



**A deckhand on the 133-foot tender "Retriver" reaches for the hook of Akland Helicopters Hiller 12E to attach to an 800-pound brailer of red salmon the pilot will wisk to the north shore of the Naknek River in less than a minute. This photo was taken from the 185,000 pound capacity aft hold of vessel which was loaded with more than a half million pounds of fish in its three holds.**

## Many fish hauled

Alaska International Air, the 49th state's largest cargo airline, has moved in excess of 10 million pounds of salmon in one month, more than five million pounds of it from King Salmon to Kenai. Alaska International began moving red salmon in 50,000 pound loads in the box-car sized hold of its Hercules L-100 aircraft June 15 and by July 12 had moved more than 10.4 million pounds of fish from communities where the fish were caught to communities where freezing and canning facilities were available.

A unique aspect of the airline's fish moving operation this year was performed at Bristol Bay where Kenai Packers used the airline to fly fish to Kenai after they had been relayed to shore by helicopter from the company tender "Retriver". Akland Helicopters of Talkeetna used a pair of Hiller 12E helicopters to fly the fish from the deck of the "Retriver" to a truck a mile and a half away on the north side of the Naknek River by using brailers capable of carrying up to 800 pounds of fish per load. Each helicopter made a round trip between the tender sitting in the middle of the Naknek River and the truck every two minutes. From the site on the north side of the river the fish were driven by truck some 15 miles to the King Salmon airport where they were loaded aboard Alaska International Air's four-engine Lockheed Hercules.

Veteran helicopter pilots Bill Bliss and Ed Gunter of Akland Helicopters performed the long line work without setting their aircraft down at either end. On board the 133 foot "Retriver" a deck hand attached a

loaded brailer to a hook at the end of the line and at the truck a workman released the bottom of the brailer so the salmon dropped into a large plastic tote while the helicopter hovered overhead. Two brailer loads filled the 1,600 pound capacity totes which were loaded aboard the Hercules aircraft by fork lift.

"We figured out the best way to make the brailers aerodynamic so they would not spin," explained Harold Daubenspeck of Kenai Packers, "and so that two brailers would fill a tote."

"After we engineered that and we felt we had it under control we put our money down on the helicopters and prayed. and it worked," Daubenspeck said.

"This is not a good sane way to move fish," he said.