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Preliminary Commercial Catch Statistics for the 1998 Alaska Salmon Season

by

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THIS PAPER IS ABSTRACTED FROM THE FOLLOWING, AND MAY BE CITED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

Hart, Deborah, and Harold J. Geiger. 1999. Run forecasts and harvest projections for 1999 Alaska salmon fisheries and review of the 1998 season: The short version. Regional Information Report No. 5J99-01 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Commercial Fisheries, P.O. Box 25526, Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526.

The overall catch of sockeye salmon was about 40% lower than expected, but statewide catches of pink salmon were about 20% higher than expected, and the all-species total reached 151 million salmon in 1998. Notably, pink salmon catches were far above expectations in Kodiak. Although statewide chum salmon catches were above expectation, and chum salmon catches in Southeast were far above expectation, other areas failed to produce at expected levels. For example, runs of Western Alaska chum salmon, Yukon River chinook salmon, and Bristol Bay sockeye salmon were well below expectations. We suspect that ocean conditions have changed and that unusually poor ocean survivals were to blame. Table 2 shows 1998 harvest numbers by species and fishing area, in units of fish harvested, and Table 3 provides this information in units of pounds harvested.

The exvessel value of the commercial harvest continued on its long downward trend. The preliminary estimate for the total value of Alaska's 1998 harvest is \$259 million – below the estimates of \$296 for 1997, \$378 for 1996, \$466 for 1995, and \$489 for 1994.

In both 1997 and 1998, the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was considerably less than the forecasted levels. The 1997 forecast was for a return of 35.8 million, with an in-Bay catch of 24.8 million. The actual run in 1997 was 20.1 million, with an in-Bay catch of 12.3 million. The forecast for 1998 was for a run of 32.1 million and an in-Bay catch of 20.6 million. The actual run in 1998 was 19.3 million, with an in-Bay catch of 10.0 million. We suspect that unfavorable climatic and oceanographic conditions reduced marine survival since parent-year escapements were at levels that had produced large runs in the past.

Look for inseason harvest information, postseason statistics, and other information about salmon in Alaska on the World Wide Web at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/> .

Table 1. Preliminary 1998 Alaska commercial salmon harvests by fishing area and species, in thousands of fish.

Fishing Area	Species					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
Southeast Region	230 ^a	1,370	2,900	42,500	15,500	62,500
Prince William Sound	71	1,710	195	28,700	1,270	31,900
Upper Cook Inlet	8	1,220	160	552	96	2,030
Lower Cook Inlet	1	284	16	1,450	5	1,760
Bristol Bay	126	9,990	125	25	391	10,700
Central Region	206	13,200	496	30,700	1,760	46,400
Kodiak Area	17	3,620	425	22,100	316	26,500
Chignik	4	1,050	130	777	129	2,090
South Peninsula	5	2,170	154	8,040	712	11,100
North Peninsula	6	1,090	135	35	70	1,340
Aleutian Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Westward Region	32	7,930	844	31,000	1,230	41,000
AYK Region	95	129	342	591	368	1,530
Total Alaska	563	22,600	4,580	105,000	18,900	151,000

Missing data indicates no harvest, and zeros indicate harvest activity but <1,000.
Columns and rows do not total exactly due to rounding.

^a Total commercial harvest of chinook salmon for the October 1, 1997 to September 30, 1998 catch accounting period.

Modified December, 1998

Table 3. Preliminary 1998 Alaska commercial salmon harvests by fishing area and thousands of pounds.

Fishing	Species					Total
	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	
Southeast	3,950	8,270	22,500	147,000	138,000	320,000
Prince William	1,590	10,400	1,670	105,000	10,400	129,000
Upper Cook	181	6,690	1,100	2,090	695	10,800
Lower Cook	14	1,290	120	4,540	35	6,000
Bristol	2,230	57,200	1,050	85	2,500	63,000
Central	4,020	75,600	3,940	112,000	13,600	209,000
Kodiak	249	17,500	3,590	81,700	2,460	105,000
Chignik	67	6,440	1,050	2,590	918	11,100
South	75	12,500	1,110	28,300	5,040	47,000
North	89	6,080	1,090	126	497	7,890
Aleutian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Westward	480	42,500	6,840	113,000	8,920	171,000
AYK	1,690	1,000	2,630	1,830	2,830	9,980
Total	10,100	127,000	35,900	374,000	163,000	710,000

Missing data indicates no harvest, and zeros indicate harvest activity but Columns and rows do not total exactly due to

Modified December, 1998



Figure 1. The four fishery management regions (Southeast, Central, Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim, and Westward) of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries.

Chinook Salmon

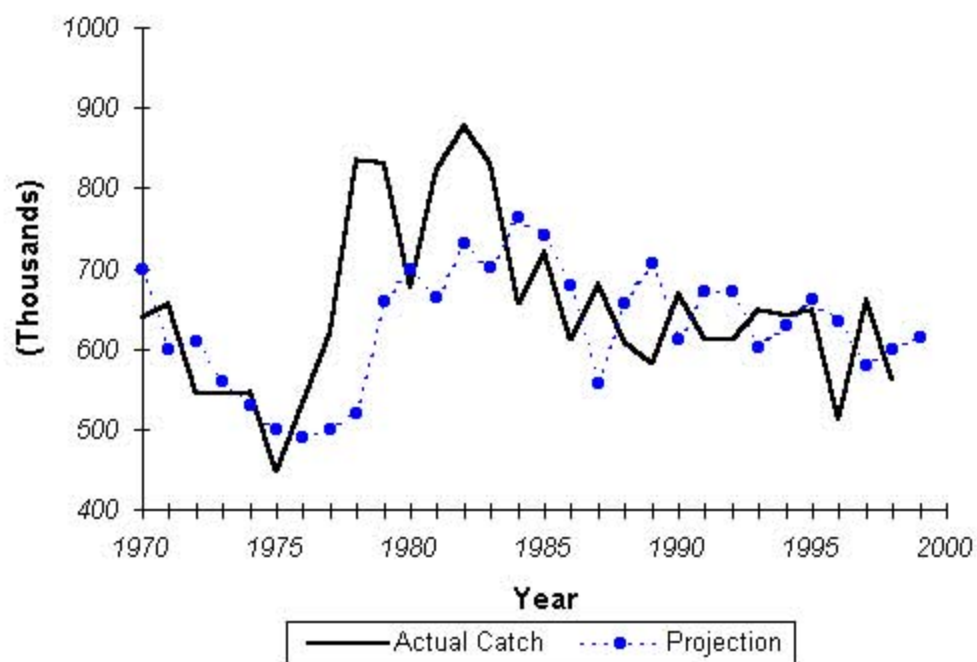


Figure 2. Relationship between actual catch (thousands) and projected catch (thousands) for Alaskan chinook salmon from 1970 to 1998, with the 1999 projection.

Sockeye Salmon

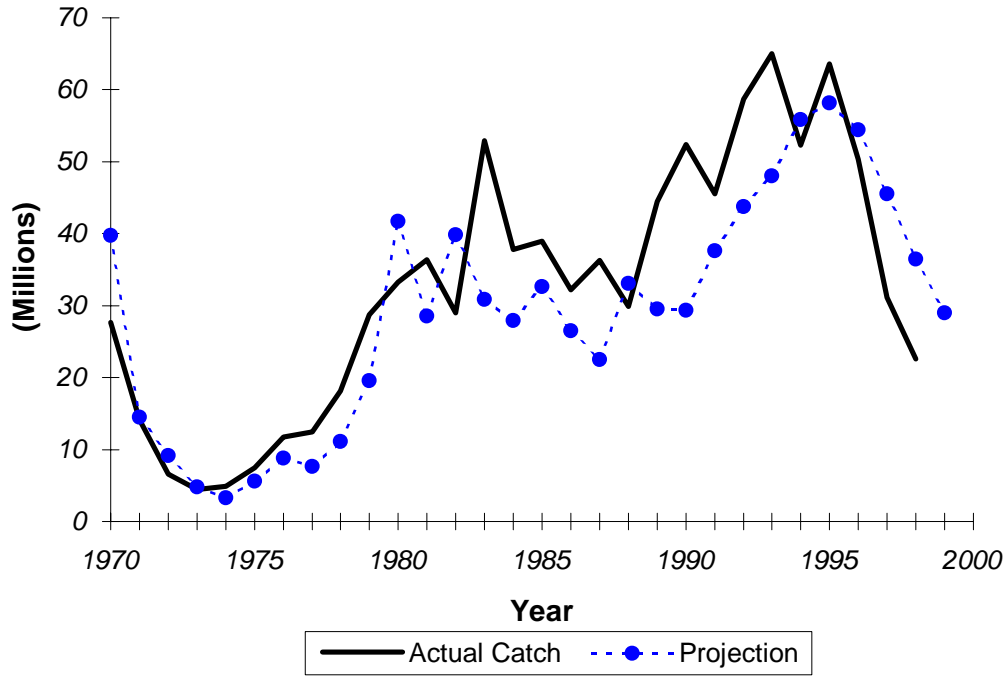


Figure 3. Relationship between actual catch (millions) and projected catch (millions) for Alaskan sockeye salmon from 1970 to 1998, with the 1999 projection.

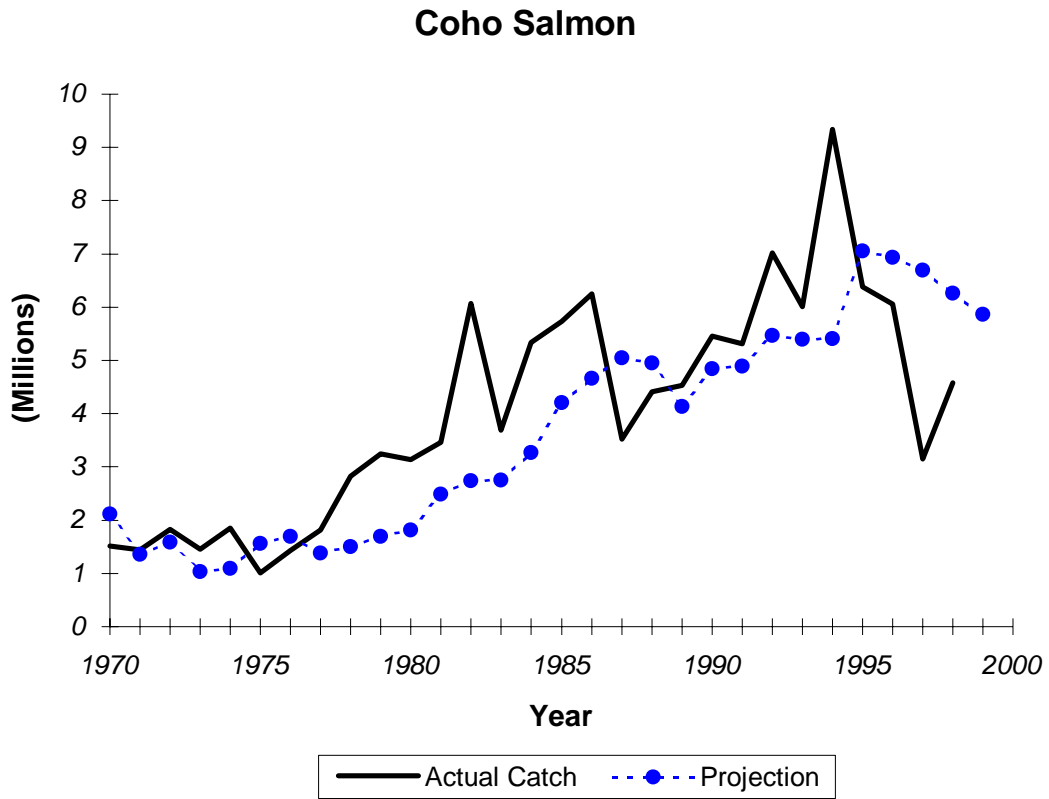


Figure 4. Relationship between actual catch (millions) and projected catch (millions) for Alaskan coho salmon from 1970 to 1998, with the 1999 projection.

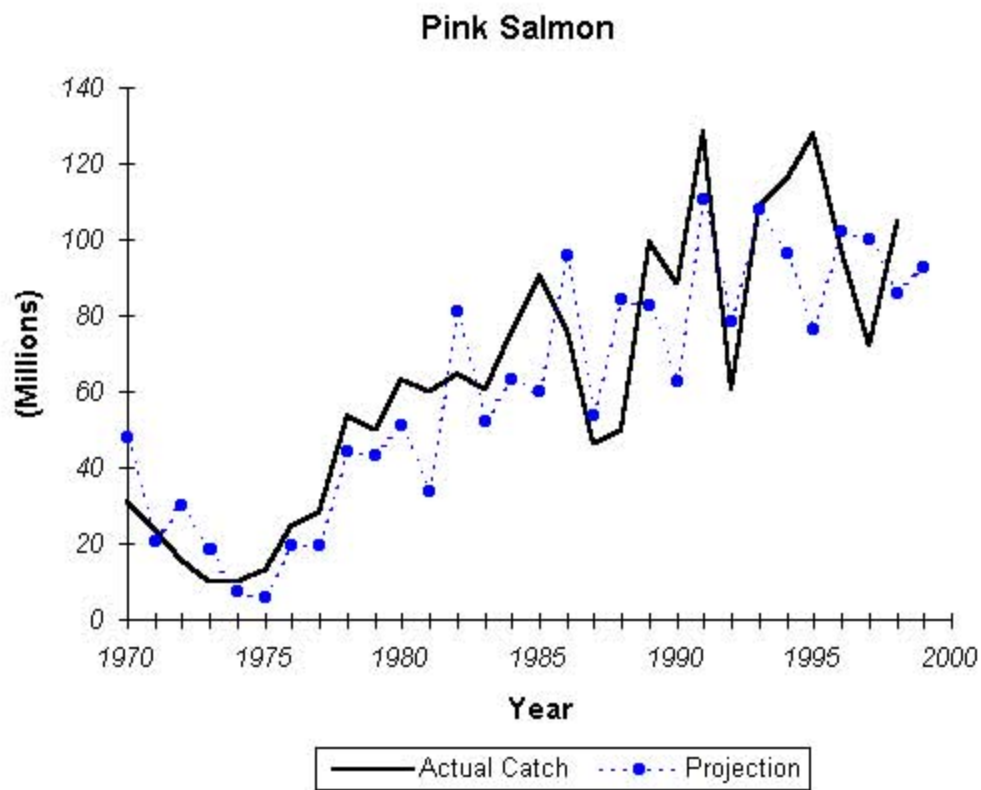


Figure 5. Relationship between actual catch (millions) and projected catch (millions) for Alaskan pink salmon from 1970 to 1998, with the 1999 projection.

Chum Salmon

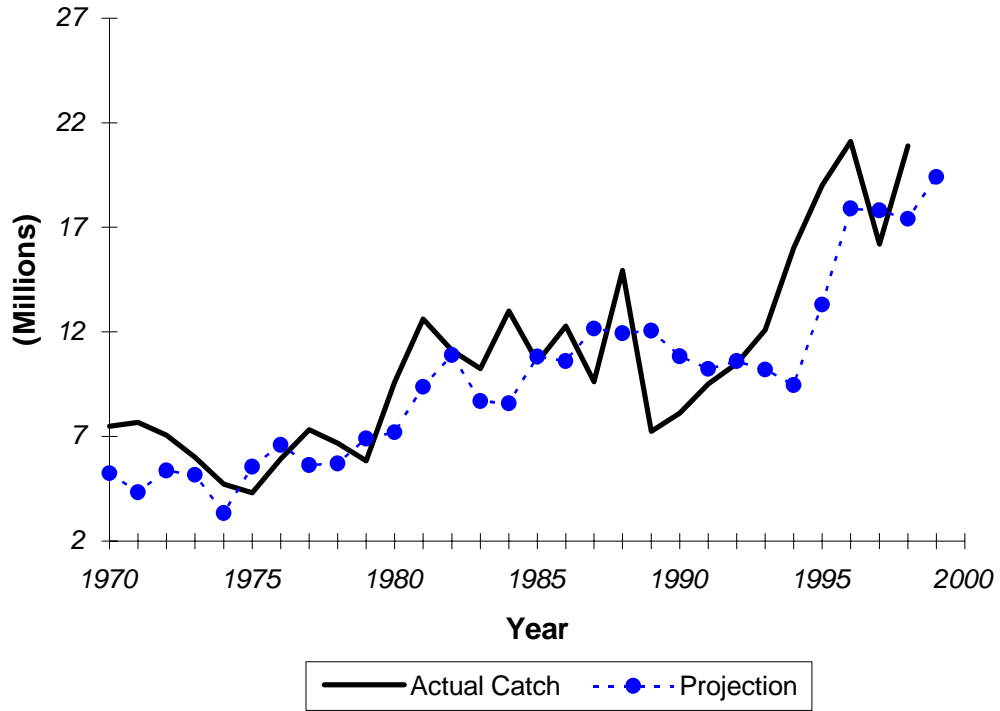


Figure 6. Relationship between actual catch (millions) and projected catch (millions) for Alaskan chum salmon from 1970 to 1998, with the 1999 projection.