



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fisheries and Habitat Conservation

Fish & Wildlife Conservation Offices

Federal Subsistence Management Program

The Federal Subsistence Management Program is a multi-agency effort to provide the opportunity for a subsistence way of life by rural Alaskans on Federal public lands and waters while maintaining healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Subsistence fishing and hunting provide a large share of the food consumed in rural Alaska. The state's rural residents harvest about **22,000 tons** of wild foods each year — an average of **375 pounds** per person. Fish makes up about **60 percent** of this harvest. Nowhere else in the United States is there such a heavy reliance upon fish and game.



Salmon drying is a practice dating back at least 9,000 years.

THE ROLE OF FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OFFICES

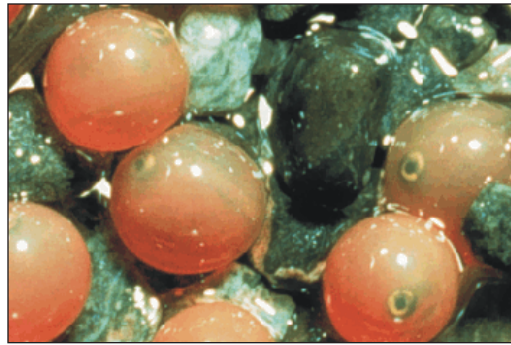
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for subsistence fisheries on behalf of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCOs) supervise subsistence use by rural Alaskans along with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Forest Service. All together, the five Federal agencies manage 237

million acres of Federal lands, which encompasses 66% of Alaska's lands and 52% of its rivers and lakes. In this capacity, FWCOs oversee harvest assessments and resource monitoring, conduct genetic population structure assessments, and participate in Native outreach and education. Specifically, service biologists work with rural residents to maintain sustainable harvest of salmon and ensure that subsistence needs are met.



Subsistence fishing on the Koyukuk river in Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.

Alaska is unique among our states in the scale of its natural resources. All Americans benefit from sound management of its vast fish and wildlife resources. While subsistence use is a priority, sustainable management of Alaska's fishery resources is also crucial to maintaining the health and stability of Alaska's ecosystems and economy. Bears, eagles, and other wildlife depend on annual salmon migrations for food. Likewise, commercial harvest of Alaskan pink salmon alone exceeds **100 million** fish, annually. FWCOs strive to ensure healthy fish and wildlife resources which will also help sustain the rural lifestyles of Native Alaskan cultures.



Pink salmon eggs and a spawning male.



Recent FWCO projects include:

- examining the extent and pattern of genetic diversity in Yukon River Coho salmon to assist in conservation of the species and appropriate harvest management of the populations.
- monitoring the returns of all five salmon species through weir panels installed on the Kwethluk River to ensure that adequate salmon spawn to perpetuate the runs.
- evaluating the impact of a size selective fishery on Chinook salmon in the Kuskokwim River to estimate the heritability of adult size, growth rate, and age in wild Chinook.

Alaska's Native Salmons

Five Pacific salmon species spawn and have directed fisheries in Alaska:

Sockeye Salmon

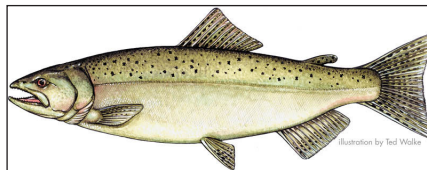
Oncorhynchus nerka



Sockeye salmon is the most important commercial salmon species in North America, valued for their delicious red flesh worldwide.

Chinook Salmon

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha



Chinook salmon, also known as king salmon, are by far the largest, reaching a maximum reported size of 126 pounds.

Chum Salmon

Oncorhynchus keta



Chum salmon is the most widely distributed North American salmon, ranging from Arctic Ocean drainages to Tillamook Bay, Oregon.

Pink Salmon

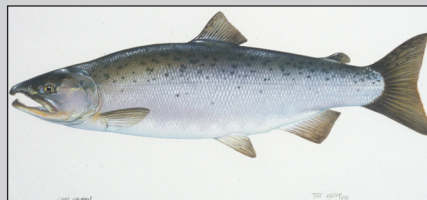
Oncorhynchus gorbuscha



Pink salmon, also known as humpback salmon, are the most numerous of the North American salmon species.

Coho Salmon

Oncorhynchus kisutch



Coho salmon is the most popular Pacific salmon among anglers for their willingness to leap and take flies and lures near the surface.

For more information about the Federal Subsistence Management Program, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation at (202) 208-6394 or visit <http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/fwco/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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