ALASKA'S 2008 SALMON FISHERIES EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

The peak summer fisheries are complete for the 2008 Alaska salmon season. Fall fisheries continue but the bulk of this year's salmon harvest is on the books. After a statewide, all-species harvest of 213 million fish in 2007, Alaska's Department of Fisheries and Game (ADF&G) had predicted a 2008 harvest of 133 million fish. Because of the two-year spawning cycle of pink salmon – Alaska's most abundant salmon species – even-year harvests tend to be much lower than odd year ones, which partially explains ADF&G's lower forecast for 2008. But it is also lower than the average even-year harvest over the last 10 years:

ALASKA ALL-SPECIES SALMON CATCH, 1997-2007
all figures in '000s of fish

Year	Odd-year harvest	Even-year harvest
1997	123,000	
1998		152,000
1999	217,000	
2000		138,000
2001	175,000	
2002		131,000
2003	178,000	
2004		168,000
2005	222,000	
2006		141,000
2007	213,000	
Average	***188,000***	***146,000***
2008 forecast		***133,000***

As of September 5th, Alaskan fishermen had caught 137 million fish, already exceeding ADF&G's forecast with fall fisheries still producing:

YTD ALASKA SALMON HARVEST BY SPECIES, 2008
all figures in '000s of fish — **As at: 05-Sep-08**

Area	Subarea	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Southeast		208	388	1,356	14,560	8,483	24,995
Central							
	PWS	12	1,196	377	39,774	4,377	
	Cook Inlet	13	2,790	155	625	212	3,795
	Bristol Bay	22	27,101	11	38	735	27,907
Total Central		47	31,087	543	40,437	5,324	77,438
Westward							
	Kodiak	18	1,782	277	8,628	898	
	Chignik		638	118	2,337	205	3,298
	S. Peninsula	4	2,176	209	12,718	804	15,911
	N. Peninsula	1	1,921	114	15	175	2,226
	Aleutians				830		830
Total Westward		23	6,517	718	24,528	2,082	33,868
AYK		28	113	383	90	564	1,178
Total		306	38,105	3,000	79,615	16,453	137,479

Pink

As mentioned above, the year-to-year swings in harvest levels depend mainly on the two-year pink salmon spawning cycle, and in 2008 pink salmon harvests far outpaced predictions:

2008 PINK SALMON HARVEST VS. FORECAST *all figures in '000s of fish unless otherwise noted*			
Area Subarea	**Forecast**	**YTD catch**	**Diff (%)**
Southeast	20,700	14,560	(29.7%)
Central			
PWS	22,221	39,774	79.0%
Cook Inlet	1,206	625	(48.2%)
Bristol Bay	56	38	(32.1%)
Total Central	23,483	40,437	72.2%
Westward			
Kodiak	9,700	8,628	(11.1%)
Chignik	738	2,337	216.7%
S. Peninsula	6,380	12,718	99.3%
N. Peninsula	50	15	(70.0%)
Aleutians		830	
Total Westward	16,868	24,528	45.4%
AYK	501	90	(82.0%)
Total	61,552	79,615	29.3%

- Harvests in the central Prince William Sound (PWS) area currently almost double the forecast.
- Although smaller than those in PWS, the South Peninsula fisheries also outperformed, currently 50% ahead of forecast.
- Gains in these areas help offset what has until now been a disappointing pink harvest in the Southeast area.

Sockeye

The pink harvest may be the most abundant, but the sockeye harvest is by far Alaska's most valuable salmon harvest. Alaska has enjoyed three consecutive sockeye harvests of more than 40 million fish. The 2008 harvest currently sits at 38 million fish, so another harvest of 40 million fish seems unlikely and it will definitely fall short of ADF&G's forecast of 47 million fish.

2008 SOCKEYE SALMON HARVEST VS. FORECAST *all figures in '000s of fish unless otherwise noted*			
Area Subarea	**Forecast**	**YTD catch**	**Diff (%)**
Southeast	1,682	388	(76.9%)
Central			
PWS	1,986	1,196	(39.8%)
Cook Inlet	4,246	2,790	(34.3%)
Bristol Bay	31,350	27,101	(13.6%)
Total Central	37,582	40,437	7.6%
Westward			
Kodiak	2,000	1,782	(10.9%)
Chignik	907	638	(29.7%)
S. Peninsula	1,973	2,176	10.3%
N. Peninsula	2,800	1,921	(31.4%)
Aleutians			
Total Westward	7,680	6,517	(15.1%)
AYK	245	113	(53.9%)
Total	47,189	38,105	(19.3%)

- The Bristol Bay fisheries produce the majority of Alaska's salmon harvest.

- In 2008 they fell short of the forecast by six million fish, which explains most of the shortfall in the statewide sockeye harvest.

Chum

ADF&G had predicted a better than average chum salmon harvest of 18.7 million fish for 2008. To date, fishermen have caught 16.5 million fish, but since chum are a main target species for fall salmon fisheries in the Southeast, the final chum harvest is likely to fall close to the forecast.

2008 CHUM SALMON HARVEST VS. FORECAST
all figures in '000s of fish unless otherwise noted

Area	Subarea	Forecast	YTD catch	Diff (%)
Southeast		10,250	8,483	(17.2%)
Central				
	PWS	3,609	4,377	21.3%
	Cook Inlet	139	212	52.5%
	Bristol Bay	1,018	735	(27.8%)
Total Central		4,766	40,437	748.4%
Westward				
	Kodiak	915	898	(1.9%)
	Chignik	86	205	138.4%
	S. Peninsula	805	804	(0.1%)
	N. Peninsula	150	175	16.7%
	Aleutians			
Total Westward		1,956	2,082	6.4%
AYK		1,750	564	(67.8%)
Total		18,722	16,453	(12.1%)

- Chum harvests in PWS are 30% or more above forecast.
- Southeast chum harvests trail forecasts for the moment, but fall fisheries will boost these numbers.

Sources: ADF&G

Implications for frozen seafood buyers:

- Salmon harvests in 2008 have gone relatively according to plan, meaning that supply availability should not affect prices too much in either direction.
- Despite this, rising fuel costs may mean higher prices across the board.
- In general harvests have fallen in areas with nearby ports (e.g. Southeast) and any increased harvests have come in more remote areas (e.g. South Peninsula), which means the average cost to catch and bring a fish to market is probably rising.
- Fisheries in the Southeast continue to suffer across all species, suggesting at least in part the growing effect of climate change.

Visit www.tradexfoods.com or contact your Tradex Foods account manager.

val@tradexfoods.com	greg@tradexfoods.com	jeffrey@tradexfoods.com
felix@tradexfoods.com	alejandra@tradexfoods.com	linling@tradexfoods.com