

Trolling: Alaska's quintessential low impact small boat fishery



The Southeast Alaska commercial troll fishery has been sustainably harvesting salmon for nearly 120 years. Trollers (not to be confused with *trawlers*) are hook and line fishermen operating small, often family-run, boats. They slowly pull four lines with bright lures (very similar to sport fishing) through the water for salmon to bite, resulting in little to no environmental impact. Trollers are the only commercial salmon fishermen who catch salmon one at a time, individually caring for each fish. Trolling is a low volume, high value fishery: every fish is handled with the utmost care, resulting in some of the highest-quality seafood products available in U.S. markets.

Southeast Alaska's salmon fisheries are managed under the bilateral Pacific Salmon Treaty, which governs shared harvest and conservation responsibilities between Alaska, British Columbia, and the lower 48. These shared responsibilities are necessitated due to the transboundary migration of salmon throughout their life cycle. Southeast Alaska's troll fishery Chinook harvest is a key component of the catch, and has been substantially reduced over time in an effort to relieve pressure on struggling stocks in the Lower 48 due to habitat loss (dams, water pollution, urbanization). Trollers are deeply invested in and dependent on the future survival and sustainability of Chinook salmon - their Chinook fishery's survival depends on it.

Commercial fishing is an economic pillar across Southeast Alaska. Specifically:

Troll fishery participation

- The troll fleet the second largest fleet in Alaska and the largest fleet in SE Alaska, with 85% of troll permit holders residing in Southeast Alaska.-CFEC
- Southeast Alaska includes 35 remote communities, some with populations under 100 people and with limited economic opportunity. The troll fishery provides an entry level opportunity due to its affordability when compared to other fisheries in Alaska. As a result, there are troll permits housed in virtually every community in Southeast Alaska.

- Approximately 1,450 fishermen earn income directly from the fishery, including skippers (permit holders) and crew. -McDowell
- The troll fishery provides more jobs for Alaskan residents than any other fishery and is especially important to those who live in smaller, remote communities; roughly one of every 50 people in Southeast Alaska works on a trolling boat.
- Trolling is essentially a year-round salmon fishery, providing fishermen with year-round revenue and high quality fresh fish to markets during months when fresh salmon is not typically available.
- The troll fishery, along with other salmon fisheries in Southeast Alaska, is sustainably managed under strict annual limits negotiated through the Pacific Salmon Treaty. In-season harvest is carefully managed by Alaska Department of Fish and Game, who has a long history of sustainable salmon management.

Troll fishery value

- The SE troll fishery is consistently in the top 3 most valuable fisheries in SE- CFEC
- Ex vessel- \$37M 5yr avg- CFEC
- Including fishing, processing, and all related multiplier effects, the troll fleet has a total economic impact in Southeast Alaska of approximately \$85 million annually, as measured in terms of total output.- McDowell
- Approximately 44% of that \$85M is derived from Chinook harvest- McDowell
- The total troll fishery generates \$148 million annually in economic outputs when adding in restaurant sales, consumer purchases, transportation jobs and other benefits accruing throughout the west coast of the U.S. and beyond- Seabank
- Without trolling, many smaller and mid size SE processors cannot survive
- Each king salmon is worth more than a barrel of oil
- Maintaining access to this fishery is critical for the well-being and continued diversification in Southeast Alaska's economy. The troll fishery is a lifeline for rural livelihoods across this region where hundreds of small-boat fishermen take great pride in the high quality product they provide to consumers across America.