

Fishery Management Report No. 26-01

Sport Fisheries in the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2024

by

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and

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Weights and measures (metric)		General		Mathematics, statistics	
centimeter	cm	Alaska Administrative Code	AAC	<i>all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations</i>	
deciliter	dL	all commonly accepted abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.	alternate hypothesis	H_A
gram	g	all commonly accepted professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.	base of natural logarithm	e
hectare	ha	at	@	catch per unit effort	CPUE
kilogram	kg	compass directions:		coefficient of variation	CV
kilometer	km	east	E	common test statistics	(F, t, χ^2 , etc.)
liter	L	north	N	confidence interval	CI
meter	m	south	S	correlation coefficient	
milliliter	mL	west	W	(multiple)	R
millimeter	mm	copyright	©	correlation coefficient	
		corporate suffixes:		(simple)	r
Weights and measures (English)		Company	Co.	covariance	cov
cubic feet per second	ft ³ /s	Corporation	Corp.	degree (angular)	°
foot	ft	Incorporated	Inc.	degrees of freedom	df
gallon	gal	Limited	Ltd.	expected value	E
inch	in	District of Columbia	D.C.	greater than	>
mile	mi	et alii (and others)	et al.	greater than or equal to	≥
nautical mile	nmi	et cetera (and so forth)	etc.	harvest per unit effort	HPUE
ounce	oz	exempli gratia	e.g.	less than	<
pound	lb	(for example)		less than or equal to	≤
quart	qt	Federal Information Code	FIC	logarithm (natural)	ln
yard	yd	id est (that is)	i.e.	logarithm (base 10)	log
		latitude or longitude	lat or long	logarithm (specify base)	log ₂ , etc.
Time and temperature		monetary symbols		minute (angular)	'
day	d	(U.S.)	\$, ¢	not significant	NS
degrees Celsius	°C	months (tables and figures): first three letters	Jan, ..., Dec	null hypothesis	H_0
degrees Fahrenheit	°F	registered trademark	®	percent	%
degrees kelvin	K	trademark	™	probability	P
hour	h	United States	U.S.	probability of a type I error	
minute	min	(adjective)		(rejection of the null hypothesis when true)	α
second	s	United States of America (noun)	USA	probability of a type II error	
		U.S.C.	United States Code	(acceptance of the null hypothesis when false)	β
Physics and chemistry		U.S. state	use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)	second (angular)	"
all atomic symbols				standard deviation	SD
alternating current	AC			standard error	SE
ampere	A			variance	
calorie	cal			population	Var
direct current	DC			sample	var
hertz	Hz				
horsepower	hp				
hydrogen ion activity	pH				
(negative log of)					
parts per million	ppm				
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰				
volts	V				
watts	W				

FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 26-01

SPORT FISHERIES IN THE BRISTOL BAY MANAGEMENT AREA, 2024

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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the major sport fisheries in the Bristol Bay Management Area during 2024. Fisheries include Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho (*O. kisutch*), and sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*); and rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*), Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*), Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), and northern pike (*Esox lucius*). Significant sport fisheries are described, and estimates of sport fishing effort, catch, harvest, and salmon escapements are provided. Overviews of the management for each fishery are provided, including sport fishing regulations and management plans.

Keywords: Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area, Alaska Board of Fisheries, management plan, Nushagak River, Togiak River, Naknek River, rainbow trout, *Oncorhynchus mykiss*, Chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, coho salmon, *Oncorhynchus kisutch*, sockeye salmon, *Oncorhynchus nerka*

INTRODUCTION

MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION

The Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area (BBMA) is part of the Southcentral Region (Region 2) of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish. BBMA includes all waters and drainages flowing into Bristol Bay between Cape Newenham in the northwest to Cape Menshikof in the southeast (Figure 1).

The sport fisheries of this large region are divided into 3 geographic sections for convenience: Eastern, Central, and Western (Figure 1). The section boundaries, which encompass 1 or more adjacent drainages, are located somewhat arbitrarily. However, for some species, particularly rainbow trout, the section boundaries delineate distinct differences in the character of the fisheries or the biology of local stocks.

The Eastern Section includes all drainages from the Kvichak River to the area's southern boundary at Cape Menshikof (Figure 1). Major federal jurisdictions in the Eastern Section include the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Katmai National Park and Preserve, and the Becharof National Wildlife Refuge. The Central Section is composed of the drainages entering Nushagak Bay and is dominated by the Nushagak River and Wood River systems. The Wood–Tikchik State Park falls within the Central Section boundary. The Western Section includes all drainages from Cape Constantine on the Nushagak Peninsula west to Cape Newenham and contains portions of the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. The Togiak River is the major drainage within the section.

Major communities located within the area include Togiak, Dillingham, Iliamna, King Salmon, Naknek, Egegik, and Pilot Point. The management area is not linked to the State of Alaska highway system, although local roads provide sport anglers with limited access near the major communities. Float-equipped aircraft, and to a lesser extent boats, are commonly used to access the area's many remote fisheries.

Although the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has management jurisdiction for sport fisheries in the BBMA, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and United States Geological Survey manage federal public lands and conduct research in the area.

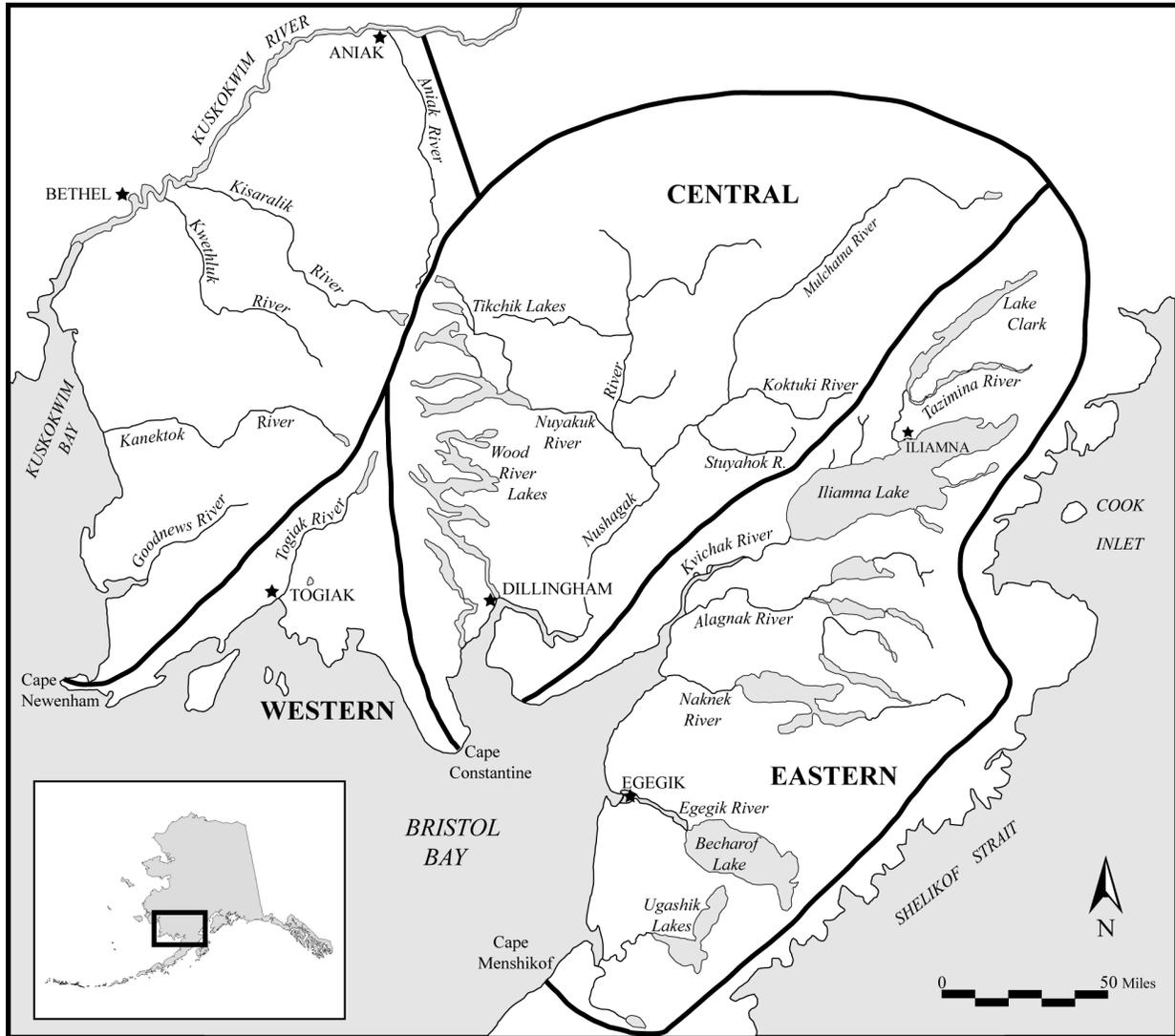


Figure 1.—Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area showing the Eastern, Central, and Western Sections.

FISHERY RESOURCES

The BBMA contains some of the most productive waters in the world for Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.), rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*), Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), and Dolly Varden (*S. malma*). The area has been acclaimed for its sport fisheries since the 1930s. Sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*), Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*; referred to as “king salmon” in regulatory language), and coho salmon (*O. kisutch*) are the most harvested species in the BBMA, with less harvest of chum (*O. keta*) and pink (*O.gorbuscha*) salmon, Dolly Varden, Arctic char, Arctic grayling, and rainbow trout taken annually, although there is an accepted catch-and-release ethic among sport anglers for these species.

ESTABLISHED MANAGEMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

There are several management plans adopted or implemented by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) that guide ADF&G’s management of Bristol Bay sport fisheries. For those plans

specifically adopted as a regulation, the Alaska Administrative Code (AAC) is provided. Additional information is provided later in the pertinent fishery sections. There are other management plans addressing commercial salmon fisheries that do not directly address sport fisheries management but may affect sport fisheries to some extent. These plans are more fully discussed under the specific sport fishery affected.

Nushagak–Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan

Management of the subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries for Nushagak Chinook salmon stocks is governed by the *Nushagak–Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.361). The plan was first adopted by the BOF in January 1992 and most recently modified in March 2023.

Nushagak District King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan

Nushagak River Chinook salmon were designated as a stock of management concern by the BOF in 2022 after the stock failed to meet the inriver goal of 95,000 fish in 2017 and during 2019–2021. The *Nushagak District King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.391) provides management tools and guidelines to ADF&G for the management of Nushagak District salmon fisheries while Nushagak River Chinook salmon are listed as a stock of management concern. The plan was adopted by the BOF in March of 2023.

Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan

Management of the subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries for Nushagak coho salmon stocks is governed by the *Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.368). The plan was first adopted by the BOF during the December 1995 meeting and was updated at the December 2015 meeting. The purpose of this plan is to provide management guidelines to ensure an adequate spawning escapement of coho salmon into the Nushagak River system.

Kvichak River Drainage Sockeye Salmon Management Plan

To ensure biological spawning escapement requirements of sockeye salmon into the Kvichak River drainage, the BOF adopted the *Kvichak River Drainage Sockeye Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 67.025) during the January 2001 meeting. The impetus for this plan was the poor sockeye salmon runs of 1999 and 2000. This is an inriver plan that addresses sport and subsistence fisheries only.

Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan

In February 1990, the BOF overhauled nearly all regulations for rainbow trout fisheries in the 2 management areas now known as the Bristol Bay Management Area and the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Sport Fish Management Area. The new regulations implemented the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan*¹ without adopting the plan’s language into regulation. However, the BOF recognized the plan as a guiding policy to achieve and maintain a more orderly and comprehensive mix of rainbow trout angling opportunities throughout the 2 areas. The overriding philosophy of the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan* is one of conservative wild stock management. In 1998, the BOF adopted *Criteria for Establishing Special Management Areas for Trout* (5 AAC 75.013; subsequently amended as 5 AAC 75.210). This regulation

¹ ADF&G. 1990. Southwest Alaska rainbow trout management plan. Located at: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage.

embodies most of the original criteria that are still used in the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan*.

Statewide Policy and Plan for Management of Sustainable Wild Rainbow Trout Fisheries

The BOF adopted the *Policy for the Management of Sustainable Wild Trout Fisheries* (5 AAC 75.222), and *Statewide Management Standards for Wild Trout* (5 AAC 75.220) in March 2003. The policy provides principles and criteria to ensure conservation, sustainability, and optimal sustained yield and benefits for wild trout, and provides direction to the BOF and ADF&G as to how those principles and criteria are to be applied in the regulatory process. The plan ensures conservative management of wild trout fisheries while recognizing existing plans and policies that guide management of wild trout on a regional basis.

In most areas of the state, conservative management for wild rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, and steelhead, in combination, means a bag and possession limit of 2 fish, of which only 1 may be 20 inches or greater in length, with an annual limit of 2 fish 20 inches or greater in length. The plan recognizes existing plans and policies that guide management of wild trout by region and allows the BOF to adopt regulations that deviate from the plans as necessary to address sustainability or optimal sustained yield issues, establish special management areas, or liberalize harvest opportunities in specific water bodies under other criteria.

Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy for Alaska

In March 2000, the BOF adopted the *Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries* (5 AAC 39.222), which became an integral part of the BOF's yearly review of the state's salmon fisheries. The policy contains 5 fundamental principles for sustainable salmon management, each with criteria that are to be used by ADF&G and the BOF to evaluate the health of the state's salmon fisheries and to address any conservation issues and problems as they arise. The 5 fundamental principles of the policy are as follows:

- 1) Wild salmon populations and their habitats must be protected to maintain resource productivity.
- 2) Fisheries shall be managed to allow escapements within ranges necessary to conserve and sustain potential salmon production and maintain normal ecosystem functioning.
- 3) Effective salmon management systems should be established and applied to regulate human activities that affect salmon.
- 4) Public support and involvement for sustained use and protection of salmon resources must be maintained.
- 5) In the face of uncertainty, salmon stocks, fisheries, artificial propagation, and essential habitats must be managed conservatively.

The policy requires that ADF&G describe the extent to which salmon fisheries and their habitats conform to the explicit principles outlined above and their associated criteria. If these principles or criteria are deemed to be unmet within a given fishery, the BOF reviews fishery management plans or create new ones. If a salmon stock of concern is identified in this review, the management plan will contain measures to address the concern, including needed research, habitat improvements, or new regulations.

EMERGENCY ORDERS ISSUED IN 2024

There were 3 emergency orders issued in 2024 (Table 1).

Table 1.—Emergency orders for 2024.

Emergency order	Date issued	Effective		
		Time	Day	Date
2-K-5-31-24	1 Jul	12:01 AM	Wednesday	3 Jul
2-RS-5-33-24	1 Jul	12:01 AM	Wednesday	3 Jul
2-RS-5-34-24	1 Jul	12:01 AM	Wednesday	3 Jul

Note: All emergency orders expired on 31 July (for Chinook salmon) or 31 December (all other species) at 11:59 PM of the year of issue unless superseded by a subsequent emergency order.

EMERGENCY ORDER 2-K-5-31-24 prohibited the retention of Chinook salmon of any size and prohibited the use of bait and multiple hooks in all waters of the Nushagak–Mulchatna River drainage. Chinook salmon were not to be retained or possessed, nor removed from the water, and must be released immediately. Only 1 unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure was allowed.

Justification: The passage of Chinook salmon was projected to fall below the escapement goal range.

EMERGENCY ORDER 2-RS-5-33-24 increased the bag and possession limits for sockeye salmon from 5 to 10 fish in all waters of the Wood River drainage. The bag and possession limit for other salmon, except Chinook and sockeye salmon, remained at 5 fish. These limits for salmon, other than Chinook and sockeye salmon, were in combination with the more liberal limits for sockeye salmon.

Justification: The passage of sockeye salmon was projected to exceed the escapement goal for the Wood River drainage.

EMERGENCY ORDER 2-RS-5-34-24 increased the bag and possession limit for sockeye salmon from 5 to 10 fish in all waters of the Nushagak–Mulchatna River drainage, excluding the Wood River drainage. The bag and possession limit for other salmon, except Chinook and sockeye salmon, remained at 5 fish. These limits were in combination with the more liberal limit for sockeye salmon.

Justification: The passage of sockeye salmon had exceeded the escapement goal for the Nushagak River drainage.

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR MANAGEMENT

ADF&G utilizes several sources of information to manage fisheries in the BBMA. One of the primary means for monitoring sport fishing effort, catch, and harvest is a mail survey by ADF&G called the Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS;² Mills 1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1994; Howe et al. 1995, 1996). This annual survey began in 1977 and estimates the number of angler-days of sport fishing effort expended by anglers in Alaskan waters (residents as well as nonresidents) and harvest by species. The survey provides estimates of both effort and

² Hereafter, “SWHS” will refer to these references for 1977–1995 data and to the Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet] Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish for data 1996–present. Recent SWHS estimates are available from: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>.

harvest by general location, but it is not designed to provide estimates of effort directed toward a single species. Beginning in 1990, the survey was modified to include estimates of catch (release plus harvest) by site. The BBMA includes portions of the SWHS Area R (the Naknek River Drainage–Alaska Peninsula Area excluding the saltwater fisheries and freshwater fisheries of Cold Bay and the Aleutian Islands), and the entirety of Areas S (Kvichak Area) and Area T (Nushagak Area). SWHS estimates were available through 2024 for this report.

In addition to the SWHS, ADF&G Division of Sport Fish (SF) operated a freshwater logbook program from 2006 to 2018, which required sport fishing guide businesses to record freshwater sport fishing effort, catch, and harvest by commercially guided clients (Sigurdsson and Powers 2009-2014; ADF&G freshwater logbook database). This program was discontinued in 2018. Past reports provide these freshwater logbook data (Dye and Borden 2018; Borden and Adickes 2022).

Creel surveys have been selectively used to ground-truth the SWHS and the freshwater logbook program for fisheries of interest or for fisheries that require more detailed information or inseason management. For BBMA, these include creel surveys of the Alagnak River (Brookover 1989; Dunaway 1990a, 1994; Naughton and Gryska 2000; Collins and Dye 2003), the Kvichak River (Dunaway and Fleischman 1996b), Lower Talarik Creek (Russell 1977; Minard 1990; Minard et al. 1992; and unpublished data³), and the Nushagak River (Dye 2012).

ADF&G also conducts stock assessment projects. For example, on the Nushagak and Mulchatna Rivers, significant monitoring and stock assessment projects have been conducted intermittently since 1986 (Minard 1987; Minard and Brookover 1988a; Dunaway et al. 1991; Dunaway and Bingham 1992; Dunaway and Fleischman 1995; Minard et al. 1998; Dye 2005; Cappiello and Dye 2006; Dye 2012).

Commercial and subsistence harvests of salmon are monitored and reported by the ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries (Elison et al. 2025). For larger fisheries, forecasts of each season's run are provided by the Division of Commercial Fisheries and are reported in a statewide salmon forecast summary (Donnellan and Munro 2024). Commercial and subsistence harvest estimates were available through 2024 for this report

Escapements of some salmon stocks are monitored by counting towers, sonar, or aerial index surveys. For example, in the Nushagak River, escapement is estimated by sonar as the salmon migrate upriver (Elison et al. 2025). Historically, aerial index surveys of Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) in the drainages of the Nushagak, Togiak, Alagnak, and Naknek Rivers were also conducted. Due to budget shortfalls, most of these aerial index surveys were suspended from 2009 through 2024.

SPORT FISHING EFFORT AND HARVEST

The BBMA contains some of the most productive waters in the world for Pacific salmon, rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, Arctic char, and Dolly Varden. The area has been acclaimed for its sport fisheries since the 1930s. Total sport fishing effort in the BBMA increased from about 25,000 angler-days in 1977 to a peak of more than 116,000 angler-days in 1995 (SWHS). Angler effort

³ Memos summarizing the Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout projects, located at Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Dillingham are as follows: 1997 data from J. Dye, dated October 15, 1997, Dillingham; 1998 data from C. Schwanke, dated December 1, 1998; 1999 data from J. Dye to Bob Clark, dated November 15, 2000; 2000 data from J. Dye and M. Cavin to Bob Clark, dated November 15, 2000; 2001 data from J. Dye to Bob Clark, dated January 2002; 2003 data from C. Collins to James Hasbrouck, dated August 12, 2004; 2004 data from T. Jaecks to James Hasbrouck, dated January 23, 2005.

during 2024 was 64,264 angler-days (Table 2). Based on recent trends and current economic stability, sport fishing effort is expected to stabilize or slowly increase during the foreseeable future.

Historically, more than 60% (1977–2006 average) of the sport fishing effort has occurred in the Eastern Section of the BBMA (Figure 2). Effort is still predominant in the Eastern Section, and the percentage increased slightly to 68% in 2024 (Figure 2). The Central Section typically accounts for the second largest portion of effort, followed by the Western Section. Distribution of effort among sections during 2024 was similar to other recent seasons (Figure 2).

Sockeye salmon, Chinook salmon, and coho salmon have greater harvests than other sport fish in the BBMA. Although smaller, harvests of chum and pink salmon, Dolly Varden, Arctic char, Arctic grayling, and rainbow trout are taken annually (Table 3). The apparent decline in harvests of nonsalmon species is probably due in part to the accepted catch-and-release ethic among sport anglers as well as bag limit reductions for Dolly Varden and Arctic char, northern pike (*Esox lucius*), and Arctic grayling adopted by the BOF in 1997, 2001, and 2006.

Table 2.—Sport fishing effort in angler-days by section and drainage, Bristol Bay Management Area, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Naknek River	12,723	16,202	14,621	15,813	14,851	14,279	13,973	7,850	13,756	16,047	12,146	12,754	13,759
Brooks River	3,426	3,696	2,265	2,994	2,326	2,125	1,695	1,694	2,186	2,230	3,788	2,319	1,849
Kvichak River	4,080	4,132	3,767	4,850	4,227	3,607	3,254	2,863	4,584	4,866	4,239	3,961	5,363
Copper River	3,082	3,424	2,269	2,564	2,653	1,979	1,997	1,475	2,367	1,360	1,312	1,702	1,196
Alagnak River	4,782	6,013	6,908	5,668	7,001	9,550	6,095	5,242	7,356	3,925	4,447	5,413	7,070
Newhalen River	1,498	429	4,033	2,049	2,860	974	3,911	854	1,611	1,789	1,142	1,861	1,016
Lake Clark	3,193	3,336	3,827	3,814	3,831	3,132	2,718	955	3,421	2,083	2,977	2,431	3,706
Other	10,745	12,757	10,310	11,704	11,662	13,564	10,564	10,972	13,305	11,469	8,897	11,041	9,845
Subtotal ^a	43,529	49,989	48,000	49,456	49,411	49,210	44,207	31,905	48,586	43,769	38,948	41,483	43,804
Central													
Nushagak River	16,082	17,576	13,766	17,737	13,299	13,705	12,292	3,723	11,917	11,104	6,944	9,196	5,893
Mulchatna River	1,415	1,338	2,949	1,169	1,806	1,841	4,595	837	948	1,106	1,361	1,769	1,575
Agulowak River	1,176	1,991	1,346	935	1,660	865	1,201	1,025	725	1,505	1,041	1,099	873
Agulukpak River	689	796	678	1,131	1,026	599	389	159	668	386	554	431	857
Wood River Lakes ^b	7,988	6,665	3,683	2,434	3,754	4,065	3,301	2,230	2,992	3,606	3,097	3,045	4,257
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	1,485	2,958	1,624	636	3,030	3,052	1,283	342	1,876	1,301	2,716	1,504	2,918
Other	619	397	691	237	645	424	270	108	1,536	2,761	415	1,018	1,626
Subtotal ^a	29,454	31,721	24,737	24,279	25,220	24,551	23,331	8,424	20,662	21,769	16,128	18,063	17,999
Western													
Togiak River	3,170	8,098	4,129	3,159	4,960	3,803	3,188	2,155	3,688	3,050	2,491	2,914	2,077
Other	439	237	533	348	1,510	969	279	0	1,307	448	196	446	384
Subtotal ^a	3,609	8,335	4,662	3,507	6,470	4,772	3,467	2,155	4,995	3,498	2,687	3,360	2,461
Total	76,592	90,045	77,399	77,242	81,101	78,533	71,005	42,484	74,243	69,036	57,763	62,906	64,264

Source: Estimates from Alaska Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) were obtained from the Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025), <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Note: “Angler-day” is the time spent fishing by 1 person for any part of a day.

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugaluk through 1998. Prior to 1997, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were also included in Wood River Lakes.

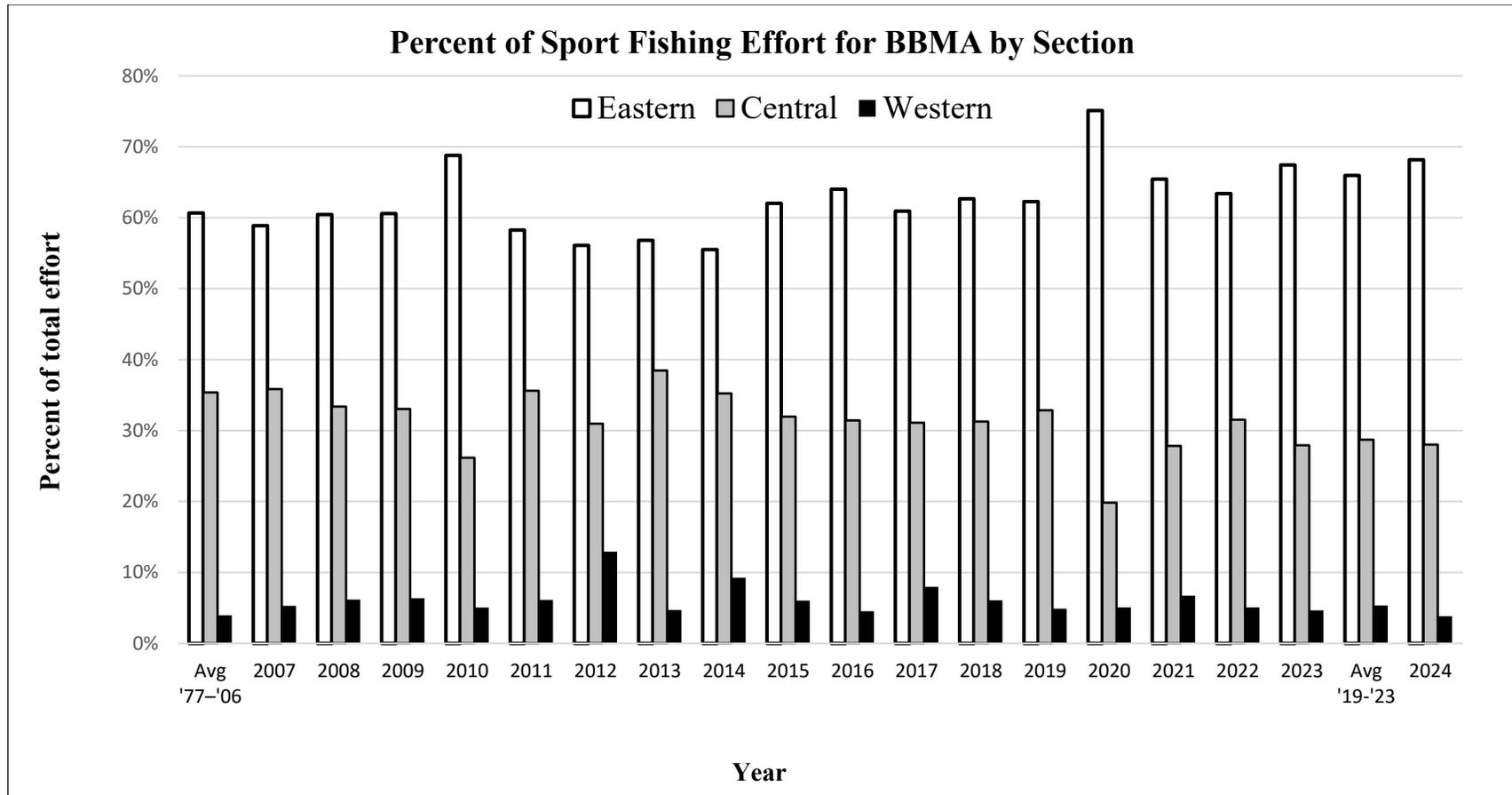


Figure 2.—Percent of total sport fishing effort by section for the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2007–2024, including 1977–2006 and 2019–2023 averages.

Source: Calculated from Alaska Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) estimates obtained from the Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025), <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data from Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Table 3.—Numbers of fish harvested by species in sport fisheries in the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2013–2024.

Species	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Sockeye salmon	13,539	14,866	18,837	15,535	23,500	19,696	19,052	16,418	33,052	20,592	23,122	22,447	25,920
Chinook salmon	9,929	10,745	9,578	11,873	9,844	12,806	9,866	3,138	5,873	4,777	4,350	5,601	4,646
Coho salmon	12,380	20,816	18,145	14,178	19,794	24,725	16,832	9,084	13,480	19,288	19,150	15,567	19,681
Dolly Varden/ Arctic char	1,679	2,138	2,602	1,588	1,282	1,006	1,379	656	2,177	1,095	2,050	1,471	1,038
Rainbow trout	323	329	1,025	694	498	865	520	647	406	300	384	451	276
Arctic grayling	640	802	1,243	827	790	734	784	90	555	258	556	449	322
Pink salmon	124	1,082	60	849	101	77	0	61	745	2899	58	753	1,544
Lake trout	719	598	736	542	411	238	349	50	55	39	418	182	177
Chum salmon	2,946	1,348	939	1,412	1,746	1,467	2,007	17	728	1,582	667	1,000	833
Northern pike	917	671	869	216	409	202	745	160	765	104	540	463	966
Total	43,196	53,395	54,034	47,714	58,375	61,816	51,534	30,321	57,836	50,934	51,295	52,281	55,403

Source: Estimates from Alaska Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) were obtained from the Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025), <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Totals in this table may not sum to totals of harvest by location (e.g., Table 4) because the harvest in this table includes SWHS areas S, T, and R, with area R overlapping with the Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands Management Area.

CHINOOK SALMON FISHERIES

AREAWIDE FISHERY DESCRIPTION

Historically, the Bristol Bay commercial fishery, in contrast to the sport and subsistence fisheries, generally took the majority of the area’s annual Chinook salmon harvest. Most of this Chinook salmon harvest occurs during the sockeye salmon commercial fishery. From 2014 through 2023, total annual commercial harvest in Bristol Bay ranged from 6,944 to 57,243 Chinook salmon, with an average of 25,801 fish (Elison et al. 2025: page 61). However, total Bristol Bay commercial Chinook salmon harvest was 4,583 fish in 2024 (Elison, et al. 2025: page 61), which is similar to the total Bristol Bay sport harvest of 4,433 Chinook salmon during that year (Table 4). Average annual subsistence harvest from 2014 to 2023 was 11,313 Chinook salmon from the Nushagak District and 631 from the Togiak District (Elison et al. 2024: pages 73–74).

Bristol Bay is home to several world-class Chinook salmon sport fisheries. The peak of these sport fisheries occurs from mid-June to late July in the lower reaches of the Alagnak, Naknek, Nushagak, and Togiak Rivers, as well as several smaller rivers (Figure 3). In the BBMA, the Chinook salmon sport fisheries, like the sport fisheries for most other species, are fished primarily by guided anglers. With few exceptions, the guided to unguided angler ratio is about 3 to 1. Anglers usually keep less than 50% of the fish they catch, especially since the adoption of areawide annual bag limits (see *Areawide Fishery Management and Objectives* section below).

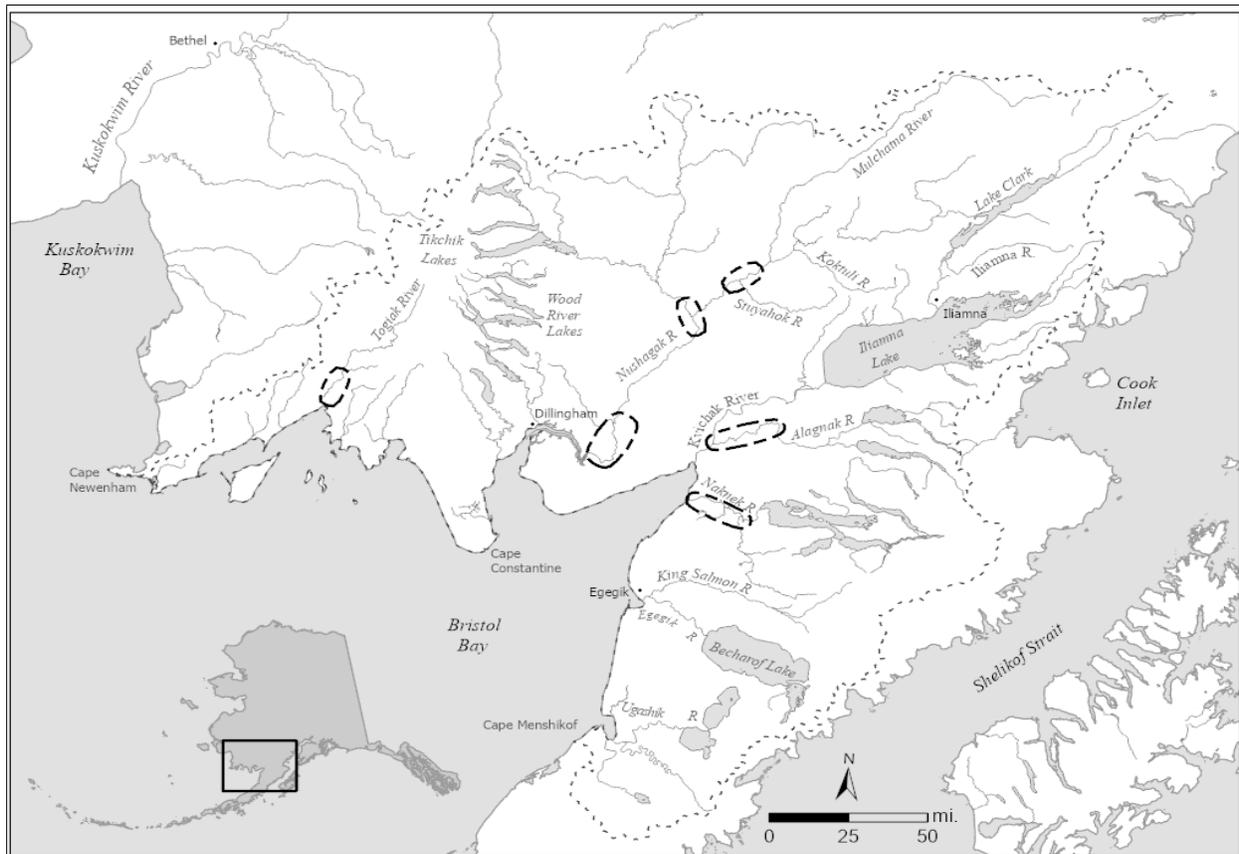


Figure 3.—Popular Chinook salmon sport fisheries (delineated with black dashes) in the Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area (delineated with dots).

The 2019–2023 sport harvest estimate for the entire BBMA averaged 5,601 Chinook salmon (Table 3). The Chinook salmon sport harvest of 4,646 fish accounted for approximately 8% of the sport salmon harvest in Bristol Bay in 2024 (calculated from Table 3). This was similar to the 2024 commercial harvest of 4,583 Chinook salmon (Elison et al. 2025: page 61). In general, most of the sport harvest of Chinook salmon in the BBMA occurs in the Nushagak River in the Central Section of the BBMA, which had about 71% of the total BBMA Chinook salmon harvest in 2024 (3,158 fish). Other notable harvests in the BBMA include the Naknek (595) and Alagnak (239) Rivers in the Eastern Section. There was no reported Chinook salmon harvest in the Western Section (Table 4).

AREAWIDE FISHERY MANAGEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Since 1960, bag limits for Chinook salmon in the Bristol Bay Management Area have become increasingly conservative and complex (Table 5). The most conservative and sweeping regulatory changes to the area’s Chinook salmon fisheries were adopted during the November and December 1997 BOF meetings. A Bristol Bay-wide annual limit of 5 Chinook salmon was adopted, and in the Nushagak River drainage, anglers were further restricted to an annual limit of 4 Chinook salmon. The daily bag limits in several other major fisheries were reduced slightly. Season closures after July 24 or July 31 were adopted for all Bristol Bay waters to protect spawning Chinook salmon.

In 2001, a statewide regulation (5 AAC 67.010 [b]) created a daily bag and possession limit for Chinook salmon under 20 inches of 10 per day in all fresh waters open to Chinook salmon sport fishing, except for the Nushagak River drainage. Chinook salmon under 20 inches do not count toward the annual limit and are in addition to the daily bag limit for Chinook salmon 20 inches or longer. The only exception is the Nushagak River daily bag and possession limit of 5 Chinook salmon under 20 inches per day.

In the Alagnak, Egegik, Kvichak, Igushik, Naknek, Snake, Togiak, and Ugashik River drainages, the bag and possession limits for Chinook salmon are all 3 per day, 1 of which may exceed 28 inches in length (5 AAC 67.020 [1]).

Anglers are prohibited from removing a Chinook salmon from the water before releasing the fish in all fresh waters of Bristol Bay. Any Chinook salmon removed from the water must be kept and becomes part of an angler’s daily bag limit. The goal of this regulation is to improve survival of released Chinook salmon and to encourage anglers to be more careful with the fish they release.

Table 4.—Sport harvest of Chinook salmon by section and drainage in the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Naknek River	1,242	1,071	1,096	2,070	2,073	2,029	1,192	686	723	102	711	683	595
Brooks River	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kvichak River	111	41	0	17	263	82	179	8	0	23	111	64	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0	0	0	59	0	0	0	0	12	0
Alagnak River	823	983	206	385	394	1,596	261	16	180	165	201	165	239
Newhalen River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	12	0
Lake Clark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	15	134	379	465	100	61	0	0	0	0	29	6	187
Eastern subtotal^a	2,191	2,229	1,681	2,951	2,830	3,768	1,691	710	903	290	1,110	941	1,021
Central													
Nushagak River	6,332	5,796	6,988	8,328	5,671	7,778	6,055	1,832	3,960	3,421	2,756	3,605	3,158
Mulchatna River	236	337	138	83	95	250	140	107	87	237	0	114	0
Agulowak River	0	16	0	17	0	0	37	0	0	0	0	7	0
Agulukpak River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood River Lakes ^b	0	0	0	0	21	0	111	64	22	0	0	39	0
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	117	0	108	0	82	164	111	0	0	0	57	34	254
Other	0	127	59	68	147	0	0	0	65	147	57	54	0
Central subtotal^a	6,685	6,276	7,293	8,496	6,016	8,192	6,454	2,003	4,134	3,805	2,870	3,853	3,412
Western													
Togiak River	900	2,166	983	787	978	641	1,617	425	836	477	286	728	0
Other	18	0	0	0	20	0	104	0	0	0	0	21	0
Western subtotal^a	918	2,166	983	787	998	641	1,721	425	836	477	286	749	0
Bristol Bay total	9,794	10,671	9,957	12,234	9,844	12,601	9,866	3,138	5,873	4,572	4,266	5,543	4,433

Source: Estimates from Alaska Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) were obtained from the Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025), <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugluk through 1998. Prior to 1997, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were also included in Wood River Lakes.

Table 5.–Bag limit regulatory changes affecting Chinook salmon in the Bristol Bay Management Area.

Effective	Regulation
1965	10 salmon (all species combined) per day, no size limit
1972	5 king salmon per day, only 2 may be over 26 inches
1976	5 king salmon per day, only 2 may be over 28 inches
1988	3 king salmon per day, only 2 may be over 28 inches
1998	Daily bag and possession limits on several waters reduced to 3 per day, only 2 over 28 inches. Annual limit of 5 king salmon. Spawning closures for all waters.
2001	Daily bag and possession limits on most Eastern and most Central Section waters (except Nushagak and Wood River drainages) reduced to 3 per day, only 1 over 28 inches. All waters except Nushagak drainage allow harvest of 10 per day under 20 inches. All fish released must remain in the water from Cape Menshikof to Cape Constantine.
2003	All fish released must remain in the water from Cape Menshikof to Cape Pierce. Harvest of 5 per day under 20 inches allowed in the Nushagak drainage.
2012	Bag and possession limit for king salmon in all drainages from Cape Constantine to Cape Newenham changed to 2, only 1 fish over 28 inches in length.
2022	Use of bait and retention of king salmon over 28 inches in length prohibited in the Togiak River Drainage.
2023	Annual limit of king salmon over 28 inches in length reduced to 1 fish in the Nushagak River Drainage under the <i>Nushagak District King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan</i> .

Note: Chinook salmon are referred to as king salmon in the regulatory language

NAKNEK RIVER

Fishery Description

The Naknek River (Figure 3) is located on the Alaska Peninsula near the communities of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek. The Naknek River Chinook salmon sport fishery commences May 1 and continues through July 31, when it closes by regulation to protect spawning fish. The peak angling weeks are from about June 22 to July 15. Effort is concentrated in a 15-mile stretch of the Naknek River adjacent to the community of King Salmon.

This fishery is one of the most popular sport fisheries in the area and accounted for roughly 12% of the average total harvest by sport anglers in the BBMA from 2019 to 2023 (calculated from Table 4). Several factors contribute to the popularity of the Naknek River, including ease of access and regularly scheduled airline service into King Salmon. This fishery has a significant amount of unguided effort, reasonably good catch rates, and a relatively high retention rate.

The estimated Naknek River drainage Chinook salmon sport harvest from 2019 through 2023 ranged from a high of 1,192 in 2019 to a low of 102 in 2022, with an average (2019–2023) of 683 fish (Table 4). Angler effort for all species on the Naknek River has decreased from highs of over 20,000 angler-days in the early 2000s to a 5-year (2019–2023) average of 12,754 (Dye et al. 2006; Table 2).

Fishery Management and Objectives

Concern over low escapements and increasing sport harvest prompted the 1987 BOF to adopt regulations addressing Naknek River Chinook salmon. The key elements were as follows:

- 1) Establish a season for Chinook salmon (May 1 to July 31).
- 2) Designate artificial-lure-only.
- 3) Reduce bag and possession limits to 3 per day, 1 of which may be over 28 inches.

Beginning in the early 1990s, increasing portions of Pauls and King Salmon Creeks were closed to Chinook salmon fishing to protect spawning stocks in these waters. In 1995, the outlets of Pauls and King Salmon Creeks into the Naknek River were closed to angling to protect important holding areas for Chinook salmon.

In 1997, closures to Chinook salmon angling in Pauls and King Salmon Creeks were clarified, and an annual limit of 5 Chinook salmon per angler was adopted for this fishery. This annual harvest limit was also areawide in the BBMA and required anglers to record the date and location of each Chinook salmon taken.

With the advent of the annual limit on Chinook salmon, local anglers expressed strong interest in taking smaller Chinook salmon on the Naknek River. In January 2001, the BOF added the opportunity to harvest 10 Chinook salmon per day under 20 inches in length and prohibited anglers from removing Chinook salmon from the water if the fish were to be released.⁴ During the January 2001 meeting, the BOF also restricted most of Big Creek to catch-and-release angling for Chinook salmon. The Big Creek regulation grew from a locally generated proposal addressing concerns for the Big Creek Chinook salmon escapement. In 2013, Big Creek and waters of the Naknek River drainage within a ¼-mile radius of its confluence with Big Creek were closed to sport fishing for Chinook salmon. Big Creek was reopened to catch-and-release sport fishing after the 2015 BOF meeting, and the ¼-mile area from the confluence of Big Creek with the Naknek River was reopened to sport fishing for Chinook salmon.

In the drainages of the Alagnak, Egegik, Kvichak, Igushik, Naknek, Snake, Togiak, and Ugashik Rivers, the current bag and possession limits for Chinook salmon are all 3 per day, 1 of which may exceed 28 inches in length (5 AAC 67.020 [1]). Anglers are prohibited from removing a Chinook salmon from the water before releasing the fish in all fresh waters of Bristol Bay. Any Chinook salmon removed from the water must be kept and becomes part of an angler's daily bag limit. The goal of this regulation is to improve survival of released Chinook salmon and to encourage anglers to be more careful with the fish they release.

Historically, escapement of Chinook salmon for the Naknek River was indexed by fixed-wing aerial surveys of the 4 primary spawning areas during the presumed peak of spawning in early to mid-August. Aerial counts were left unexpanded and were considered minimum estimates of escapement. These escapement surveys indicated the mainstem of the Naknek River, along with Big Creek, composed approximately 90% of the observed escapement.

Surveys to estimate abundance for Naknek River Chinook salmon ceased in 2009 due to budget shortfalls, and the escapement goal was dropped in 2015 due to concerns over the ability to reliably estimate abundance via aerial surveys (Erickson et al. 2015). Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by the Division of Commercial Fisheries (CF) and are reported in the ADF&G Fishery Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2022). The Division of Sport Fish (SF) has also conducted monitoring and stock assessment projects for Naknek River Chinook salmon (Coggins and Bingham 1993; Gryska and Naughton 2001; Schwanke and Reed 2011).

Some Naknek River anglers have been concerned about the management of the Naknek–Kvichak District commercial sockeye salmon fishery with respect to its impacts on the Chinook salmon

⁴ Southwest Alaska sport fishing regulations summary, 2022 (effective until the 2023 summary is issued) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

sport fishery. When conservation concerns for the Kvichak River sockeye salmon stocks require area restrictions in the Naknek–Kvichak District, commercial fishing may be allowed in the lower reaches of the Naknek River under the terms of the *Naknek River Sockeye Salmon Special Harvest Area Plan* (NRSOA; 5 AAC 06.360). This plan, adopted by the BOF in 1986, can result in a higher percentage of the Naknek River Chinook salmon escapement being exposed to gillnets, raising the concern of some guides and anglers. The BOF has amended the plan several times and in 2001, adopted amendments to address the quality of salmon of all species escaping through the NRSOA openings.

2024 Season

There was an estimated sport harvest of 595 Chinook salmon from the Naknek River in 2024 (Tables 4 and 6), and anglers reported that sport fishing success for Chinook salmon was below average. Commercial harvest of Chinook salmon in the Naknek–Kvichak District during 2024 was also below average at approximately 739 fish (Table 6). The preliminary estimate of subsistence harvest of Chinook salmon in the Naknek–Kvichak District during 2024 was below average as well, at approximately 226 fish (Table 6).

Table 6.–Chinook salmon commercial, subsistence, and sport harvest plus escapement for the Naknek River, 1995–2024, including the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Harvest			Total	Escapement index ^d
	Commercial ^a	Subsistence ^b	Sport ^c		
1995	5,130	1,431	4,153	10,714	4,960
1996	4,273	1,574	2,984	8,831	5,010
1997	3,132	2,764	4,231	10,127	10,453
1998	2,722	2,433	3,443	8,598	5,505
1999	1,439	1,567	2,856	5,862	NA
2000	1,077	894	2,105	4,076	3,233
2001	995	869	2,656	4,520	6,340
2002	1,002	837	2,170	4,009	7,503
2003	611	1,221	2,412	4,244	6,081
2004	1,496	1,075	3,004	5,575	12,878
2005	1,458	1,047	2,140	4,645	NA
2006	2,333	881	2,558	5,772	NA
2007	1,520	672	1,431	3,623	5,498
2008	1,344	719	1,285	3,348	6,559
2009	1,026	392	2,279	3,697	NA
2010	1,060	422	1,266	2,748	NA
2011	1,962	550	2,416	4,928	NA
2012	2,306	785	2,288	5,379	NA
2013	1,360	502	1,242	3,104	NA
2014	1,648	562	1,071	3,127	NA
2015	2,926	678	1,096	4,700	NA
2016	2,797	936	2,070	5,803	NA
2017	2,477	757	2,073	5,307	NA
2018	2,398	943	2,029	5,370	NA
2019	2,743	590	1,192	4,525	NA
2020	816	306	686	1,808	NA
2021	990	418	723	2,131	NA

-continued-

Table 6.–Page 2 of 2.

Year	Harvest				Escapement index ^d
	Commercial ^a	Subsistence ^b	Sport ^c	Total	
2022	1,154	189	102	1,445	NA
2023	1,036	325 ^e	711	2,072	NA
Average 1985–1994	5,508	1,329	4,362	11,199	6,065
Percent of total	49%	12%	39%	NA	NA
Average 1995–2018	2,021	1,021	2,302	5,338	NA
Percent of total	38%	19%	43%	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	1,348	366	683	2,396	NA
Percent of total	56%	15%	28%	NA	NA
2024	739	226 ^e	595	1,569	NA

Source: **Commercial:** 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A4); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A4); 2008–2024: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A4).

Subsistence: 1985–2015: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Appendix A1); 2016–2020: Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Escapement: 1985–2009: Erickson et al. (2015: Appendix A2).

Note: “NA” means data not available.

^a Naknek–Kvichak district commercial harvests probably include Naknek, Alagnak, and Kvichak stocks. The harvests reported for Naknek River stocks are therefore considered maximum.

^b Naknek–Kvichak District harvests.

^c Sport fish harvest numbers from Naknek River drainage.

^d Actual raw counts made from fixed-wing aerial surveys. No escapement surveys were conducted 2009–2022 due to budget constraints.

^e Subsistence harvest estimates preliminary.

ALAGNAK (BRANCH) RIVER

Fishery Description

The Alagnak River (Figure 3), known locally as the Branch River, is located in the Kvichak River drainage, approximately 40 miles north of the community of King Salmon. The Alagnak River’s proximity to the community of King Salmon makes it an attractive alternative to fishing the more crowded Naknek River. In addition, it is the closest Chinook salmon fishery for many lodges near Iliamna Lake, where a few Chinook salmon spawn. The Chinook salmon fishery in the Alagnak River occurs mainly in the lower 15 miles of the river and peaks in mid- to late July, roughly 2 weeks later than other Chinook salmon fisheries in the area. Chinook salmon returning to the Alagnak River are typically larger than those found in other systems. Effort is primarily guided (about 80%) and nonresident (more than 90%; Dunaway 1990a, 1994; Naughton and Gryska 2000). Most anglers either fly in with float-equipped aircraft for 1-day trips or base themselves in one of several lodges located along the river. Retention rates for Chinook salmon average approximately 20% (Dunaway 1990a, 1994; Naughton and Gryska 2000), typical of most of the area’s Chinook salmon fisheries.

From 2019 through 2023, the largest estimated annual harvest of Chinook salmon from the Alagnak River was 261 fish in 2019 (Table 4). From 2019 through 2023, the average harvest of Chinook salmon in the Alagnak River was 165 fish (Table 4).

Since 2009, only 3 unexpanded escapement index counts of Chinook salmon were conducted in the Alagnak River, and these were considered minimums, averaging 902 fish (Table 7).

Table 7.—Unexpanded escapement counts and total sport fishing effort and harvest of Chinook salmon in the Alagnak River, 1995–2024, including the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Index count ^a	Sport effort ^b	Sport harvest ^b
1995	6,860	13,232	891
1996	9,885	8,121	931
1997	15,210	11,062	972
1998	4,148	7,715	1,531
1999	2,178	6,411	592
2000	2,220	7,589	501
2001	5,458	4,391	508
2002	3,765	7,886	305
2003	8,209	9,956	334
2004	6,755	8,267	1,146
2005	5,084	11,228	1,008
2006	4,278	11,747	1,052
2007	3,455	8,881	1,007
2008	1,825	8,652	394
2009	1,957	5,541	199
2010 ^c	NA	6,459	405
2011	NA	5,669	1,317
2012	NA	5,039	572
2013	NA	4,782	823
2014	NA	6,013	983
2015	NA	6,908	206
2016 ^d	1,283 ^d	5,668	385
2017 ^d	435 ^d	7,001	394
2018 ^d	988 ^d	9,550	1,596
2019	NA	6,095	261
2020	NA	5,242	16
2021	NA	7,356	180
2022	NA	3,925	165
2023	NA	4,447	201
2024	NA	7,935	239
Average 1985–1994	4,362	6,715	945

Source: Total effort and harvest: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Index counts: 1985–2018: Erickson et al. (2018: Appendix A1).

Note: “NA” means data not available.

^a Maximum index count; escapement goal is 2,700. Counts were discontinued after 2018.

^b Sport harvest and effort for Alagnak River only.

^c Emergency order issued July 15 reducing the bag limit to 1 fish over 20 inches and the seasonal limit to 3.

^d Escapement survey considered a minimum estimate.

Fishery Management and Objectives

Alagnak River drainage Chinook salmon fisheries were historically managed to achieve a sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 2,700 Chinook salmon as assessed by aerial survey. This goal was dropped after the 2018 Bristol Bay BOF meeting, and aerial surveys were discontinued.

Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025). Commercial harvests are reported for the Naknek–Kvichak District, which is a mixed-stock fishery composed of Kvichak, Naknek, and Alagnak River stocks. It is not possible to separate the commercial harvests by river of origin. SF has conducted significant monitoring and stock assessment projects on the Alagnak River in the recent past (Brookover 1989; Dunaway 1990a, 1994; Naughton and Gryska 2000; Collins and Dye 2003, 2005).

Management concerns for Chinook salmon stocks of the Alagnak River drainage center on an inability to estimate total exploitation rates. Allocation of commercial catches from the Naknek–Kvichak District to the river of origin is not yet possible, and the lack of inseason assessment of escapement makes it difficult to effectively manage this stock. Run timing of Chinook salmon stocks to the Alagnak River coincides with peak periods of commercial sockeye salmon fishing in the Naknek–Kvichak District. When sockeye salmon runs are sufficient to allow for liberal fishing schedules, substantial harvest of the Alagnak River Chinook salmon stocks is possible.

In 2015, a management plan was developed at the Bristol Bay BOF meeting to create an inriver sockeye salmon fishery to harvest surplus Alagnak River sockeye salmon. The plan stipulated that for the sockeye salmon fishery to occur, Alagnak River Chinook salmon needed to be surveyed in the previous year, and that the previous year’s Chinook salmon escapement goal be achieved. However, index counts since 2015 have been some of the lowest on record and yet estimated sport catch and catch per unit effort from the SWHS has been well above average in these same years, casting doubt on the ability to consistently estimate Chinook salmon spawning escapement in the Alagnak River via aerial survey. At the 2018 Bristol Bay BOF meeting, the goal was dropped partly based on these concerns, and so the aerial surveys were discontinued.

Terminal tackle in this river system has been restricted to single-hook artificial lures only for many years to protect rainbow trout. Through 1988, the bag and possession limits for Chinook salmon in the Alagnak River were 5 fish, only 2 over 28 inches in length. From 1989 through 1997, the limits were 3 fish, only 2 over 28 inches in length. Finally, in addition to a 5 fish annual limit and a spawning season closure on July 31, the BOF established a daily bag and possession limit of 3 fish, only 1 of which could exceed 28 inches in length. In January 2001, the BOF added the opportunity to harvest 10 Chinook salmon under 20 inches in length per day and prohibited anglers from removing Chinook salmon from the water if the fish were to be released.⁵

2024 Season

Based on recent returns and relatively low productivity of Chinook salmon stocks statewide, a below average run of Chinook salmon was expected to the Alagnak River drainage. Throughout the 2024 season, reports of average fishing success by guided sport fishing operators on the river served to confirm the preseason expectation. The 2024 harvest of 239 fish was slightly above the

⁵ Southwest Alaska sport fishing regulations summary, 2024 (effective until the 2025 summary is issued) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

2019–2023 average of 165 (Table 4), and the 2024 total estimated effort of 7,070 angler-days was above the 2019–2023 average effort of 5,413 angler-days (Table 2).

NUSHAGAK AND MULCHATNA RIVERS

Fishery Description

The Nushagak River drainage (Figure 3) supports the largest sport, commercial, and subsistence fisheries for Chinook salmon in the BBMA (Tables 4 and 8). Sport fishing effort is concentrated in 3 areas: the lower Nushagak River near the village of Portage Creek, the middle section of the Nushagak River near the village of Ekwok, and the midsection of the Mulchatna River between the Stuyahok and Kuktuli Rivers.

Between 1992 and 1997, effort in the Ekwok area was highly variable. Since about 1999, the lower river fishery has begun to expand steadily upriver to Ekwok, and the 2 areas are merging into a single fishery. The amount of angling for Chinook salmon in the middle section of the Mulchatna River seems to have diminished since bait was prohibited there in 1992. Although sport fishing for Chinook salmon does occur in some tributaries of the drainage, the overall impact on harvest is considered slight.

The uplands along much of the Nushagak River are privately owned. Choggiung Limited, an Alaska Native village corporation, administers a recreational land management program. Since its inception in the mid-1980s, this program has grown to include the lands of the adjoining villages of Ekwok, New Stuyahok, and in some years, Koliganek. Private and commercial land-use permits sold by the program allow anglers access to desirable campsites while engaged in sport fishing and hunting.

Chinook salmon escapement into the Nushagak and Mulchatna Rivers was estimated by aerial surveys beginning in 1967. Since 1987, sonar has been used to estimate the inriver run of Chinook salmon to the Nushagak River drainage. The sonar is considered an improvement over the aerial survey program because it gives a real-time estimate of escapement on which management decisions can be based.

Sonar counts of the Chinook salmon stocks in the Nushagak–Mulchatna drainage have been low in recent years. Except for 2018, all runs from 2017 through 2024 were well below average and did not achieve the lower end of the escapement goal once harvest upriver from the sonar was taken into account. The 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2018 runs exceeded the inriver goal. The 2017 count indicated a below-average run; however, several inseason factors confounded the 2017 counts, including extremely low water levels and a record run of sockeye salmon. These factors, coupled with inseason catches and anecdotal information indicating an average return, resulted in ADF&G deciding to fly postseason aerial spawning ground surveys to get additional assessments of spawning escapement. Although the counts were incomplete and the total spawning escapement was not estimated, these aerial counts indicated that the escapement was near average and probably greater than the sonar indicated. Estimated total runs of Nushagak–Mulchatna Rivers Chinook salmon averaged 59,272 fish from 2019 through 2023, ranging from 79,014 fish in 2019 to 40,255 in 2023 (Table 8).

Total harvest by commercial, subsistence, and sport fisheries averaged 19,400 Chinook salmon from 2019 through 2023 (Table 8). The majority (48%) of the average total harvest was taken by the commercial fishery, 33% was taken by the subsistence fishery, and 19% by sport anglers. Sport harvest of Chinook salmon averaged 3,696 fish from 2019 through 2023 (calculated from Table 8).

Table 8.—Chinook salmon commercial, subsistence, and sport harvests, and escapement for the Nushagak River drainage, 1995–2024, including the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Total run ^a	Harvests below sonar			Inriver sonar estimate	Harvests above sonar		Spawning escapement ^g	Total harvest
		Commercial ^b	Subsistence ^c	Sport ^d		Subsistence ^e	Sport ^f		
1995	271,127	79,943	10,800	2,238	178,146	2,419	2,713	173,014	98,113
1996	193,141	72,123	10,217	2,346	108,456	3,063	3,045	102,348	90,793
1997	247,327	64,390	11,397	931	170,610	2,981	2,567	165,062	82,265
1998	371,638	117,820	7,717	1,640	244,461	4,429	4,188	235,845	135,793
1999	149,248	11,178	7,450	934	129,686	2,477	3,304	123,906	25,342
2000	138,044	12,120	7,247	1,389	117,288	1,979	4,628	110,682	27,362
2001	213,306	11,746	7,972	1,600	191,988	3,372	4,299	184,317	28,989
2002	229,485	40,039	6,946	1,193	181,307	4,103	2,500	174,704	54,781
2003	225,594	43,485	13,399	2,203	166,507	4,448	3,752	158,307	67,287
2004	356,240	100,846	10,644	2,567	242,183	4,422	4,339	233,422	122,818
2005	307,701	62,764	7,951	2,863	234,123	4,471	5,702	223,950	83,751
2006	218,861	84,881	6,131	3,166	124,683	3,012	4,307	117,364	101,497
2007	125,435	51,831	9,564	3,581	60,459	3,411	6,088	50,960	74,475
2008	128,752	18,968	9,149	3,305	97,330	2,571	3,395	91,364	37,388
2009	117,936	24,693	9,312	2,451	81,480	2,796	3,903	74,781	43,155
2010	94,245	26,056	6,345	1,659	60,185	1,845	2,248	56,092	38,153
2011	145,232	26,927	8,485	1,542	108,278	2,981	3,302	101,995	43,237
2012	195,106	11,952	7,236	1,833	174,085	2,398	4,098	167,589	27,517
2013	132,782	10,213	6,889	1,971	113,709	4,201	4,714	104,794	27,988
2014	96,639	11,868	11,942	2,369	70,460	3,890	3,891	62,679	33,960
2015	160,713	50,675	9,505	2,514	98,019	2,209	4,720	91,090	69,623
2016	165,189	24,937	14,182	3,053	125,368	1,933	5,358	118,077	49,463
2017	100,101	33,376	8,912	2,834	56,961	1,827	3,161	51,973	50,110
2018	144,924	36,626	10,427	3,450	97,239	1,408	4,742	91,089	56,653
2019	79,014	22,725	7,162	3,600	46,763	2,967	2,706	41,090	39,160
2020	56,705	7,452	5,988	1,496	43,032	2,265	454	40,313	17,655

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Year	Total run ^a	Harvests below sonar			Inriver sonar estimate	Harvests above sonar		Spawning escapement ^g	Total harvest
		Commercial ^b	Subsistence ^c	Sport ^d		Subsistence ^e	Sport ^f		
2021	65,521	4,820	3,922	1,575	55,222	1,297	2,472	51,453	14,086
2022	54,867	5,431	3,723	1,279	44,434	1,721	2,142	40,571	14,296
2023	40,255	5,785	1,816 ^h	1,155	31,499	1,444 ^h	1,601	28,454	11,801
Average 1985–1994	229,487	47,839	8,532	1,630	171,486	3,124	3,155	165,207	64,280
Percent of total	NA	74%	13%	3%	NA	5%	5%	NA	NA
Average 1995–2018	188,699	42,894	9,159	2,235	134,709	3,027	3,957	127,725	61,271
Percent of total	NA	70%	15%	4%	NA	5%	6%	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	59,272	9,243	4,522	1,821	44,190	1,939	1,875	40,376	19,400
Percent of total	NA	48%	23%	9%	NA	10%	10%	NA	NA
2024	52,816	2,438	1,293 ^h	1,120	42,621	1,828 ^h	2,038	40,669	8,717

Source: Commercial (total Nushagak District): 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A19); 1997–2007: Elison et al. 2018 (2018: Appendix A19); 2008–2024: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A16).

Subsistence (above and below sonar). Data for 1985–2021 provided by Jordan Head, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Region II, Anchorage. Data for 2022–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport harvests (above and below sonar): Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 17, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Sonar estimates: 1985–2000: Buck et al. (2012: Table 10); 2001–2024: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A16).

Note: “NA” means data not available.

^a Run refers to an aggregation of salmon of all ages returning from ocean feeding grounds to spawn in any given year.

^b Total Nushagak District commercial harvest. 2001 to present includes personal use reported from commercial harvest.

^c Includes Nushagak River bound Chinook salmon harvests from below the sonar site.

^d Sport harvest total for 1985–1996 is 50% of the Nushagak River system sport harvest. Sport harvest total for 1997–2023 is Nushagak River sport harvest from Black Point to sonar.

^e Includes Ekwok area, Iowithla River, Klutuk River, Koliganek area, New Stuyahok area, Portage Creek area, Kokwok area, Mulchatna River, and an unknown Nushagak River watershed site.

^f Sport harvest total for 1985–1996 is 50% of the Nushagak River system sport harvest plus the Mulchatna River system, Tikchik–Nuyakuk Rivers, and Koktuli River sport harvests. Sport harvest total for 1997 to 2001 is 50% of the Nushagak River harvest plus the Black Point to Iowithla River, Nushagak River upstream of Iowithla River, Mulchatna River system, Tikchik–Nuyakuk Rivers and the Koktuli River harvests. Sport harvest total for 2002–2023 is Nushagak River drainage excluding Black Point to sonar.

^g Spawning escapement for 1985–1996 and 1998–2023 are sonar estimates minus subsistence and sport harvest above sonar. 1997 estimate is expanded from arial survey data, minus subsistence and sport harvest above sonar.

^h Subsistence harvest preliminary.

Fishery Management and Objectives

Under the *Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.361; adopted January 1992 and amended 6 times), Chinook salmon are managed to attain an inriver run of 95,000 fish, which is expected to provide 55,000 to 120,000 spawning fish per year, a reasonable opportunity to harvest Chinook salmon in the inriver subsistence fishery, and a guideline harvest level in the sport fishery of 5,000 fish (Table 9). If the inriver run exceeds 95,000 Chinook salmon, then the guideline harvest level does not apply. If the inriver run projection falls below 55,000 Chinook salmon, the sport fishery is restricted to nonretention with the use of bait prohibited, and the sockeye salmon commercial fishery in the Nushagak District is closed until the projected sockeye salmon escapement into the Wood River exceeds 100,000 fish. The subsistence fishery may also be restricted if the inriver run projection falls below 55,000 Chinook salmon.

Table 9.—A chronology of significant regulation changes for the Nushagak and Mulchatna Rivers.

Effective year	Regulation
1990	Sport season established from January 1 to July 25 upstream of and including the Iowithla River. Spawning season closure adopted to afford drainagewide protection to spawning king salmon stocks.
1992	Gear restricted to single-hook artificial lures for the portion of the Mulchatna River between the Koptuli and Stuyahok Rivers. <i>Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan</i> (5 AAC 06.361) is adopted, capping the sport harvest at 5,000 fish and establishing an escapement projection of 65,000 as the trigger for inseason restrictions in the sport fishery.
1994	<i>Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan</i> (5 AAC 06.361) is amended, setting the sport allocation as a guideline harvest rather than a cap.
1997	<i>Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan</i> (5 AAC 06.361) was amended, by establishing an escapement projection of 55,000 king salmon below which inseason restrictions in the sport fishery must be imposed. The 55,000 fish “trigger” was adopted when analysis showed this escapement level was not likely to show a difference in the expected productivity versus that expected at the 65,000 fish trigger. In addition, the 65,000 fish “trigger” had become quite disruptive to the sport fishery by precipitating frequent inseason restrictions. The daily bag and possession limits were reduced to 2 king salmon per day, only 1 over 28 inches. An annual harvest limit of 4 king salmon was adopted for the whole Nushagak–Mulchatna River drainage. Guides were prohibited from retaining any species of fish while guiding (all Bristol Bay.) The Kokwok River and the Nushagak River upstream from its confluence with Harris Creek were closed to angling for king salmon. A July 31 spawning season closure was adopted for the Nushagak River drainage downstream from the Iowithla River outlet. The commercial fishery was to be managed to allow pulses of king salmon to enter the Nushagak River untouched.
2001	The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) amended the management plan to allow a catch-and-release fishery when the final inriver abundance is projected to be below 55,000 fish but above 40,000 fish. The amended plan also stipulates that when the king salmon sport fishery is restricted to catch-and-release or is closed for conservation, the use of bait must be prohibited. A regulation allowing a daily bag limit of 10 king salmon less than 20 inches total length (508 mm TL) statewide, specifically excluded the Nushagak–Mulchatna River drainages until ADF&G could study the potential effects of the regulation on the spawning populations and the escapement goal. As with most other Bristol Bay drainages, the Nushagak River drainage was included in the regulation prohibiting anglers from removing king salmon from the water if the fish were to be released.

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Effective year	Regulation
2001	<p>The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) amended the management plan to allow a catch-and-release fishery when the final inriver abundance is projected to be below 55,000 fish but above 40,000 fish. The amended plan also stipulates that when the king salmon sport fishery is restricted to catch-and-release or is closed for conservation, the use of bait must be prohibited.</p> <p>A regulation allowing a daily bag limit of 10 king salmon less than 20 inches total length (508 mm TL) statewide, specifically excluded the Nushagak–Mulchatna River drainages until ADF&G could study the potential effects of the regulation on the spawning populations and the escapement goal.</p> <p>As with most other Bristol Bay drainages, the Nushagak River drainage was included in the regulation prohibiting anglers from removing king salmon from the water if the fish were to be released.</p>
2003	<p>A daily bag and possession limit for king salmon under 20 inches of 5 per day is implemented on the Nushagak drainage. King salmon under 20 inches do not count toward the annual limit of 4 and are in addition to the bag limit for king salmon 20 inches or longer. The <i>Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan</i> (5 AAC 06.361) was amended so that if inriver projections fall below 75,000, a bag limit of 1 per day, 1 in possession, no size limit, is imposed on the sport fishery. The seasonal limit would not be adjusted.</p>
2012	<p>The BOF adopted the following regulations: from May 1 to July 31, only 1 single-hook or single-hook lure may be used and the use of bait is allowed until an angler harvests a daily bag limit of king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, then that angler can only fish with 1 unbaited, single-hook or single-hook lure for the remainder of that day. Additionally, the numbers in the Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan were updated to reflect counts from the new dual frequency identification sonar counter.</p>
2018	<p>The BOF repealed 5 AAC 06.361 (d)(2) & (3) at the 2018 meeting. The repealed language dictated that if the inriver run fell below 95,000 king salmon, restrictive actions were required for the sport fishery and the directed king salmon commercial fishery would close. If the inriver run fell below 70,000 king salmon, then additional restrictive actions were required for the sport fishery. If the inriver run fell below 55,000 king salmon, the sport fishery was to be closed, and the sockeye salmon commercial fishery in the Nushagak District would close until the projected sockeye salmon escapement into the Wood River exceeds 100,000 fish.</p>
2023	<p>The BOF adopted 5 AAC 06.391 which outlines the methods of management intended to rebuild the Nushagak River king salmon stock. This includes the creation of an OEG for Nushagak River sockeye salmon to provide the flexibility for managers to restrict early season fishing for sockeye salmon to allow for king salmon passage through the district. An OEG provides guidance for conservative management based on the preseason forecast sockeye salmon run size. Setting OEG tiers that are greater than the upper end of the sustainable escapement goal for the Nushagak River sockeye allows more conservative management and less fishing time on sockeye salmon. Less fishing, especially early in the season, will reduce king salmon commercial harvest. Additionally, the annual sport fish bag limit for fish over 28" was reduced to 1 fish in an effort to get more of the larger female spawners through the fishery and onto the spawning grounds.</p>

Note: Chinook salmon are referred to as king salmon in the regulatory language.

In October of 2022, ADF&G recommended Nushagak River Chinook salmon as a stock of management concern and presented an Action Plan at the Bristol Bay area BOF meeting in November 2022. This plan summarized the background of the stock, the basis for recommendation, and the management recommendations made to the board. It also describes the research and monitoring of the stock, and criteria for future delisting. Based on this, the board met in March 2023 and developed the *Nushagak District King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan* (5 AAC 06.391).

Since 1972, smaller runs and increasing sport fishing effort have prompted restrictive actions on the inshore commercial and sport fisheries. To remain within the sport fishery guideline harvest level of 5,000 fish, the bag and possession limit is 2 Chinook salmon per day, of which only 1 may be longer than 28 inches in length (ADF&G 2009). Only 4 of the 5 Chinook salmon allowed in an angler's Bristol Bay annual harvest may come from the Nushagak–Mulchatna drainage, and only one of those 4 fish may be over 28 inches in length while the *Nushagak District King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan* is in effect. Additionally, in the Nushagak–Mulchatna drainage, there is a bag and possession limit of 5 per day for Chinook salmon under 20 inches. Chinook salmon under 20 inches do not count toward the annual limit of 4 and are in addition to the daily bag limit for Chinook salmon 20 inches or longer. Due to concerns over catch-and-release mortality, the BOF adopted regulations in 2012 requiring anglers to use single hooks and, after harvesting a bag limit, to use only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures for the remainder of that day.

Due to continued concerns regarding catch-and-release mortality of Chinook salmon caught in the Nushagak River sport fishery, SF began a 2-year study in 2017 estimating the 5-day survival of Chinook salmon caught and released on sport tackle in the lower Nushagak River. Preliminary results indicate that the 5-day mortality of catch-and-release Chinook salmon in the Nushagak River sport fishery is approximately 6.7% (Borden and Dye 2025).

Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025).

2024 Season

Due to uncertainty with past estimates of escapement, there was no preseason forecast for the 2024 Nushagak–Mulchatna Rivers Chinook salmon run. However, inriver escapement projections remained below the inriver goal throughout the season and, in accordance with the *Nushagak and Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan*, inseason restrictions were implemented on the sport fishery. The preliminary total estimate of Chinook salmon passing the sonar was 34,322 (Table 8). No directed Chinook salmon commercial fishing periods allowing large mesh gillnets occurred in the Nushagak District. A total of 2,438 Chinook salmon were reported harvested during the 2024 commercial sockeye salmon fishery openings (Table 8). Total harvests in the sport and subsistence fisheries in 2024 were 3,158 and 3,121, respectively. The estimated 2024 total run was 52,816 Chinook salmon (Table 8). Due to inseason projections being so low, an emergency order was issued for the sport fishery prohibiting the retention of all Chinook salmon and the use of bait.

TOGIAK RIVER

Fishery Description

The Togiak River (Figure 3) is 1 of 3 major river systems within the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. The Chinook salmon sport fishery on the Togiak River is concentrated along the lower 15 miles of the river and runs from late June through the month of July. The Togiak River supports the second largest Chinook salmon run in Bristol Bay, but its remote location, refuge regulations on guides, and ongoing friction between user groups have limited development of the fishery.

Based on SWHS estimates, the Chinook salmon sport harvest from 2019 through 2023 has ranged from a high of 1,617 in 2019 to a low of 286 in 2023 with an average of 728 fish from the Togiak

River drainage (Table 10). From 2019 through 2023, angler effort for the Togiak River drainage peaked in 2021 with a high of 3,688 angler-days; average effort for this time period was 2,914 angler-days (Table 2).

Fishery Management and Objectives

Escapement of Chinook salmon into the Togiak River has been estimated inconsistently by aerial survey from fixed-wing aircraft since 1980. Aerial counts are expanded to account for missed fish and, therefore, represent total escapement estimates. Due to budget constraints, aerial Chinook salmon counts were not conducted by SF from 2010 through 2024. In 2006, the escapement goal for Togiak River Chinook salmon became a sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 9,300 fish; however, lacking annual escapement information, this goal was dropped in 2012.

Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025). SF has conducted significant monitoring and stock assessment projects (Dunaway 1990b; Gryska and Naughton 2000; Schwanke 2013).

Table 10.—Escapement and commercial (Togiak District), subsistence, and sport harvests of Chinook salmon from the Togiak River, 1995–2024, including 1985–1994 average.

Year	Harvest			Total	Escapement ^c
	Commercial ^a	Subsistence ^a	Sport ^b		
1995	11,982	448	581	13,011	16,438
1996	8,603	471	790	9,864	11,476
1997	6,074	667	1,165	7,906	11,495
1998	14,132	782	763	15,677	11,666
1999	11,932	1,244	644	13,820	12,263
2000	7,862	1,116	470	9,448	16,897
2001	1,021	1,612	1,006	3,639	13,110
2002	2,801	703	76	3,580	9,515
2003	3,231	1,208	706	5,145	3,050 ^d
2004	9,310	1,094	1,388	11,792	12,324
2005	10,759	1,528	1,734	14,021	10,200
2006	16,225	1,630	1,064	18,919	NA ^e
2007	7,769	1,234	1,501	10,504	NA ^e
2008	3,087	1,337	892	5,316	2,140 ^d
2009	4,602	827	606	6,035	NA ^e
2010	5,553	1,162	591	7,306	10,096 ^f
2011	6,731	966	1,438	9,135	2,140 ^f
2012	4,829	933	859	6,621	1,503
2013	2,718	691	900	4,309	NA ^e
2014	1,841	607	2,166	4,614	3,994
2015	2,663	876	983	4,522	2,922
2016	3,831	1,141	787	5,759	NA ^e
2017	4,643	959	978	6,580	NA ^e
2018	3,457	481	641	4,579	NA ^e
2019	3,568	599	1,617	5,784	NA ^e
2020	767	672	425	1,864	NA ^e
2021	729	157	836	1,722	NA ^e
2022	1,307	561	477	2,345	NA ^e
2023	605	263 ^g	286	1,154	NA ^e
Average 1985–1994	15,232	698	274	16,204	12,112
Percent of total	94%	4%	2%	NA	NA
Average 1995–2018	6,486	988	947	8,421	10,293
Percent of total	77%	12%	11%	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	1,395	450	728	2,574	NA
Percent of total	54%	17%	28%	NA	NA
2024	805	347 ^g	0	1,152	NA ^e

-continued-

Source: Commercial: 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A4); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A4); 2008–2023: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A17).

Subsistence: 1985–2015: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Appendix A1); 2016–2021: Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 16, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Escapement: 1985–1994: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A20); 1995–2002: Jones et al. (2016: Appendix A20); 2003–2023: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A17)..

Note: NA means not available.

- ^a Commercial and subsistence harvest from Togiak District.
- ^b Sport harvest from Togiak River system.
- ^c Togiak River drainage total estimated by aerial survey and expanded for missed fish.
- ^d Aerial survey was incomplete; 3 sections of the mainstem and 2 tributaries were not surveyed.
- ^e No survey conducted due to poor weather/pilot availability.
- ^f U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service radiotelemetry-derived escapement estimate.
- ^g Subsistence number preliminary.

In 1997, the BOF adopted several regulation changes that affected the Togiak River Chinook salmon sport fishery. The May 1 through July 31 Chinook salmon sport fishery season was established by the BOF to protect spawning salmon. An annual limit of 5 Chinook salmon for sport anglers throughout Bristol Bay waters was adopted. In addition, guides were no longer allowed to harvest fish while guiding. These measures were designed to moderate the brief fishing season throughout the Bristol Bay drainage and to spread the harvest among more anglers. In 2012, the BOF reduced the area open to commercial fishing near the outlet of the Togiak River to minimize harvest of Chinook salmon.

In 2022, the BOF adopted a regulation change that prohibited the use of bait and retention of any Chinook salmon greater than 28 inches in length as well as closing the drainage to fishing for Chinook salmon above the confluence of the river with Gechiak Creek.

In 2023, the BOF adopted a regulation change that re-allowed the use of bait from July 16 to April 30 so that bait could be utilized for other species aside from Chinook salmon.

2024 Season

During 2024, there were 2,077 angler-days of sport fishing effort and 0 Chinook salmon were harvested in the Togiak River sport fishery (Tables 2 and 10). Commercial and preliminary subsistence harvests in 2024 were 805 and 347 respectively, both below the 2019–2023 averages of 1,395 and 450, respectively (Table 10). Anglers reported that sport fishing success for Chinook salmon on the Togiak River was below average in 2024.

COHO SALMON FISHERIES

AREAWIDE FISHERY DESCRIPTION

Coho salmon are a very popular component of the Bristol Bay sport fishery. Coho salmon fisheries occur from late July through September with some isolated runs of fish available into October. While many BBMA anglers pursue coho salmon with the assistance of a guide, this readily caught

species is quite popular with unguided anglers. Given the run timing, this species often serves as a popular activity for hunters and rainbow trout anglers visiting the area. Significant fisheries occur in the Alagnak, Egegik, Mulchatna, Naknek, Nushagak, Togiak, and Ugashik Rivers, as well as a host of smaller, lesser-known waters (Figure 4, Table 11).

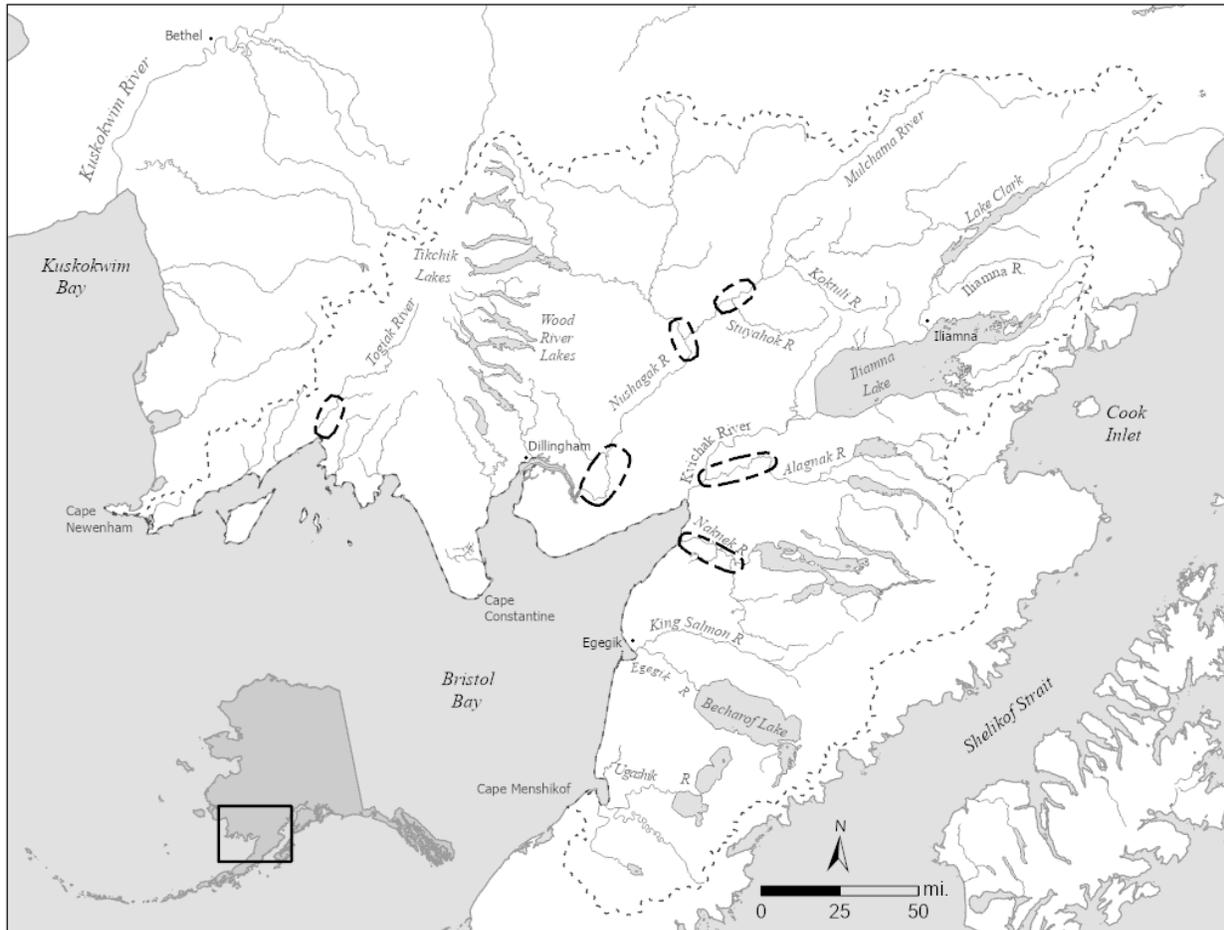


Figure 4.—Popular coho salmon sport fisheries (delineated with black dashes) in the Bristol Bay Management Area (delineated with dots).

The Bristol Bay commercial fishery generally takes the majority of the area’s annual coho salmon harvest. Between 2014 and 2023, the annual commercial harvest of coho salmon ranged from 17,579 to 287,292 coho salmon with an average (2014–2023) of 109,722 fish harvested annually (calculated from Elison et al. 2024: page 64). Although not estimated recently, subsistence harvest between 2013 and 2020 averaged 7,387 coho salmon annually (calculated from Tiernan et al. 2021b: page 97). From 2013 through 2023, the annual estimated sport harvest averaged 16,551 coho salmon, peaking in 2014 with 20,699 fish (calculated from Table 11). In 2024, anglers harvested 17,668 fish (Table 11).

Table 11.—Sport harvest of coho salmon from the waters of the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2011	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern														
Naknek River	2,879	2,987	6,026	3,942	3,346	5,521	5,497	3,741	1,618	2,329	5,015	1,820	2,905	2,411
Brooks River	0	0	13	0	0	102	24	95	0	13	94	88	58	0
Kvichak River	1,212	715	235	485	632	385	780	1,516	830	650	816	949	952	501
Copper River	36	0	64	128	0	0	0	102	292	0	0	138	106	0
Alagnak River	819	1,030	1,754	660	741	2,034	2,867	1,698	623	1,672	284	644	984	3,917
Newhalen River	0	115	0	148	127	80	288	362	69	81	0	0	102	292
Lake Clark	9	0	41	83	206	70	0	0	23	0	0	0	5	0
Other	2,494	848	3,051	2,315	2,588	4,570	4,867	3,962	2,211	3,044	4,124	3,026	3,273	3,575
Eastern subtotal^a	7,449	5,695	11,184	7,761	7,640	12,762	14,323	11,476	5,666	7,789	10,333	6,665	8,386	10,696
Central														
Nushagak River	2,997	3,318	5,319	3,260	2,529	1,420	4,737	3,247	278	1,488	3,697	3,802	2,502	3,089
Mulchatna River	127	114	246	779	353	247	1,593	72	28	315	375	265	211	138
Agulowak River	100	23	0	84	57	23	0	68	0	0	155	0	45	0
Agulukpak River	0	57	0	0	0	243	0	0	0	20	0	64	17	0
Wood River Lakes ^b	1,038	1,479	410	1,242	754	12	922	838	688	482	371	269	530	1,123
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	46	0	20	24	0	500	23	0	0	0	108	92	40	1,022
Other	199	11	194	201	0	1,354	385	0	0	805	103	0	182	0
Central subtotal^a	4,507	5,002	6,189	5,590	3,693	3,799	7,660	4,225	994	3,110	4,809	4,492	3,526	5,372
Western														
Togiak River	1,232	1,534	3,319	4,653	2,719	2,985	2,519	1,120	2,424	2,333	4,122	2,073	2,414	1,600
Other	347	149	7	141	183	248	223	11	0	248	24	172	91	0
Western subtotal^a	1,579	1,683	3,326	4,794	2,902	3,233	2,742	1,131	2,424	2,581	4,146	2,245	2,505	1,600
Bristol Bay total	13,535	12,380	20,699	18,145	14,235	19,794	24,725	16,832	9,084	13,480	19,288	13,402	14,417	17,668

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 17, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishing/survey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugalak. Prior to 1998, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were included in Wood River Lakes.

AREAWIDE MANAGEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Except for the Kvichak River drainage, where the limit is 2 coho salmon per day, and the Alagnak River drainage, where the limit is 3 per day, the limits for coho salmon are 5 salmon per day with no size limit. The 5-per-day limit has been in effect since 1972. The lower limits for the Kvichak and Alagnak River drainages were adopted during the 1997 BOF meeting (first effective in the 1998 season) to protect the small runs in the Kvichak River system and to address modest runs and large angling effort on the Alagnak River. The lack of escapement data to establish escapement goals and harvest strategies for all user groups continues to be a concern.

UGASHIK RIVER DRAINAGE

Fishery Description

The Ugashik River drainage (Figure 4) is located on the Alaska Peninsula about 128 km south of the community of King Salmon. Much of the drainage is within the boundaries of the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge. The local population center of Pilot Point, at the outlet of the Ugashik River, has a long history of a commercial fishing and subsistence-based economy. The drainage is well known for producing some of the biggest Arctic grayling in Alaska, as well as providing good angling for sockeye and coho salmon, Dolly Varden, and Arctic char. The Ugashik Lakes area is accessible only by float plane or by boat from the village of Ugashik and Pilot Point, 40 km downstream from the Lower Ugashik Lake outlet. Most angler effort is nonresident guided anglers who access the river by flying out from nearby lodges for day-fishing trips.

Coho salmon angling is popular in the drainage from mid-August through early September and combines well with anglers seeking a mixed bag of Dolly Varden, Arctic char, and Arctic grayling. Available information suggests peak coho salmon run timing to the Ugashik River drainage occurs in late August. The most popular fishing sites are the “Narrows,” a short stream connecting upper and lower Ugashik Lake, the outlet of lower Ugashik Lake, and the outlets of larger streams where they flow into the big lakes.

The Ugashik River drainage has historically been a popular destination for coho salmon anglers from lodges in Bristol Bay; however, angling effort in the drainage has decreased from a period when annual sport effort was typically over 2,000 angler-days (1996–2001) to a recent 5-year average (2019–2023) of 1,313 angler-days (Table 12). The greatest sport harvest of coho salmon was 921 in 2005, which was well above average during 1995–2023. More recently (2019–2023), sport harvest has averaged 283 fish (Table 12).

Fishery Management and Objectives

Escapement of coho salmon in the Ugashik River drainage had been estimated with aerial surveys since 1981 until 2011. Estimated escapement ranged from 400 in 1991 to 20,100 in 2006; however, during many years the drainage survey was not completed due to budget constraints, poor weather, and poor survey conditions. As a result, survey numbers are minimum estimates of escapement and do not provide a reliable index to assess Ugashik River drainage coho salmon escapement. No escapement estimates have been produced since 2012 (Table 12).

Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2024).

Table 12.—Angler sport fishing effort and coho salmon harvest plus escapement for the Ugashik River drainage, 1995–2024, with 1985–1994 average.

Year	Sport effort ^a	Harvest			Total	Escapement
		Sport ^a	Commercial ^b	Subsistence ^b		
1995	905	346	13,454	290	14,090	NA
1996	2,098	392	13,163	298	13,853	8,275
1997	2,551	631	7,156	311	8,098	9,400
1998	1,534	223	13,007	485	13,715	1,459
1999	2,008	830	2,289	271	3,390	10,210
2000	2,403	513	1,269	467	2,249	12,070
2001	2,471	690	976	357	2,023	4,540
2002	1,350	724	464	460	1,648	3,805
2003	1,317	529	994	392	1,915	19,670
2004	1,017	408	4,744	234	5,386	5,440
2005	882	921	8,162	249	9,332	9,850
2006	541	571	3,087	339	3,997	20,100
2007	1,393	336	1,954	281	2,571	3,500
2008	615	74	2,220	222	2,516	6,240
2009	868	233	2,602	131	2,966	NA
2010	1,390	251	407	135	793	NA
2011	1,844	72	84	136	292	4,900
2012	1,756	116	0	228	344	NA
2013	1,471	411	479	106	996	NA
2014	1,019	604	435	224	1,263	NA
2015	887	271	2,533	217	3,021	NA
2016	1,169	156	171	199	526	NA
2017	984	249	7	113	369	NA
2018	1,467	184	1,633	293	2,110	NA
2019	1,642	119	550	57	726	NA
2020	1,172	383	818	38	1,239	NA
2021	1,478	81	151	0	232	NA
2022	1,382	766	11	60	837	NA
2023	889	67	211	36 ^c	264	NA
Average 1985–1994	1,403	288	32,063	376	32,727	9,907
Percent of total	NA	1%	98%	1%	NA	NA
Average 1995–2018	1,414	406	3,387	268	4,061	8,533
Percent of total	NA	10%	83%	7%	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	1,313	283	348	38	667	NA
Percent of total	NA	42%	52%	6%	NA	NA
2024	979	329	424	0 ^c	753	NA

Source: **Effort and sport harvest:** Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 17, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Commercial: 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A7); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A7); 2008–2024: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A7).

Subsistence: 1985–2015: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Appendix A1); 2016–2021: Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Escapement: Unpublished estimates from ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries Salmon Spawning Ground Surveys in the Bristol Bay, Alaska.

Note: “NA” means data not available.

^a Sport effort and harvest from Ugashik System.

^b Commercial and subsistence harvest from Ugashik District.

^c Subsistence harvests preliminary.

2024 Season

During 2024, estimated sport fishery effort was below both the long-term and recent 5-year average at 979 angler-days; the resulting harvest was above the recent average at 329 coho salmon (Table 12). Reports from anglers during the 2024 season indicated a normal coho salmon run. An aerial survey was not conducted to assess coho salmon escapement.

NAKNEK RIVER

Fishery Description

The Naknek River coho salmon sport fishery (Figure 4) occurs in late July and continues well into September. The peak fishing period is normally from August 7 to August 21. Effort is concentrated along a 12-mile stretch of the Naknek River adjacent to the community of King Salmon, but significant and possibly increasing effort occurs upstream from Rapids Camp to Lake Camp. This fishery is the most popular coho salmon fishery in the area and provides significant recreational opportunity and economic benefit for the community of King Salmon. Most anglers in the coho salmon fishery are unguided and are not Alaskan residents (Gryska and Naughton 2001).

Harvests of coho salmon by the sport fishery averaged 2,869 fish during 2019–2023 (Table 13). Sport harvests of coho salmon from the Naknek River since 2014 have ranged from a high of 6,026 in 2014 to a low of 1,490 in 2020 (Table 13).

In recent years, the fall commercial fishery has not been active, and other than 2017 and 2018, its impact on coho salmon has been modest. Most of the commercial take is incidental to the sockeye salmon fishery. Subsistence harvests of coho salmon have varied from 2019 to 2023, with a high of 909 fish in 2021 and a low of 311 in 2022 (Table 13).

Fishery Management and Objectives

No biological escapement goal (BEG) has been established for Naknek River coho salmon stocks. Because of the lack of escapement information, it is impossible to assess fishery impacts on the total run. In addition, the commercial harvest occurs on stocks returning to 3 different major rivers, further confounding ADF&G's ability to calculate the spawner–return relationships needed to develop an escapement goal.

Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025). SF has conducted significant monitoring and stock assessment projects in the recent past (Minard and Brookover 1988b; Minard 1989a; Coggins 1992; Dunaway and Fleischman 1996a; Gryska and Naughton 2001).

The present bag and possession limits for coho salmon on the Naknek River are 5 fish per day with no size limit; the same limits have been in effect since 1972. No adjustments to the Naknek River coho salmon fishery bag and possession limits have occurred by inseason emergency order since 1999. In 1999, the coho salmon runs were so poor throughout Bristol Bay that the coho salmon sport fishery was restricted by emergency order to 1 coho salmon per day beginning on August 23.

Management concerns for this fishery include the lack of escapement data and the lack of a management goal or target for this fishery. Without a clearer management target, justification for adjusting fishing time in the various fisheries is tenuous.

Table 13.—Coho salmon commercial, subsistence, and sport harvests from the Naknek River, 1995–2024, with the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Harvest			Total
	Commercial ^a	Subsistence ^a	Sport ^b	
1995	1,105	1,791	1,788	4,684
1996	3,601	1,482	4,754	9,837
1997	718	1,457	3,879	6,054
1998	1,587	1,592	2,547	5,726
1999	303	856	3,672	4,831
2000	952	937	3,549	5,438
2001	3	740	4,795	5,538
2002	0	943	4,756	5,699
2003	42	812	6,393	7,247
2004	2,142	566	7,333	10,041
2005	3,314	1,224	2,714	7,252
2006	5,163	720	4,015	9,898
2007	2,180	1,104	4,218	7,502
2008	7,059	1,437	5,830	14,326
2009	732	669	4,325	5,726
2010	901	645	4,970	6,516
2011	633	690	2,879	4,202
2012	431	485	3,239	4,155
2013	467	399	2,987	3,853
2014	646	573	6,026	7,245
2015	1,253	796	3,942	5,991
2016	1,110	603	3,346	5,059
2017	4,754	1,346	5,521	11,621
2018	11,549	1,155	5,438	18,142
2019	1,418	552	3,718	5,688
2020	1,033	645	1,490	3,168
2021	1,053	909	2,302	4,264
2022	1,039	311	5,015	6,365
2023	1,126	359 ^c	1,820	3,305
Average 1985–1994	13,406	1,237	2,559	17,201
Percent of total	78%	7%	15%	NA
Average 1995–2018	2,110	959	4,288	7,358
Percent of total	29%	13%	58%	NA
Average 2019–2023	1,134	555	2,869	4,558
Percent of total	25%	12%	63%	NA
2024	557	271 ^c	2,411	2,968

-continued-

Source: **Commercial (Naknek–Kvichak District):** 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A7); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A7); 2008–2023: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A7).

Subsistence (Naknek–Kvichak District): 1985–2015: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Appendix A1); 2016–2021: Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport (Naknek River): Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 17, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Note: “NA” means data not available.

- ^a Commercial and subsistence harvest from Naknek-Kvichak District
- ^b Sport harvest from Naknek River and tributaries excluding Naknek Lake and tributaries.
- ^c Subsistence harvest preliminary

2024 Season

During 2024, estimated sport fishery effort for the Naknek River (13,759 angler-days) was near the recent average (Table 2). The 2024 sport harvest of 2,411 coho salmon was below the recent 5-year average of 2,869 (2019–2023; Table 13). Reports from anglers during the 2024 season indicated a normal coho salmon run. Harvests in the commercial and preliminary subsistence fisheries were 557 and 271, respectively (Table 13). No aerial escapement survey was conducted during 2024.

NUSHAGAK–MULCHATNA DRAINAGE

Fishery Description

The Nushagak–Mulchatna River drainages (Figure 4) produce the largest runs of coho salmon in Bristol Bay. Within the drainage, there are 4 areas of concentrated sport fishing effort: the lower 15 miles of the Nushagak River near the village of Portage Creek, the middle section of the Nushagak River near the village of Ekwok, the section of the Mulchatna River between the Stuyahok and Kuktuli Rivers, and the upper Nushagak River from the outlet of Nuyakuk River upstream to the outlet of the King Salmon River (Figure 4). Of these areas, the lower portion of the Nushagak River and the fishery in the immediate vicinity of the Nuyakuk River outlet have long been the most significant. Although sport fishing for coho salmon occurs in some of the tributaries of the drainage, the overall harvest is considered slight. The lower Nushagak River provides fishing opportunity for early coho salmon in late July and early August when other coho salmon fisheries have not yet begun. Increased guided rainbow trout angling as well as caribou and moose hunting in the upper Nushagak River area may contribute to increased coho salmon angling in this remote portion of the drainage. Combination hunting and fishing (coho salmon, rainbow trout) float trips have been popular for years in the Mulchatna River drainage.

Most recently (2019–2023), sport fishing harvest has averaged 2,585 fish or 7% of the average total harvest of Nushagak–Mulchatna coho salmon (Table 14). Commercial harvest accounted for 81% and subsistence was 12% of the average total annual harvest for the same period. Subsistence harvest varied between 1,814 and 6,044 fish during this period. At current levels, the coho salmon sport fishery has little impact on the overall productivity of Nushagak–Mulchatna Rivers coho salmon stocks.

Table 14.—Coho salmon commercial, subsistence, and sport harvest, plus inriver abundance for the Nushagak River drainage, 1995–2024 with the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Commercial harvest ^a	Subsistence harvest ^a	Sport harvest ^b	Total	Inriver abundance ^c	Spawning escapement ^d
1995	4,181	3,905	725	8,811	46,340	45,137
1996	11,401	5,217	3,761	20,379	187,028	182,460
1997	4,110	3,433	500	8,043	43,369	42,869
1998	22,703	5,316	1,368	29,387	104,948	103,194
1999	2,836	3,993	618	7,447	34,853	33,991
2000	112,852	5,983	2,219	121,054	213,062	210,075
2001	3,218	5,993	2,425	11,636	75,961	72,992
2002	93	4,565	1,530	6,188	52,194	50,267
2003	583	5,432	1,055	7,070	NA	NA
2004	47,706	4,240	3,436	55,382	152,613	151,108
2005	42,456	5,596	2,094	50,146	NA	NA
2006	44,385	3,590	2,392	50,367	NA	NA
2007	29,578	3,050	2,907	35,535	NA	NA
2008	76,932	5,133	6,496	88,561	NA	NA
2009	35,171	6,777	3,478	45,426	NA	NA
2010	72,909	2,983	2,820	78,712	NA	NA
2011	4,712	5,746	3,170	13,628	NA	NA
2012	97,382	2,642	5,182	105,206	329,946	326,582
2013	124,182	7,717	3,432	135,331	207,222	202,428
2014	242,604	7,463	5,600	255,667	483,219	477,602
2015	6,614	5,644	4,063	16,321	NA	NA
2016	79,538	4,766	2,882	87,186	NA	NA
2017	167,347	5,720	2,167	175,234	NA	NA
2018	84,320	4,735	6,353	95,408	111,455	106,687
2019	33,018	5,229	3,319	41,566	51,852	48,176
2020	76,133	4,320	306	80,759	NA	NA
2021	27,467	6,044	1,803	35,314	NA	NA
2022	5,155	1,814	3,697	10,666	NA	NA
2023	7,872	5,578 ^c	3,802	17,252	NA	NA
Average 1985–1994	34,918	7,065	906	42,183	72,519	69,091
Percent of total	83%	17%	2%	NA	NA	NA
Average 1995–2018	54,909	4,985	2,945	62,839	157,093	154,261
Percent of total	87%	8%	5%	NA	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	29,929	4,597	2,585	37,111	51,852	48,176
Percent of total	81%	12%	7%	NA	NA	NA
2024	22,078	2,567 ^c	3,089	27,734	NA	NA

-continued-

Source: **Commercial:** 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A7); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A7); 2008–2023: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A7).

Subsistence: 1985–2015: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Appendix A1); 2016–2021 Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 17, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Escapement: 1985–1994: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A23); 1995–2023: Bristol Bay Annual Management Reports, Division of Commercial Fisheries (see daily and cumulative escapement by species for the Nushagak River sonar project in the appropriate year in following link for inriver abundance counts from Nushagak River sonar; no sonar coho salmon counts 2020–2024) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareabristolbay.salmon#management>.

Note: “NA” means data not available.

- ^a Total Nushagak District commercial and subsistence harvest.
- ^b Sport harvest from Nushagak River drainage.
- ^c Inriver abundance estimated by sonar counter at Portage Creek.
- ^d Estimated spawning escapement calculated from sonar estimates.
- ^e Subsistence harvests preliminary

Fishery Management and Objectives

Current management of Nushagak–Mulchatna Rivers coho salmon is governed by 5 AAC 06.368 *Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan* adopted by the BOF in December 1995. The plan calls for managing the commercial fishery for an inriver run of 70,000–130,000 coho salmon, providing a spawning escapement of 60,000–120,000 fish, a reasonable opportunity in the subsistence fishery, and a 2,000-fish guideline harvest level in the sport fishery. The plan addresses management actions to take if the inriver run falls short of the goal. If the inriver run falls below 95,000 fish, then ADF&G may implement restrictions on the sport fishery to maintain the sport harvest below 2,000 fish. If the inriver run is less than 70,000 fish, then closure of the sport fishery is required. Along with sport fishery management actions, the plan directs ADF&G to take actions in the commercial and subsistence fisheries; all fisheries must close when the inriver run falls below 60,000 coho salmon.

There are currently no conservation concerns for Nushagak River coho salmon stocks. Since 1995, the 60,000–120,000 fish escapement goal was achieved in 9 of 16 years the sonar was in operation. The sonar did not operate during the coho salmon run in 14 of those years due to budget shortfalls (Table 14). In the past, significant restrictions have been placed on all fisheries, including closure of the subsistence fishery, to reduce exploitation on this stock in poor years (e.g., in 1999, when the inriver sonar estimate was the lowest on record since 1987; Table 14). In contrast, runs for 2012–2014 were well above average and the inriver and escapement goals were exceeded.

Sport harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Annual Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2024). Inriver abundance of coho salmon in the Nushagak River is estimated by side-scan sonar operated near the village of Portage Creek. Sport and subsistence harvests are assumed to occur above the sonar site; therefore, estimated spawning escapement is equal to the sonar count minus sport and subsistence harvests.

From 1985 through 1992, Nushagak River coho salmon stocks were managed to achieve a biological escapement goal (BEG) of 150,000 fish, estimated by sonar at Portage Creek. However, spawning escapements during that period consistently fell short of the goal, averaging 79,159 fish

(Westing et al. 2005). Subsequent spawner–recruit analysis suggested the 150,000 fish goal was higher than necessary to manage for maximum sustained yield, so the BEG was reduced to 90,000 spawners in 1992 (Dunaway and Sonnichsen 2001). The present bag and possession limits for coho salmon on the Nushagak–Mulchatna drainage are 5 fish per day with no size limit,⁶ which has been in effect since 1972 for most of the region.

2024 Season

During the 2024 season, estimated effort in the Nushagak–Mulchatna River sport fishery was 7,468 angler-days, which was well below the recent 5-year average of 10,965 angler-days (2019–2023; calculated from Table 2). Sport harvest was 3,089 coho salmon, which was slightly above the recent average of 2,585 (2019–2023; Table 14). Anglers reported below average sport fishing success in 2024. Inriver escapement was not monitored during the 2024 season and no inseason restrictions were implemented on the sport fishery. The 2024 commercial and preliminary subsistence harvests were 22,078 and 2,567 fish, respectively (Table 14).

TOGIAK RIVER

Fishery Description

The bulk of the Togiak River coho salmon fishery occurs in the lower 20 miles of the Togiak River (Figure 4) below the Wilderness boundary of the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. The sport fishery occurs from early August to the middle of September. The best angling usually occurs between August 21 and September 7, when coho salmon enter in the greatest abundance. Angler effort is largely nonresident guided anglers who access the river by flying out from nearby lodges to fish for the day. In addition, there are 2 river-based lodges that cater to nonresident anglers, one of which is owned by the local Native corporation in Togiak and leased to a concession group.

Sport harvest of coho salmon from the Togiak River averaged 2,414 fish annually from 2019 through 2023, or about 21% of the average total Togiak River coho salmon harvest (Table 15). Since 1995, annual sport harvest peaked in 2015 at 4,653 fish. A high degree of voluntary catch-and-release angling has been documented for this fishery and ranges up to 60% of the catch (Gryska and Naughton 2000). Given previous studies (Vincent-Lang et al. 1993), concern over hook-induced mortality prompted staff to evaluate the potential catch-and-release mortality in this fishery. ADF&G concluded that although the released proportion of the catch was large, the total number of fish caught is small relative to total run size. Therefore, catch-and-release is believed to affect only a small proportion of fish and is expected to have only a minor impact on the overall abundance of the stocks. In addition, Vincent-Lang et al. (1993) and Stuby (2002) have demonstrated that the mortality of released coho salmon is low when catches are made above the intertidal area, as is the case for much of the Togiak River fishery.

⁶ Southwest Alaska sport fishing regulations summary, 2024 (effective until the 2025 summary is issued) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

Table 15.—Coho salmon commercial, subsistence, and sport harvest plus escapement for the Togiak River, 1995–2024, with the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Harvest			Total	Escapement ^c	Total run
	Commercial ^a	Subsistence ^a	Sport ^b			
1995	8,871	703	408	9,982	NA	NA
1996	58,978	199	1,382	60,559	64,980	124,930
1997	2,970	260	780	4,010	20,625	24,641
1998	58,688	310	1,020	60,018	25,335	79,448
1999	2,653	217	1,109	3,979	3,855	7834
2000	2,758	342	840	3,940	NA	NA
2001	284	388	1,004	1,676	NA	NA
2002	754	241	1,475	2,470	NA	NA
2003	1,047	883	2,086	4,016	6,900	10,830
2004	15,463	204	2,321	17,988	NA	16,954
2005	8	295	1,959	2,262	NA	NA
2006	449	408	2,214	3,071	NA	NA
2007	157	110	1,970	2,237	NA	NA
2008	1,159	541	3,420	5,120	NA	NA
2009	9,209	272	1,556	11,037	NA	NA
2010	24,065	514	772	25,351	NA	NA
2011	7,605	545	1,232	9,382	NA	NA
2012	15,977	293	2,506	18,776	NA	NA
2013	11,420	208	1,534	13,162	NA	NA
2014	32,134	486	3,319	35,939	NA	NA
2015	26,080	650	4,653	31,383	NA	NA
2016	9,346	521	2,719	12,586	NA	NA
2017	54,503	545	2,985	58,033	NA	NA
2018	43,243	181	2,519	45,943	NA	NA
2019	27,778	98	1,120	28,996	NA	NA
2020	10,095	333	2,424	12,852	NA	NA
2021	3,583	659	2,333	6,575	NA	NA
2022	1,100	438	4,122	5,660	NA	NA
2023	407	251 ^d	2,073	2,731	NA	NA
Average 1985–1994	28,490	1,060	838	39,260	31,876	71,136
Percent of total	73%	3%	2%	NA	NA	NA
Average 1995–2018	16,159	388	1,908	18,455	24,339	44,106
Percent of total	88%	2%	10%	NA	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	8,593	356	2,414	11,363	NA	NA
Percent of total	76%	3%	21%	NA	NA	NA
2024	786	0 ^d	1,600	2,386	NA	NA

-continued-

Source: **Commercial:** 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A7); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A7); 2008–2023: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A7).

Subsistence: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Appendix A1); 2016–2021 Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Escapement: 1985–2003: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A24).

Note: “NA” means data not available.

^a Total Togiak District commercial and subsistence harvest.

^b Sport harvest from Togiak River drainage.

^c Escapement estimates are based on fixed wing aerial surveys. Peak counts are expanded by a factor of 3 to account for missed fish. In 1985–1987, expansion factors were greater due to incomplete surveys or poor survey conditions. There were partial counts in 1999 and 2003.

^d Subsistence harvest preliminary.

Since 1995, commercial catches in the Togiak Section have varied, ranging from a high of 58,978 fish in 1996 to a low of 8 in 2005. The annual average commercial harvest from 2019 through 2023 was 8,593 fish, accounting for 76% of the average total Togiak coho salmon harvest (Table 15). Subsistence harvests were variable between 2019 and 2023 and ranged from 98 to 659 fish per year, with an average of 356 fish (Table 15).

Fishery Management and Objectives

Currently, there is no escapement goal for Togiak River coho salmon due to a lack of annual escapement information. Coho salmon runs have been highly variable; weather frequently prohibits escapement assessment, and occasional illegal fishing with unknown harvest has confounded ADF&G’s ability to consistently collect accurate run size information.

Sport fishery harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025). SF conducted significant monitoring and stock assessment projects in 1984 and 1989 (Minard and Lisac 1984; Dunaway 1990b). A creel survey to estimate catch and harvest rates in the sport fishery was conducted in 1999 (Gryska and Naughton 2000) and 2007 (Dye and Schwanke 2012).

Since 1972, the bag and possession limits for coho salmon on the Togiak River have been 5 per day with no size limit.⁷ For years when spawner escapements have been adequate (e.g., 1996), the current bag limit of 5 has been satisfactory, but in poor years, ADF&G has responded with emergency orders to restrict the bag limit to reduce overall harvest. Prior to 1999, the limit was restricted 4 times in response to conservation concerns. There were no inseason restrictions placed on this fishery from 2016 through 2024.

2024 Season

During the 2024 season, estimated effort in the sport fishery was 2,077 angler-days, which was slightly below the recent 5-year average of 2,914 angler-days (2019–2023; Table 2). Sport harvest was 1,600 coho salmon which was well below the 5-year average of 2,414 (Table 15). Anglers

⁷ Southwest Alaska sport fishing regulations summary, 2024 (effective until the 2025 summary is issued) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

reported normal sport fishing success in 2024. Aerial surveys were not conducted during the 2024 season and no inseason restrictions were implemented on the sport fishery. The 2024 commercial and preliminary subsistence harvests were 786 and 0 fish respectively, both well below the recent averages of 8,593 and 356 coho salmon, respectively (Table 15).

SOCKEYE SALMON FISHERIES

Sockeye salmon is the most numerous Pacific salmon species spawning in Bristol Bay, which is the world's largest producer of commercially sold sockeye salmon. Sockeye salmon are often indifferent to most fishing lures, making them difficult to catch in the sport fishery. Since the late 1960s, however, anglers have discovered innovative ways to legally catch sockeye salmon with customary sport gear, and the species has rapidly gained favor as a hard-fighting and delectable game fish. The most popular fisheries exist in the Naknek and Kvichak River drainages, but effort is growing in other waters of the BBMA as well (Figure 5).

Sport harvest of sockeye salmon in the BBMA has averaged 21,742 from 2019 through 2023 (Table 16), with an estimated peak of 33,052 fish taken in 2021 and a low of 16,418 fish in 2020. The most active sport fisheries occur in the Eastern Section of the management area, where an average (2019–2023) of 15,243 fish or about 70% of the average annual harvest was taken. The Central Section fishery harvest averaged 5,501 sockeye salmon per year, and harvest in the Western Section averaged 998 fish annually (Table 16). Even at its highest levels, the sport harvest is a small fraction of the 2013 through 2022 average annual run of 55.8 million sockeye salmon (Elison et al. 2025: page 67). Subsistence fishers usually harvest a small fraction of this run as well (Tiernan et al. 2021a).

Sockeye salmon share the same bag and possession limits with all salmon except Chinook salmon: 5 salmon per day with no size limit. This regionwide limit has been in effect since 1972. ADF&G's ability to manage for sustained yield is essentially unaffected by the sport harvest of sockeye salmon. Adjustments were made to the bag and possession limits annually from 2019 through 2024 in the form of emergency orders to liberalize bag limits in several drainages. Sockeye salmon continue to play an important role in the development and expansion of the sport fishery in the BBMA.

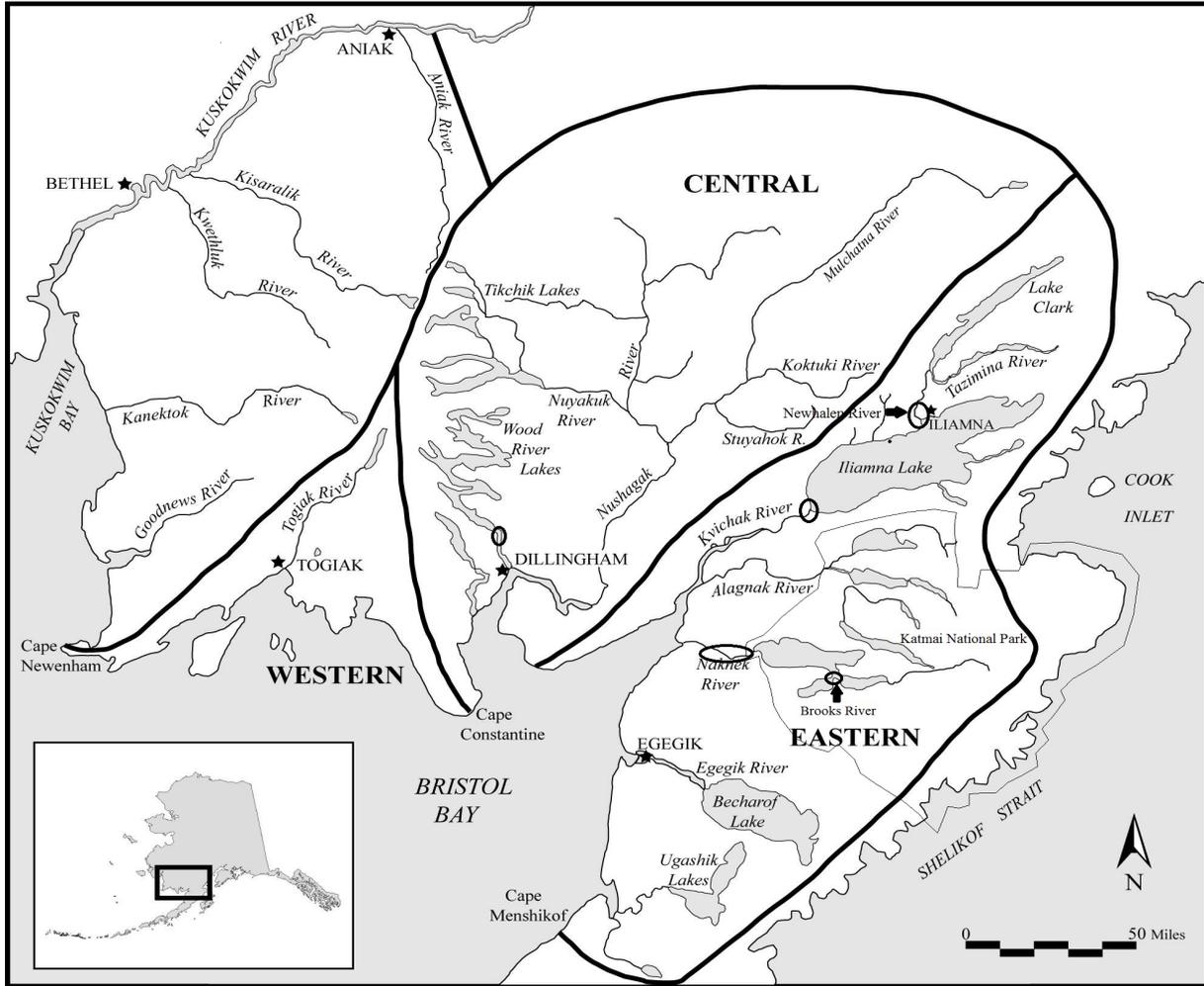


Figure 5.—Popular sockeye salmon sport fisheries (circled) in the Bristol Bay Management Area.

Table 16.—Sport harvest of sockeye salmon by section for the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Naknek River	4,586	4,939	5,904	4,935	4,932	5,042	5,635	6,537	5,637	4,950	7,364	6,025	6,079
Brooks River	411	93	241	270	39	19	38	318	313	174	226	214	0
Kvichak River	1,244	2,423	1,947	2,997	2,634	2,941	1,259	1,063	4,740	1,998	1,916	2,195	3,881
Copper River	657	277	180	351	277	298	250	562	217	501	829	472	385
Alagnak River	1,032	2,821	2,134	1,874	3,575	4,821	2,039	3,393	5,668	2,899	400	2,880	3,844
Newhalen River	559	4,598	734	1,769	6,024	529	4,064	1,522	2,153	1,399	1,143	2,056	2,964
Lake Clark	181	337	519	382	468	820	144	224	724	161	429	336	1127
Other	1,188	1,474	1,095	1,398	389	1,736	1,528	1,158	2,365	277	0	1,066	954
Eastern subtotal ^a	11,041	16,486	13,804	13,040	18,338	16,206	14,957	14,777	21,817	12,359	12,307	15,243	19,234
Central													
Nushagak River	209	462	250	334	2,346	1,572	755	291	6,140	3,183	4,900	3,054	2,260
Mulchatna River	446	497	150	340	211	184	374	225	267	161	0	205	508
Agulowak River	317	424	192	345	545	202	486	123	227	968	274	416	128
Agulukpak River	0	112	31	65	0	0	0	0	72	32	229	67	0
Wood River Lakes ^b	2,356	418	60	630	1,636	1,462	1,596	855	2,640	663	904	1,332	1,490
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	0	0	0	27	132	37	147	0	241	0	229	123	1240
Other	94	0	386	120	0	0	442	0	0	347	732	304	0
Central subtotal ^a	3,422	1,913	1,069	1,862	4,870	3,457	3,800	1,494	9,587	5,354	7,268	5,501	5,626
Western													
Togiak River	284	438	647	431	594	33	295	147	1,648	819	2,081	998	411
Other	0	0	15	3	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western subtotal ^a	284	438	662	434	634	33	295	147	1,648	819	2,081	998	411
Bristol Bay total	14,747	18,837	15,535	15,336	23,842	19,696	19,052	16,418	33,052	18,532	21,656	21,742	25,271

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugaluk. Prior to 1998, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were included in Wood River Lakes.

BROOKS RIVER

Fishery Description

Brooks River, which drains Brooks Lake into Naknek Lake (Figure 5), is a 2-mile long stretch of water located within the boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve. This river is cherished by some anglers because of its classic pool-and-riffle structure and excellent fishing opportunities. Brooks Camp, located on Naknek Lake, was established in 1960 by Northern Consolidated Airlines as primarily a sport fishing facility, but in recent years it has also become popular with tourists for hiking and bear viewing opportunities. Access to Brooks River and Brooks Camp is by float-equipped aircraft or boat. In addition to guest cabins, a campground facility is available for overnight visitors. At the lower end of Brooks River is a footbridge that allows visitors to cross between the south and north shores without wading. The sport fishery for sockeye salmon generally takes place below the bridge in the lower ¼ mile of the river where it empties into Naknek Lake. The sockeye salmon fishery begins in late June when the first salmon arrive and peaks over the Fourth of July weekend. The sport fishery occupies waters also used by brown bears fishing for salmon. This overlap has caused management problems and conflicts for ADF&G and the National Park Service. At issue is the safety of visitors and priority in access for different groups (bear viewers, sport anglers, hikers).

Since 2013, annual estimates of sport harvests of Brooks River sockeye salmon have ranged from a low of 19 in 2018 to a high of 411 in 2013 (Table 16). The recent 5-year (2019–2023) average annual harvest of 214 fish (Table 16) is easily sustained by this run, which is part of the Naknek River drainage escapement of about 2 million fish (Elison et al. 2025: page 68).

Fishery Management and Objectives

The abundance of sockeye salmon at Brooks River is a function of the escapement into the Naknek River. The Naknek River drainage escapement goal is 800,000 to 2 million sockeye salmon (Elison et al. 2025). The magnitude of the escapement is such that variations in inriver abundance have little effect on sport fishery performance in the Brooks River.

Sport fishery harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2024). SF has not conducted any significant monitoring or stock assessment projects for this fishery in recent seasons. Forecasts of next season's run are provided by CF and are reported in a statewide salmon forecast summary (Gleason et al. 2025). Escapement of sockeye salmon in Brooks River is estimated from fixed-wing aerial surveys during the presumed peak of spawning.

There has been a complicated history of regulations regarding this sport fishery. The current regulations are the result of the BOF overhauling the regulations in 1990 as part of the development of a rainbow trout management plan for the area. The regulation allowing catch-and-release fishing only for all species for Brooks River from Brooks Lake downstream to the foot bridge was adopted during the fall of 1997 to address bear-human concerns raised by the National Park Service. From the bridge downstream to Naknek Lake, anglers may keep and possess 1 fish per day except rainbow trout, which are managed for catch-and-release fishing for the entire river.⁸ Anglers are

⁸ Alaska sport fishing regulations summary—Bristol Bay drainages (effective April 15, 2024, through April 14, 2025) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

restricted to single-hook artificial lures below the footbridge and unbaited single-hook artificial flies above the bridge. Over the years, significant restrictions to sport fishing have been made under the premise of ensuring the safety of sport anglers using the Brooks River. These concessions include reductions in bag limits from 5 sockeye salmon to 1, restrictions in terminal tackle to include single-hook artificial lures below the bridge, and the previously mentioned catch-and-release only, fly-fishing-only, restrictions above the bridge.

Brooks River is managed to provide a diversity of angling opportunities by providing a special management area restricted to unbaited, single-hook, artificial flies.

2024 Season

During the 2024 season, estimated effort of 1,849 angler-days in the Brooks River sport fishery was below the 2019–2023 average of 2,319 angler-days (Table 2). The sport harvest of 0 sockeye salmon was below the recent 5-year average of 214 fish (2019–2023; Table 16). Anglers reported average sport fishing success. In 2024, escapement of sockeye salmon into the Naknek River drainage totaled 926,112 fish, meeting the goal of 800,000 to 2 million fish (Elison et al. 2025: page 68). The large sockeye salmon escapement into the Naknek River system provided plenty of fish for anglers in Brooks River and for anglers throughout the Naknek River drainage. No inseason restrictions were imposed on the sport fishery.

KVICHAK RIVER

Fishery Description

The Kvichak River drainage (Figure 5) hosts one of the largest sockeye salmon runs in the world, and the river is a popular destination for anglers targeting this species. Two locations within the drainage support the biggest sport fisheries for sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay. The first is the fishery on the Kvichak River at the outlet of Lake Iliamna. The other, often larger, fishery occurs on the Newhalen River near the community of Iliamna. Smaller tributaries within the drainage are fished less intensively and sport harvests are relatively minor comparatively.

Sockeye salmon first appear in the Kvichak River during the last week of June. The run peaks in the first week of July, then declines steadily until late July or early August. In peak years, the sport fishery may be active for much of the month of July.

A modern airstrip and trail system in the village of Igiugig provides easy access to the river where it drains out of Lake Iliamna, and floatplanes can land on the lake or on the river. Although much of the sport fishing effort is from nonresident guided anglers, a growing component is the resident unguided angler arriving from Anchorage in private, chartered, or scheduled aircraft. The Igiugig Native Corporation owns most of the uplands along the upper Kvichak River, and charges anglers modest daily fees for access. Commercial operators are charged more substantial fees for annual leases.

Historically, the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fleet has taken over 99% of the sockeye salmon harvested from Kvichak River sockeye salmon run, averaging 12,543,988 fish from 2019 to 2023 (Table 17). The subsistence fishery took an average of approximately 72,090 fish annually, or about 0.7% of the average total run from 1985 to 1994, but more recently has taken an average of 19,796 fish (2018–2022; Table 17).

Estimates of sockeye salmon sport harvest from the Kvichak River drainage since 1995 have ranged from 1,916 in 2023 to 15,135 in 1995 (Table 17). From 2019 through 2023, the annual

sport harvest averaged 2,195 fish from the Kvichak River (Table 16). The sport harvest accounts for less than 0.1% of the average total Kvichak drainage harvest. From 2019 through 2023, average annual sport fishing effort in the Kvichak River was 3,961 angler-days (effort is for all species, though anglers mainly fish for rainbow trout and sockeye salmon at the Kvichak River; Table 2). At such low levels, the sport fishery has little effect on ADF&G's ability to manage for sustained yield.

Fishery Management and Objectives

Kvichak River sockeye salmon stocks are managed to achieve a sustainable escapement goal (SEG) range of 2–10 million fish (Elison et al. 2024).

The sport fishery is managed with the *Kvichak Drainage Sockeye Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 67.025). This plan provides increased participation and opportunity and reduces potential conflicts between sport and subsistence users. Participation in this fishery could grow quickly by improving access to desirable fishing sites, promoting the fishery as a destination, and ensuring necessary facilities are provided to accommodate growth in a responsible manner. To this end, ADF&G has worked closely with the Igiugig City Council on a project to build trails to desirable fishing locations close to the village airfield. For example, a trail was completed from the village road system to a prime sockeye salmon fishing site along the Kvichak River in fall 2001.

Sport fishery harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025).

2024 Season

The 2024 sockeye salmon run to the Kvichak River achieved the SEG of 2.0–10.0 million fish, with approximately 6.6 million sockeye salmon counted at the Igiugig tower (Elison et al. 2025: page 58; Table 17). The preliminary 2024 subsistence harvest (20,867) was just above the recent 5-year average harvest of 19,796 fish (2019–2023; Table 17). During the 2024 season, estimated effort in the Kvichak River sport fishery was 5,363 angler-days, which is above the recent 5-year average of 3,961 angler-days (2019–2023; Table 2). The sport harvest of 3,881 sockeye salmon was well above the recent average of 2,195 fish (2019–2023; Table 17). Anglers reported above average sport fishing success.

Table 17.—Sockeye salmon harvests and escapements for the Kvichak River, 1995–2024, with the 1985–1994 average.

Year	Harvest			Total	Escapement ^d
	Commercial ^a	Subsistence ^b	Sport ^c		
1995	20,280,970	54,679	15,135	20,350,784	10,038,720
1996	8,215,474	54,872	7,965	8,278,311	1,450,578
1997	589,545	59,508	7,875	656,928	1,503,732
1998	2,596,490	53,656	13,119	2,663,265	2,296,074
1999	9,454,109	57,723	12,760	9,524,592	6,196,914
2000	4,728,095	36,990	8,479	4,773,564	1,827,780
2001	5,281,837	32,808	4,502	5,319,147	1,095,348
2002	1,419,630	33,001	2,215	1,454,846	703,884
2003	3,350,656	38,525	3,068	3,392,249	1,686,804
2004	4,716,715	53,225	5,098	4,775,038	5,500,134
2005	6,730,812	48,263	4,292	6,783,367	2,320,422
2006	7,151,741	49,850	4,899	7,206,490	3,068,226
2007	9,027,161	47,538	4,172	9,078,871	2,810,208
2008	10,385,172	49,563	6,496	10,441,231	2,757,912
2009	8,517,450	46,771	7,510	8,571,731	2,266,140
2010	10,861,016	40,688	5,522	10,907,226	4,207,410
2011	9,019,372	45,226	5,487	9,070,085	2,264,352
2012	10,152,917	52,369	3,770	10,209,056	4,164,444
2013	4,853,030	42,556	1,244	4,900,358	2,088,576
2014	13,791,053	41,016	2,423	13,836,871	4,458,540
2015	16,531,193	39,279	1,947	16,578,479	7,349,712
2016	13,466,245	30,257	2,997	13,502,027	4,462,728
2017	8,256,304	27,847	2,634	8,293,601	3,163,404
2018	8,917,710	25,764	2,941	8,949,781	4,398,708
2019	11,527,837	21,835	1,259	11,556,681	2,371,242
2020	14,311,035	21,826	1,063	14,337,066	4,030,968
2021	9,253,721	20,246	4,740	9,278,707	4,703,520
2022	14,362,397	14,386	1,998	14,378,781	4,224,882
2023	13,264,949	20,689 ^e	1,916	13,287,554	3,751,686
Average 1985–1994	9,572,717	72,090	10,723	9,655,530	5,512,064
Percent of total	99.1%	0.7%	0.1%	NA	NA
Average 1995–2017	8,262,279	44,249	5,690	8,313,246	3,420,031
Percent of total	99.4%	0.5%	0.1%	NA	NA
Average 2019–2023	12,543,988	19,796	2,195	12,567,758	3,816,460
Percent of total	99.8%	0.2%	0.0%	NA	NA
2024	9,251,442	20,867 ^e	3,881	9,276,190	6,644,490

-continued-

Source: **Commercial:** 1985–1996: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A12); 1997–2007: Elison et al. (2018: Appendix A12); 2008–2023: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A11).

Subsistence: 1985–2015: Halas and Neufeld (2018: Table 2-2); 2016–2021: Unpublished data from B. Jones and G. P. Neufeld, Division of Subsistence. Data for 2020–2024 provided by Terri Barnett, Research Analyst III Division of Subsistence.

Sport: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Escapement: 1985–1994: Westing et al. (2005: Appendix A12); 1995–2000: Jones et al. (2016: Appendix A11); 2001–2021: Elison et al. (2022: Appendix A12); 2022–2024: Elison et al. (2025: Appendix A11).

- ^a Estimated Kvichak River fish captured in Naknek–Kvichak District commercial fishery.
- ^b Harvests are extrapolated for all permits issued, based on those returned. Harvest estimates prior to 1991 are rounded to the nearest hundred fish. Harvest estimates prior to 1990 are based on the community where the permit was issued; estimates from 1990 to the present are based on community of residence and include fish caught only in the Kvichak District.
- ^c Sport harvest from Kvichak River drainage excluding the Alagnak River drainage.
- ^d Tower counts conducted at Igiugig.
- ^e Subsistence harvest preliminary.

NEWHALEN RIVER

Fishery Description

The Newhalen River is the largest tributary in the Kvichak River drainage. It flows from Lake Clark into the north side of Lake Iliamna near the communities of Iliamna and Newhalen (Figure 5). Because it is farther inland, sockeye salmon reach the Newhalen River a few days later than the Kvichak River, and the best angling usually occurs during the middle 2 weeks of July.

The Newhalen River is more easily accessed than the Kvichak River and supports a large run of sockeye salmon. Several businesses and lodges in the town of Iliamna cater to anglers' needs, and a large runway serviced by regularly scheduled commercial airlines provides economical access from Anchorage. From the runway, a mile-long trail leads to the river. The trail ends near a series of cascades where large numbers of sockeye salmon congregate on their way to spawning grounds in the Lake Clark drainage. The sockeye salmon entering the Newhalen River are one segment of the large Kvichak River run. Hence, comments on the character of the commercial and subsistence harvests for the Kvichak River apply equally for the Newhalen River stocks. The sport fishery on the Newhalen River is unique in the BBMA due to the large component of unguided anglers and occasionally large component (up to 21% in 2019) of the entire BBMA's annual sport harvest of sockeye salmon (Table 16). For the period of 2019 through 2023, the annual sport harvest averaged 2,056 sockeye salmon (Table 16). ADF&G has not conducted any onsite studies of this fishery to evaluate angler catch and harvest distribution, angler demographics, or to conduct bag limit analysis.

Fishery Management and Objectives

Newhalen River sockeye salmon escapement is assessed with respect to the biological escapement goal (BEG) for the Kvichak River.

Sport fishery harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Commercial and subsistence harvests are monitored by CF and are reported in the ADF&G Fisheries Management Report series (e.g., Elison et al. 2025). SF has not conducted any significant monitoring or stock assessment projects for this fishery. Escapement is estimated by counts made from towers at the village of

Igiugig as the salmon migrate up the Kvichak River. Escapement distribution is assessed by aerial index surveys of drainage tributaries by CF.

2024 Season

The preceding segment on the Kvichak River sockeye salmon sport fishery thoroughly describes the 2024 season regarding sockeye salmon abundance. Sport fishing was reported as average to above average throughout the season. The sport harvest of 2,964 was above the recent average of 2,056 fish (2019–2023; Table 16).

CENTRAL SECTION SOCKEYE SALMON FISHERIES

On average (2014–2023), runs of about 19 million sockeye salmon return to the Central Section (Division of Commercial Fisheries Nushagak District; Elison et al. 2025: page 71). Anglers do not fish this section heavily for sockeye salmon, and sport harvests have averaged 5,501 fish, or 25% of BBMA’s total annual sport harvest average for 2019–2023 (Table 16). Angler harvest of sockeye salmon from the Central Section in 2024 totaled 5,626 fish. The stocks are generally abundant enough to be virtually unaffected by the sport harvest, and there is a lot of potential for this fishery to grow, as it has done in recent years. The subsistence and sport harvests are each less than 1% of the run. The waters most commonly used by sport anglers are the Nushagak River, Mulchatna River, and the Wood River Lakes system.

RAINBOW TROUT FISHERIES

AREAWIDE FISHERY DESCRIPTION

Wild rainbow trout stocks are a cornerstone of the multimillion-dollar BBMA sport fishing industry. Sport fishing opportunity for both guided and unguided anglers occurs primarily during the ice-free season, generally from June through October, although fisheries in early and late winter are gaining some popularity. Found throughout the area, the most popular rainbow trout waters include tributaries of the Kvichak River drainage, the Naknek River drainage, portions of the Nushagak–Mulchatna drainage, and streams of the Wood River Lakes system (Figure 6).

The rainbow trout fisheries within the BBMA underwent rapid growth from the late 1970s to mid-1980s, with annual harvests averaging 4,905 fish from 1977 through 2003 (SWHS [cited October 16, 2022]). From 2019 through 2023, annual harvests averaged 394 fish (Table 18). However, the importance of this species to the sport fishery is not adequately described by estimates of harvest. The SWHS, as well as field studies, show clearly that during the last 20 to 25 years, the retention rate (number of fish kept from the total catch), has declined steadily, whereas total effort and catch have remained stable or increased (Brookover 1989; Minard 1989b, 1990; Dunaway 1993; SWHS [cited October 16, 2022]). Estimates of total BBMA catch (number of fish harvested plus fish released) were first available from the SWHS for rainbow trout in 1990 and averaged 247,060 annually from 1991 through 2003 (Figure 7). From 2019 through 2023, the annual catch averaged 115,702 rainbow trout (Table 19, Figure 7). It is evident the angling public has embraced the concept of catch-and-release for rainbow trout and has voluntarily reduced harvests throughout the area.

Prior to 1993, rainbow trout were explicitly excluded from harvest under the subsistence priority. The status of rainbow trout as a subsistence species was changed in 1993 when the BOF allowed rainbow trout caught incidentally to other species to be retained by subsistence users. In 1994, the BOF recognized subsistence use of rainbow trout among all other finfish in Bristol Bay

(5 AAC 01.336). The subsistence taking of rainbow trout from non-navigable waters located within federal land holdings (National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks) has been allowed since December 1991. In 2002, the Federal Subsistence Board adopted regulations allowing rod-and-reel subsistence harvest of rainbow trout in federally managed subsistence fisheries in the Bristol Bay area.

Many quality rainbow trout sport fisheries exist throughout the BBMA. Other smaller rainbow trout fisheries not discussed herein include Brooks River, Moraine Creek, Funnell Creek, American Creek, Gibraltar River, Copper River, Upper Talarik Creek, Tazimina River, Mulchatna River, and Togiak River.

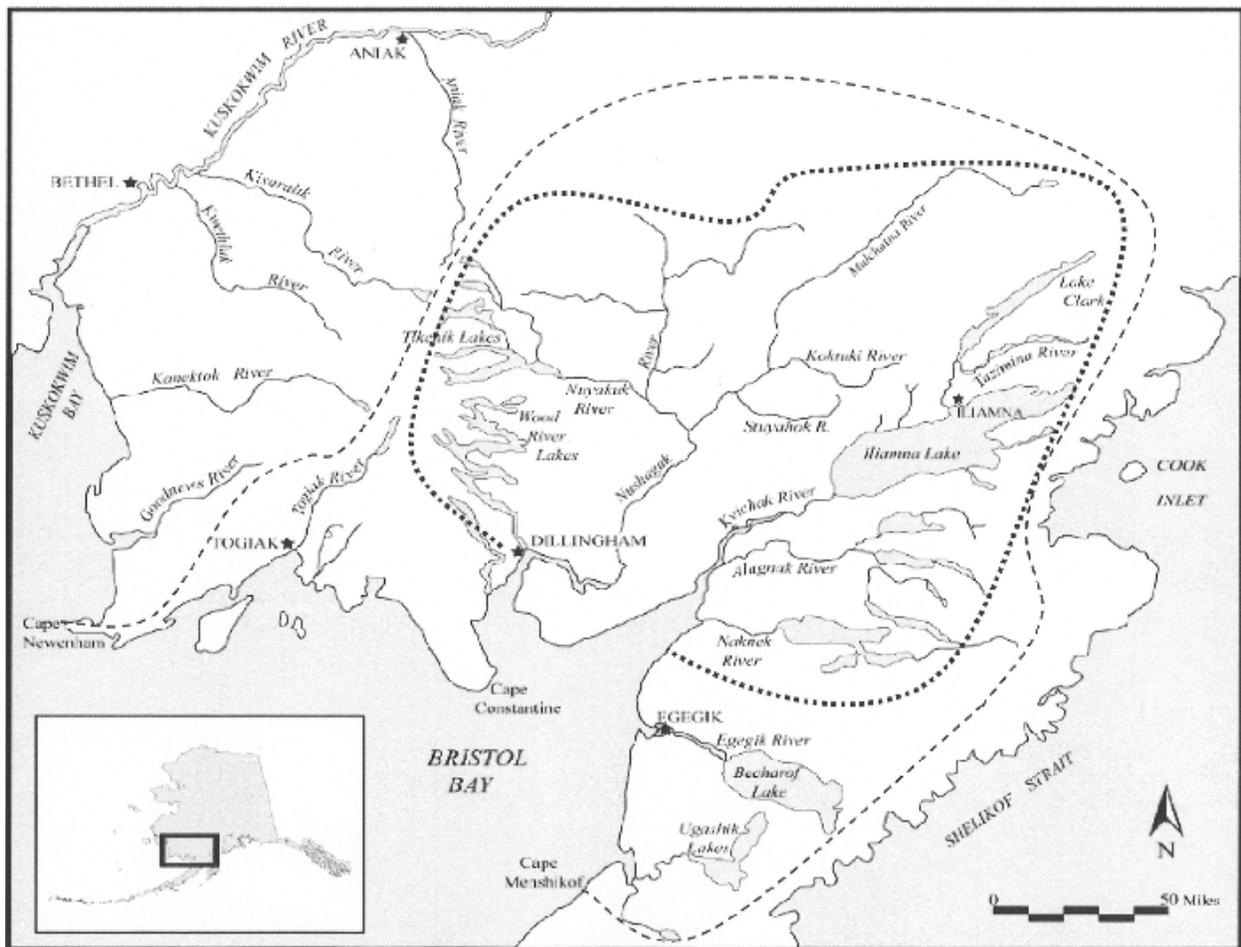


Figure 6.—Popular rainbow trout sport fisheries (delineated with black dots) in the Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area (delineated with dashed line).

Table 18.—Sport harvest of rainbow trout by section and drainage in the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Naknek River	47	95	416	101	150	89	88	158	14	0	61	64	31
Brooks River	22	0	33	129	0	0	0	53	0	0	0	11	0
Kvichak River	0	102	0	179	23	0	127	21	108	0	62	64	0
Copper River	0	320	205	0	0	0	0	0	54	0	0	11	0
Alagnak River	124	64	0	72	0	0	0	0	0	132	0	26	72
Newhalen River	35	0	20	80	0	95	68	0	0	0	58	25	32
Lake Clark	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	13	32	44	0	84	304	154	104	54	0	0	62	0
Eastern subtotal^a	265	596	718	561	258	488	437	336	230	132	181	263	135
Central													
Nushagak River	0	0	20	64	41	68	0	148	0	23	11	36	64
Mulchatna River	0	0	39	0	43	63	42	76	0	38	0	31	77
Agulowak River	58	52	0	0	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agulukpak River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood River Lakes ^b	0	0	0	32	106	193	41	0	162	0	0	41	0
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	0	0	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	0	0	13	13	0
Central subtotal^a	58	52	102	96	223	324	83	277	162	61	24	121	141
Western													
Togiak River	0	0	205	37	18	53	0	34	14	0	0	10	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western subtotal^a	0	0	205	37	18	53	0	34	14	0	0	10	0
Bristol Bay total	323	665	1,025	694	498	865	520	647	406	193	205	394	276

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugaluk. Prior to 1998, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were included in Wood River Lakes.

Table 19.—Sport catch of rainbow trout by section and drainage in the Bristol Bay Management Area, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Naknek River	15,779	19,876	21,311	36,277	21,257	11,724	19,927	14,339	11,246	17,448	11,303	14,853	8,403
Brooks River	15,513	12,243	7,954	8,500	17,100	8,665	5,398	4,933	8,322	6,862	8,020	6,707	3,613
Kvichak River	16,827	19,837	21,906	13,259	15,825	9,212	10,426	13,768	16,654	8,840	10,753	12,088	7,124
Copper River	30,317	30,138	27,942	23,328	20,923	15,082	14,724	6,128	10,749	2,444	3,220	7,453	3,288
Alagnak River	9,411	8,483	30,038	15,266	21,851	12,512	22,122	4,202	9,220	4,027	8,711	9,656	3,125
Newhalen River	1,317	603	1,358	3,017	4,671	378	2,237	745	2,606	1,128	469	1,437	306
Lake Clark	383	178	1,147	418	857	88	113	32	14	0	0	32	76
Other	49,384	70,949	47,585	68,482	60,769	48,137	57,718	55,620	50,104	42,943	33,681	48,013	21,640
Eastern subtotal ^a	138,931	162,307	159,241	168,547	162,819	105,798	132,168	99,767	108,915	83,692	76,157	100,239	47,575
Central													
Nushagak River	3,497	3,302	4,003	4,727	2,592	3,781	5,748	2,060	3,537	2,188	1,037	2,914	64
Mulchatna River	419	735	2,499	2,395	2,045	2,354	1,431	857	925	328	1,211	950	968
Agulowak River	2,292	5,079	2,918	6,259	8,069	2,528	5,092	2,513	3,823	2,642	4,097	3,633	223
Agulukpak River	1,902	4,526	6,840	6,145	7,344	3,408	2,999	663	1,587	1,295	1,860	1,681	1,413
Wood River Lakes ^b	3,344	3,015	7,791	728	2,205	1,250	4,101	1,482	1,970	3,102	1,062	2,343	1,032
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	1,116	1,135	2,611	1,026	2,056	1,019	5,101	230	1,710	2,108	878	2,005	1,514
Other	211	685	1,053	522	993	0	34	233	0	741	122	226	193
Central subtotal ^a	12,781	18,477	27,715	21,802	25,304	14,340	24,506	8,038	13,552	12,404	10,267	13,753	5,407
Western													
Togiak R.	1,318	1,889	2,605	2,086	4,113	1,710	2,490	2,226	1,294	1,223	674	1,581	912
Other	58	64	176	0	865	707	106	0	450	24	61	128	0
Western subtotal ^a	1,376	1,953	2,781	2,086	4,978	2,417	2,596	2,226	1,744	1,247	735	1,710	912
Bristol Bay total	153,088	182,737	189,737	192,435	193,535	122,555	159,767	110,031	124,211	97,343	87,159	115,702	53,894

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Data from prior years can be found in Mills (1992, 1993) and Howe et al. (1994, 1995).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugalak. Prior to 1998, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were included in Wood River Lakes.

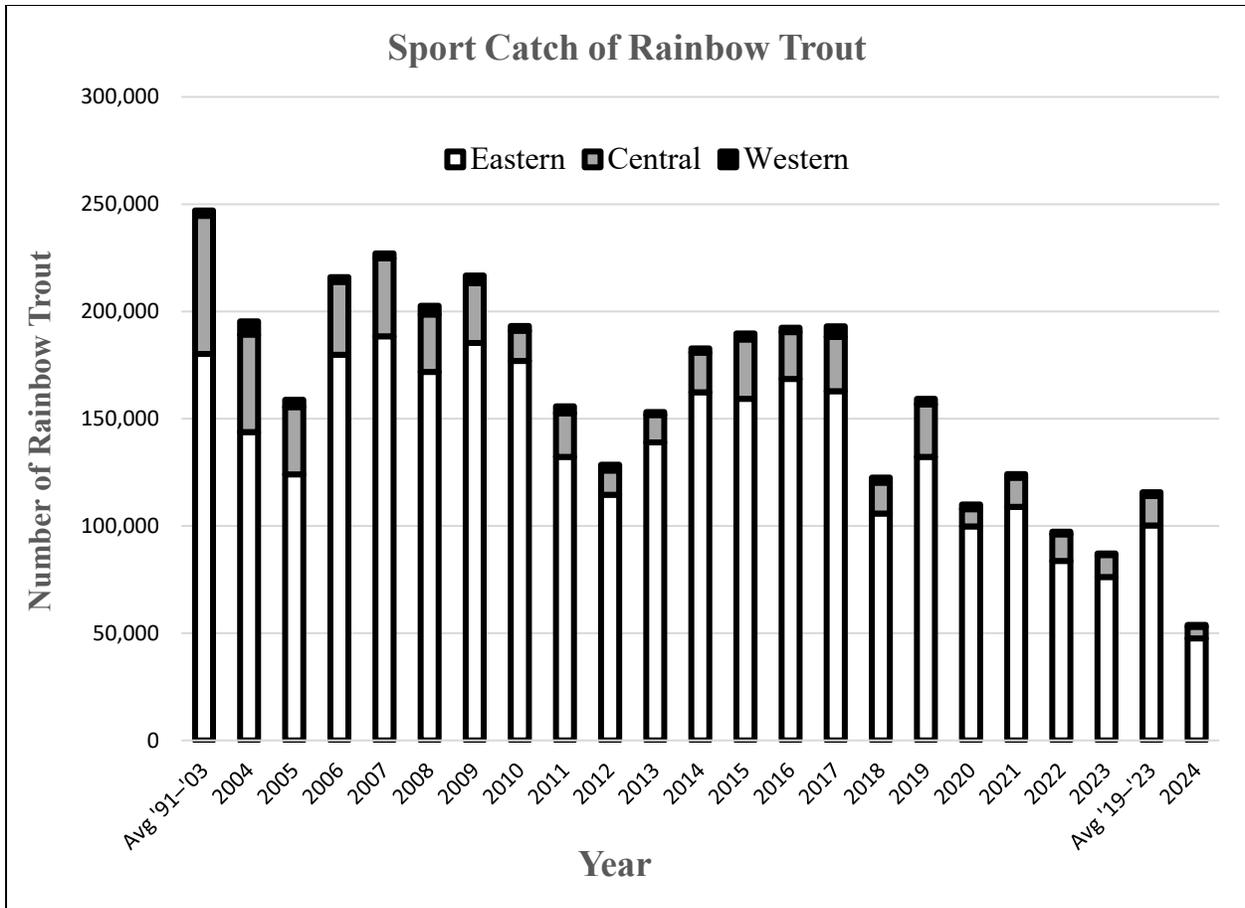


Figure 7.—Sport catch of rainbow trout by section for the Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area, 2004–2024 with averages for 1991–2003 and 2019–2023.

SOUTHWEST ALASKA RAINBOW TROUT MANAGEMENT PLAN

In February 1990, the BOF adopted regulations implementing a comprehensive management plan for rainbow trout in the area previously known as the Southwest Alaska Management Area. This area included the BBMA, the waters flowing into Kuskokwim Bay from Cape Newenham to the outlet of the Kuskokwim River, and the Kuskokwim River and tributaries from the Aniak River to Kuskokwim Bay.⁹ Still in force, this plan is not a regulation but is used as a policy for guiding the BOF and the public. It provides a clear understanding of the underlying principles by which rainbow trout stocks are to be managed and provides guidance for the BOF in developing future regulations. In 1998, the BOF adopted *Criteria for Establishing Special Management Areas for Trout* (5 AAC 75.013). This regulation embodies most of the criteria that originated, and are still used, in the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan*.

Guiding Policies

The intent of the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan* is one of conservative wild stock management. Conservative wild stock management does not necessarily preclude limited

⁹ ADF&G. 1990. Southwest Alaska rainbow trout management plan. Located at: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage.

harvest of rainbow trout for food or trophies. However, maximum yield principles that emphasize harvest are ruled out. Additionally, under a principle that emphasizes wild trout management, mitigating losses of wild stocks through enhancement or stocking is not considered a desirable management alternative.

Conservative wild stock management is guided by both biological considerations and social concerns. Growth in the region's rainbow trout sport fisheries is inevitable, but by managing the area's wild rainbow trout stocks conservatively, the potential for serious long-term resource problems is minimized. From a social perspective, conservative wild stock management is consistent with the priorities of most of the public presently using the resource. The *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan* contains 3 policies that are intended to protect the biological integrity of the region's wild trout stocks and maximize their recreational benefit and economic potential. The policies guide the development of sport fishing regulations and provide ADF&G management biologists, BOF members, and the public with clear direction as to how rainbow trout fisheries in the BBMA should be managed. The 3 policies are as follows:

- 1) Native rainbow trout populations will be managed to maintain historical size and age compositions and at population levels sufficient such that stocking is not needed to enhance or supplement the wild population.
- 2) A diversity of sport fishing opportunities for wild rainbow trout should be provided through establishment of special management areas by regulation. Selection of areas for special management will be based on criteria to be adopted by the BOF.
- 3) Management strategies should be consistent with the prudent economic development of the state's sport fishing industry while at the same time acknowledging the intrinsic value of this fishery resource to the people of Alaska.

Plan Implementation

Regulations based on the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan* were adopted by the BOF in February 1990. These regulations were designed to implement the 3 management policies contained in the rainbow trout management plan. Specifically, the BOF did the following:

- 1) Expanded the Wild Trout Zone from the Iliamna drainage to include the drainages of Bristol Bay and Kuskokwim Bay and the Kuskokwim River from Aniak River downstream.
- 2) Established 8 catch-and-release areas in the BBMA and 3 catch-and-release areas in the Lower Kuskokwim Management Area (Figure 8).
- 3) Established 6 artificial fly-only, catch-and-release-only areas (Figure 9).
- 4) Established 11 unbaited, single-hook artificial lure only areas to protect rainbow trout stocks (Figure 10).

Adoption of regulations implementing the management policies contained in this plan was not expected to be a one-time effort. Rather, policy implementation was understood to be a long-term process, with the policies used as the framework to develop a very important and unique resource. Special management regulations were adopted using this process during the BOF meetings held in the fall and winter of 1997 for the Kvichak River in Bristol Bay, and the Kanektok, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, and Kisaralik Rivers in the Kuskokwim area. This plan has also proved to be a useful guide for rainbow trout management in other parts of the state.

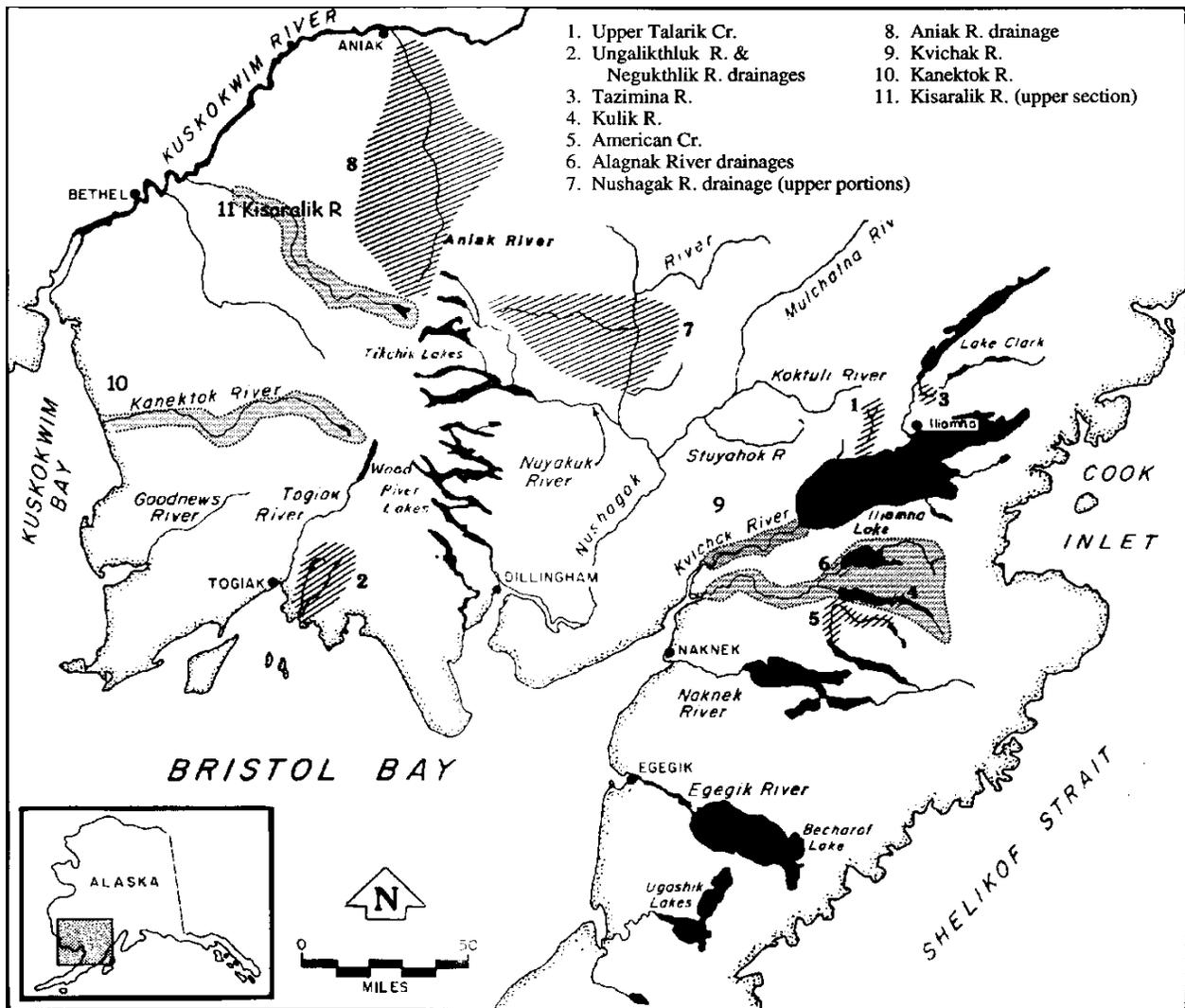


Figure 8.—Catch-and-release special management areas for rainbow trout (line-shaded areas) in the Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area.

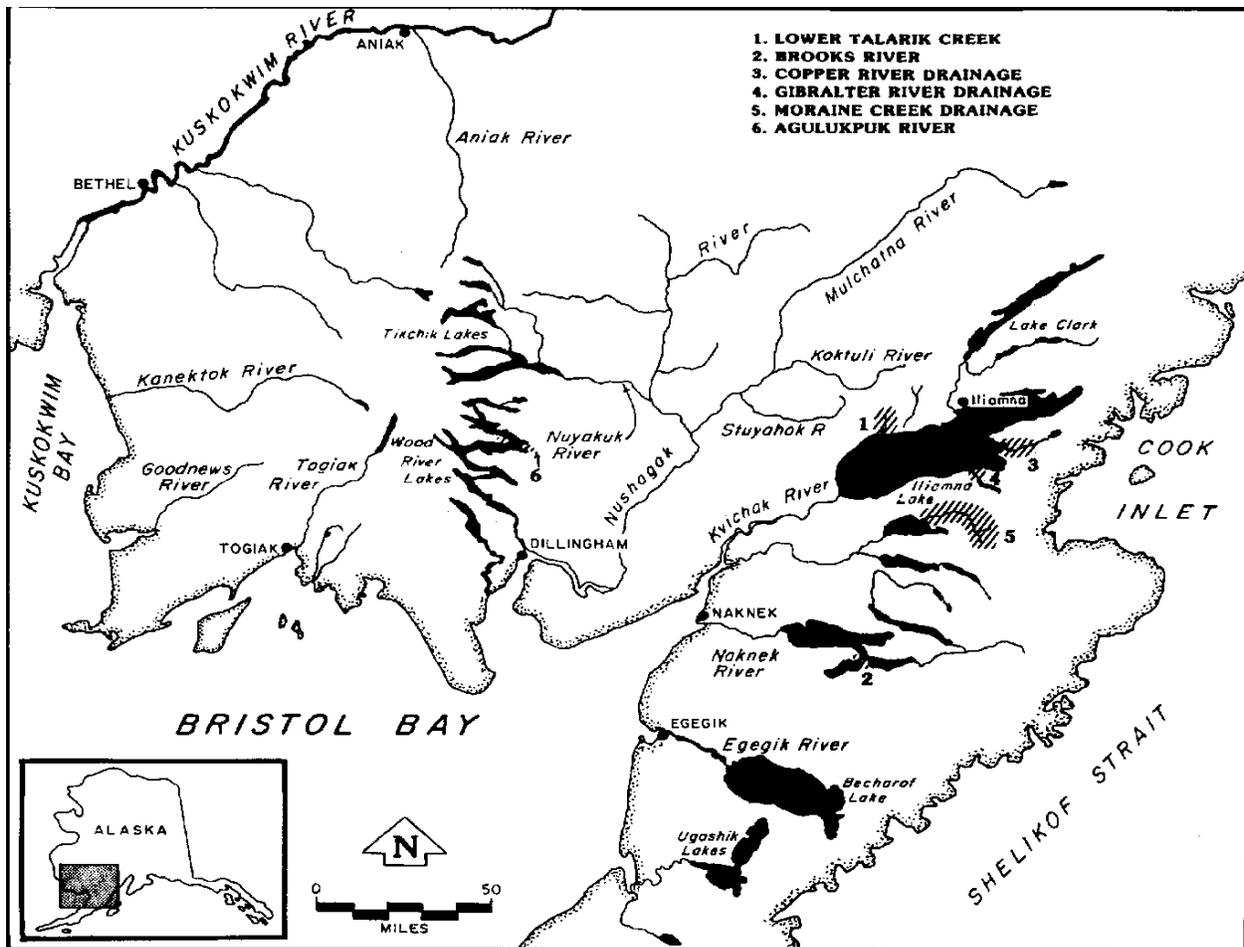


Figure 9.—Fly-only, catch-and-release special management areas for rainbow trout (line-shaded areas) in the Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area.

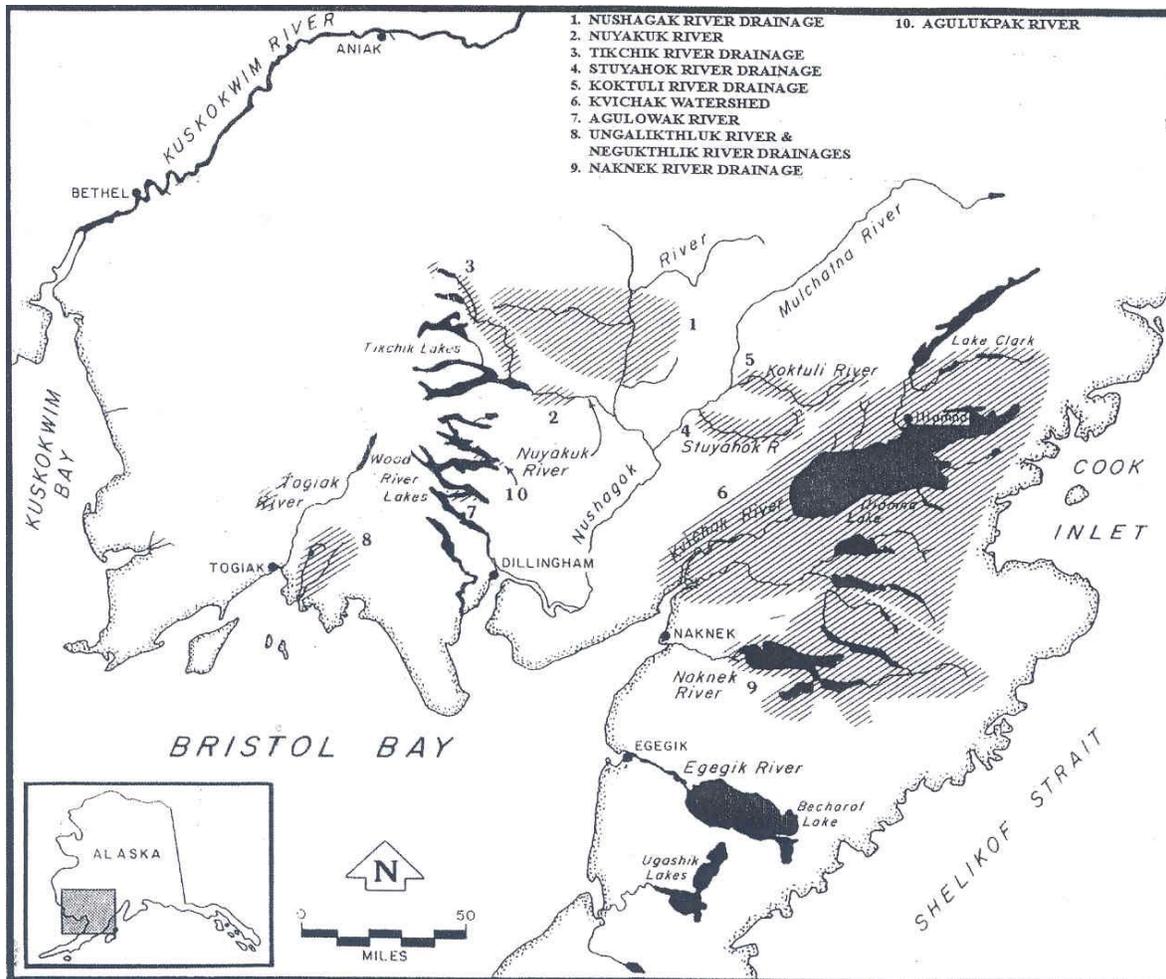


Figure 10.—Unbaited single-hook artificial lure special management areas for rainbow trout (line-shaded areas) in the Bristol Bay Sport Fish Management Area.

LOWER TALARIK CREEK

Fishery Description

Lower Talarik Creek, located at the northwest corner of Lake Iliamna, is renowned for its high-quality rainbow trout sport fishery. The creek is relatively small and most anglers only fish along the first 2 miles above its entrance into Lake Iliamna. The large fish, for which Lower Talarik Creek is so famous, enter the creek from Iliamna Lake to feed on salmon eggs and salmon carcasses in the fall. The sport fishery takes advantage of this migration and is most active from mid-August until late September or October. Most anglers fishing Lower Talarik Creek are guided nonresidents who make daily fly-in trips from the many lodges operating in the Lake Iliamna area. As many as 30 anglers at a time can be accommodated at the popular lower portion of the creek.

In 1992, a Native land claim had the potential to eliminate public access to this world-class rainbow trout fishery. Through an agreement with the claimant, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) obtained the land and coordinated a land management agreement with ADF&G and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR). One stipulation of the agreement was to create a Special Use Area along the lower reaches of Lower Talarik Creek that would allow public access. After extensive

discussions with local leaders, the Special Use Area was created in August 1999. In the spring of 2001, TNC initiated a process to convey these lands to the state for management, and the DNR-Realty Section finalized the transfer.

Fisheries managers first estimated angler effort and harvest on Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout with onsite creel surveys from 1970 through 1976. Annual harvest ranged from a high of 433 fish in 1971 to 73 fish in 1974 (Table 20). The SWHS has measured effort (angler-days) since 1977 and harvest since 1990 (Mills 1979–1980, 1981a–b, 1982–1994; Howe et al. 1995, 1996; Alaska Sport Fishing Survey Database <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>). Onsite creel surveys conducted during the fall fisheries of 1989–1991 and 1993–2001 found effort was similar to the upper range of levels observed in the 1970s (Table 20). Small estimates of catch and effort in 1997 and 2001 are due to the short duration of those surveys (Table 20).

Table 20.—Angler effort, catch, catch per angler-hour, harvest, and retention rate for rainbow trout in Lower Talarik Creek, 1970–1976, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1993–2005.

Year	Survey dates	Angler-hours	Catch	Catch/hour ^a	Mean angler-hours per day	Harvest	Percent retained
1970	26 Aug–11 Oct	1,315	600	0.46	27.4	119	20%
1971	8 Jun–30 Sep	2,604	2,300	0.88	26.3	433	19%
1972	8 Jun–30 Sep	1,718	834	0.49	17.4	141	17%
1973	8 Jun–30 Sep	1,376	780	0.57	13.9	113	14%
1974	8 Jun–30 Sep	1,037	498	0.48	10.5	73	15%
1975	8 Jun–30 Sep	1,048	1,648	1.57	10.6	127	8%
1976	8–15 Jun; 12–23 Sep	438	843	1.92	21.9	92	11%
1986	8–15 Jun; 15 Aug–9 Oct	2,063	2,389	1.16	62.5	16	1%
1987	22 Aug–22 Sep	1,893	2,844	1.50	59.2	4	1%
1990	1–27 Sep	2,086	2,910	1.40	77.3	0	NA ^b
1991	30 Aug–25 Sep	1,729	2,363	1.37	64.0	0	NA
1993	10–20 Sep	1,080	699	0.65	98.2	0	NA
1994	2–29 Sep	2,462	3,273	1.33	87.9	0	NA
1995	1–29 Sep	2,496	3,200	1.28	86.1	0	NA
1996	3–30 Sep	1,930	1,655	0.86	68.9	0	NA
1997 ^c	1–15 Sep	1,210	1,794	1.48	80.7	0	NA
1998	31 Aug–21 Sep	2,596	1,698	0.65	118.0	0	NA
1999	29 Aug–23 Sep	2,121	1,192	0.57	81.6	0	NA
2000	28 Aug–23 Sep	2,813	4,868	1.73	104.2	0	NA
2001 ^c	2–13 Sep	934	692	0.74	77.8	0	NA
2002 ^c	5–19 Sep	1014	770	0.76	67.6	0	NA
2003 ^c	1–13 Sep	789	685	0.87	60.7	0	NA
2004	1–29 Sep	1,321	1,044	0.84	45.8	0	NA
2005	2–29 Sep	1,002	2,100	2.10	35.8	0	NA
Average							
All years		1,628	1,737	1.07	58.5	47	NA
2001–2005		1,012	1,058	1.06	57.5	0	NA

Source: Russell (1977); Minard (1990); Minard et al. (1992); T. Jaecks, Fishery Biologist, ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, Dillingham, unpublished data for 2005.

^a Unstratified catch per unit effort, recalculated from total catch and hours in original reports.

^b Lower Talarik Creek became a catch-and-release fishery beginning in 1990.

^c Small total catch and effort is due to the short duration of the survey.

Fishery Management and Objectives

The Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout fishery is managed to maintain historical age and size composition and a diversity of angling opportunities by maintaining the special management designation with artificial fly-only, catch-and-release.

Lower Talarik Creek was designated a special management area in 1990 as part of the implementation of the *Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan*. Sport fishing is restricted to unbaited artificial flies, and the area is catch-and-release only for rainbow trout. A season closure from April 10 through June 7 provides protection for spawning rainbow trout during this critical life stage.

Sport fishery harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS. Subsistence harvest data are collected by CF with onsite surveys that yield detailed estimates of angler use and success. Biological information and demographic information are also collected. Significant stock assessment and creel survey results are reported by Russell (1977), Minard (1990), Minard et al. (1992).

Lower Talarik Creek's small size, accessibility, and abundant and large rainbow trout garnered early regulatory attention. A synopsis of significant regulation changes can be found in Table 21.

Table 21.—A chronology of significant regulation changes for Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout.

Effective year	Regulation
1965	Spawning season closure imposed on Lower Talarik Creek. Lower Talarik Creek closed to all fishing from April 10 to June 8.
1968	Lower Talarik Creek was included in the "Bristol Bay Trophy Fish Area."
1969	Bag and possession limits reduced to 5 trout, only 1 over 20 inches in length. Helicopter access was forbidden; single hooks were required on tackle.
1974	The use of bait was prohibited during the summer months.
1977	Trophy Fish Area renamed the Bristol Bay Wild Trout Area, retaining the regulations accumulated since 1965.
1981	Gear was limited to single-hook artificial flies from June to October.
1984	Reduced the bag and possession limit to 2 rainbow trout, 1 over 20 inches.
1985	Reduced the bag limit to 1 rainbow trout during the summer.
1990	Adopted the Southwest Alaska Rainbow Trout Management Plan. Lower Talarik Creek was designated as a special management area to be managed under fly-fishing-only, catch-and-release restrictions.
1999	Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) designated as a Special Use Area, the 5 sections of state-owned land immediately surrounding the lower reaches of Lower Talarik Creek. Guidelines for overnight camping and commercial activities were established. The DNR entered into an Interagency Land Management Agreement for approximately 2 acres of land on which stands the Division of Sport Fish (SF) cabin.
2001	The Nature Conservancy transferred its privately held lands to the DNR with management responsibilities to be delegated to ADF&G SF.

A Native Allotment claim that could have jeopardized public access to the Lower Talarik Creek fishery was resolved in 2001. TNC of Alaska acquired title to the claim, which included the land adjacent to the most popular fishing sites along Lower Talarik Creek, through a special agreement with the claimant. In December 1995, TNC coordinated a 3-way land management agreement with ADF&G and DNR. One stipulation of the agreement was to establish a Special Use Area (SUA) for the lower reaches of Lower Talarik Creek and nearby uplands. This was completed in August 1999 with some controversy and after extensive discussions with local municipalities and leaders. Finalizing the SUA allowed the DNR to enter into an Interagency Land Management Agreement (ILMA) with ADF&G for the land on which an ADF&G-owned cabin sits. The ILMA was completed at about the same time as the SUA. The next steps in the agreement were to obtain Critical Habitat status for the drainage and the eventual conveyance of the TNC holdings to the State of Alaska for long-term management. During the spring of 2001, TNC advised the State of Alaska of its interest in conveying its lands to the state but there was little movement until late in the year. The conveyance is now complete.

In 2018, a commercial sport fishing operator purchased a private inholding on the east fork of Lower Talarik Creek within the SUA and applied for permits to install a float plane dock and construct bridges for ATV trails to provide clients with easy access to Lower Talarik Creek. A DNR Land Use Permit was issued to the commercial operator for the installation and use of a float plane dock on Char Lake immediately adjacent to the SUA. Installation of this dock allows for ATV travel from Char Lake throughout the SUA, including the private inholding as well as popular fishing locations.

Research

From 2009 through 2015, a weir was operated each season from breakup in April or May until approximately June 7 (Fo 2015). Consecutive years of weir data were collected to assess spawning abundance, length composition, and life history of Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout. Weir counts of spawning rainbow trout ranged from 49 to 181 moving upstream and 163 to 794 moving downstream during the 2009–2015 seasons (Table 22). Comparisons of weir counts, visual counts, and length compositions with past data indicate fewer mature rainbow trout and fewer large rainbow trout than observed in the 1970s and 1997 (Russell 1977).

Table 22.–Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout weir counts, 2009–2015.

Year	Upstream passage			Downstream passage		
	Spawner	Nonspawner	Total	Spawner	Nonspawner	Total
2009	98	86	184	271	261	532
2010	78	99	177	511	152	663
2011	103	125	228	330	169	499
2012	99	27	126	456	745	1,201
2013	49	169	218	163	170	333
2014	32	39	71	435	983	1,418
2015	181	63	244	794	857	1,651

Source: I. Fo, Fishery Biologist, ADF&G Division of Sport Fish, Dillingham, unpublished data.

2024 Season

Anglers reported average sport fishing success for rainbow trout during the 2024 season at Lower Talarik Creek.

KVICHAK RIVER

Fishery Description

The Kvichak River (Figure 1) is recognized around the world for its large rainbow trout. Presently, the river is one of the few waters in Southwest Alaska where anglers may still harvest large rainbow trout. Studies by ADF&G of rainbow trout in the Kvichak River (ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, Dillingham, unpublished manuscript) provide opportunity to examine changes in abundance, recruitment, survival, and age and length compositions of a moderately exploited wild Alaskan rainbow trout population. Additionally, as part of a regionwide comprehensive management planning exercise, SF is developing concise, measurable management objectives for this important fishery. Stock status information is needed to develop specific management objectives for this fishery.

In late winter and spring, rainbow trout aggregate in the upper Kvichak River near the outlet of Lake Iliamna. From 1987 through 1997, ADF&G conducted a mark–recapture study to estimate the abundance and survival of fish in this aggregation (ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, Dillingham, unpublished data). Findings from this study have raised questions about the nature of the aggregation (i.e., whether it is composed of overwintering fish from several natal streams or prespawning fish from the Kvichak River only). If some rainbow trout marked at the upper Kvichak River during a spring sampling event subsequently emigrate and spawn in other streams in future years, then survival estimates from the mark–recapture study are a measure of both mortality and emigration. Radiotelemetry data from sexually mature Lower Talarik Creek rainbow trout suggest the majority of rainbow trout that spawn in Lower Talarik Creek are not susceptible to angling pressure on the Kvichak River and do not appear to significantly contribute to the prespawning population of rainbow trout in the Kvichak River.

Fishery Management and Objectives

Sport fishery harvests and effort are estimated through the SWHS.

The Kvichak River rainbow trout fishery is managed to maintain historical abundance and size composition of rainbow trout.

2024 Season

During 2024, estimated sport fishing effort was 5,363 angler-days (Table 2), and rainbow trout catch was 7,124 (Table 19), which anglers reported as normal.

ALAGNAK (BRANCH) RIVER

Fishery Description

The Alagnak River, locally referred to as the Branch River, is located in the eastern section of the BBMA and flows into the Kvichak River approximately 40 miles north of King Salmon. The Alagnak River originates in Katmai National Park and Preserve, and the upper 55 miles have been designated a Wild and Scenic River.

Two large lakes, Kukaklek and Nonvianuk, feed this drainage. Kukaklek Lake is drained by the Alagnak River, whereas the Nonvianuk River flows 11 miles from Nonvianuk Lake to join the Alagnak River from the south. The Nonvianuk River is a wide, relatively gently flowing river (class 2 or less) that provides the most convenient float trip access to the upper drainage. The upper

Alagnak River is characterized by a narrow canyon and class 3 rapids that provide a more rigorous boating experience. Below its confluence with the Nonvianuk River, the Alagnak River is slower and easily navigated. At the proper water levels, both rivers can be navigated their entire lengths with power boats. The water is clear throughout its length, although the lower 20 miles are colored lightly from silt and bog-stained runoff.

In the lower portion of the drainage, anglers pursue Chinook, sockeye, chum, and coho salmon. In the upper reaches, rainbow trout are the big attraction, with some lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) at headwater lakes, and Arctic char and Arctic grayling in the river, adding diversity to the angling experience. The fisheries are accessed with power boats, particularly the lower one-half to two-thirds of the river, whereas float trips are the most common access in the upper reaches. Several lodges are based along the river and many other lodges from the surrounding area fly clients to the river for day-trip fishing.

The easy access and abundant fish populations of the Alagnak River are major reasons the popularity of this river has grown quickly. Rainbow trout from the Alagnak River drainage, like those of the nearby Kvichak and Naknek River drainages, are known for their abundance and large size.

In terms of angler effort, the Alagnak River is among the top 3 most popular fishing destinations in Southwest Alaska, along with the Naknek and Nushagak Rivers (Tables 2). Estimates of effort and harvest for rainbow trout from the Alagnak River were first available in 1981 from the SWHS. Historically, effort averaged 6,982 angler-days annually from 1977 through 2006 (SWHS [cited October 16, 2022]). Effort peaked at 9,550 angler-days in 2018 and has since decreased with a recent 5-year average from 2019 through 2023 of 5,413 angler-days (Table 2). Since estimates of catch were first made in 1991, the annual average sport catch (fish released plus fish harvested) of rainbow trout from 1991 through 2003 was estimated at 34,518 fish, giving the sport fishery in the Alagnak River the largest catch of rainbow trout in the BBMA during that time (SWHS [cited October 16, 2022]). The 2019–2023 average rainbow trout catch for the Alagnak River was 9,656 (Table 19). Harvest rates have dropped dramatically since 1998, when catch-and-release only regulations were instituted to address concerns for the rainbow trout population.

Fishery Management and Objectives

The Alagnak River rainbow trout fishery is managed to maintain historical abundance and size composition.

Sport fishery effort, catch, and harvest are estimated through the SWHS. Subsistence harvests are considered slight but are not well monitored. Onsite surveys yield detailed estimates of angler use and success as well as data on angler demographics and biological samples from the catch. Significant stock assessment and creel survey results, focused on the lower river salmon fisheries but containing some rainbow trout data, have been collected and reported by Brookover (1989), Dunaway (1990a, 1994), and Naughton and Gryska (2000). Surveys of the spring sport fisheries were conducted jointly with the National Park Service and ADF&G in 1996 at the outlet of Nonvianuk Lake and at the outlet of Kukaklek Lake in 1997 (Jaenicke 1998a–b).

Located between the Kvichak and Naknek River drainages, the Alagnak–Nonvianuk Rivers rainbow trout fishery has been managed like adjacent fisheries. For quite some time, the sport fishing season has featured a spring spawning closure from April 10 through June 7 and single-

hook artificial lure only restrictions. Until 1998, regulations for the open water season allowed the retention of 1 rainbow trout per day with no size limit.

In the 1997 fall BOF meeting, the Alagnak River rainbow trout fishery was restricted by regulation to catch-and-release only out of concerns for the stock. This no-harvest regulation for the period of June 8 through October 31 has been in effect in the Alagnak and Nonvianuk Rivers ever since.¹⁰ From November 1 through April 9, anglers may retain 5 rainbow trout less than 18 inches in length. The new regulations were generally well received by anglers and are expected to provide a measure of protection to this population until better information becomes available. The relatively large rainbow trout and salmon fisheries, coupled with significant float trip and motorboat use, has been a concern of the National Park Service (NPS), nearby communities, and some anglers. NPS has designated the 55-mile portion of the river as a Wild and Scenic River. Human impacts to uplands, stock status of fish populations, and boat wake erosion are high priority issues.

2024 Season

In 2024, effort for the Alagnak River was above the 2019–2023 average at 7,070 angler-days (Table 2). An estimated 3,125 rainbow trout were caught, and 72 fish were harvested (Tables 18 and 19). Anglers reported that sport fishing success for rainbow trout was average.

UPPER NUSHAGAK RIVER

Fishery Description

The upper Nushagak River consists of the stretch of river upstream of the confluence with the Nuyakuk River. The upper Nushagak River provides an attractive alternative to more crowded rainbow trout fisheries in the area. The rainbow trout are not as large as those in other area rivers, but they are abundant. There are approximately 5 camps situated in this section of river that are operated by sport guide services. In addition, this section of the river is popular for float trips.

Sport fishing effort in the Nushagak River upstream of the Mulchatna River averaged 919 angler-days from 2019 through 2023, with a low of 568 angler days in 2023 (SWHS [cited December 31, 2025]).

Fishery Management and Objectives

The upper Nushagak River rainbow trout fishery is managed to maintain historical abundance and size composition of rainbow trout. The upper Nushagak River upstream of Harris Creek, including the King Salmon River, has been designated as a special management area, restricted to unbaited, single-hook tackle and catch-and-release for rainbow trout since 1990.

Sport fishery effort, catch, and harvest for the upper Nushagak River are estimated via the SWHS. Subsistence harvests are not well monitored, and the best information is obtained from a household survey of freshwater fish harvest conducted by the Division of Subsistence.

Size composition data for rainbow trout between Harris Creek and the Chichitnok River was collected by SF in 1999 and 2006. The average size of fish was approximately 16 inches, and no fish larger than 23 inches were sampled.

¹⁰ Southwest Alaska sport fishing regulations summary, 2024 (effective until the 2025 summary is issued) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

2024 Season

The 2024 sport fishing effort for the upper Nushagak River was down from recent years with 285 angler-days (SWHS [cited December 31, 2025]). Anglers reported that sport fishing for rainbow trout was moderate to good.

NAKNEK RIVER

Fishery Description

The first significant recreational use of Naknek River rainbow trout stocks occurred in the mid-1950s when 2 recreational camps were constructed by the military for use by military personnel. The camps, one located at the outlet of Naknek Lake (Lake Camp) and one at the lower reach of the rapids (Rapids Camp), provided a base for significant sport fishing opportunities until 1974. During that time, civilians also discovered bountiful fish resources and effort continued to grow. By the mid-1980s, there were approximately 12 guiding services working the river regularly, with others less frequently. Boat rental and lodging services, available in King Salmon, provided the necessary support needed by the unguided angler.

Most of the rainbow trout sport fishery takes place in the upper reach of the river from Rapids Camp upstream to the outlet of Naknek Lake and has 3 periods of activity: from ice-out in March to April 10, June 8 to June 30, and August 15 to freeze-up in October. Although rainbow trout may be found during July and early August, the huge influx of salmon during this time tends to depress rainbow trout angling. A few determined anglers seek rainbow trout whenever there is open water, and fishing through the ice is a popular activity for some anglers and some subsistence users.

Total sport fishing effort in the Naknek River has varied little from the historical average (1977–2006) of 14,147 angler-days to the recent average (2019–2023) of 12,754 angler-days (SWHS [cited October 16, 2022], Table 2). Rainbow trout catch in the Naknek River between 2019 and 2023 ranged from a low of 11,246 fish in 2021 to a high of 19,927 fish in 2019 (Table 19).

Following the 2018 season, ADF&G received reports that the quality of the experience was declining due to overcrowding. SF staff traveled to King Salmon in late September 2018 to observe the rainbow trout sport fishery. On September 28, a boat survey from Rapids Camp to Lake Camp counted 22 boats and 62 anglers. Concerns about overcrowding generated a larger than usual number of BOF proposals to address this issue for the Naknek River.

Fishery Management and Objectives

Naknek River rainbow trout stocks are managed to maintain the historical abundance and size composition reported in the early 1980s. Sport catch and harvest of rainbow trout in the Naknek River, as well as angler reports strongly suggest the rainbow trout population has long remained near historical abundance and size composition (e.g., Table 23).

There is a long history of special regulations for Naknek River rainbow trout stocks dating back to statehood. Seasons, limits, and gear restrictions were initially liberal. However, as effort increased, reports of declining catch rates and smaller size of the catchable population increased. ADF&G studies conducted in the late 1980s verified the suspected decline (Minard and Brookover 1988b). Recent catch and harvest data and public opinion indicate the stocks are near historical levels (Table 23). Current regulations still reflect the remedial actions adopted in 1990 and allow for harvest of 1 rainbow trout per day less than 18 inches in length during summer and fall, and a winter season harvest of 5 per day less than 18 inches in length. The spawning season closure is in

effect from April 10 to June 7, and only single-hook artificial lures may be used in the area above Rapids Camp. In 1997, the BOF restricted hook gap size to one-half inch or less March 1–April 9 and June 8–July 31 to protect rainbow trout.

Table 23.–Naknek River sport fishing effort and rainbow trout harvest and catch, 1996–2024.

Year	Total effort (angler-days)	Harvest	Catch
1996	11,971	603	16,888
1997	13,673	246	13,737
1998	13,988	388	12,795
1999	21,189	343	17,946
2000	22,529	450	30,738
2001	12,401	160	16,198
2002	21,020	760	30,635
2003	13,398	171	26,183
2004	16,956	272	20,497
2005	12,699	175	16,431
2006	14,928	196	15,555
2007	18,943	307	25,692
2008	15,444	175	19,886
2009	16,850	60	31,097
2010	16,828	226	22,555
2011	14,465	589	21,869
2012	12,704	48	15,794
2013	12,723	47	15,779
2014	16,202	95	21,640
2015	14,621	416	21,311
2016	15,813	101	36,501
2017	14,851	150	21,257
2018	14,279	89	11,724
2019	13,973	88	19,927
2020	7,850	158	14,339
2021	13,756	14	11,246
2022	16,047	0	17,448
2023	12,146	61	11,303
Average			
1996–2018	15,586	264	20,987
2019–2023	12,754	64	14,853
2024	13,759	31	8,403

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1986–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Note: Effort, harvest, and catch estimates for Naknek drainage exclude Brooks River and American Creek.

In the late 1990s, growing interest in the spring fishery that occurs prior to April 9 sparked heated public requests for more intensive management during this time. Some anglers supported managing portions of the river for quality of experience by advocating restrictions to angler access.

Other management suggestions included managing for a particular size composition in the sport catch with emphasis on providing very large fish. Another group of anglers was convinced that growth of the rainbow trout fishery on the Naknek River required a spawning season closure earlier than April 10 to maintain the biological integrity of the population. Regardless of this perspective, it appears clear that the angling public is extremely interested in maintaining and enhancing this fishery.

Strong fishery performance seems to have allayed the concerns of some individuals. Angler success throughout the recent seasons has been good and there are numerous accounts of large rainbow trout being caught.

2024 Season

During the 2024 season, estimated effort in the Naknek River sport fishery was 13,759 angler-days, which is slightly above the recent 5-year average of 12,754 angler-days (2019–2023; Table 23). Sport catch was 8,403 rainbow trout, which was below average (2019–2023; Table 23). Anglers reported that sport fishing success for rainbow trout was average throughout the season.

OTHER SPECIES FISHERIES

The BBMA offers diverse sport fishing opportunities for a large variety of species that often go unnoticed because of the publicity given to the more popular species. Arctic char or Dolly Varden, Arctic grayling, lake trout, northern pike, and chum and pink salmon all contribute to the sport fishing enjoyment of many anglers who fish the area. Catch and harvest estimates are made annually for these other species, and trends in catch are followed for the more popular sport species (Appendices A4 and A5).

WOOD RIVER LAKES SYSTEM ARCTIC CHAR AND DOLLY VARDEN

Fishery Description

The Wood River Lakes system is a series of 5 large, connected lakes north of Dillingham that drain into Wood River and Nushagak Bay at Dillingham (Figure 1). All of these lakes, except the eastern two-thirds of Lake Aleknagik, are included in the boundaries of the Wood–Tikchik State Park. This lake system sustains large populations of Dolly Varden and Arctic char, which are very popular with sport anglers and subsistence users. The most popular angling sites are the Agulowak River, which connects Lake Nerka with Lake Aleknagik, and the Agulukpak River connecting Lake Beverly with Lake Nerka (Figure 1). There are many other good fishing spots throughout the system but these 2 rivers (often called “Wak” and “Pak”) and the outlets of other tributaries into Lake Aleknagik probably support most of the Arctic char angling effort in the system.

By both catch and harvest, the sport fishery for Dolly Varden and Arctic char in the Wood River Lakes is one of the largest fisheries for these species in the BBMA (Table 24 and Appendix A4). The recent 5-year average estimated effort from 2019 through 2023 is 3,045 angler-days (Table 2). Much of the effort is aimed at Arctic char and Dolly Varden, and most sport harvest for these 2 species occurs at the mouths of the Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers.

A stock assessment project conducted in 1993 found the abundance of Arctic char at the mouth of the Agulowak River had declined from 12,000 to 5,000 fish over a 10-year period (Minard and Hasbrouck 1994). Sport harvests during the period of decline are thought to have been excessive. This prompted an emergency order reduction in bag limits for the 1994 season. Restrictive

regulations addressing this fishery were adopted by the BOF in January 1995. The new regulations reduced the daily bag limit from 10 to 2 fish per day and in possession and required the use of single-hook artificial lures. Additionally, a single-hook artificial lure restriction was adopted for the portion of Lake Aleknagik within a ½-mile radius of the outlet of the Agulowak River. These restrictions have been in place since the 1994 season (by emergency order in 1994, and by regulation since 1995). Public acceptance and compliance have been good. Overall, the Arctic char stocks at the Agulowak River appear to have recovered, suggesting that the regulatory changes have allowed recovery to previous levels. High effort at the outlet of the Agulowak River continues and may require ongoing attention.

Since the BOF action, harvests of Dolly Varden and Arctic char for the Wood River Lakes system (Wood River Lakes, Agulowak River, and Agulukpak River) have stayed less than 1,000 fish per year since 2011, except in 2021 (Table 24). Most of the harvest occurs at the mouth of the Agulowak River at the inlet to Aleknagik Lake; the fishery at the Agulukpak River is primarily catch-and-release.

Fishery Management and Objectives

The management objective for this fishery is to maintain the Agulukpak–Agulowak Rivers stocks at the abundance and sizes previously documented in the 1980s. Sport fishery effort, catch, and harvest are estimated through the SWHS. Subsistence harvests are not well monitored and are managed by the Division of Commercial Fisheries. Onsite surveys yield detailed estimates of angler use and success. Biological information and demographic information are also collected. Significant stock assessment and creel survey results have been reported by Minard (1989b), and Minard and Hasbrouck (1994).

2024 Season

During the 2024 season, estimated effort in the Wood River Lakes sport fishery was 4,257 angler-days, which is above the recent 5-year average of 3,045 angler-days (2019–2023; Table 2). Sport catch of Dolly Varden and Arctic char was 6,742 fish, which was above the recent average, and harvest was 89, which was well below the recent average of 518 (2019–2023; Appendix A4, Table 24). Anglers reported that sport fishing for Dolly Varden and Arctic char was excellent throughout the season.

Table 24.–Sport harvest of Dolly Varden and Arctic char from the waters of the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Ugashik	44	0	20	0	15	0	71	0	0	0	0	14	0
Egegik–Becharof	0	225	0	16	15	97	20	14	219	0	0	51	22
Naknek River	49	86	521	32	55	74	156	41	22	0	0	44	0
Naknek Lake	0	30	0	0	0	102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bay of Islands	0	0	0	0	291	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brooks River	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brooks Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
American Creek	0	107	28	0	80	0	18	30	83	0	0	26	0
King Salmon River (Ushagik)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kvichak River	16	17	34	23	0	81	0	0	0	0	22	4	0
Copper River	0	389	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alagnak River	99	81	78	106	0	0	0	12	22	0	0	7	287
Newhalen River	0	0	20	68	0	54	0	0	21	7	0	6	0
Lower Talarik Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Clark	0	49	70	66	17	11	0	17	0	28	29	15	0
Lake Iliamna	0	0	0	16	0	159	0	0	21	0	0	4	0
Kulik River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tazimina River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moraine Creek	0	17	20	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	87	15	895	157	0	0	0	0	0	541	3,870	882	0
Eastern subtotal ^a	295	1,016	1,686	496	513	578	265	114	388	576	3,921	1,053	309
Central													
Nushagak River	197	61	239	237	23	0	208	45	21	28	0	60	50
Mulchatna River	53	135	236	374	65	54	107	25	43	28	21	45	137
Agulowak River	88	132	156	137	0	0	0	0	13	53	0	13	38
Agulukpak River	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
Wood River Lakes ^b	154	381	226	100	95	334	542	329	1,348	230	143	518	89
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	0	68	230	0	268	20	78	42	25	74	17	47	72
Koktuli River	0	61	0	0	15	0	0	63	0	0	21	17	0
Other	47	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	3	139

-continued-

Table 24.–Page 2 of 2.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average	
												2019–2023	2024
Central subtotal ^a	555	899	1,087	848	466	408	935	504	1,450	427	202	704	554
Western													
Togiak	153	122	724	401	274	20	179	38	55	0	100	74	0
Other	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	284	0	0	57	0
Western subtotal ^a	190	122	724	401	274	20	179	38	339	0	100	131	0
Bristol Bay total	1,040	2,037	3,497	1,745	1,253	1,006	1,379	656	2,177	1,003	4,223	1,888	863

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugaluk. Prior to 1998, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were included in Wood River Lakes.

UGASHIK LAKES ARCTIC GRAYLING

The Ugashik Lakes are located on the Alaska Peninsula 560 km southwest of Anchorage and are within the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge. Two popular sport fishery areas are the Ugashik Narrows, which connect the Upper and Lower Ugashik Lakes, and the Outlet, which includes the upper 2 km of the Ugashik River between Lower Ugashik Lake and a large lagoon. The Ugashik Narrows is approximately 0.5 km long and consists of 2 main channels with moderately fast water. The Outlet consists of shallow, braided channels with moderately fast water. The Ugashik Lakes area is accessible only by float plane or by boat from the village of Ugashik and Pilot Point, 40 km downstream from the Outlet.

Fishery Description

Angler effort in the Ugashik Lakes area is concentrated at the Narrows and Outlet, with limited effort expended in other parts of the drainage. Due to the inclement weather of the Alaska Peninsula and the remote nature of the Ugashik Narrows, fishing pressure is moderate. Three active and 1 inactive sport fishing lodges are located in the Ugashik Lakes area. In addition, several lodges in the King Salmon area fly guests to the Ugashik Lakes for day fishing trips.

Species of interest in the sport fishery include Arctic grayling, coho and sockeye salmon, Arctic char and Dolly Varden, and lake trout. Annual sport fishery harvest and catch are estimated for the drainage through the SWHS. Rainbow trout have never been officially documented in the drainage, but reports of catches and harvests of this species routinely appear in the SWHS.

The primary attraction in the drainage has been the Ugashik Narrows, which harbors a population of very large Arctic grayling. Studies indicate that the Arctic grayling at this site are an accumulation of old large fish (Meyer 1991). From 1967 through 1998, 66 trophy fish certificates or honorary catch-and-release certificates were issued for Arctic grayling in the Ugashik River drainage (Havens, ADF&G, Division of Sport Fish, Juneau, personal communication). From 2019 through 2023, the Ugashik drainage fisheries for all species had an average annual effort of 1,139 angler-days and an average catch of 603 Arctic grayling (SWHS [cited December 31, 2025]; Appendix A5). The 2019–2023 average harvest was zero (SWHS [cited December 31, 2025]).

Fishery Management and Objectives

Sport fishing regulations are intended to ensure the sport fishery does not negatively impact Arctic grayling populations and gives the populations sufficient opportunity to reproduce and possibly increase in abundance.

Management of the sport fishery for Arctic grayling in the Ugashik River drainage has been conservative since 1969, when the bag limit was reduced to 2 fish per day. The entire drainage was closed to the taking of Arctic grayling during 1990 through 1994 after studies found declining and very low grayling populations with old fish and poor recruitment (Meyer 1991; Villegas 1993). In 1995, the BOF allowed a sport harvest in portions of the drainage again, with a 5 fish per day daily bag limit in the Ugashik River drainage, excluding the Ugashik Narrows and Ugashik River, for the period of 1995 through 1997. The Ugashik Narrows has been designated as a catch-and-release Arctic grayling fishery since 1995. The Ugashik River has been closed to Arctic grayling fishing

since 1990. During the 1997 winter meeting, the BOF reduced the daily harvest limit to 2 fish per day, with no size restrictions in areas where harvest is allowed.¹¹

During much of the early and mid-1990s, there was controversy over public access easements at the Ugashik Narrows, which is a popular angling site. The state sought to preserve a site easement on Lower Ugashik Lake and a trail easement running north along the west side of the Narrows to public lands along Upper Ugashik Lake. Fly-in anglers had a tradition of getting dropped off on the shores of one lake, angling along the shores of the Narrows, and then getting picked up at the other lake at the end of the day. Frequent and rapid weather changes often made the different drop-off and pick-up sites a necessity for safe air travel. A Native corporation sought to obtain control of the lands along the Narrows and objected to the establishment of easements. From 1992 through 1997, there were extensive legal discussions. The state accumulated extensive documentation establishing historical use of the site and trail, and showed its determination to secure these easements through litigation or a negotiated agreement. In August 1997, the Native corporation chose to relinquish its selection of these lands, thereby allowing the lands to remain as public lands under the management of the Alaska Peninsula–Becharof National Wildlife Refuge. The Narrows and landing sites at both lakes continue to be accessible to the public. However, a portion of land on the southeast side of the outlet has been conveyed to a private, Native Allotment applicant.

2024 Season

During the 2024 season, overall harvest of Arctic grayling in the BBMA was 322 fish (Table 25). Estimated effort in the Ugashik Lakes sport fishery was 942 angler-days, which is below the recent 5-year average of 1,139 angler-days (2019–2023; SWHS [cited December 31, 2025]) and may be an indication of a low number of responses from the Ugashik system to the SWHS, which may lead to an inaccurate estimation. Estimated sport catch and harvest was 0 fish (Appendix A5, Table 25). Anglers reported that sport fishing for Arctic grayling in the Ugashik Lakes was normal during 2024.

¹¹ Southwest Alaska sport fishing regulations summary, 2023 (effective until the 2024 summary is issued) Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Anchorage.

Table 25.—Sport harvest of Arctic grayling from the waters of Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Naknek River	0	10	264	16	14	17	0	13	0	0	0	3	0
Brooks River	0	0	0	0	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kvichak River	0	21	33	23	24	57	20	0	16	0	0	7	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alagnak River	0	10	124	106	0	61	99	0	0	20	41	32	51
Newhalen River	67	24	45	68	154	80	361	0	57	0	11	86	0
Lake Clark	42	41	121	66	299	294	0	22	25	43	330	84	48
Other	72	465	84	28	40	20	24	0	110	52	0	37	0
Eastern subtotal^a	181	571	671	307	531	590	504	35	208	115	382	249	99
Central													
Nushagak River	37	98	38	0	68	52	17	0	293	88	107	101	93
Mulchatna River	22	60	46	54	112	32	107	13	18	9	67	43	48
Agulowak River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	5	0
Agulukpak River	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood River Lakes ^b	254	19	0	0	23	0	34	0	36	0	0	14	34
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	56	21	204	0	12	60	42	0	0	20	0	12	0
Other	45	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48
Central subtotal^a	431	218	288	54	215	144	200	13	347	143	174	175	223
Western													
Togiak River	9	10	118	0	44	0	80	42	0	0	0	24	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western subtotal^a	9	10	118	0	44	0	80	42	0	0	0	24	0
Bristol Bay total	621	799	1,077	361	790	734	784	90	555	258	556	449	322

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Prior data can be found in Mills (1979–1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982–1994) and Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

^a Subtotals of averages may not be the sum of the drainages because information for some drainages is not available for some years.

^b Wood River Lakes includes Lake Nunavaugaluk. Prior to 1998, Agulowak and Agulukpak Rivers were included in Wood River Lakes.

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APPENDIX A: CATCH TABLES

Appendix A1.—Sport catch of Chinook salmon from the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Ugashik	74	109	0	48	524	61	0	0	26	0	145	34	0
Egegik–Becharof	148	564	218	238	99	1245	39	139	65	0	0	49	36
Naknek River	2,846	3,482	3,716	8,758	4,422	6,390	7,824	1,878	1,803	1,009	2,285	2,960	2,742
Naknek Lake	29	0	18	0	0	44	74	0	0	0	87	32	0
Bay of Islands	0	216	36	0	0	0	0	82	43	68	0	39	0
Brooks River	0	264	0	158	142	40	189	0	26	23	0	48	0
Brooks Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
King Salmon River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	172	0	124	0	59	30
Kvichak River	372	79	0	527	733	102	328	19	651	241	258	299	580
Copper River	15	0	0	0	0	0	59	0	0	0	0	12	0
Alagnak River	3,502	4,265	4,299	5,613	3,673	5,125	1,852	873	1,384	599	571	1,056	1,669
Newhalen River	0	0	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	17	0
Lake Clark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Iliamna	0	109	0	18	0	123	0	0	0	443	0	89	0
Kulik River	0	0	20	0	0	0	37	11	0	0	0	10	347
Tazimina River	15	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	47	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	84	0	17	184
Eastern subtotal	7,001	9,135	8,350	15,376	9,611	13,130	10,402	3,174	3,998	2,591	3,432	4,719	5,588
Central													
Nushagak River	30,807	24,465	31,993	45,893	24,345	41,828	23,043	8,491	15,612	7,566	10,587	13,060	7,467
Mulchatna River	997	1,034	716	253	231	940	319	346	651	891	196	481	2182
Agulowak River	0	31	0	34	125	0	632	0	26	113	57	166	0
Agulukpak River	0	0	0	0	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood River Lakes	184	357	688	51	118	0	427	150	22	0	29	126	0
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	350	659	108	0	224	1342	914	0	91	0	429	287	357
Koktuli River	0	0	138	187	73	0	37	58	0	0	0	19	0
Other	0	20	215	52	636	0	0	0	117	550	743	282	30
Central subtotal	32,338	26,566	33,858	46,470	25,794	44,110	25,372	9,045	16,519	9,120	12,041	14,419	10,036
Western													
Togiak	6,392	10,671	5,620	5,405	5,320	4,014	4,495	2,679	2,341	1,112	486	2,223	212
Other	106	69	258	254	456	0	269	0	0	0	0	54	90
Western subtotal	6,498	10,740	5,878	5,659	5,776	4,014	4,764	2,679	2,341	1,112	486	2,276	302
Bristol Bay total	45,837	46,441	48,086	67,505	41,181	61,254	40,538	14,898	22,858	12,823	15,959	21,415	15,926

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Data from prior years can be found in Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Appendix A2.—Sport catch of coho salmon from the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Ugashik	1,187	2,426	4,759	559	358	6,586	551	1,246	351	2,112	491	950	432
Egegik–Becharof	2,309	4,797	3,932	6,706	10,993	17,990	6,942	5,471	8,696	8,270	4,810	6,838	4,786
Naknek River	3,359	10,130	6,892	5,113	11,176	10,213	5,291	2,324	4,618	8,588	2,478	4,660	4,025
Naknek Lake	114	28	506	148	58	94	23	52	40	0	0	23	0
Bay of Islands	31	120	33	16	947	0	0	391	27	301	0	144	225
Brooks River	61	293	17	202	195	270	166	85	107	59	544	192	17
Brooks Lake	0	0	0	171	0	12	0	0	0	94	0	19	0
American Creek	240	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	47	0	64	26	0
King Salmon River	11	386	1,147	34	869	0	1,749	69	0	81	0	380	2,073
Kvichak River	2,828	1,493	1,287	968	1,551	3,437	2,013	1,679	2,260	1,693	1,389	1,807	3,350
Copper River	101	521	535	69	104	0	102	558	0	538	576	355	0
Alagnak River	5,446	10,663	3,368	1,438	6,219	9,689	8,214	1,077	3,544	1,447	1,731	3,203	7,953
Newhalen River	144	52	722	127	220	614	373	77	81	22	0	111	426
Lower Talarik Creek	172	10	118	0	550	0	0	86	0	156	32	55	17
Lake Clark	15	179	225	776	139	0	0	46	0	0	16	12	35
Lake Iliamna	0	31	1,013	137	64	456	172	63	81	143	337	159	146
Kulik River	229	112	71	0	58	83	0	34	0	0	160	39	0
Tazimina River	0	0	0	0	0	332	0	6	0	0	0	1	0
Moraine Creek	0	153	118	0	0	0	0	75	0	0	64	28	0
Other	486	20	0	582	233	392	318	1,453	27	3,519	160	1,095	1,589
Eastern subtotal	16,733	31,414	24,743	17,046	33,734	50,168	25,933	14,792	19,879	27,023	12,852	20,096	25,074
Central													
Nushagak River	9,811	14,124	8,181	6,716	2,355	6,904	7,608	464	3,919	5,141	5,241	4,475	5,950
Mulchatna River	1,717	1,900	3,004	560	2,193	4,656	514	131	315	1,492	1,593	809	173
Agulowak River	106	198	84	137	209	96	68	29	0	233	46	75	146
Agulukpak River	275	593	12	0	324	0	57	0	40	0	192	58	928
Wood River Lakes	2,864	2,036	2,349	1,354	3,543	1,555	1,193	1,424	670	543	322	830	1,400

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Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Central (Continued)													
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	122	204	556	297	2,012	372	432	0	201	323	231	237	1,771
Other	92	254	574	0	131	481	0	17	2,281	150	96	509	297
Central subtotal	14,987	19,309	14,760	9,064	10,767	14,064	9,872	2,065	7,426	7,882	7,721	6,993	10,665
Western													
Togiak	4,258	10,051	14,672	15,017	16,541	17,670	6,139	10,978	9,240	8,700	7,342	8,480	5,012
Other	984	778	3,195	1,884	2,726	3,236	318	0	507	367	1,033	445	876
Western subtotal	5,242	10,829	17,867	16,901	19,267	20,906	6,457	10,978	9,747	9,067	8,375	8,925	5,888
Bristol Bay total	36,962	61,552	57,370	43,011	63,768	85,138	42,262	27,835	37,052	43,972	28,948	36,014	41,627

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Data from prior years can be found in Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Appendix A3.—Sport catch of sockeye salmon from the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Ugashik	1,022	504	1,325	180	265	863	258	841	259	378	189	385	486
Egegik–Becharof	178	2,116	444	227	442	976	538	290	733	403	289	451	724
Naknek River	6,977	8,521	9,095	11,103	8,439	10,443	9,609	11,239	14,342	20,799	13,396	13,877	11,134
Naknek Lake	445	1,065	1,182	1,901	342	119	878	417	128	76	477	395	0
Bay of Islands	114	0	63	175	80	0	0	533	0	484	0	203	0
Brooks River	2,103	5,032	1,788	2,638	2,299	1,071	1,088	660	918	1,759	2,065	1,298	735
Brooks Lake	303	890	353	157	0	0	0	0	259	0	113	74	0
American Creek	719	2,089	319	164	2,979	161	420	64	762	558	157	392	194
King Salmon River	19	0	0	35	0	0	184	42	0	0	229	91	77
Kvichak River	3,367	7,076	3,288	9,242	8,930	6,140	2,887	4,352	9,229	4,067	5,614	5,230	8,207
Copper River	2,145	3,118	2,034	990	812	1,874	917	1,687	1,327	1,505	1,775	1,442	2,024
Alagnak River	5,107	2,280	12,163	5,890	9,156	8,961	3,801	7,602	11,224	4,886	1,628	5,828	7,353
Newhalen River	3,913	1,295	6,270	1,648	6,604	1,227	5,064	2,111	3,202	2,152	2,100	2,926	3,876
Lower Talarik Creek	256	427	133	0	121	0	0	253	129	81	1,006	294	162
Lake Clark	1,024	734	811	919	1,425	1,371	236	743	2,396	452	686	903	2,142
Lake Iliamna	0	4,828	2,559	1,042	40	2,576	1,031	710	725	1,283	290	808	340
Kulik River	264	1,227	80	0	1,406	446	387	462	179	1,771	2,858	1,131	731
Tazimina River	530	0	197	0	0	0	0	21	149	0	31	40	0
Moraine Creek	1,958	704	455	401	891	1,569	748	808	2,821	1,408	917	1,340	1,728
Other	2,157	1,070	41	2,731	612	2,404	2,422	2,030	4,719	2,118	2,450	2,748	4,514
Eastern subtotal	32,601	42,976	42,600	39,443	44,843	40,201	30,468	34,865	53,501	44,180	36,270	39,857	44,427
Central													
Nushagak River	786	753	1,671	1,097	3,716	4,474	920	397	13,885	5,645	11,658	6,501	2,775
Mulchatna River	720	464	1,284	361	753	776	447	352	949	363	702	563	1,324
Agulowak River	600	2,063	676	437	1,743	383	1,580	502	757	1,468	480	957	257
Agulukpak River	203	347	540	178	916	290	111	0	314	179	575	236	437
Wood River Lakes	3,423	6,575	2,638	444	3,223	3,087	2,832	1,964	8,366	2,022	1,834	3,404	3,647
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	204	583	250	175	508	363	531	131	1,058	761	3,181	1,132	2,252
Koktuli River	0	0	199	105	0	0	213	650	0	25	76	193	257

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Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Other	132	348	60	638	0	0	589	11	259	347	1,347	511	0
Central subtotal	6,068	11,133	7,318	3,435	10,859	9,373	7,223	4,007	25,588	10,810	19,853	13,496	10,949
Western													
Togiak	191	636	1,146	2,838	1,575	578	1,301	661	4,605	2,728	2,665	2,392	925
Other	360	435	299	160	80	423	92	0	0	38	0	26	103
Western subtotal	551	1,071	1,445	2,998	1,655	1,001	1,393	661	4,605	2,766	2,665	2,418	1,028
Bristol Bay total	39,220	55,180	51,363	45,876	57,357	50,575	39,084	39,533	83,694	57,756	58,788	55,771	56,404

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Data from prior years can be found in Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Appendix A4.—Sport catch of Dolly Varden and Arctic char from the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Ugashik	3,153	11,013	4,588	2,648	7,259	3,760	4,549	2,459	2,603	1,858	439	2,382	909
Egegik–Becharof	3,698	12,144	5,357	7,634	4,695	7,199	4,268	3,443	2,974	835	408	2,386	4,450
Naknek River	5,837	5,673	7,034	6,815	3,468	3,859	4,949	1,037	855	5,100	743	2,537	1,022
Naknek Lake	1,522	1,969	626	771	43	921	468	450	82	302	0	260	133
Bay of Islands	56	0	71	0	608	0	0	23	0	115	0	28	0
Brooks River	2,131	1,094	924	1,215	731	982	254	197	22	153	284	182	172
Brooks Lake	0	0	97	0	0	0	267	0	0	0	0	53	0
American Creek	9,848	8,260	9,140	2,723	10,622	2,757	4,291	1,849	3,201	3,082	1,289	2,742	3,223
King Salmon River	70	0	0	754	363	0	80	151	0	138	0	74	51
Kvichak River	1,232	1,511	1,877	1,069	1,169	1,288	472	590	669	1,004	299	607	29
Copper River	2,055	7,131	3,132	3,059	933	102	297	407	894	0	91	338	44
Alagnak River	1,919	2,248	6,555	1,909	1,556	2,199	1,165	385	978	541	564	727	3,109
Newhalen River	431	17	295	850	659	346	567	30	109	7	0	143	0
Lower Talarik Creek	0	67	0	481	44	0	0	15	44	0	65	25	0
Lake Clark	133	717	1,329	340	569	540	991	168	1,557	56	210	596	553
Lake Iliamna	347	4,145	6,005	11,216	8,806	182	927	330	21	84	108	294	0
Kulik River	678	745	465	530	1,213	20	139	113	103	319	95	154	316
Tazimina River	106	0	78	0	201	0	15	0	0	138	0	31	22
Moraine Creek	750	1,724	2,694	519	143	815	1,234	255	351	157	122	424	44
Other	9,742	4,602	2,874	2,238	946	16,421	6,208	1,093	4,018	5,638	4,657	4,323	1,703
Eastern subtotal	43,708	63,060	53,141	44,771	44,028	41,391	31,141	12,995	18,481	19,527	9,374	18,304	15,780
Central													
Nushagak River	9,724	11,001	15,224	12,263	1,147	7,683	2,416	236	1,307	1417	969	1,269	107
Mulchatna River	504	338	3,608	2,896	580	759	199	236	190	553	546	345	560
Agulowak River	2,551	4,129	4,602	6,397	5,909	1,508	2,273	1,234	604	3,027	2092	1,846	938
Agulukpak River	2,395	1,560	1,297	1,460	1,176	1,437	694	276	1,199	869	1,443	896	2,031
Wood River Lakes	14,260	5,479	9,351	5,481	5,879	3,329	7,601	3,345	6,211	6,635	5,328	5,824	6,742

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Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	828	2,178	4,733	181	3,236	815	2,877	179	1,261	1438	1,346	1,420	3,071
Koktuli River	0	1,218	1,072	2,422	165	0	1,787	247	0	28	158	444	0
Other	346	307	1,350	521	527	53	438	61	85	1155	0	348	539
Central subtotal	30,608	26,210	41,237	31,621	18,619	15,584	18,285	5,814	10,857	15,122	11,882	12,392	13,988
Western													
Togiak	2,085	7,528	12,486	3,479	4,728	8,286	6,012	1,345	1,060	708	2,809	2,387	860
Other	322	322	169	642	581	0	0	0	955	335	69	272	0
Western subtotal	2,407	7,850	12,655	4,121	5,309	8,286	6,012	1,345	2,015	1,043	2,878	2,659	860
Bristol Bay total	76,723	97,120	107,033	80,513	67,956	65,261	55,438	20,154	31,353	35,692	24,134	33,354	30,628

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Data from prior years can be found in Howe et al. (1995, 1996).

Appendix A5.—Sport catch of Arctic grayling from the waters of the Bristol Bay Management Area by fishery, 2013–2024.

Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Eastern													
Ugashik	561	708	251	319	180	970	2,838	8	0	146	21	603	0
Egegik–Becharof	2,847	1,107	1,130	1,015	457	3,485	279	763	2,422	336	504	861	1,004
Naknek River	2,100	1,811	3,606	2,054	1,137	2,326	1,448	418	563	168	180	555	557
Naknek Lake	144	89	0	21	0	172	417	8	0	223	0	130	85
Bay of Islands	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	30	0	8	0
Brooks River	1,429	204	368	308	860	135	40	0	128	0	19	37	145
Brooks Lake	0	89	166	0	0	0	208	0	37	30	0	55	0
American Creek	423	110	1,664	31	2,265	155	20	4	55	0	61	28	0
King Salmon River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	0	20	0
Kvichak River	6,091	6,746	12,383	2,939	2,133	2,023	2,630	1,322	1,299	457	1,223	1,386	1,040
Copper River	515	955	83	77	206	121	20	778	18	0	39	171	34
Alagnak River	7,114	1,588	6,557	716	1,502	2,612	3,364	212	2,315	1,233	2,542	1,933	1,245
Newhalen River	1,888	706	6,277	1,450	7,490	1,247	1,934	480	797	1,156	186	911	34
Lower Talarik Creek	36	203	0	95	153	0	63	29	18	89	19	44	120
Lake Clark	3,799	2,496	3,319	3,649	4,415	4,106	6,325	1,368	7,358	753	3,325	3,826	2,772
Lake Iliamna		4,266	674	2,547	293	85	201	305	0	43	234	157	0
Kulik River	1,489	48	705	157	168	2,950	521	10	144	0	143	164	0
Tazimina River	1,606	91	0	111	681	683	1,344	101	758	217	39	492	17
Moraine Creek	969	1,143	2,400	251	550	832	838	261	162	52	322	327	448
Other	969	4,499	336	219	1,104	2,902	1,493	90	220	39	564	481	600
Eastern subtotal	32,003	23,144	34,932	12,550	21,820	24,804	23,983	6,165	16,294	5,070	9,421	12,187	8,101
Central													
Nushagak River	7,801	4,926	10,038	2,988	3,608	4,679	5,565	54	3,436	2,207	1,052	2,463	117
Mulchatna River	504	292	2,808	1,106	2,651	2,031	188	483	286	161	842	392	1,649
Agulowak River	1,065	1,563	1,187	1,378	3,480	1,181	2,521	292	432	700	769	943	179
Agulukpak River	1,453	872	1,616	817	3,044	633	746	27	92	457	610	386	681

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Section and drainage	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2019–2023	2024
Central (Continued)													
Wood River Lakes	6,873	1,732	5,586	285	809	778	2,967	788	1,030	879	642	1,261	1,784
Tikchik–Nuyakuk	4,174	2,840	7,809	812	2,711	8,819	1,906	80	2,293	747	2,719	1,549	1,729
Koktuli River	22	426	615	556	1,156	0	2,344	103	250	17	555	654	0
Other	23	290	490	115	355	0	21	3	57	403	0	97	2,118
Central subtotal	21,915	12,941	30,149	8,057	17,814	18,121	16,258	1,830	7,876	5,571	7,189	7,745	8,257
Western													
Togiak	1,256	2,005	4,672	276	3,019	2,436	1,691	280	307	52	827	631	541
Other	187	0	20	10	0	17	99	0	396	17	0	102	0
Western subtotal	1,443	2,005	4,692	286	3,019	2,453	1,790	280	703	69	827	734	541
Bristol Bay total	55,361	38,090	69,773	20,893	42,653	45,378	42,031	8,275	24,873	10,710	17,437	20,665	16,899

Source: Alaska Sport Fishing Survey database [Internet]. 1996–present. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish (cited September 18, 2025) <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/>. Data from prior years can be found in Howe et al. (1995, 1996).