarily from the post-Labor Day hatchery clean up fishery in Port Valdez.

Table 1.—Preliminary Area E salmon harvest, 2025.

District	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Bering River	26	9,224	33,096	1	1,625	43,972
Copper River	5,779	840,271	162,396	8,063	25,850	1,042,359
Eastern	136	20,330	132,969	28,526,500	139,562	28,819,497
Northern	22	2,867	10,398	2,303,938	7,810	2,325,035
Coghill	87	118,090	20,834	276,641	699,832	1,115,484
Northwestern	21	3,573	2,084	324,520	6,188	336,386
Eshamy	26	149,934	1,342	53,116	85,216	289,634
Southwestern	17	23,615	10,193	3,712,610	515,898	4,262,333
Montague	265	9,057	5,696	1,050,742	1,932,962	2,998,722
Southeastern	1	1,135	850	466,601	39,129	507,716
Unakwik	0	3,823	0	9	106	3,938
Commercial Total	6,380	1,181,919	379,858	36,722,741	3,454,178	41,745,076
Hatchery						
Solomon Gulch	0	0	0	1,868,349	0	1,868,349
Cannery Creek	0	0	0	3,004,956	0	3,004,956
Wally Noerenberg	0	0	0	1,156,315	1,438,731	2,595,046
Main Bay	0	60,477	0	0	0	60,477
Armin F. Koernig	0	0	0	2,282,719	0	2,282,719
Hatchery Total^a	0	60,477	0	8,312,339	1,438,731	9,811,547
PWS Total Harvest	6,380	1,242,396	379,858	45,035,080	4,892,909	51,556,623

^a Hatchery harvest to meet cost recovery and broodstock needs.