

Salmon harvest sets new record

Juneau — Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced that the 1985 commercial salmon harvest has exceeded 138.7 million fish, eclipsing the previous record harvest of 135.4 million fish set in 1984. This is the sixth consecutive year that the harvest has exceeded 100 million salmon. Record harvests are attributed to favorable environmental conditions, reductions in high seas interceptions, and more precise management practices. The exvessel value of the harvest is expected to fall between \$350 and \$400 million, the second highest on record. Prices for all species except pink salmon remained good throughout the season. Pink salmon prices have softened as the harvest has increased.

The pink salmon harvest of 85 million set an all time record, lead by a Southeastern Alaska harvest of 49 million. The 23 million harvest from Prince William Sound added significantly to this new state record pink salmon harvest.

The second most abundant species harvested was sockeye salmon, with over 38 million fish being taken. This was the third largest harvest on record. As usual, Bristol Bay contributed the

majority of the catch with a harvest of over 23 million fish with all-time catch records being set in the Egegik and Ugashik Districts. Cook Inlet contributed over 4 million fish, the second highest harvest on record, with Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula providing an additional 7 million fish.

The statewide chum salmon harvest of 9.3 million fish was slightly below expectations and below harvests experienced since 1980. Chum salmon runs, while generally reduced throughout the state, were especially poor in most areas of Western Alaska, which are heavily dependent upon this species.

The coho salmon harvest of over 5.5 million fish is exceeded only by the 1982 record harvest of 6 million. The coho fishery is still under way in some parts of the state but it is unlikely that a new record will be set. Southeastern Alaska experienced the best harvest in 35 years, contributing nearly half of the statewide harvest. The Copper River fishery had an all time record harvest of over 1 million fish.

The Chinook harvest of 700

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thousand was slightly below recent years' harvests. The Southeastern Alaska troll fishery, limited through U.S.-Canada treaty provisions, contributed 213,000 fish. The Yukon River provided a harvest of 145,000 fish. Many central and Western Alaska locations experienced good harvests.