

Draft Report to the Alaska Board of Fisheries

Chignik River King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2026

by
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and
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DRAFT

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Commercial Fisheries



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ABSTRACT

In response to guidelines established in the Policy for Management of Sustainable Fisheries (SSFP), in October 2022, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) recommended that Chignik River king (Chinook) salmon be designated a “stock of management concern” based on failure to achieve escapement goals over a 4- to 5-year period. In February of 2023, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) designated this stock as such and triggered the requirement for the department to develop an action plan identifying options to rebuild the stock. Since this designation, the department has opted to implement additional restrictions during the 2024 and 2025 salmon seasons. In October 2025, the department recommended that Chignik River king salmon continue to be designated a stock of management concern, and that management options should be re-evaluated. This plan reviews escapement and management history and identifies a range of options for both directed and indirect (incidental) fisheries that could potentially impact rebuilding.

Keywords: Chignik Management Area (CMA), Chignik River, Chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, stock of management concern, Alaska Board of Fisheries, BOF, commercial fisheries, sport fisheries, subsistence fisheries, escapement.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2022, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) recommended that the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) designate Chignik River (Figures 1–3) king salmon as a stock of management concern. Chignik River king salmon were formally listed as a stock of management concern at the regulatory board meeting for the Chignik, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutian Islands in February 2023 based on guidelines established in the Policy for Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries (SSFP); 5 AAC 39.222): “management concern means a concern arising from a chronic inability, despite use of specific management measures, to maintain escapements for a salmon stock within the bounds of the sustainable escapement goal (SEG), biological escapement goal (BEG), optimal escapement goal (OEG), or other specific management objectives for the fishery....” The SSFP further defines “chronic inability” as “...the continuing or anticipated inability to meet escapement thresholds over a 4 to 5-year period...” based on the generation time of most salmon species. Despite specific management measures taken by the department to reduce harvest in the commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries since 2006, the Chignik River king salmon stock has continued to decline and, at the time of listing, had failed to meet the escapement goal for 5 of the previous 6 years (Table 1; Figure 4). Since its listing in 2023, Chignik River king salmon failed to reach the escapement goal in 2023 and 2024 but achieved the lower bound of the goal in 2025.

This stock status and action plan review summarizes historical annual run sizes, describes existing regulations and emergency order (EO) authority that the department follows to manage Chignik River king salmon, actions set by the 2023 action plan, and additional proactive conservation measures the department has taken in 2024 and 2025.

STOCK ASSESSMENT AND ESCAPEMENT GOAL HISTORY

The Chignik River weir has been operated to assess salmon escapement to the Chignik River since 1922. Since 1978, the Chignik River king salmon escapement has ranged from a low of 267 fish in 2023 to a high of 7,633 fish in 2004 (Table 1; Figure 4). After 2006, there was a decline in productivity, as measured both by harvest and escapement, similar to other king salmon stocks around the state (ADF&G 2013). The decline in escapement is not attributed to increased harvests (sport, subsistence, and commercial), which also declined (Table 1).

The BEG has been in place since 2002. Chignik River king salmon escapements have achieved the BEG 4 of the last 10 years (2016–2025) (Finkle et al. In prep; Figure 4). During this period, escapement ranged from 267 fish in 2023 to 1,743 fish in 2016 (Table 1).

HABITAT

The Chignik River drainage is located on federal lands (Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge) and private Alaska Native corporation lands. The habitat is considered pristine with no habitat-related concerns identified for Chignik River king salmon.

HARVEST MANAGEMENT

Overlapping state and federal subsistence fisheries also take place within the Chignik River drainage and a state subsistence fishery takes place in Chignik Lagoon and elsewhere within the Chignik Management Area (CMA). A permit is required to participate in both the state and federal subsistence fisheries. Unlike most other subsistence fisheries that require a permit, the Chignik permit is an individual permit, not a household permit. There is a limit of 250 salmon per permit, though users may be issued an additional permit if additional salmon are needed for subsistence. The state subsistence fishery is closed from July 1 to August 31 by regulation (5 AAC 01.475(1)) in the Chignik River between the Chignik weir and Chignik Lake. Legal gear in the state subsistence fishery includes seines and gillnets, or as specified on the permit, except that in Chignik Lake, salmon may not be taken with purse seines.

The Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) has authorized a federal subsistence fishery for salmon for residents of the Chignik Area. Federally qualified users must obtain a state subsistence fishing permit (individual, not household), and the harvest limit is no more than 250 salmon, unless specified otherwise on the permit. Within the Chignik watershed, depending on the area, a federal subsistence fishing permit may also be required. Legal gear includes rod and reel in addition to seines and gillnets. The federal subsistence fishery in the Chignik River between the weir and Chignik Lake is open to rod and reel fishing January 1 through August 9. Under Federal Subsistence regulations one may also take salmon without a permit by snagging (by handline or rod and reel), using a spear, bow and arrow, or capturing by bare hand.

The average subsistence king salmon harvest in the Chignik Bay, Lagoon, and Lake during 2016–2025 is 33 fish (Table 1). In response to poor king salmon returns, the department began requiring non-retention of king salmon in the CMA state subsistence fishery beginning in 2018 through 2025, except for 2019 (Table 3).

Chignik River king salmon are harvested in the CMA by a commercial fishery in the Chignik Lagoon and nearby salt water and by intermittent subsistence and sport fisheries in the Chignik River drainage and Chignik Lagoon (Figures 1, 2, 3).

The Chignik area commercial salmon purse seine fishery typically targets sockeye, pink, and chum salmon. During these fisheries, king salmon are harvested incidentally. Since 2013, the department has restricted commercial fisheries in the Chignik Bay District, and sometimes the Central District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater when king salmon escapement appears weak and commercial fishing is occurring (Table 2). The established practice in the Westward Region of releasing of king salmon 28 inches or greater is based on conservation and assumed increased survival of king salmon in proximity to natal rivers. However, the mortality of king salmon released from commercial seine vessels in the CMA is unknown, and there are no annual estimates of the number of king salmon caught and released in the CMA commercial salmon fishery. While it is assumed that king salmon under 28 inches

are more likely to be non-gravid (not spawning that year) or be non-local, the size constraint is ultimately in place for feasibility and enforceability reasons. Juvenile king salmon school with other salmon species in variable numbers, and it is unrealistic to be able to identify, separate, and release all king salmon under 28 inches from mixed harvest in a timely manner. Following the record low escapement of 267 fish in 2023, additional restrictions were implemented in 2024 and 2025 including additional closed waters and a reduction in commercial fishing opportunity throughout July (maximum of 48 hours per week) in the Chignik Bay District. Additionally, harvest caps of 1,000 king salmon within a 48-hour period for the CMA commercial fisheries were implemented in 2025, which, if triggered, would result in the closure of districts primarily responsible for a 7-day period. Although fishing time reductions in the Chignik Bay District appear effective at increasing king salmon escapement, they also resulted in escapement beyond the bounds of established escapement goals of sockeye salmon and significant loss of commercial fishing opportunity.

Sport fishing regulations for Chignik River king salmon allow a bag and possession limit of 2 king salmon with a 5-fish annual limit and an open season of January 1 through August 9. The sport fishery has become increasingly restricted since 2017, and participation in the Chignik sport fisheries has declined concurrently, resulting in low sport fish harvests. The Chignik River king salmon sport fishery is characterized by low participation rates in both the guided and unguided fisheries to the extent that, in most years, participation is too low for the Statewide Harvest Survey to provide estimates of sport harvest or effort, and previously available freshwater guide logbook information is confidential, with fewer than 4 guide businesses reporting annually. To estimate escapement postseason, a proxy of 100 king salmon is used for sport harvest above the weir when harvest is allowed. When harvest restrictions are in place, the sport harvest is estimated by applying the percentage of days the sport fishery is open from the first escapement through the end of the regulatory season to the 100 fish proxy used for sport harvests in other years (Table 1). The department began taking king salmon inseason management actions in the sport fishery to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012, and in most years since 2017, the department has used the commissioner's emergency order (EO) authority to implement inseason bag limit restrictions, non-retention regulations, and (or) total king salmon sport fishery closures for each of the last 9 years except for in 2019 when the escapement goal was achieved (Table 4; Figure 4).

2023 ACTION PLAN REVIEW

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Past Management Actions

5 AAC 15.357(b)(3)(C) *Chignik Salmon Management Plan* allows the commissioner to take additional EO actions to protect or harvest local pink, chum, king, and coho salmon runs within the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Although there is no commercial fishery management plan for king salmon in the CMA, fishery managers have responded to the recent declines with inseason management actions designed to reduce harvests when king salmon runs are low. The department has opted to restrict the Chignik Bay District, and often the Central District, to non-retention of king salmon greater than 28 inches when king salmon runs are weak. Until 2024, the department had not taken action to restrict time and area of commercial fishing opportunity based on king salmon run strength (Table 2).

2023 Stock of Concern Designated Management Actions

During the Chignik, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutian Islands meeting in February 2023, the board chose commercial action #2 (below) to adopt a regulation that restricts the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape Section of the Western District (Figure 2), to non-retention of king salmon greater than 28 inches until the department determines that the king salmon BEG will be achieved. The specific language of the action adopted in 2023 (including background, benefits, and detriments) is quoted below with identical verbatim, values and text for context:

Specific Actions:

The department manages fisheries to achieve the Chignik River king salmon BEG of 1,300–2,700 fish. The majority of the commercial salmon regulatory openings in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District are based on Chignik River system sockeye salmon escapement. Under this regulation, retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater would preemptively be restricted in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape Section of the Western District until it is clear the king salmon BEG will be achieved. Depending on the strength of the king salmon run, it is likely the department would not be able to lift this restriction until mid-July.

Background:

King salmon harvests in the CMA commercial fisheries are incidental to other species. Currently, there are no management plans for the CMA that provide specific direction about king salmon management. However, the department does have EO authority to limit the harvest of king salmon by requiring the release of king salmon over 28 inches in length within the CMA. Since 2013, the department has restricted the Chignik Bay District, and sometimes Central District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater when inseason indicators suggest the Chignik River king salmon escapement will not achieve the BEG and commercial fishing is occurring. This restriction has been put in place as early as July 13 and has occurred in 3 of the past 6 seasons (Table 2). This restriction was not issued in 2018 or 2020 due to the lack of commercial fishing opportunities. On average, approximately 50% of the run occurs by July 16, and 90% of the Chignik River king salmon escapement takes place by August 5 (Figure 5).

Benefits:

Restricting the commercial seine fishery in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape section of the Western District, until the department determines the king salmon BEG will be reached would preemptively ensure the survival of more king salmon earlier in the run.

Detriments:

The majority of the Chignik River king salmon run occurs within the month of July. Restricting the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape section of the Western District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater may cause unnecessary difficulty for fishermen targeting sockeye salmon, particularly earlier in the season and further from the Chignik River drainage where it is unknown what proportion of king salmon caught would be Chignik River system bound. Mortality on king salmon released from commercial purse seines in the CMA is unknown, and there is no estimate of the number of king salmon caught and released annually in the CMA fish

2024 and 2025 Additional Management Actions

After the record low Chignik River king salmon escapement of 267 fish during the 2023 season, and observing the record low escapement in Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers in the Kodiak Management Area during the 2024 season, the department determined during the 2024 season that additional preemptive conservation measures beyond those established in the 2023 action plan for Chignik River king salmon were necessary to protect the stocks.

In 2024, non-retention of king salmon 28 inches and over was enforced within the entire CMA. Additionally, throughout July, the Chignik Bay District was restricted to no more than 48 hours of commercial openings per week when Chignik late-run sockeye salmon were projecting over the mid-point of the escapement goal, or no more than 96 hours of commercial openings per week when late-run sockeye salmon were projecting over the upper end of the escapement goal. Due to the weak sockeye salmon returns in 2024, no opportunity over 48 hours in any given week was provided. Additional closed waters around the area locally known as the “king hole” in the Chignik Lagoon were also implemented. Final 2024 king salmon estimated escapement was 1,166 fish (Table 1).

In 2025, non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater was enforced within the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, and mandatory retention of all king salmon was required in the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts. This change to mandatory retention in the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts was done for two reasons: first, to enforce a newly implemented king salmon cap of 1,000 fish within 48 hours which, if triggered, would cause the districts primarily responsible to immediately close for one week; and second, to ensure sampling integrity on sampled king salmon harvest. The Chignik Bay District was also restricted to no more than 48 hours of commercial openings per week regardless of sockeye salmon escapement. The department implemented additional closed waters around the area locally known as the “king hole” in the Chignik Lagoon. The final 2025 king salmon estimated escapement was 1,391 fish (Table 1).

SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Past Management Actions

In 1993, the board found that salmon in the CMA are customarily and traditionally used for subsistence (5 AAC 01.466). The board specified the amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) for Chignik Bay, Central, and Eastern Districts combined as follows: 2,900–5,400 early-run sockeye salmon, 3,200–6,000 late-run sockeye salmon, 100–150 king salmon, and 400–700 salmon other than sockeye or king salmon. In the Perryville and Western Districts combined, the ANS findings are 1,400–2,600 coho salmon and 1,400–2,600 salmon other than coho salmon (5 AAC 01.466(b)).

The state subsistence fishery was closed to king salmon retention by EO within the Chignik Bay District and the Chignik River drainage in 2018, and in 2020 through 2025 (Table 3).

In 2020-2025, the federal subsistence board’s delegated authority was used to close all federal public waters in the Chignik River drainage to subsistence fishing for king salmon upstream of the Chignik River weir due to conservation concerns. King salmon could not be retained or possessed, and king salmon incidentally harvested had to be released immediately, without removal from the water.

2023 Stock of Concern Designated Management Action

During the meeting for the Chignik, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutian Islands in February 2023, the board chose subsistence action #1 to continue the status quo. The department is tasked with the management of

salmon to prioritize subsistence uses and uses EO authority to manage subsistence fisheries. The specific language of the action adopted in 2023 (including background, benefits, and detriments) is quoted below with identical verbatim, values and text for context:

Specific Actions:

When king salmon runs to the Chignik system are weak, the department can require non-retention of king salmon in the subsistence fishery in the Chignik Bay District and Chignik River system drainage.

Background:

Currently, there are no management plans directing the department on king salmon subsistence management. However, the department does have EO authority to limit the harvest of king salmon. In conjunction with federal subsistence fishery managers, the department has enforced non-retention of king salmon in the subsistence fishery when it was apparent the king salmon runs were weak.

Benefits:

Currently, the department has the ability to apply conservation measures in the state subsistence fisheries to protect Chignik River king salmon in years when runs are weak. Maintaining status quo ensures the regulations continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for priority subsistence uses of Chignik River king salmon.

Detriments:

During small runs, it is difficult to know if the king salmon run is weak or just arriving later than normal until a significant portion of the run has passed. This can lead to EO restriction in the subsistence fishery after much of the run has occurred.

2024 and 2025 Management Actions

In 2024, retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater in length was prohibited in Chignik Lake and its tributaries, as well as the Chignik River drainage extending to the mouth of the Chignik Lagoon spit from June 14 through December 31. In 2025, subsistence retention of king salmon was prohibited in Chignik Lake and its tributaries, as well as the Chignik River drainage extending to the mouth of the Chignik Lagoon spit from May 1 until December 31. Prior to 2024, the restricted area only extended to the Mensis Point markers, rather than the Chignik Lagoon spit (Figure 6).

SPORT FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Past Management Actions

Regulations for the Chignik River king salmon sport fishery designated for the Alaska Peninsula stipulate a 2-fish bag and possession limit and a 5-fish annual limit. For the Chignik River, there is a king salmon season from January 1 through August 9. Recently, EO authority has also been used to manage the Chignik River king salmon sport fishery.

The department first took inseason management actions to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012 and has used EO authority to implement inseason non-retention regulations and total fishery closures annually since 2017, except for 2019 (Table 4). In 2012, harvest of king salmon was prohibited midseason

in the sport fishery; in 2013, harvest of king salmon was prohibited midseason in the sport fishery and then sport fishing for king salmon was closed shortly after; in 2017, sport fishing for king salmon was restricted midseason to non-retention and then subsequently closed; in 2018, sport fishing for king salmon was closed for the entire season; and from 2020 to 2022, sport fishing for king salmon was closed early in the season when it became apparent the king salmon run would not meet the BEG. From 2023 to present, the sport fishery has been closed pre-season as the most conservative measure to begin the season. In each year the department has taken management actions in the sport fishery, the use of bait and treble hooks has also been restricted as a conservation measure (Table 4).

2023 Stock of Concern Designated Management Action

During the meeting for the Chignik, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutian Islands in February 2023, the board chose sport action #1 (below) to continue the status quo. The department would continue using EO authority to manage the Chignik River king salmon stock to achieve the escapement goal and rebuild from the recent period of low productivity. Preseason or inseason sport fishery EO closures, as in many recent years, are the most restrictive management actions that can be implemented by the department. The specific language of the action adopted in 2023 (including background, benefits, and detriments) is quoted below with identical verbatim, values and text for context:

Specific Action:

Use EO authority to allow the department the ability to restrict bag limits or methods and means or close the Chignik River king salmon sport fishery inseason as needed.

Background:

Chignik River is open to fishing for king salmon January 1–August 9. The king salmon bag and possession limit is 2 fish, 20 inches or greater in length, 10 fish less than 20 inches in length, and there is a 5 fish annual limit for fish 20 inches or greater in length. The department first took inseason management actions to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012 and has used EO authority to implement inseason non-retention regulations and total fishery closures annually since 2017, except for 2019 when the escapement goal was achieved (Table 4). The use of bait and treble hooks has also been restricted to reduce the incidence of hooking related injury and mortality on king salmon.

Benefits:

The benefits of maintaining the department’s ability to manage Chignik River king salmon stocks inseason with EO authority are that timely and meaningful management actions can be based on inseason indicators of current run strength. The department has, and has used, EO authority to manage the sport fishery to achieve established escapement goals. As the Chignik River king salmon run rebuilds, the department would have the ability to return to more liberal bag limits and provide more angler opportunity prior to the next board meeting.

Detriments:

Because inseason actions are based on current data and are implemented in response to inseason indicators of the strength or weakness of a run, anglers will find less predictability in the timing and types of management actions that may be taken. Most anglers traveling to the Chignik River are with a guide service and plan their trips 6–18 months in advance.

2024 and 2025 Management Actions

In 2024, the sport fishery was closed in the Chignik River pre-season and the use of bait and treble hooks restricted during the king salmon season in accordance with the preferred option recommended by the board in this action plan; however, it became apparent that additional protections were needed to increase king salmon escapement and the Chignik Lagoon was closed early in the season to king salmon sport fishing. In 2025, the sport fishery was again closed pre-season, including the Chignik Lagoon, and the use of bait and treble hooks was restricted during the king salmon season. An additional EO was also issued for the saltwaters of the Alaska Peninsula that restricted king salmon harvest to 1 fish per day from April 1 through September 15. This included all saltwaters of the CMA and was paralleled with other EO's encompassing the remaining waters of the Gulf of Alaska.

SUMMARY OF 2023 BOF DESIGNATED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS:

Fishery/Action number	Summary
Sub/#1	Status quo. Maintain current EO management for a reasonable opportunity for success in subsistence harvests.
CF/#2	Restrict the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape section of the Western District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater until the department determines the BEG of the Chignik River king salmon run will be achieved.
SF/#1	Status quo. Continue to use EO authority to manage the Chignik River king salmon stock to achieve the escapement goal and rebuild from the recent period of low productivity.

2026 ACTION PLAN FOR ADDRESSING STOCK OF CONCERN

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Action Plan Renewal

Since the adoption of the 2023 action plan, Chignik king salmon have continued to struggle to reach the lower bound of the BEG, reaching the goal only once in the last 3 years. Following a historically low return in 2023, the department opted to add additional restrictions to the Chignik Bay District commercial fishery in 2024 and 2025. Further restrictions in the form of harvest caps were also implemented in 2025 to reduce overall king salmon harvest within the entire CMA. Considering the historic low returns following adoption of the action plan in 2023, and the increase in returns following the stricter management restrictions implemented in 2024 and 2025, it is the department's recommendation that the Chignik River king salmon action plan be revised to include additional management actions. The following includes potential actions for the board to adopt. Actions are written with the intent for the board to be able to pick and choose multiple management actions, or alter actions, if desired.

Recommended Management Actions

Chignik Bay District Action #1

Status quo to 2024 and 2025: The Chignik Bay District would be restricted to no more than 48 hours of commercial fishing openings per week, and no more than 2 total commercial periods within each week. Implement closed waters around the "king hole" (Figure 6) within the Chignik Lagoon. Non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater within the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District, would be implemented as well.

Specific Actions:

The department manages fisheries to achieve the Chignik River king salmon BEG of 1,300–2,700 fish. July 1 through July 31, the Chignik Bay District could open for no more than 48 hours of commercial fishing openings per calendar week, which could be split into no more than 2 total commercial periods within each week (for example, a single 48-hour or two 24-hour commercial periods could occur, but not four 12-hour periods). The department would also implement additional closed waters around the area known as the "king hole" as described as follows: in the Chignik Lagoon, waters within a box defined by corners at the points of 56° 18.04' N lat. 158° 35.16' W long., 56° 17.42' N lat. 158° 34.43' W long., 56° 17.34' N lat. 158° 35.22' W long., and 56° 17.41' N lat. 158° 35.37' W long. Retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater would preemptively be restricted in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District until it is clear the king salmon BEG will be achieved. Depending on the strength of the king salmon run, it is likely the department would not be able to lift these restrictions until at least mid-July.

Background:

King salmon harvests in the CMA commercial fisheries are incidental to other targeted species. Currently, the 2023 action plan for the CMA only requires non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District commercial fisheries. The additional restriction of no more than 48 hours of commercial fishing periods per week throughout July implemented in 2024 and 2025 resulted in significantly higher returns for Chignik king salmon. On average, approximately 50% of the run occurs by July 16, and 90% of the Chignik River king salmon escapement takes place by August 5 (Figure 5). Compared to the action taken

in 2023, this action does suggest reducing non-retention from the entire Castle Cape Section of the Western District to just the Inner Castle Cape Subsection to improve sampling integrity of king salmon harvest.

Benefits:

Implementing time restrictions in the commercial seine fishery in the Chignik Bay District until the department determines the king salmon BEG will be reached would preemptively ensure the survival of more king salmon earlier in the run. Returns seen in 2024 and 2025 were significantly better than those seen in 2023 without time restrictions in place. Limiting the number of commercial openings to 2 per week ensures less fishing effort and larger windows for king salmon escapement than having more frequent but shorter periods.

Detriments:

Most of the Chignik River king salmon run occurs in July, which coincided with most sockeye salmon harvest in recent years. Restricting the Chignik Bay District will cause difficulty for fishermen targeting sockeye salmon. Significant loss in harvest opportunity and escapement beyond the established goals on early- and especially late-run Chignik sockeye salmon is likely to occur. Significant sockeye salmon escapement beyond the established goals may negatively impact future sockeye salmon returns. Mortality on king salmon released from commercial purse seines in the CMA is unknown, and there is no estimate of the number of king salmon caught and released annually in the CMA.

Chignik Bay District Action #2

Instead of 48 hours, the Chignik Bay District would be restricted to no more than 72 hours of commercial fishing openings per week, which could be split into no more than 3 total commercial periods within each week. As compensation, closed waters would increase to inside a line Southwest from Oly's Point (Figure 6) within the Chignik Lagoon. Non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater within the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District would be implemented as well.

Specific Actions:

The department manages fisheries to achieve the Chignik River king salmon BEG of 1,300–2,700 fish. July 1 through July 31, the Chignik Bay District could open for no more than 72 hours of commercial fishing openings per calendar week, which could be split into no more than 3 total commercial periods within each week. The department would also implement additional closed waters inside of a line Southwest from Oly's Point (Figure 6). Retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater would preemptively be restricted in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District until it is clear the king salmon BEG will be achieved. Depending on the strength of the king salmon run, it is likely the department would not be able to lift these restrictions until at least mid-July.

Background:

King salmon harvests in the CMA commercial fisheries are incidental to other species. Currently, the 2023 action plan for the CMA only requires non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District. In comparison to Action #1, this action would trade liberalization of time for additional area restriction within the Chignik Lagoon. It is unclear how effective area restrictions would be in comparison to time restrictions. Local knowledge has suggested that more king salmon hold between Chignik Island and

Chignik River than in other parts of Chignik Lagoon. On average, approximately 50% of the run occurs by July 16, and 90% of the Chignik River king salmon escapement takes place by August 5 (Figure 5). Compared to the action taken in 2023, as in Action #1, this action does suggest changing non-retention from the entire Castle Cape Section of the Western District to just the Inner Castle Cape Subsection to improve sampling integrity of king salmon harvest.

Benefits:

Restricting the commercial seine fishery in the Chignik Bay District until the department determines the king salmon BEG will be reached would preemptively ensure the survival of more king salmon earlier in the run. Returns seen in 2024 and 2025 were significantly better than those seen in 2023 without time restrictions in place. Reducing area and increasing fishing time could allow for more harvest opportunity on Chignik River sockeye salmon while maintaining protections for king salmon. Limiting the number of commercial openings to 3 per week ensures less fishing effort and larger windows for king salmon escapement than having more and shorter periods.

Detriments:

Most of the Chignik River king salmon run occurs in July, which has coincided with most sockeye salmon harvest in recent years. It is uncertain how effective area restrictions within the Chignik Lagoon are in comparison to time restrictions. Restricting Chignik Bay will cause difficulty for fishermen targeting sockeye salmon. Significant loss in harvest opportunity and increased escapement beyond the established goals on Chignik early- and especially late-run sockeye is likely to occur. Significant sockeye salmon escapement beyond the established goals may negatively impact future sockeye salmon returns. Mortality on king salmon released from commercial purse seines in the CMA is unknown, and there is no estimate of the number of king salmon caught and released annually in the CMA.

Chignik Bay District Action #3

This action would incorporate both the more conservative time reductions from Action #1 and the increased closed waters from Action #2. The Chignik Bay District would be restricted to no more than 48 hours of commercial fishing openings per week, which could be split into no more than 2 total commercial periods within each week. This action would implement closed waters inside of a line Southwest from Oly's Point (Figure 6) within the Chignik Lagoon. Non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater within the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District, would also be implemented.

Specific Actions:

The department manages fisheries to achieve the Chignik River king salmon BEG of 1,300–2,700 fish. From July 1 through July 31, the Chignik Bay District could open for no more than 48 hours of commercial fishing openings per calendar week, which could be split into no more than 2 total commercial periods each week. Additional closed waters would be implemented inside of a line southwest from Oly's Point (Figure 6). Retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater would preemptively be restricted in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District until it is clear the king salmon BEG will be achieved. Depending on the strength of the king salmon run, it is likely the department would not be able to lift these restrictions until at least mid-July.

Background:

King salmon harvests in the CMA commercial fisheries are incidental to other species. Currently, the 2023 action plan for the CMA only requires non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater in the Chignik

Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District. This action would be the most restrictive of the 3 presented, incorporating the time restrictions from Action #1 and area restrictions from Action #2. Local knowledge suggests more king salmon hold between Chignik Island and Chignik River than in other parts of Chignik Lagoon. On average, approximately 50% of the run occurs by July 16, and 90% of the Chignik River king salmon escapement takes place by August 5 (Figure 5). Compared to the action taken in 2023, as in Action #1, this action does suggest changing non-retention from the entire Castle Cape Section of the Western District to just the Inner Castle Cape Subsection to improve sampling integrity of king salmon harvest.

Benefits:

Restricting the commercial seine fishery in the Chignik Bay District until the department determines the king salmon BEG will be reached would preemptively ensure the survival of more king salmon earlier in the run. Returns seen in 2024 and 2025 were significantly better than those seen in 2023 without time restrictions in place. Reducing additional commercial fishing area where king salmon hold within the Chignik Lagoon could further protect Chignik king salmon and increase returns. Limiting the number of commercial openings to 2 per week ensures less fishing effort and larger windows for king salmon escapement than having more and shorter periods.

Detriments:

It is unclear how effective area restrictions are in comparison to time restrictions. Most of the Chignik River king salmon run occurs in July, which coincided with most sockeye salmon harvest in recent years. Restricting the Chignik Bay will cause difficulty for fishermen targeting sockeye salmon. Significant loss in harvest opportunity and escapement beyond the established goals on early- and especially late-run Chignik sockeye is likely to occur to greater extents than with the previous actions. Significant sockeye salmon escapement beyond the established goals may negatively impact future sockeye salmon returns. Mortality on king salmon released from commercial purse seines in the CMA is unknown, and there is no estimate of the number of king salmon caught and released annually in the CMA.

CMA wide action #1

This action would implement commercial harvest caps throughout the CMA. If more than 1,000 king salmon are commercially harvested throughout the CMA within a 48-hour period, a 7-day closure would be triggered in the statistical areas primarily responsible for the harvest. Additionally, for enforcement and harvest sampling integrity, mandatory retention of all king salmon would be required within the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts, excluding the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Specific Actions:

Throughout the CMA, a commercial harvest cap of 1,000 king salmon within a 48-hour period would be in place. If harvest throughout the CMA exceeded this based on processor reporting and fish tickets, the statistical areas primarily responsible would be immediately closed for a minimum of 7 days. Mandatory retention of all king salmon would be in effect in the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts, excluding the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Background:

King salmon harvests in the CMA commercial fisheries are incidental to other species. Currently, the 2023 action plan for the CMA only requires non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District. This action

would be comparable to department action taken in 2025 in response to unusually high king salmon harvest in 2024 (Table 5), except that only individual statistical areas would close instead of entire districts. On average, approximately 50% of the run occurs by July 16, and 90% of the Chignik River king salmon escapement takes place by August 5 (Figure 5). Compared to the action taken in 2025 requiring mandatory retention within the entire Western District, this action would enact non-retention of king salmon 28 inches and greater within the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Benefits:

Implementing harvest caps provides incentive to actively avoid fishing in areas with high king salmon presence and will likely decrease overall king salmon harvest. Commercial harvest of king salmon in 2025 was minimal in comparison to 2024. Mandatory retention aids in enforcing harvest caps and improves harvest sampling integrity. In comparison to full district closures, limiting triggered closures to statistical areas will provide more harvest opportunity on other salmon species if a harvest cap is hit.

Detriments:

There is little data on how many of the king salmon harvested in outer CMA districts are Chignik River system bound, but it is assumed to be small. It is unknown if eliminating or reducing king salmon harvest in outer districts would have any significant effect on Chignik king salmon returns. Avoiding king salmon may reduce harvest opportunity on other salmon species. Reduced fishing area resulting from triggering a cap will reduce harvest opportunity on other salmon species. Limiting closures to single statistical areas instead of entire districts provides less incentive for fishermen to avoid reaching harvest caps. If fishermen move to neighboring stat areas following closures resulting from triggered caps, the chance of further harvesting moving schools of king salmon may be higher than if entire districts were closed.

CMA wide action #2

Status quo with 2025: Implement commercial harvest caps throughout the CMA. If more than 1,000 king salmon are commercially harvested throughout the CMA within a 48-hour period, a 7-day closure would be triggered in the districts primarily responsible. Additionally, for enforcement and harvest sampling integrity, mandatory retention of all king salmon would be enforced within the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts, excluding the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Specific Actions:

Throughout the CMA, a harvest cap of 1,000 king salmon within a 48-hour period would be in place. If harvest throughout the CMA exceeded this based on processor reporting and fish tickets, the districts primarily responsible would be immediately closed for a minimum of 7 days. Mandatory retention of all king salmon would be in effect in the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts, excluding the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Background:

King salmon harvests in the CMA commercial fisheries are incidental to other species. Currently, the 2023 action plan for the CMA only requires non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District. This action would be identical to department action taken in 2025 in response to unusually high king salmon harvest in 2024 (Table 5). On average, approximately 50% of the run occurs by July 16, and 90% of the Chignik River king salmon have escaped by August 5 (Figure 5). Compared to the action taken in 2025 requiring mandatory retention within the entire Western District, this action would enact non-retention of king salmon 28 inches and greater within the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.

Benefits:

Implementing harvest caps provides incentive to actively avoid fishing in areas with high king salmon presence and will likely decrease overall king harvest. Commercial harvest of king salmon in 2025 was minimal in comparison to 2024. Mandatory retention aids in enforcing harvest caps and improves harvest sampling integrity. Triggered caps closing entire districts will provide more incentive for fishermen to avoid king salmon harvest. Closing entire districts will also increase distance between active fishing areas and areas with high enough king salmon presence to trigger caps.

Detriments:

There is little data on how much king salmon harvest in outer CMA districts is Chignik River system bound, but it is assumed to be small. It is unknown if reducing king salmon harvest in outer districts would have any significant effect on Chignik king returns. Avoiding king salmon may reduce harvest opportunity on other salmon species. Reduced fishing area from triggering a cap will reduce harvest opportunity on other salmon species. Having entire districts close would further reduce harvest opportunity in comparison to single statistical areas.

SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Action Plan Renewal

Since the adoption of the 2023 action plan, Chignik king salmon have continued to struggle to reach the lower bound of the BEG, reaching the goal only once in the last 3 years. The subsistence fishery was closed to king salmon retention by EO within the Chignik Bay District and the Chignik River drainage in 2018, and in 2020 through 2025 (Table 3). The department has continued to close the subsistence fishery earlier each year, opting to close preseason on May 1 in 2025. The department also extended the area of subsistence closure to the Chignik Lagoon spit in 2024 and 2025.

In 2020-2025, the FSB, through delegated authority to the federal Subsistence Manager, closed all federal public waters in the Chignik River drainage to subsistence fishing for king salmon upstream of the Chignik River weir due to conservation concerns. King salmon could not be retained or possessed, and king salmon incidentally harvested had to be released immediately, without removal from the water.

Recommended Management Actions

Subsistence action #1

Status quo: The department is tasked with the management of salmon to provide a priority for subsistence uses and uses EO authority to manage subsistence fisheries.

Specific Actions:

When king salmon runs to the Chignik system are weak, the department can require non-retention of king salmon in the subsistence fishery in the Chignik Bay District and Chignik River system drainage. The department will likely continue to restrict king salmon retention from the subsistence fishery preseason and extend restrictions to the Chignik Lagoon spit until there is more confidence the Chignik king salmon BEG will be reached.

Background:

Currently, there are no management plans directing the department on king salmon subsistence management. However, the department has EO authority to limit the harvest of king salmon. In conjunction with federal subsistence fishery managers, the department has established non-retention of king salmon in the subsistence fishery when it was apparent the king salmon runs were weak.

Benefits:

Currently, through EO authority, the department has the ability to apply conservation measures in the state subsistence fisheries to protect Chignik River king salmon in years when runs are weak. Maintaining the status quo ensures the regulations continue to provide the department with the ability to address Chignik River king salmon conservation concerns in a timely manner. As the Chignik River king salmon stock rebuilds, the department would have the ability to, when determined feasible, remove subsistence restrictions prior to the next board meeting.

Detriments:

During small runs, it is difficult to know if the king salmon run is weak or just arriving later than normal until a significant portion of the run has passed. This can lead to EO restriction of the subsistence fishery prior to knowing run strength.

SPORT FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Action Plan Renewal

Since the adoption of the 2023 action plan, Chignik king salmon have continued to struggle to reach the lower bound of the BEG, reaching the goal only once in the last 3 years. Following a historically low return in 2023, the department opted to add additional restrictions to the sport fishery in 2024 and 2025. In 2024 the Chignik Lagoon was closed early in the season to king salmon sport fishing. In 2025, the sport fishery was again closed pre-season, including the Chignik Lagoon, and the use of bait and treble hooks was restricted during the king salmon season. An additional EO was also issued for the saltwaters of the Alaska Peninsula that restricted king salmon harvest to 1 fish per day from April 1 through September 15. This included all saltwaters of the CMA and was paralleled with other EO's encompassing the remaining waters of the Gulf of Alaska. Considering the historic low returns following adoption of the action plan in 2023, and the increase in returns following the stricter management restrictions implemented in 2024 and 2025, it is the department's recommendation that the Chignik River king salmon action plan be revised to include additional management actions. The following includes potential actions for the board to adopt.

Recommended Management Actions

Sport action #1

Status Quo: The department would continue using EO authority to manage the Chignik River king salmon stock to achieve the escapement goal and rebuild from the recent period of low productivity. Preseason or inseason sport fishery EO closures provide the most restrictive management actions that can be implemented by the department.

Specific Action:

Use EO authority to allow the department the ability to restrict bag limits or methods and means or close the Chignik River king salmon sport fishery inseason as needed.

Background:

Chignik River is open to fishing for king salmon January 1–August 9. The king salmon bag and possession limit is 2 fish, 20 inches or greater in length, 10 fish less than 20 inches in length, and there is a 5 fish annual limit for fish 20 inches or greater in length. The department first took inseason management actions to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012 and has used EO authority to implement inseason non-retention regulations and total fishery closures annually since 2017, except for 2019 when the escapement goal was achieved (Table 4). The use of bait and treble hooks has also been restricted to reduce the incidence of catch and release related injury and mortality on king salmon.

Benefits:

The benefits of maintaining the department’s ability to manage Chignik River king salmon stocks inseason with EO authority are that timely and meaningful management actions can be based on inseason indicators of current run strength. The department has used EO authority to manage the sport fishery to achieve established escapement goals. As the Chignik River king salmon stock rebuilds, the department would have the ability to, when determined feasible, return to more liberal bag limits and provide more angler opportunity prior to the next board meeting.

Detriments:

Because inseason actions are based on current data and are implemented in response to inseason indicators of the strength or weakness of a run, anglers will find less predictability in the timing and types of management actions that may be taken. Most anglers traveling to the Chignik River are with a guide service and plan their trips 6–18 months in advance.

Sport action #2

Management of the king salmon sport fishery by Emergency Order using 2024 and 2025 management options: Under this option, the department would continue using EO authority to manage the Chignik River king salmon stock to achieve the escapement goal and would include preseason or inseason sport fishery EO closures and also adjust closed waters and take action in the CMA saltwaters as needed to achieve the king salmon BEG.

Specific Action:

Use EO authority to allow the department the ability to restrict bag limits or methods and means or close the Chignik River, Lagoon, and saltwater king salmon sport fishery inseason as needed.

Background:

Chignik River is open to fishing for king salmon January 1–August 9. The king salmon bag and possession limit is 2 fish, 20 inches or greater in length, 10 fish less than 20 inches in length, and there is a 5 fish annual limit for fish 20 inches or greater in length. Saltwater regulations allow a bag and possession limit of 2 king salmon per day, year-round. The department first took inseason management actions to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012 and has used EO authority to implement inseason non-retention regulations and total fishery closures annually since 2017, except for 2019 (Table 4). The use of bait and treble hooks has also been restricted in the freshwater to reduce the incidence of catch and release related injury and mortality on king salmon. The department implemented action #1 from the 2023 Action Plan beginning in 2023 per the board recommendation. In 2024 and 2025, additional closed waters were added to restrict sport fishing for king salmon in the Chignik Lagoon, and in 2025, all saltwaters of the CMA were restricted to a daily one fish bag limit from April 1 through September 15, in alignment with the remainder of the Gulf of Alaska saltwater king salmon fisheries

Benefits:

The benefits of maintaining the department’s ability to manage Chignik River king salmon stocks in season with EO authority are that timely and meaningful management actions can be based on inseason indicators of current run strength. The department has used EO authority to manage the sport fishery to achieve established escapement goals. As the Chignik River king salmon run rebuilds, the department would have the ability, when determined feasible, to return to more liberal bag limits and provide more angler opportunity prior to the next board meeting.

Detriments:

Because inseason actions are based on current data and are implemented in response to inseason indicators of the strength or weakness of a run, anglers will find less predictability in the timing and types of management actions that may be taken. Most anglers traveling to the Chignik River are with a guide service and plan their trips 6–18 months in advance.

Sport action #3

Adopt a regulation that would create a Chignik River king salmon non-retention fishery and would restrict the use of bait and treble hooks.

Specific Action:

Restrict the sport harvest of Chignik River king salmon. The sport fishery would be limited to non-retention of king salmon in the Chignik Lagoon and watershed. In addition, bait would be prohibited, and gear would be restricted to single hooks for the duration of the king salmon season.

Background:

Chignik River is open to fishing for king salmon January 1–August 9. The king salmon bag and possession limit is 2 fish, 20 inches or greater in length, 10 fish less than 20 inches in length, and there is a 5 fish annual limit for fish 20 inches or greater in length. The department first took inseason management actions to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012 and has used EO authority to implement inseason non-retention regulations and total fishery closures annually since 2017, except for 2019 (Table 4). The use of bait and treble hooks was also restricted to reduce the incidence of catch and release related injury and mortality on king salmon.

Benefits:

Sport fishery restrictions in regulation would provide the most stable situation for anglers, most of whom are traveling to the Chignik River with a guide service, and nearly all of whom plan their trips 6–18 months in advance. A non-retention fishery would provide opportunity for catch-and-release fishing with minimal impact to the run as well as provide predictability for anglers planning trips well in advance of potential fishery management actions. Similar regulations are in place on the Nelson River, on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula, which has a slightly larger king salmon run and a similar sport fishery. The intent of these regulations would be to provide more predictability in the sport fishery while limiting impact on the king salmon stock.

Detriments:

Restricting the fishery by regulation could limit the department’s ability to react to run strength in season and liberalize the fishery if inseason run strength was better than anticipated. If a non-retention regulation was adopted and it was the intention of the board to have the fishery remain conservative, even if escapements were meeting or exceeding escapement goals, liberalizing the fishery could not be addressed

until the next scheduled board meeting or if an agenda change request were accepted by the board. This would result in precluding a harvest opportunity if a harvestable surplus is available.

Sport action #4

Adopt a regulation that would close the king salmon sport fishery in the Chignik River, as well as prohibit the use of bait and treble hooks in the drainage.

Specific Action:

Close the Chignik River king salmon sport fishery. In addition, prohibit the use of bait and restrict gear to single hooks for the duration of the king salmon season.

Background:

Chignik River is open to sport fishing for king salmon January 1–August 9. The king salmon bag and possession limit is 2 fish, 20 inches or greater in length, 10 fish less than 20 inches in length, and there is a 5 fish annual limit for fish 20 inches or greater in length. The department first took inseason management actions to conserve Chignik River king salmon in 2012 and has used EO authority to implement inseason non-retention regulations and total fishery closures annually since 2017, except for 2019 (Table 4). These actions were intended to reduce the harvest of king salmon in Chignik River sport fisheries. Additionally, the use of bait and treble hooks has been restricted to reduce the incidence of catch and release related injury and mortality on king salmon.

Benefits:

A fishery closure in regulation would eliminate sport anglers targeting king salmon in the Chignik River and reduce catch and mortality of king salmon. There are few other sport fisheries in the drainage during the king salmon run, and incidental catches of king salmon would likely be very low.

Detriments:

Restricting the fishery by regulation would limit the department’s ability to provide king salmon sport fishing opportunity if king salmon escapement goals were achieved and there was a harvestable surplus. Restrictions could not be addressed until the next scheduled board meeting, or if an agenda change request were accepted by the board. There is little effort for other species in the drainage, and a fishery closure would eliminate most of the sport fishing effort in the area during the summer. This would result in precluding a harvest opportunity if a harvestable surplus is available.

SUMMARY OF 2026 BOF DESIGNATED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS:

Fishery/Action number	Summary
CF CBD/#1	Restrict the Chignik Bay District to no more than 48 hours per week. Additional closed waters around the “king hole” within the Chignik Lagoon. Restrict the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape section of the Western District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater until the department determines the BEG of the Chignik River king salmon run will be achieved.
CF CBD/#2	Restrict the Chignik Bay District to no more than 72 hours per week. Additional closed waters within the Oly’s Point markers within the Chignik Lagoon. Restrict the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape section of the Western District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater until the department determines the BEG of the Chignik River king salmon run will be achieved.
CF CBD/#3	Restrict the Chignik Bay District to no more than 48 hours per week. Additional closed waters within the Oly’s Point markers within the Chignik Lagoon. Restrict the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, as well as the Castle Cape section of the Western District, to non-retention of king salmon 28 inches or greater until the department determines the BEG of the Chignik River king salmon run will be achieved.
CF CMA/#1	Implement a CMA king salmon harvest cap of 1,000 fish within any 48-hour period, which if triggered would result in closure of the stat areas primarily responsible for 7 days. Implement mandatory retention of all king salmon within the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts excluding the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.
CF CMA/#2	Implement a CMA king salmon harvest cap of 1,000 fish within any 48-hour period, which if triggered would result in closure of the districts primarily responsible for 7 days. Implement mandatory retention of all king salmon within the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts excluding the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District.
Sub/#1	Status quo. Maintain current EO management to address conservation concerns and manage for the subsistence priority.
SF/#1	Status quo. Continue to use EO authority to manage the Chignik River king salmon stock to achieve the escapement goal and rebuild from the recent period of low productivity.
SF/#2	Status quo, with 2024 and 2025 measures. Continue to use EO authority to manage the Chignik River king salmon stock to achieve the escapement goal and rebuild from the recent period of low productivity, but include additional actions taken in 2024 and 2025 seasons.
SF/#3	Restrict the Chignik River sport fishery by regulation, creating a non-retention fishery for king salmon and restrict the use of bait and treble hooks.
SF/#4	Close the Chignik River king salmon sport fishery by regulation and restrict the use of bait and treble hooks.

RESEARCH PLAN

The department currently assesses Chignik River king salmon escapement and harvests annually. The following research projects include current and past projects used to gather detailed information about king salmon in the Chignik River.

CURRENT MONITORING PROJECTS

Salmon returning to the Chignik River are counted at a weir upstream from Chignik Lagoon, operated primarily for sockeye and king salmon. King salmon return from mid-June through late August, with the peak of the run usually in mid-July. The weir is generally operated from late May to late August. All salmon are counted for 10 minutes at the start of every hour as they pass upstream through the weir. Counts are extrapolated to estimate escapement. It is currently anticipated that weir operation will continue in future years. An additional project counting all king salmon through full 24-hour video recordings during the central 80% (July 1 through August 5) of the run is also currently underway. Preliminary results were 747 fish in 2022 and 1,162 fish in 2024, each year within 10% of the 10-minute counts estimation method for the same timeframe. During the 2025 season, the department initiated a study to assess the genetic stock, size, and age composition of the king salmon harvest in the CMA, collecting tissue samples, scales, length, and CWT data when present.

PAST RESEARCH PROJECTS

In the past, king salmon age, sex, and length (ASL) data were collected opportunistically via both the weir trap and sport harvest and used to monitor quality, track productivity, and generate data needed to review and update escapement goals. However, due to budget and run size constraints, king salmon ASL data have not been collected at all since 2017. It is doubtful that ASL data will be collected in the future.

In 2014, king salmon samples from the commercial salmon harvest in Chignik Bay District and the outside areas were collected (size, age, genetic tissue, adipose clip/CWT). The results were reported in Shedd et al. (2016), but genetic stock composition estimates were pooled with the South Alaska Peninsula Area.

Published Division of Subsistence reports for the CMA include Alaska statewide subsistence and personal use salmon fisheries annual reports (see Brown et al. 2023 for the most recent example), periodic household surveys, subsistence salmon ethnographic studies, and a report outlining findings about the subsistence salmon fisheries in the CMA to the board. A summary of these research reports is below:

In an assessment of salmon harvests and local and traditional knowledge of king salmon in the CMA from 2014–2016, researchers documented local observations of an overall decline in the amount and size of all salmon returning to the CMA area, reasons provided for this decline, and changes in run timing of each species (Hutchinson-Scarborough and Koster 2021). A study of the harvest and use patterns in six communities (Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Perryville, Port Heiden, and Egegik) for 2016 illustrated the household and community networks that facilitate the harvesting, processing, sharing, bartering, and trading of subsistence salmon resources within the communities, across the broader region, and throughout Alaska (Hutchinson-Scarborough et al. 2020). The study found that subsistence use of salmon was almost universal in the study communities in 2016 and that most households were engaged in the exchange of salmon. An ethnographic study of salmon harvests and uses in Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, and Perryville described contemporary subsistence salmon fishing practices, illustrated how

subsistence fishing is important to the study communities, and explained what factors influence how fishing practices change over time (Hutchinson-Scarborough et al., 2016).

Several reports describe fish and wildlife harvests in CMA communities dating back to the 1980s. These include Hutchinson et al. 2010, Fall et al. 1995, and Fall et al. 1991.

CONDITIONS FOR REDUCING MANAGEMENT RESTRICTIONS OR DELISTING A STOCK OF CONCERN

1. If the lower bound of the BEG range is met or exceeded in 3 consecutive years or 4 out of 6 consecutive years, and the department is expecting to meet the goal in future years, the department will recommend removing Chignik River king salmon as a stock of management concern at the first Chignik board meeting after this condition is met.
2. Management measures could be relaxed in specific areas if updated data indicates areas where restrictions are no longer needed to ensure the escapement goal is met.
3. In the event that 2 consecutive years of escapements are near the upper bound or above the BEG range, management restrictions may be relaxed or set aside using EO authority.

Stock status, action plan performance (including information on harvest rate, distribution, and timing in commercial fisheries), and escapement goal review will be updated in a report to the board at the 2029 Chignik, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutian Islands meeting.

REFERENCES CITED

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TABLES.

Table 1–Chignik River king salmon harvest and escapement, 1978–2025.

Year	Commercial Harvest ^a	Subsistence Harvest ^b	Sport Harvest Above Weir ^c	Weir Count	Escapement ^d	Lower Bound BEG	Upper Bound BEG
1978	1,386	50	207	1,197	990		
1979	856	14	207	1,050	843		
1980	929	6	207	876	669		
1981	2,006	0	207	1,603	1,396		
1982	3,269	3	207	2,412	2,205		
1983	3,560	0	207	1,943	1,736		
1984	3,696	23	207	5,548	5,341		
1985	1,810	1	207	3,144	2,937		
1986	2,592	4	207	3,612	3,405		
1987	1,931	10	207	2,624	2,417		
1988	4,331	9	233	4,868	4,635		
1989	3,532	24	181	3,316	3,135		
1990	3,719	103	207	4,364	4,157		
1991	1,993	42	207	4,545	4,338		
1992	3,179	55	207	3,806	3,599		
1993	5,240	122	207	1,946	1,739		
1994	1,804	165	207	3,016	2,809	1,450	2,700
1995	3,008	98	207	4,288	4,081	1,450	2,700
1996	1,579	48	207	3,485	3,278	1,450	2,700
1997	1,289	28	207	3,824	3,617	1,450	2,700
1998	1,700	91	207	3,075	2,868	1,450	2,700
1999	2,101	219	207	3,728	3,521	1,450	2,700
2000	581	132	207	4,285	4,078	1,450	2,700
2001	1,142	161	207	2,992	2,785	1,450	2,700
2002	920	68	207	3,028	2,821	1,300	2,700
2003	2,834	252	207	6,412	6,205	1,300	2,700
2004	2,337	57	207	7,840	7,633	1,300	2,700
2005	2,442	223	361	6,486	6,125	1,300	2,700
2006	1,941	183	245	3,535	3,290	1,300	2,700
2007	641	59	198	2,000	1,802	1,300	2,700
2008	208	40	65	1,730	1,665	1,300	2,700
2009	496	46 ^e	103	1,680	1,577	1,300	2,700

-continued-

Table 1.–Page 2 of 2.

Year	Comm Harvest ^a	Subs Harvest ^b	Sport Harvest Above Weir ^c	Weir Count	Escapement ^d	Lower Bound BEG	Upper Bound BEG
2010	1,480	94 ^e	215	3,679	3,464	1,300	2,700
2011	1,382	34	265	2,728	2,463	1,300	2,700
2012	303	44 ^e	61	1,449	1,388	1,300	2,700
2013	545	14 ^e	83	1,253	1,170	1,300	2,700
2014	353	51	88	2,895	2,807	1,300	2,700
2015	1,572	125	112	2,054	1,942	1,300	2,700
2016	664	91	100	1,843	1,743	1,300	2,700
2017	410	55 ^e	58	1,137	1,079	1,300	2,700
2018	0	5 ^e	56	825	769	1,300	2,700
2019	1,137	55 ^e	100	1,517	1,417	1,300	2,700
2020	0	51 ^e	55	1,278	1,223	1,300	2,700
2021	38	0 ^e	37	1,172	1,135	1,300	2,700
2022	27	22 ^e	37	761	724	1,300	2,700
2023	130	0 ^e	0	267	267	1,300	2,700
2024	34	18 ^e	0	1,166	1,166	1,300	2,700
2025	107	^f	0	1,391	1,391	1,300	2,700
2016-2025							
Average	255	33	44	1,136	1,091	1,300	2,700
2021-2025							
Average	67	10	15	951	937	1,300	2,700

Source: ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries Kodiak.

^a Commercial harvest of king salmon from the Chignik Lagoon statistical area (271-10). This does not include personal use (home-pack) or test fishery harvest.

^b Subsistence harvest prior to 1999 is from the entire CMA and includes harvest from outside Chignik Lagoon and Chignik Lake. Subsistence harvest from 1999 to present is from Chignik Bay, Lagoon, and Lake.

^c Sport harvest in 1988 and 1989 was estimated from an onsite creel survey (Schwarz 1990). Sport harvest from 1977 through 1987 and 1990 through 2004 is the average of the 1988 and 1989 sport harvests. Sport harvest from 2005 to 2015 was estimated using guided logbook harvest. From 2016 to present, harvest information was unavailable and estimated to be 100 fish harvested above the weir (based on historical harvests) unless the fishery was closed to harvest, and then the estimated harvest was the percent of days the fishery was open from the first fish passage to the regulatory close of the season multiplied by 100.

^d Escapement is weir count minus sport harvest above the weir.

^e From 1993–2008, 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2016 postseason household surveys were conducted to supplement harvest data collected through returned permits. Limited budgets prevented administering the surveys for 2009–2010, 2012–2013, and 2017–2024 likely resulting in an underestimate of subsistence harvests since not all subsistence fishing households obtained a permit. To compensate for this underestimate, the average annual harvest for postseason surveys was added to harvests to estimate the total subsistence harvest for 2009–2010, 2012–2013, and 2017–2024.

^f Subsistence harvest for Chignik Lagoon is not currently available for 2025.

Table 2—Management actions taken in commercial fisheries for Chignik king salmon, 2013 and 2017-2025.

Year	Action	Date Implemented
2013	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28"	Chignik Bay District on 7/20, Central District on 7/21
2017	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28"	Chignik Bay District on 7/15, Central District on 8/2
2018	Non-retention in the subsistence fishery	12-Jul
2019	None	
2020	Non-retention in the subsistence fishery	16-Jul
2021	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28" in the Chignik Bay District	5-Aug
2022	Non-retention in the subsistence fishery	11-Jul
2022	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28" in the Chignik Bay District	12-Jul
2023	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28" in the Chignik Bay District, Central District, and Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District	29-Jun
2024	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28" in the entire CMA.	4-Jul
2024	Closed waters around the "king hole" within the Chignik lagoon.	4-Jul
2024	Restriction of no more than 48 hours of commercial openings per week within the Chignik Bay District when Chignik late-run sockeye salmon were projecting over the mid-point of the escapement goal, or no more than 96 hours of commercial openings per week when late-run sockeye salmon were projecting over the upper escapement goal.	4-Jul
2025	Non-retention of king salmon in commercial fishery over 28" in the Chignik Bay and Central Districts, Mandatory retention of all king salmon in the Eastern, Western, and Perryville Districts.	20-Jun
2025	Closed waters around the "king hole" within the Chignik lagoon.	27-Jun
2025	Restriction of no more than 48 hours of commercial openings per week within the Chignik Bay District.	1-Jul

Note: Years with no action are not included.

Table 3—Chignik king salmon subsistence fishery management actions, 2018–2025.

Year	Action	Effective date
2018	Non-retention over 28 inches in the subsistence fishery	12-Jul
2020	Non-retention over 28 inches in the subsistence fishery	16-Jul
2021	Non-retention over 28 inches in the subsistence fishery	14-Jul
2022	Non-retention over 28 inches in the subsistence fishery	11-Jul
2023	Non-retention over 28 inches in the subsistence fishery	5-Jul
2024	Non-retention over 28 inches extended to the Chignik lagoon spit in the subsistence fishery	14-Jun
2025	Non-retention extended to the Chignik lagoon spit in the subsistence fishery	1-May

Note: Years with no action are not included. Subsistence restrictions prior to 2024 encompassed the Chignik River watershed to the Mensis Point markers, including Chignik Lake and its tributaries.

Table 4—Chignik River king salmon sport fishery management actions, 2012–2025.

Year	Action	Date Implemented
2012	Non-retention, bait and treble hooks prohibited	15-Jul
2013	Non-retention, bait and treble hooks prohibited	20-Jul
2013	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	26-Jul
2017	Non-retention, bait and treble hooks prohibited	14-Jul
2017	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	23-Jul
2018	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	13-Jul
2020	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	18-Jul
2021	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	14-Jul
2022	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	13-Jul
2023	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited	Pre-season
2024	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited, Chignik Lagoon closed	Pre-season
2025	Closed, bait and treble hooks prohibited, Chignik Lagoon closed, saltwater bag limit reduced	Pre-season

Note: Years with no action are not included. Sport restrictions prior to 2024 encompassed the Chignik River watershed to the Mensis Point markers, including Chignik Lake and its tributaries.

Table 3—Chignik Management Area king salmon harvest (including home pack and the department’s test fishery catches), by district and year, 1996 through 2025.

Year	District				
	Chignik Bay	Central	Eastern	Western	Perryville
1996	1,590	1,022	263	162	108
1997	1,384	1,609	60	60	7
1998	1,805	1,798	79	567	254
1999	2,270	852	147	216	22
2000	598	530	53	1,421	10
2001	1,235	770	302	627	5
2002	920	17	0	584	0
2003	2,834	189	0	45	0
2004	2,520	0	0	0	0
2005	2,714	391	0	297	6
2006	2,009	165	3	79	0
2007	667	421	152	532	1
2008	219	195	16	503	37
2009	552	552	199	1,987	29
2010	1,564	2,420	834	5,476	86
2011	1,462	2,154	639	2,118	213
2012	330	1,878	185	1,284	10
2013 ^a	592	1,249	398	668	52
2014	363	4,302	75	4,054	52
2015	1,648	3,172	115	4,249	20
2016	693	15,865	413	2,446	1,302
2017 ^a	447	1,125	534	1,594	246
2018	0	0	0	0	0
2019	1,140	349	862	1,281	680
2020	0	0	0	0	0
2021 ^a	40	623	44	679	36
2022 ^a	27	1,843	2	1,559	199
2023 ^a	132	228	8	1,874	60
2024 ^a	40	32	0	12,083	17
2025 ^a	107	319	54	2,340	142
Averages					
2021-2025	69	609	22	3,707	91
2016-2025	292	2,265	213	2,651	298
2006-2025	633	1,942	239	2,358	167

^a Non-retention over 28-inches enforced mid-season.

^b Averages do not include 2020 due to no commercial fishing opportunity.

FIGURES

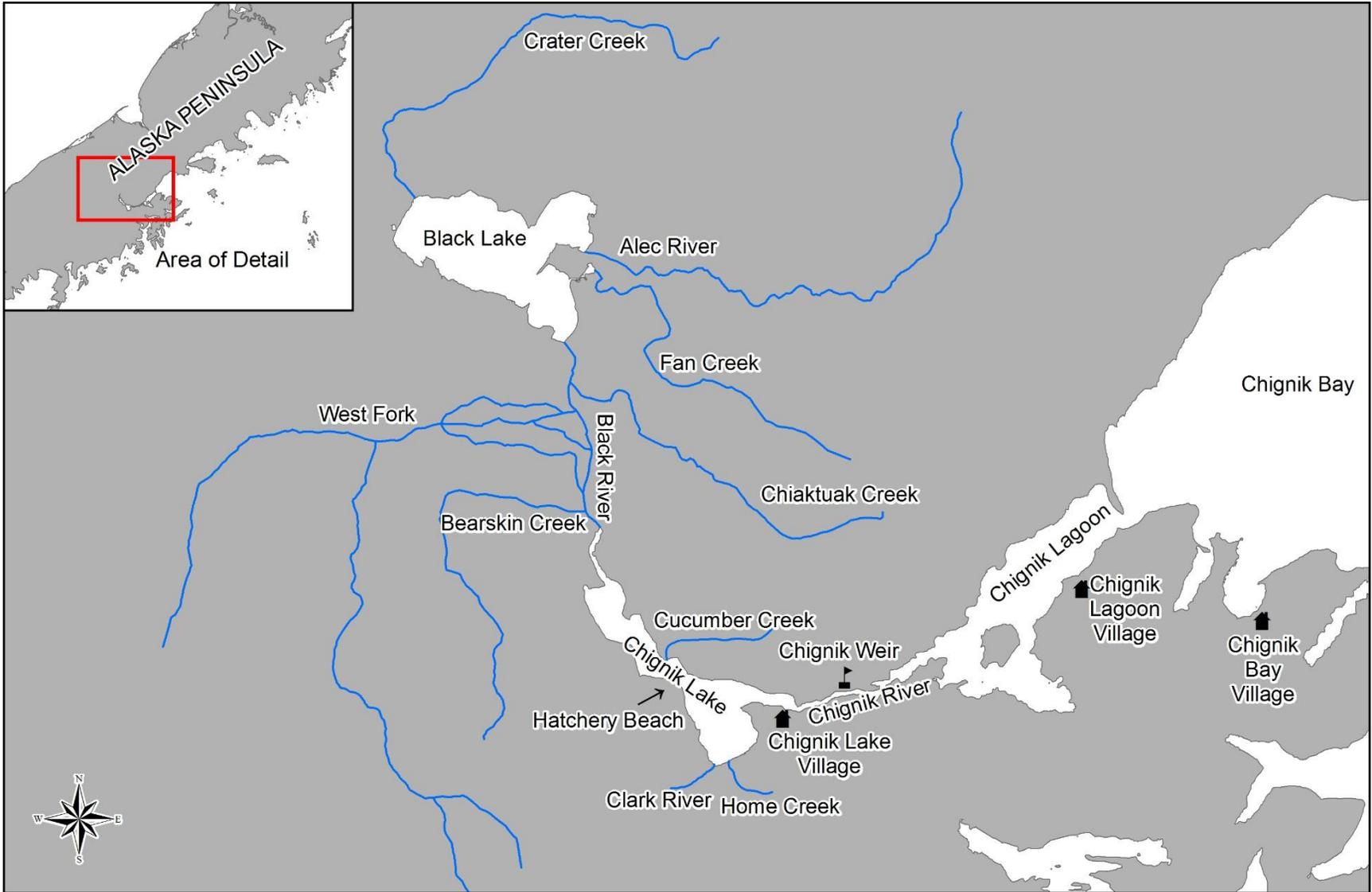


Figure 1—Chignik River Drainage, Chignik Bay and Chignik Lagoon.

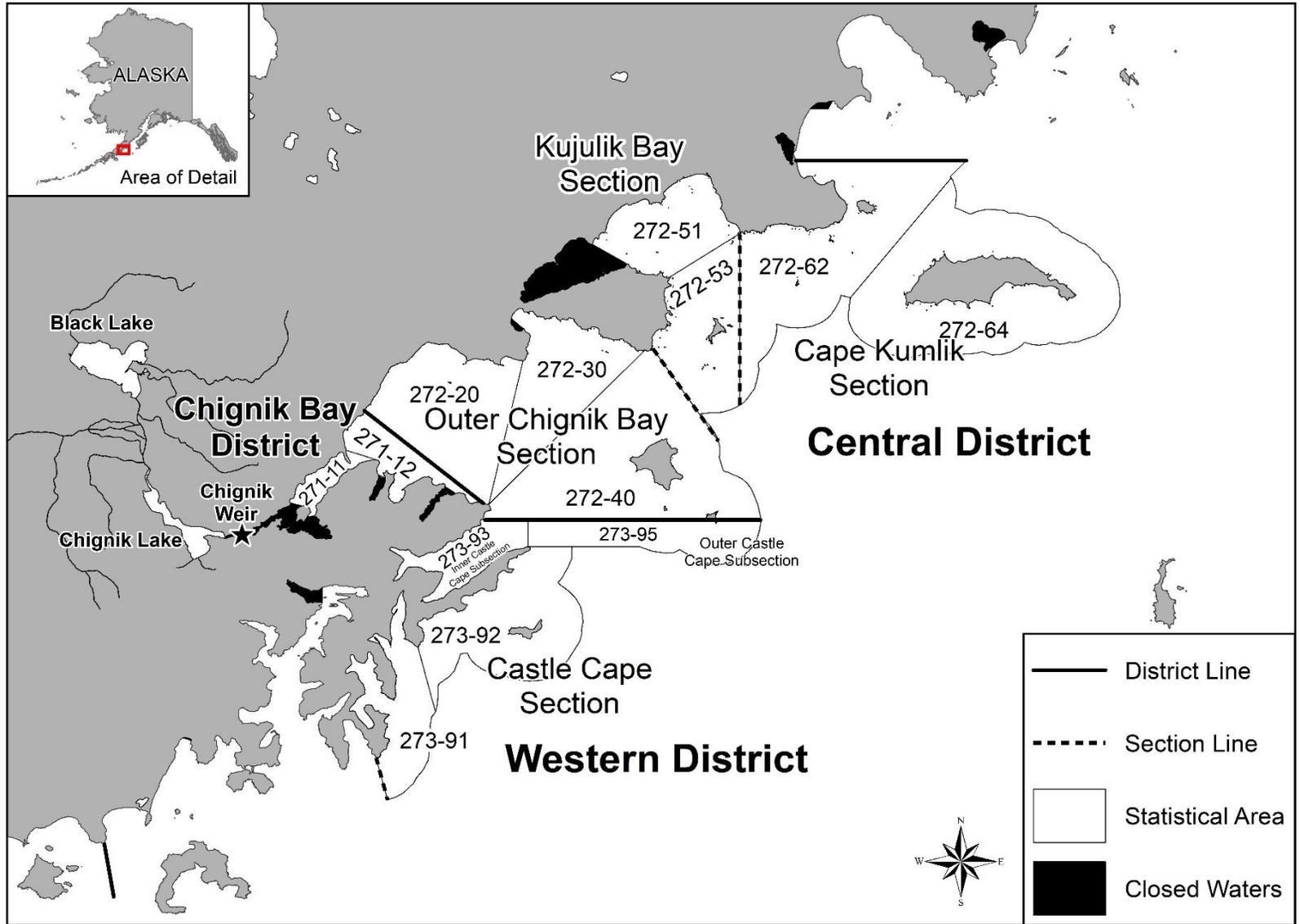


Figure 2—Commercial fisheries management districts and sections located near Chignik Bay.

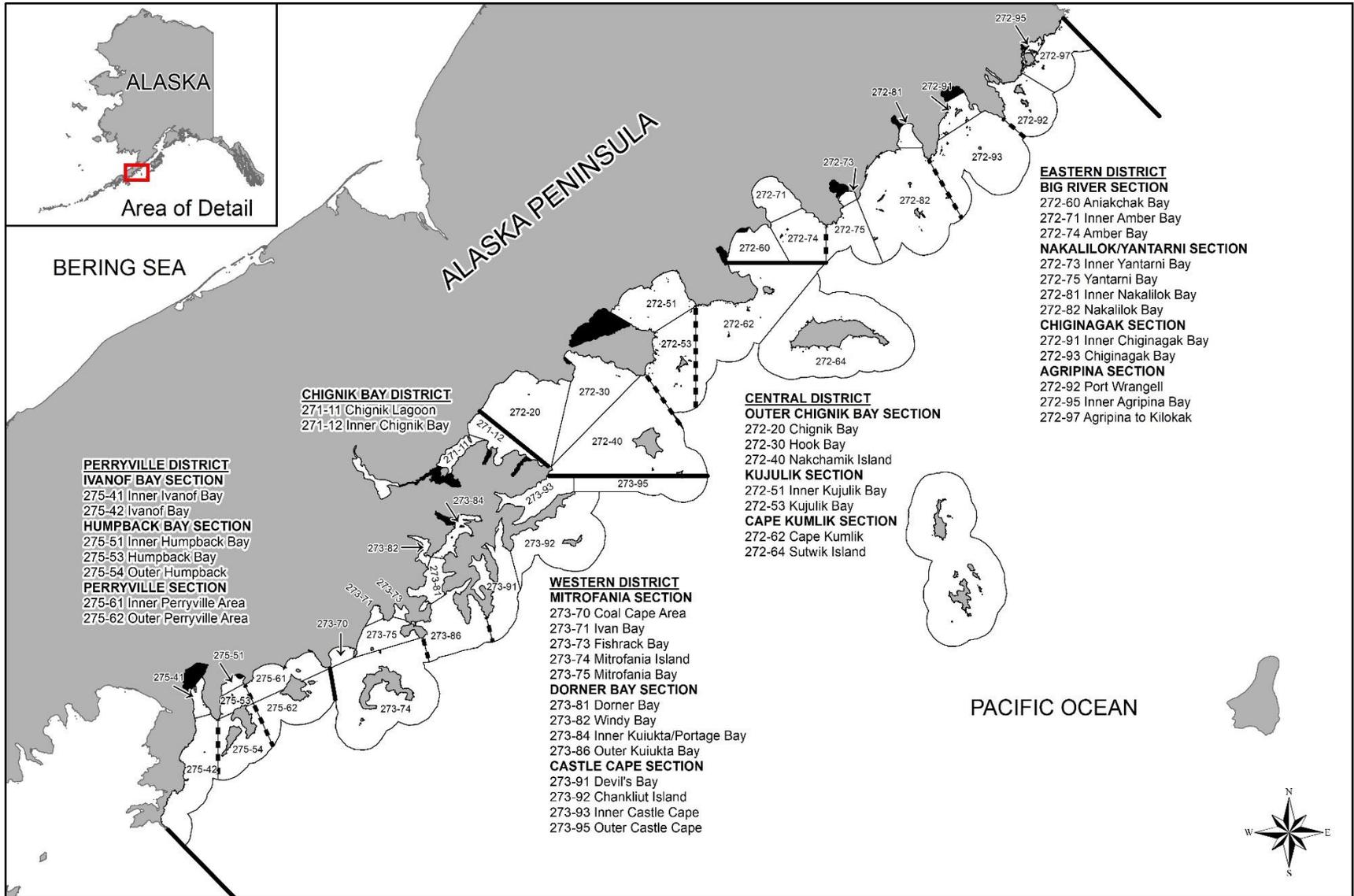


Figure 3–The Chignik Management Area (within the black bars on the upper right and lower left) including Perryville District, Chignik Bay District, Western District, Central District, and Eastern District.

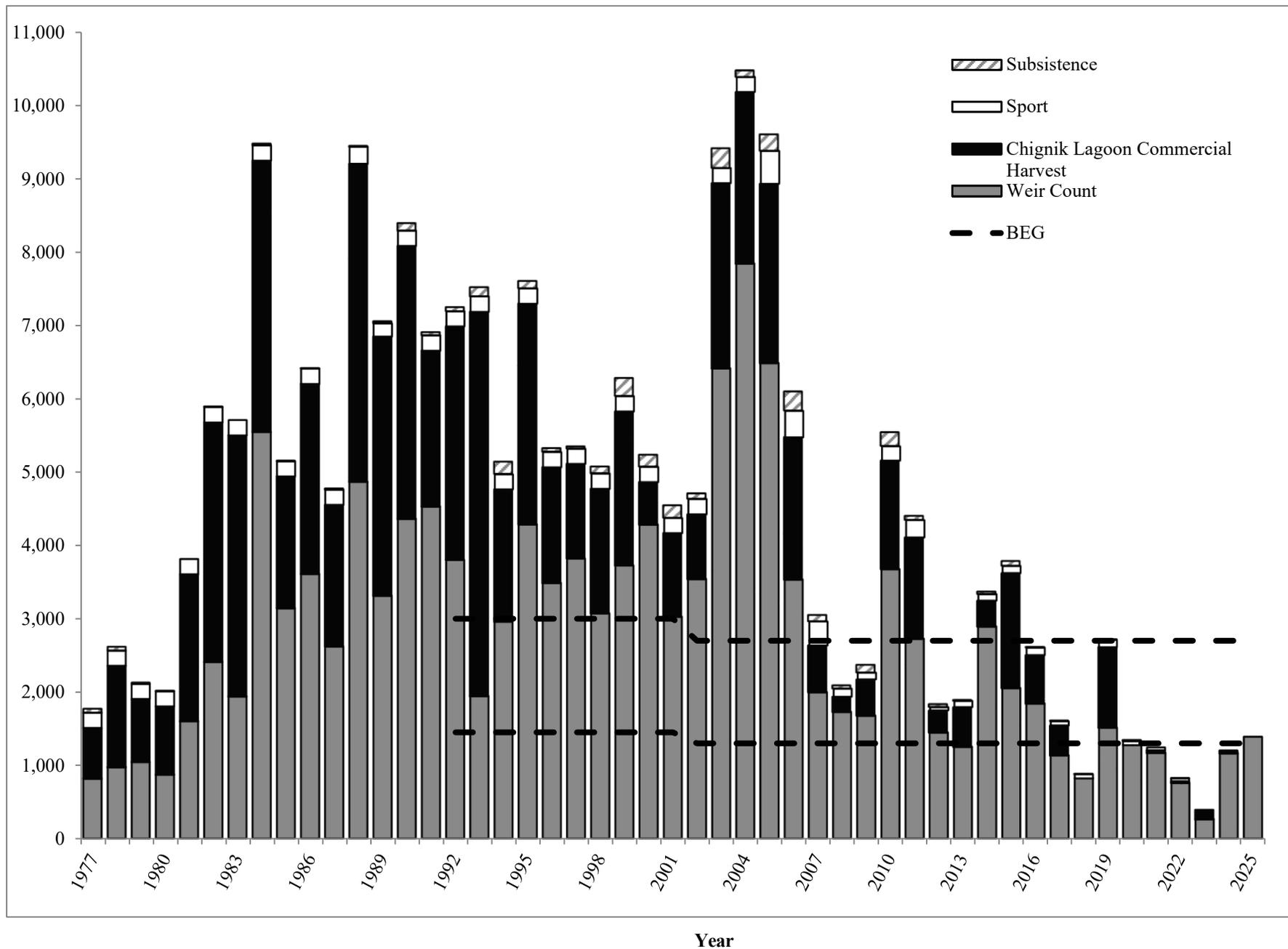


Figure 4—Sport, subsistence, and commercial harvest, and weir count of Chignik River king salmon with respect to the biological escapement goal (dashed lines), 1977–2025.

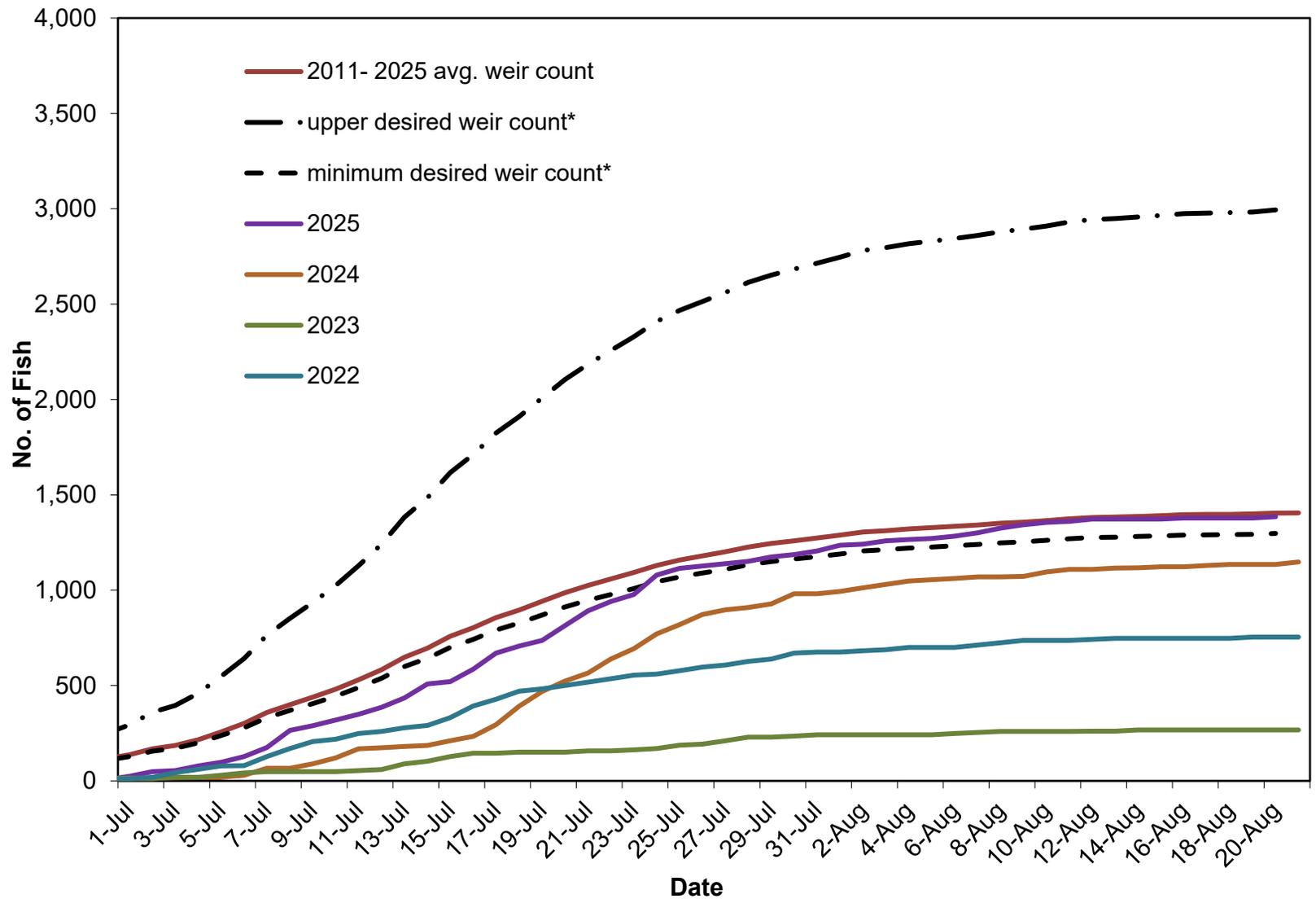


Figure 5—Chignik River king salmon run timing, 2011–2025.

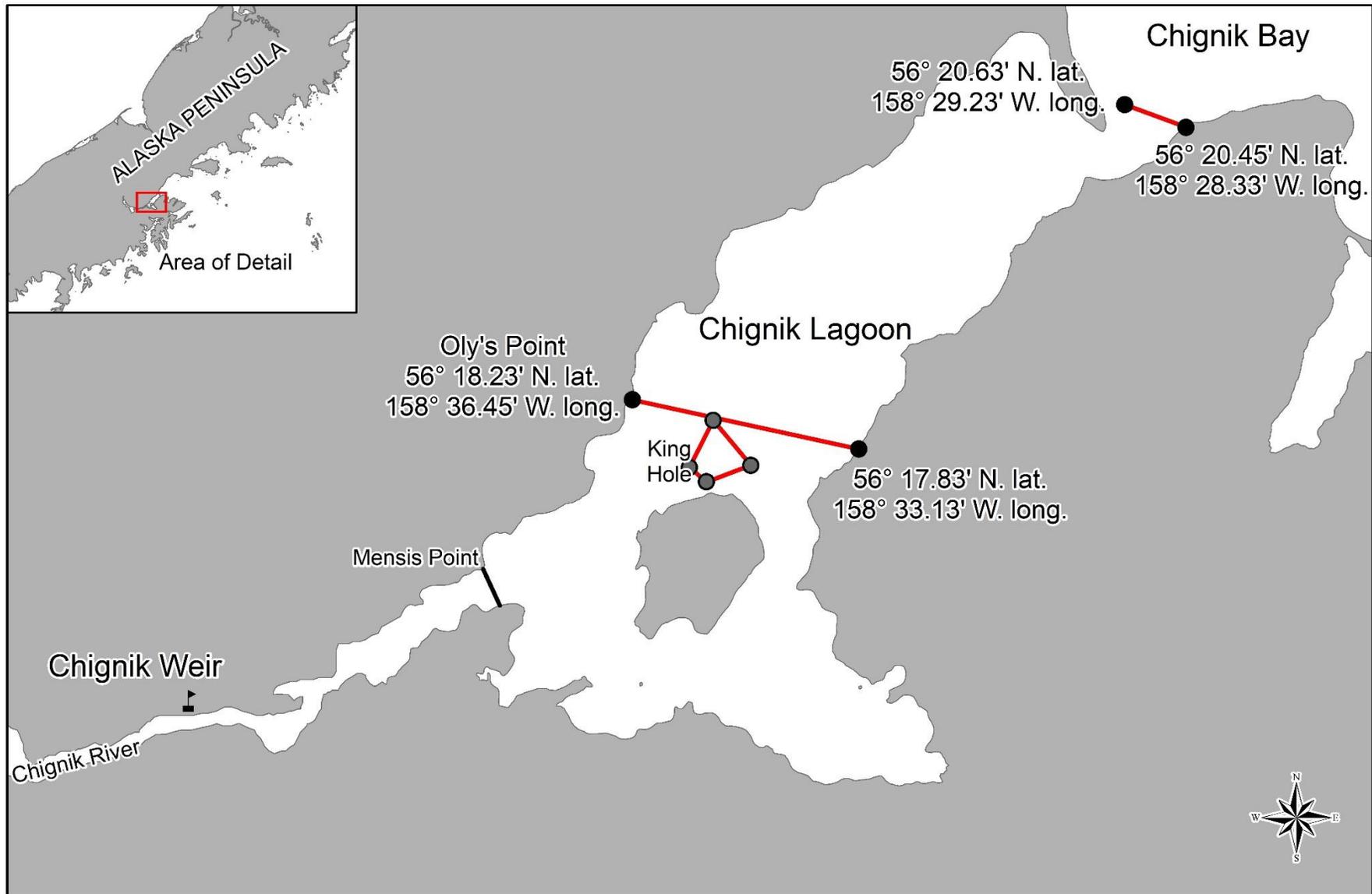


Figure 6—Chignik Lagoon with Mensis markers, the “king hole”, Oly’s point, and lagoon spit boundaries.