



Two students at the Unalakleet High School learn about rearing salmon and about commercial fishing through the school's curriculum funded in part by Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation.

*Photo by Anna M. Pickett*

## ***Salmon rearing classes taught in Bering Straits region***

**by Anna M. Pickett**  
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In the Norton Sound region, students are given a chance to learn about salmon in high school through the efforts of the Bering Straits School District, State of

Alaska and the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation.

Fish incubators throughout the school district are used in classrooms so that all students from kindergarten through 12th grade are able to help watch salmon eggs

hatch and grow into salmon.

The program in Unalakleet is in its fourth year. Students actually went to the river where the salmon were preparing to spawn. A male and female salmon were caught, just before the eggs were

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laid, and brought to the school where the eggs were laid and fertilized. Students were in charge of tracking the water temperature, oxygen and nitrogen levels, and mortality rate.

"Some of our students have gone on to get jobs through Trident (processors) and other fishing vessels," said Unalakleet teacher Gary Eckenweiler.

"They have a new sense of respect for the resource," said Eckenweiler. "They are more familiar with the lifecycle of the pacific salmon and its habitat."

A commercial fishing class is now offered at the school in Unalakleet. Two weeks out of the year, students from the region travel there for guest lectures and other information that will help them better understand salmon. They learn how to hang nets and about navigation safety.

NSEDC has designed a program that assists with the local economy by offering commercial fishermen the services of local residents to hang nets for a nominal fee of \$125. Students also work at the processing plants in Nome and Unalakleet.