

FP27-04 Executive Summary

General Description	Fisheries Proposal FP27-04 requests to revise the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area to exclude all residents of Kodiak Station Census Designated Place (CDP), except for those residing in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing. <i>Submitted by: Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council</i>
Proposed Regulation	Customary and Traditional Use Determination – Salmon <i>Kodiak Area except Mainland District</i> <i>Residents of Kodiak Island Borough, except those residing on the Kodiak Coast Guard Base in Kodiak Station CDP. (Residents of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing also qualify).</i>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support FP27-04 with modification to revise the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area to exclude all residents of Kodiak Station CDP, including those residing in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing.
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

Draft Customary and Traditional Use Analysis FP27- 04

ISSUE

Fisheries Proposal FP27-04 was submitted by the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (the Council). It requests that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) revise the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area to exclude all residents of Kodiak Station Census Designated Place (CDP), except for those residing in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing.

PROPONENT STATEMENT

The proponent states that Kodiak Station CDP should be excluded from the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area because it includes the Kodiak Coast Guard Base as well as surrounding military lands and off-base military housing communities like Aviation Hill, Lake Louise, and Nemetz (**Map 1, Table 4**). The proponent argues that this change would more appropriately meet the original intent of the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area, while also simplifying regulations by mirroring the language recently adopted for the customary and traditional use determination for Kodiak brown bear. Lastly, the proponent notes that Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge facilities are also located within Kodiak Station, but that long-term residents of Refuge housing should also qualify under this customary and traditional use determination for salmon.

Current Federal Regulations

Customary and Traditional Use Determination—Salmon

Kodiak Area except the Mainland District

Residents of the Kodiak Island Borough, except those residing on the Kodiak Coast Guard Base.

Kodiak Area Mainland District: all waters along the south side of the Alaska Peninsula bounded by the latitude of Cape Douglas (58°51.10' North latitude) mid-stream Shelikof Strait, north and east of the longitude of the southern entrance of Imuya Bay near Kilokak Rocks (57°10.34' North latitude, 156°20.22' West longitude)

All rural residents

Proposed Federal Regulations

Customary and Traditional Use Determination—Salmon

Kodiak Area except the Mainland District

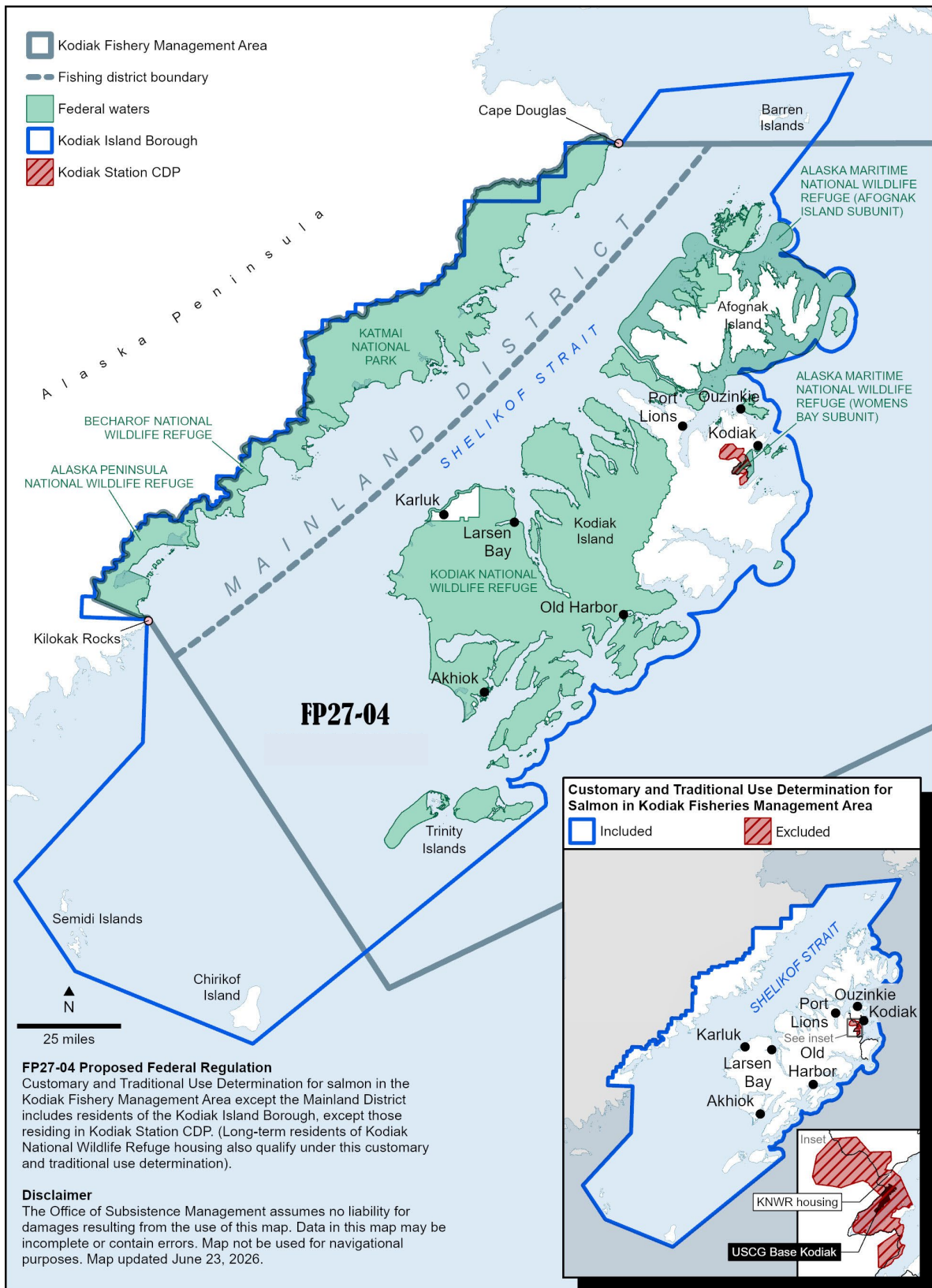
Residents of the Kodiak Island Borough, except those residing ~~on the Kodiak Coast Guard Base~~ in Kodiak Station CDP. (Residents of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing also qualify).

Kodiak Area Mainland District: all waters along the south side of the Alaska Peninsula bounded by the latitude of Cape Douglas (58°51.10' North latitude) mid-stream Shelikof Strait, north and east of the longitude of the southern entrance of Imuya Bay near Kilokak Rocks (57°10.34' North latitude, 156°20.22' West longitude)

All rural residents

Extent of Federal Public Lands

For the purpose of this discussion, the phrase “Federal public waters” is defined as those waters described under 36 CFR 242.3 and 43 CFR 51.3. In the Kodiak Management Area, these Federal subsistence fishing regulations apply on fresh waters within or adjacent to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, and the submerged lands and waters within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge known as the Karluk, Womens Bay, and Afognak subunits.



Map 1. Areas to be included in the proposed customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area except Mainland District.

Regulatory History

In 1988, the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) met to determine whether salmon was customarily and traditionally used by residents of the Kodiak Management Area. At that time, the BOF considered the existence of multigenerational kinship relations between local subsistence users to be a key criterion for establishing customary and traditional use in a given area (Fall 2022, pers. comm.). The lack of multigenerational kinship relations between residents of the Kodiak Coast Guard Base (the Base) was a key factor in excluding Base residents from the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area at this time (Fall 2022, pers. comm.). The BOF also concluded that few long-term Alaskan residents lived on the Base, and that most of the population was transient (Fall 2022, pers. comm.).

The Federal Subsistence Management Program (FSMP) assumed management of the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in 1990. In 1992, the FSMP announced regulations governing the harvest of fish for subsistence uses in non-navigable waters within and adjacent to Federal public lands (57 Fed. Reg. 22940 [May 29, 1992]). These regulations incorporated many provisions from earlier State subsistence fishing regulations, such as the existing customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area.

During a 1994 meeting of the Council, Robert Stovall of the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge noted that the Coast Guard had recently submitted a letter to the Board asking for clarification about why they were left out of the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area (KARAC 1994). According to Stovall, the Board did not consider residents of the Base to lead the same types of subsistence-oriented lifestyles as other rural residents of Kodiak Island (KARAC 1994). During the same meeting, the Chair of the Council expressed additional concerns about extending customary and traditional salmon harvest opportunities to residents of the Base (KARAC 1994). The Chair was specifically concerned about: (1) The impacts of potential Base expansions on local fisheries; (2) the effect that such expansions might have on future Kodiak Area rural determinations; (3) the difficulty of distinguishing longer-term Base residents who might otherwise qualify under Federal regulations from shorter-term Coast Guard Base residents who would not qualify; (4) and the inequity of extending Federal subsistence harvest opportunities to Base residents who have access to commissary and other resources that the rest of Kodiak cannot access (KARAC 1994).

In 1999, the FSMP announced regulations for subsistence fishing in navigable waters with a Federal subsistence nexus (64 Fed. Reg. 5 [January 8, 1999]). Many of these initial regulations were also carried over from State regulations (64 Fed. Reg. 5, 1284). Prior to 2011, Kodiak's road-accessible and off-road areas both had the same annual salmon harvest limit under Federal regulations. In 2011, the annual harvest limit was removed for off-road areas under Federal regulations (FP11-13). This change was implemented after the Alaska Department and Fish and Game (ADF&G) made similar revisions to State subsistence harvest limits. Removing State and Federal subsistence harvest limits in off-road areas was expected to improve harvest reporting accuracy and simplify enforcement of regulations, but harvest limits remained in place for the more intensively used and managed road-accessible zone (OSM 2011).

In 2022, the Council reviewed proposal FP23-05a, which requested that the Board recognize the customary and traditional use of salmon by Base residents. The Council opposed this proposal because they felt that Base residents did not generally possess the same long-term subsistence salmon harvest and use practices exhibited by other Kodiak Island communities (OSM 2023). The Council's opposition also considered that Base residents' comparatively shorter residency times did not allow harvesters to learn and pass down the same degree of local, subsistence-oriented knowledge and cultural values as other residents (OSM 2023). The Board ultimately opposed FP23-05a, consistent with the Council's recommendation (FSB 2023).

In 2026, the Board adopted wildlife proposal WP26-32, consistent with the recommendation of the Council (FSB 2026). This action added all residents of the Kodiak Island road system, except for those residing in military housing in Kodiak Station CDP, to the customary and traditional use determination for brown bear in Unit 8. Residents of Kodiak Station on-base and off-base military housing were excluded from this customary and traditional use determination due to differences in their average length of residence, typical harvest and use of resources, local subsistence-oriented knowledge, and access to goods and services (KARAC 2025).

Community Characteristics

Kodiak Island (*Qik'rtaq*) is the ancestral territory of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq¹ peoples who have lived in the area for at least 7,500 years, likely emigrating from the Alaska Peninsula (Saltonstall and Steffian 2024). Subsistence economies in the Kodiak Archipelago have been based on the harvesting of maritime resources for as long as humans have been present (Mason 1995, Clark 1998). Key among these resources have been marine mammals (e.g., whales, seals, sea lions, and sea otters), as well as ocean fish, shellfish, seabirds and their eggs, and salmon (Clark 1998). However, the typically large and reliable salmon runs found in the archipelago today were not well-established until about 6,300 years ago, and the earliest inhabitants of the island likely initially focused their harvesting activities on marine mammals, ocean fish, and seabirds (Saltonstall and Steffian 2024). As Steffian (2024: 7) explains:

The Kodiak environment creates challenges and opportunities for its residents...there is a seasonal rhythm to the availability of food and materials. Summer (*kiak*) has long days, calm weather, and an abundance of resources present on or near shore. In contrast, winters are dark and stormy, and many resources are not available or hard to reach. Alutiiq ancestors adapted their lives to this predictable pattern by harvesting large quantities of food and materials in the summer and preserving them for winter (*uksuq*). Then, as the land froze, the social season warmed. In winter, people transformed the goods collected in summer into clothing and tools, and they visited and feasted in the warmth of their sod houses.

¹ *Sugpiaq* is a traditional name for the Native people of Kodiak. It means "real person" and it is the way Native people described themselves prior to Western Contact. *Alutiiq* is the way that *Sugpiaq* people pronounce the Russian-introduced word "Aleut." *Alutiiq* is a popular self-designator in Kodiak that reflects the region's complex Native and Russian history. (Steffian 2025: 2).

Early settlements were typically located along coastlines that provided residents with easier access to maritime resources (Clark 1998). Seasonal salmon fishing camps were also located near the mouths of many of the major rivers and streams once the salmon runs were well-established (Clark 1998; Saltonstall and Steffian 2024). Salmon became an increasingly important dietary staple for the Alutiiq from this point forward (Steffian and Saltonstall 2025). Kodiak's earliest salmon fishers speared fish with long lances ground from slate, and they typically harvested smaller amounts of salmon to be eaten soon after harvest (Steffian and Saltonstall 2024, Steffian and Counceller 2025). About 4,000 years ago, Alutiiq ancestors began using nets to harvest much greater quantities of salmon to store for winter (Steffian and Saltonstall 2024, Steffian and Counceller 2025). The transition to nets was likely a function of necessity, as more salmon were needed to feed a growing Kodiak population (Steffian and Counceller 2025). About 900 years ago, Alutiiq people further intensified their use of salmon, as they established large villages near productive salmon streams and began building stone fish pens and weirs to trap salmon (Steffian and Counceller 2025). These technologies allowed the Alutiiq to harvest increasing quantities of salmon for food, trade, and winter festivals (Steffian and Counceller 2025).

People from other cultures began settling in the Kodiak Archipelago only about 260 years ago (Steffian 2024). The indigenous population of the Archipelago was estimated to be over 10,000 people residing in about 65 communities when Russian colonists established a settlement near present-day Old Harbor in 1784 (Clark 1984, Mason 1995, Black 2004). This settlement became a base for the expanding fur trade, and many Alutiiq residents were conscripted to hunt and process sea otter pelts, fish for salmon, and hunt whales for the Russians during this period (Black 2004, Keating et al. 2024). The Russians moved their base of operations to what is now Kodiak City in 1793, seeking better access to lumber (Mason 1995). By the end of the Russian colony in 1867, violence, starvation, introduced diseases, and natural disasters had decimated the indigenous population of Kodiak, reducing their total numbers to about 2,000 people (Mason 1995).

Alaskans and traders from the continental United States tried to continue the fur trade following the purchase of Alaska, but sea otters had been hunted to near-extinction by the end of the nineteenth century (Mason 1995, Keating et al. 2024). People attempted to develop several other industries following the demise of the fur trade, but salmon fishing proved to be the most successful and lasting (Mason 1995). Alutiiq residents became increasingly involved in commercial salmon fishing after 1900, coordinating commercial fishing with more traditional hunting and fishing efforts (Mason 1995).

The twentieth century was marked by rapid social and environmental change on Kodiak Island (Hildreth and Fierstein 2012). The eruption of Mount Katmai in 1912 destroyed settlements and salmon streams throughout Kodiak and had particularly negative impacts on northeastern Kodiak (Hildreth and Fierstein 2012). The eruption covered Kodiak in eighteen inches of volcanic ash, killing vegetation, clogging salmon streams, and halting commercial salmon operations for the year (Mason 1995). However, communities in the area rebounded along with the salmon fisheries. Commercial halibut, herring, and cod fisheries also became well established in the area by the 1920s (Mason 1995).

The Kodiak Naval Operating Base was constructed in the late 1930s, and significant development took place on the island during World War II (Keating et al. 2024). The local population of the Kodiak Road

Zone was estimated at 864 people in 1939, but by 1941, over 10,000 military personnel and civilians had moved to the area (Mishler et al. 1995). Military troops pulled out of Kodiak after the war and the population dropped substantially, but it quickly rebounded around commercial fishing and the emergence of the King Crab fishery in the late 1940s (KANA and ADF&G 1983, Mishler et al. 1995).

The King Crab fishery peaked in the mid-1960s, a period which was also marked by the 1964 Good Friday earthquake that destroyed downtown Kodiak City, Afognak, and much of Old Harbor and Ouzinkie. Afognak residents subsequently relocated to Port Lions (Keating et al. 2024). The canneries at Old Harbor and Ouzinkie were never rebuilt following the disaster, but Kodiak City rebuilt again around King Crab and other commercial fisheries, emerging as the preeminent King Crab producer due to the consolidation of processing operations (Mason 1995, Keating et al. 2024). From 1968 to 1980, Kodiak was the most profitable fishing port in the United States (KANA and ADF&G 1983, Mason 1995). However, King Crab stocks were largely depleted by the early 1980s and have yet to rebound (Mason 1995, Keating et al. 2024).

Kodiak Island's commercial and subsistence economy was further shaken by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, which caused the commercial fishing industry to collapse and significantly reduced subsistence harvests throughout the area due to concerns about contamination (Fall and Utermohle 1995; Mason 1995; Mishler and Cohen 1996; Fall 1999, 2006a; Keating et al. 2024). The availability of oil cleanup jobs further decreased participation in commercial fishing and subsistence activities, exacerbating a trend that began when limited entry permits were first introduced in 1975 (Carothers 2015, Beaudreau et al. 2019).

Yet, the people of Kodiak and many of their fisheries remain resilient. Today, as Keating and colleagues (2024: 9) note, "Kodiak is one of the largest fishing ports in the state and country, home to over 700 commercial fishing vessels representing multiple gear groups" and ranking fourth among U.S. ports for volume of landings in 2023 (NOAA 2025). Kodiak City is the hub for the six off-road communities in the archipelago, as well as the transportation center for the Southwest Region of Alaska (Keating et al. 2024). The Kodiak Island Borough had a population of approximately 12,430 residents in 2025 (ADLWD 2025).

The main income-earning industries in the Kodiak Island Borough today are commercial fishing, service industries (such as healthcare, restaurants, tourism, and transportation), and government (Keating et al. 2024). The economy on Kodiak Island is seasonal. The summer months bring large numbers of seasonal residents/employees to the area, while some of the local population disperses to coastal areas used for fishing and hunting (ADF&G 2002). Overall, the population of permanent residents residing in the Kodiak Road Zone has declined by about 9% since 2000, while the population of remote communities on Kodiak Island has declined by around 42% during the same period (**Table 1**).

Despite all the historical changes, subsistence practices continue to form a key basis of cultural identity, family life, and community well-being in both remote and road-accessible communities on Kodiak Island (Wolfe and Walker 1987, Fall and Walker 1993, Fall 1999, Keating et al. 2024). There

are often close social ties involving the sharing of subsistence resources, knowledge, and gear across Kodiak Island communities located on and off the road system (Sill et al. 2021, Keating et al. 2024). The most productive time of the year for subsistence tends to be from mid-May through mid-October, when the salmon are running (Mishler 2001: 167). Salmon remain one of the primary components of subsistence diets in the Kodiak Area, consistently ranking among the most important of all subsistence resources in terms of use, harvest participation, total weight harvested, and amount shared (Marchioni et al. 2016: 4, also Wolfe and Walker 1987, Fall and Walker 1993, Sill et al. 2021, Keating et al. 2024). As Clark (1998: 175) explains, the relatively high amount of precipitation on the outer coast supplies many streams, which, because of topography, tend to be short. This results in innumerable places where anadromous fish spawn. Most abundant are Pink and Sockeye salmon. Sockeye Salmon arrive at major streams as early as the end of April, and Coho Salmon can linger in a necrotic state at the spawning beds into December.

Residents throughout the Kodiak Area currently harvest salmon using subsistence gillnets and seines, rod and reel, and removal of salmon from commercial catch for home-pack (Marchioni et al. 2016). As Mishler (2001: 172) notes, there are at least five ways of ‘putting up’ salmon: drying, smoking, salting, pickling, and freezing. Freezing, the newest method, was developed in off-road communities only after they were electrified in the 1960s. Before this time, Pink Salmon was often the preferred species to dry and save for use in winter, because the generally lower oil content of Pink Salmon allows it to dry more quickly and completely (Williams et al. 2010). While a significant amount of fish is frozen today, Alutiiq residents value the way that more traditional preservation methods help make their foods culturally distinctive. Some elders also still eat parts of salmon raw, particularly the humps of very mature freshwater Pink Salmon (Mishler 2001: 172, Williams et al. 2010).

Historically, some of the most-utilized subsistence salmon harvest areas in the Kodiak Archipelago have been the Buskin River located on the northern end of Kodiak Island, and the Pasagshak River located on the southeast side of Afognak Island at Litnik (Anderson et al. 2016, Brown et al. 2021). Kodiak Island residents also subsistence fish in the freshwater streams within the 1.9-million-acre Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, which encompasses the southwestern two-thirds of Kodiak Island, as well as Uganik Island, the Red Peaks area on the northwest side of Afognak Island, and all of Ban Island. There are at least 117 anadromous streams in the Refuge, many of which support mixed populations of salmon, Rainbow Trout, and Dolly Varden (Williams et al. 2010: 3).

Table 1. Population estimates for Kodiak Island Borough communities 1990 to 2025 (ADLWD 2025).

Community	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025
Kodiak City	6,365	6,334	6,130	5,581	5,238
Mill Bay CDP	--	--	4,324	4,216	4,058
Kodiak Station CDP	2,025	1,840	1,301	1,673	1,524
Womens Bay CDP	620	690	719	743	759
Chiniak CDP	69	50	47	61	47
Balance*	3,220	3,991	266	203	216
<i>Total Road Accessible</i>	<i>12,299</i>	<i>12,905</i>	<i>12,787</i>	<i>12,477</i>	<i>11,842</i>

Community	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025
Akhiok	77	80	71	63	63
Aleneva CDP	--	68	37	5	8
Karluk CDP	71	27	37	27	31
Larsen Bay	147	115	87	34	30
Old Harbor	284	237	218	216	186
Ouzinkie	209	225	161	109	102
Port Lions	222	256	194	170	168
<i>Total Off-road</i>	<i>1,010</i>	<i>1,008</i>	<i>805</i>	<i>624</i>	<i>588</i>
Total Kodiak Island	13,309	13,913	13,592	13,101	12,430

*The balance represents estimated number of people living in the Kodiak Island Borough outside of city or CDP boundaries. It is included here with the road-accessible communities under the assumption that most residents living beyond census area boundaries live along the road system in the northeastern portion of the island. However, there may be a small number of residents included in the balance estimate that reside in remote areas.

Eight Factors for Determining Customary and Tradition Use

A community or area's customary and traditional use is generally exemplified through these eight factors: (1) a long-term, consistent pattern of use, excluding interruptions beyond the control of the community or area; (2) a pattern of use recurring in specific seasons for many years; (3) a pattern of use consisting of methods and means of harvest which are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost, conditioned by local characteristics; (4) the consistent harvest and use of fish or wildlife as related to past methods and means of taking: near, or reasonably accessible from the community or area; (5) a means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing fish or wildlife which has been traditionally used by past generations, including consideration of alteration of past practices due to recent technological advances, where appropriate; (6) a pattern of use which includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing and hunting skills, values, and lore from generation to generation; (7) a pattern of use in which the harvest is shared or distributed within a definable community of persons; and (8) a pattern of use which relates to reliance upon a wide diversity of fish and wildlife resources of the area and which provides substantial cultural, economic, social, and nutritional elements to the community or area.

The Board makes customary and traditional use determinations based on a holistic application of these eight factors (43 CFR 51.16(b) and 36 CFR 242.16(b)). In addition, the Board takes into consideration the reports and recommendations of any appropriate Regional Advisory Council regarding customary and traditional use of subsistence resources (43 CFR 51.16(b) and 36 CFR 242.16(b)). The Board makes customary and traditional use determinations for the sole purpose of recognizing the pool of users who generally exhibit some or all of the eight factors. The Board does not use such determinations for resource management or restricting harvest. If a conservation concern exists for a particular population, the Board addresses that concern through the imposition of harvest limits or season restrictions rather than by limiting the customary and traditional use finding.

In 2010, the Secretary of the Interior asked the Board to review, with Regional Advisory Council input, the customary and traditional use determination process, and present recommendations for regulatory changes. In June 2016, the Board clarified that the eight-factor analysis applied when considering customary and traditional use determinations is intended to protect subsistence use, rather than limit it. The Board stated that the goal of the customary and traditional use determination analysis process is to recognize customary and traditional uses in the most inclusive manner possible.

Residential communities and administrative areas are located both on and off Kodiak Island's road system (**Map 1**). The road system consists of approximately 100 miles of developed roadway on northeast Kodiak Island. Most residences in this portion of the island are found within the administrative areas of Kodiak City, Kodiak Station Census Designated Place (CDP), Womens Bay CDP, Mill Bay CDP, and Chiniak CDP. Collectively, these road-connected communities are referred to as the Kodiak Road Zone or the Kodiak Road System, and they accounted for about 95% (11,842 people) of Kodiak Island Borough's total population in 2025 (**Table 1**). In recent research (Keating et al. 2024), the subsistence practices of Kodiak City and Kodiak Station CDP residents were analyzed separately, while residents of the rest of the communities located along the road system (Mill Bay CDP, Womens Bay CDP, and Chiniak CDP) were analyzed as one group that is referred to as the "Road Zone Remainder" below.

Named communities located off the road system include: Akhiok, Aleneva CDP, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions (Brown et al. 2021). There are also some residences located outside of these administrative areas. However, there is very limited data available on residents and harvest practices in these areas. Therefore, the analysis below focuses on available subsistence survey data on salmon harvest and use practices for named Kodiak Island communities. A 2005 review of the subsistence permit program revealed that lost and unreturned permits contributed to underestimated salmon harvests, misrepresenting the importance of salmon to Kodiak Island residents (Williams et al. 2010). Harvest levels gathered from permits tended to be much lower (~14% to 40%) than those gathered through household surveys, and harvest estimates based on survey data were generally considered to be more accurate (Williams et al. 2010). Because the current proposal requests to narrow an existing customary and traditional use determination, the analysis provides a review and comparison of the salmon harvest and use practices by all the communities/areas within this customary and traditional use determination.

Kodiak Road Zone

The Kodiak Road Zone² includes Kodiak City, Kodiak Station, Womens Bay, Mill Bay, and Chiniak. Road Zone communities are generally larger, with more employment options, higher median

² The combination of communities/areas included within the "Kodiak Road Zone" designator has not always been consistent across subsistence survey years. It appears that in some years, the Kodiak Road Zone has been defined as all communities located along the Kodiak road system (Marchioni et al. 2016), in other years the Kodiak Road Zone has included all road-connected communities/areas except Chiniak, Pasagshak, and the Coast Guard Base (KANA & ADF&G 1983); and during the most recent study year (2021) the Kodiak Road Zone referred to the remaining road-connected communities located outside of Kodiak City and Kodiak Station (Keating et al. 2024). This issue complicates comparison of survey data for the Kodiak Road Zone between survey years.

household incomes, and greater access to stores and community services than off-road communities (Fall 2006, Marchioni et al. 2016, Keating et al. 2024). Perhaps, as a result, Kodiak Road Zone communities generally harvest a significant, but lower diversity and quantity of subsistence resources (per person and household) than their neighbors living off the road system (**Table 2**, Marchioni et al. 2016). This trend has been documented in subsistence research conducted on Kodiak Island since the early 1980s (see KANA and ADF&G 1983).

However, previous research has also demonstrated that there are substantial differences in salmon harvest participation and total harvest between Kodiak Road Zone subsistence permit holders and other Road Zone residents (Marchioni et al. 2016). This information suggests that subsistence permit holders harvest and use substantially more salmon than Kodiak Road Zone residents without subsistence permits (Marchioni et al. 2016). Further, participation in commercial fishing has been positively correlated with participation in subsistence fishing (Carothers 2010, Marchioni et al. 2016). Road Zone households that obtained a subsistence salmon fishing permit tended to also fish commercially, depend on home-pack, and share salmon in ways that more closely resembled off-road communities like Larsen Bay and Old Harbor than their road zone neighbors without subsistence permits (Marchioni et al. 2012: 36). It is likely that at least some of these Road Zone subsistence permit holders harvest and distribute a disproportionate amount of subsistence resources within their communities (Wolfe et al. 2010). This trend has been documented in numerous rural Alaskan communities (Wolfe et al. 2010), including those located on and off the Kodiak road system (Marchioni et al. 2016, Sill et al. 2021, Keating et al. 2024, Keating et al. 2026).

Kodiak City (*Sun'aq*)

Kodiak City was one of the earliest Russian settlements on the island. It was established in the late 1700s as the fortified headquarters of Northeastern Company operations before becoming part of the Russian American Company in 1799 (KANA and ADF&G 1983, Solovjova and Vovnyanko 2002). The city was officially incorporated in 1940 and became the center of commercial fishing activities, with 14 canneries operating in the early 1980s (KANA and ADF&G 1983, Keating et al. 2024). Today, Kodiak City is the most populous community on Kodiak Island (5,238 people), and most community services and facilities are located here (Keating et al. 2024). It serves as the local hub for communities located off Kodiak Island's road system, and it is the regional hub for Southwest Alaska more broadly (Keating et al. 2024). In recent years, more residents from Kodiak's smaller communities have relocated to the Road Zone in and around Kodiak City because of declining commercial fishing opportunities, age, and the increasing costs of living in off-road areas (Keating et al. 2024).

During the most recent comprehensive subsistence survey conducted for Kodiak City in 2021, the average household reported using about 8 different subsistence resources and harvesting about 5 (Sill 2024). This equated to an average total harvest of about 224 pounds of wild resources per Kodiak City household, with salmon (45%), non-salmon fish (34%), large land mammals³ (13%), and vegetation⁴

³ Primarily deer, but also including caribou, moose, mountain goat, elk, and black bear (Sill 2024).

⁴ Primarily berries (Sill 2024).

(5%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**, Sill 2024). Salmon was the most readily shared resource, with about 57% of Kodiak City households receiving salmon and about 35% giving salmon away in 2021 (Sill 2024).

Sockeye and Coho salmon were the primary salmon species harvested by Kodiak City households in both 2021 and 1993, though Sockeye Salmon composed a substantially larger proportion of the total salmon harvest in 2021 (see Sill 2024, Mishler et al. 1995). About 63% of all subsistence Sockeye Salmon harvested by Kodiak City residents in 2021 were removed from commercial catch (55,861 lbs.), while roughly 25% were taken with subsistence net gear (21,931 lbs.) (Keating et al. 2024). Roughly 59% of all Coho Salmon harvested by Kodiak City residents in 2021 were taken with rod and reel (20,302 lbs.), while about 18% were taken via trolling (6,224 lbs.), and 16% were removed from commercial catch (5,432 lbs.) (Keating et al. 2024). A greater proportion of the total Kodiak City salmon harvest was taken with subsistence net gear in 1993 than in 2021 (Mishler et al. 1995). The primary salmon species harvested by Kodiak Road Zone communities are shown in more detail in **Table 2** below.

Overall, the total average subsistence harvest estimated for Kodiak City households in 2021 was about 50% less than that estimated for Kodiak City households in 1993 (453 lbs.) (Mishler et al. 1995). The diversity of subsistence resources used and harvested by Kodiak City households in 2021 also declined from the levels witnessed in 1993⁵ (Mishler et al. 1995). Similarly, in 2021, about 38% of Kodiak City households reported using less salmon than they typically used in the previous five years, while 37% of households used about the same amount, 13% of households used more, and another 13% noted that they did not normally use salmon (Keating et al. 2024). Households' most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2021 were: working/no time (28%), lack of effort (21%), family/personal reasons (20%), and resource was less available (19%) (Keating et al. 2024).

Though generally food secure, Kodiak City was the only Road Zone community where some households reported not having enough food to eat at certain points in 2021 (Sill 2024). As Sill (2024: 51) explained, this issue was likely related to differences in the types and characteristics of employment of Kodiak City households, which depend more on the retail trade, services, and local government sectors for income. Retail and service industries may have still been experiencing the impacts of the COVID pandemic in 2021. Likewise, during research, many residents also commented on the difficulties the grocery store had been having keeping its shelves stocked (Sill 2024).

Kodiak Station

Kodiak Station CDP encompasses approximately 23,000 acres of military property on northeastern Kodiak Island (Marchioni et al. 2016). It includes the Coast Guard Base as well as surrounding military lands and off-base military housing communities like Aviation Hill, Lake Louise, and Nemetz (**Map 1**, **Table 4**). Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge facilities are also located within Kodiak Station.

⁵ The average Kodiak City household used about 12 different subsistence resources and harvested about 7 different resources in 1993 (Mishler et al. 1995).

Kodiak Station was home to an estimated 1,524 people in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). This area was originally developed as a US Navy base in 1939, but the site was turned over to the Coast Guard in 1972 (Mishler et al. 1995). It is now the nation's largest Coast Guard base (Keating et al. 2024). The Base has several of its own facilities including water and sewer systems and a shopping center, and it is generally considered a distinct community within Kodiak Station and the broader Kodiak Road Zone (Keating et al. 2024). Coast Guard personnel and family can live on the Base, in nearby off-base communities in Kodiak Station, or elsewhere in Kodiak (OSM 2023). Off-base housing options owned by the Coast Guard are located near the Buskin River and Buskin Lake, which support the most heavily utilized subsistence and sport fisheries on Kodiak Island (Keating et al. 2024). While Coast Guard personnel are typically only stationed for three-year tours, the Base receives more extended tour requests than average due to the appeal of hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities in the Kodiak area (Keating et al. 2024). Most Coast Guard households that extend their tours or return to Kodiak either live in off-base military housing like Aviation Hill and Lake Louise, or in private housing outside of Kodiak Station (Keating 2026, pers. comm.).

The Council has previously excluded Kodiak Station CDP and/or Base residents from several of their recommendations for customary and traditional use determinations due to differences in average length of residence, typical harvest and use of resources, local subsistence-oriented knowledge, and access to goods and services (**Table 5**, OSM 2023, KARAC 2025). Previous research conducted in the early 1990s indicated that the demographic makeup of Kodiak Station differed from that of other Kodiak Road Zone communities (Mishler et al. 1995). At this time, Kodiak Station residents were generally much younger than residents of other road zone communities, and the average Kodiak Coast Guard household head had lived in the area for just a little over two years (Mishler et al. 1995). In contrast, heads of household in Kodiak City and other Road Zone communities had lived in the area for an average of 15 years (Mishler et al. 1995). At this time, the average tour of duty for Kodiak Coast Guard personnel was also three years (Mishler et al. 1995). These findings were significant as Mishler and colleagues noted (1995: X-20), “newcomers do not participate as much in traditional subsistence activities as long-term residents. It generally requires two or three years to get acquainted with harvest methods and gear types and to become familiar with the seasonal locations of available wild resources.”

Mishler and colleagues (1995) revealed differences in harvest rates, methods, and use patterns among Kodiak communities in the early 1990s. While the average Kodiak Station household harvested only 10% less total subsistence resources by weight than the average Kodiak City household, their harvest was 39% less than the average Road Zone Remainder household (Mishler et al. 1995). The differences in average salmon harvest between Kodiak Station (118 lbs.), Kodiak City (145 lbs.), and Road Zone Remainder (209 lbs.) households were more pronounced than that noted for total subsistence harvest (Mishler et al. 1995). Kodiak Station households reported only using rod and reel to harvest salmon in the early 1990s, while households throughout the rest of the Road Zone reported using multiple gear types (Mishler et al. 1995). Kodiak Station households also reported sharing salmon at lower rates than their neighbors in Kodiak City and other Road Zone communities (**Table 2**).

Similar demographic and economic differences were noted in more recent research conducted in the Kodiak Road Zone in 2021 (Sill 2024). At this time, Kodiak Station households were again generally much younger than households in other communities, had resided in Kodiak for much shorter durations, had a higher proportion of adults employed year-round, but lower average incomes (**Table 5**). Kodiak Station residents reported smaller and less diverse subsistence harvests than their neighbors in Kodiak City and other Road Zone communities (**Table 2**). The average Kodiak Station household harvested a total of 166 lbs. of wild resources during this study period, with salmon (44%), non-salmon fish⁶ (35%), large land mammals⁷ (14%), and vegetation⁸ (6%) accounting for most of this harvest (Keating et al. 2024). Salmon were the species most used (87%) and harvested (71%) by Kodiak Station households during this study period (Keating et al. 2024). A greater percentage of Kodiak Station households used and harvested salmon than households in Kodiak City (**Table 2**). However, a substantially lower percentage of Kodiak Station households gave salmon away than households in Kodiak City and the rest of the Road Zone (**Table 2**).

As documented in 1991, all salmon harvested by Kodiak Station households in 2021 were taken with rod and reel (Sill 2024). All other Kodiak Island communities harvested salmon with a greater variety of gear types than Kodiak Station during both study periods. In terms of usable weight, Kodiak Station households primarily harvested Coho (56%), Sockeye (23%), and Pink salmon (16%) in 2021 (Keating et al. 2024). As Sill (2024: 71) explains, the higher proportion of Coho and Pink salmon harvested by Kodiak Station households in comparison to other Road Zone households “likely stems from the more accessible nature of the Coho and Pink salmon fisheries [nearby] and the relative ease of harvest. Coast Guard housing is close to Sargent, Russian, and Salonie creeks where both species of salmon return. Coho and Pink salmon can be harvested from these roadside systems and do not require a boat or subsistence net.”

In 2021, approximately 48% of Kodiak Station households reported using more salmon than they typically used in the previous five years, while 29% of households used about the same amount, 16% of households used more, and 6% noted that they did not normally use salmon (Keating et al. 2024). At least some of the Kodiak Station households that reported using more salmon in 2021 could have been Coast Guard service members that had recently moved to the area from places where salmon harvesting opportunities were not available. Households’ most frequently cited reasons for using more salmon in 2021 were: family/personal reasons (73%) and increased effort (20%) (Keating et al. 2024). The most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon were: lack of effort (40%), working/no time (20%), less sharing (20%), and family/personal reasons (20%) (Keating et al. 2024).

Overall, the average Kodiak Station household reported using about 5 different subsistence resources and harvesting about 4–5 different resources in 2021; both figures were somewhat less than that reported by the households in other Road Zone communities (Sill 2024). However, despite their generally lower average incomes and subsistence harvests, Kodiak Station households were considered

⁶ Primarily halibut, but also Black Rockfish and cod (Keating et al. 2024).

⁷ Caribou and deer (Keating et al. 2024).

⁸ Primarily berries (Keating et al. 2024).

to have the highest food security of all Road Zone communities in 2021 (Sill 2024). Kodiak Station households' higher food security rating was at least partially due to their access to the commissary on Base, which typically offers lower priced groceries than the public stores in town (Sill 2024: 51).

Road Zone Remainder: Mill Bay CDP, Womens Bay CDP, and Chiniak CDP

The remainder of the Kodiak Road Zone includes all the administrative areas located along the road system outside of Kodiak City and Kodiak Station (Keating 2024). These other administrative areas include the CDPs of Mill Bay, Womens Bay, and Chiniak. Altogether, approximately 4,864 people lived in these three communities in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). Mill Bay is the most recently defined and most populous CDP on the island. It is located at the northeastern corner of the road system, and it features some of the highest density residential housing. This area provides access to subsistence and sport fisheries around Monashka Bay (Keating 2024).

Womens Bay CDP is located at the base of Old Womens Mountain and encompasses much of the lower Russian River and Sargent Creek valleys, which are important salmon fishing sites (Keating 2024). Many of the roads in Womens Bay were constructed by the U.S. Army during World War II, and much of the land was transferred to the State of Alaska in the late 1960s and subsequently developed into a residential area (Keating et al. 2024). Due to its proximity to the Base, many residents of Womens Bay are military families (Keating 2024).

Chiniak, a transliteration of the Alutiiq word for “cape” (*cingiyaq*), is located about 45 miles southeast of Kodiak City, on the easternmost point of the island. While the Chiniak area has been consistently inhabited for generations, contemporary Chiniak was first developed when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built an access road and an Air Force radar tracking station in the area just after World War II (Keating 2024). However, many community services were not available in Chiniak until after the population began to grow in the 1970s (Keating 2024). Chiniak remains the least populated administrative area located on the road system.

Residents of the Road Zone Remainder had somewhat larger and slightly more diverse subsistence harvests than their neighbors in Kodiak City and Kodiak Station in 2021. The average Road Zone Remainder household reported using about 8 different subsistence resources and harvesting about 6 different resources during this period (Sill 2024). This equated to an average total subsistence harvest of about 240 lbs. of wild resources per Road Zone Remainder household, with non-salmon fish⁹ (37%), salmon (36%), large land mammals (19%), and vegetation¹⁰ (7%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**, Sill 2024). Salmon were the most readily shared resource, with about 54% of all Road Zone Remainder households receiving salmon and about 38% giving salmon away in 2021 (Sill 2024). Salmon also accounted for about the same proportion of Road Zone households' average total subsistence harvest in 2021 as it did during the previous survey conducted in 1991 (Mishler et al. 1995).

⁹ Primarily halibut, but also Black Rockfish and cod (Keating et al. 2024).

¹⁰ Primarily berries (Keating et al. 2024).

Coho and Sockeye salmon were the primary species harvested by Road Zone households in terms of weight in 2021 and 1991, though a greater proportion of the harvest was taken with subsistence net gear in 1991 (**Table 3**; Mishler et al. 1995). In 2021, about 49% of all Sockeye Salmon were harvested with subsistence net gear (24,829 lbs.), while roughly 26% were taken with rod and reel (13,491 lbs.), and 25% were removed from commercial catch (12,498 lbs.) (Keating et al. 2024). Approximately 75% of all subsistence Coho Salmon harvested were taken with rod and reel (38,402 lbs.), while about 13% were removed from commercial catch (6,673 lbs.), and 9% were taken with subsistence net gear during this same period (4,409 lbs.) (Keating et al. 2024).

In 2021, approximately 44% of Road Zone Remainder households reported that they used about the same amount of salmon as they had typically used in the previous five years, while 39% of households used less, 9% of households used more, and 8% noted that they did not normally use salmon (Keating et al. 2024). Households' most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2021 were: lack of effort (28%), working/no time (20%), less sharing (18%), needed less (13%), and the resource was less available (10%) (Keating et al. 2024). Overall, the average total subsistence harvest per Road Zone Remainder household was about 50% less in 2021 than it was in 1991 (Mishler et al. 1995). Similarly, like Kodiak City and Kodiak Station, the diversity of subsistence resources used and harvested by Road Zone Remainder households in 2021 also declined from reported 1991 levels (Mishler et al. 1995).

Table 2. Salmon harvest and use in Kodiak Area communities based on subsistence surveys conducted between 1982 and 2022 (Fall 2006, Williams et al. 2010, Marchioni et al. 2016, Sill et al. 2021, Keating et al. 2024, 2026, ADF&G CSIS 2026). *(HHs is shorthand for “households”).

Community	Study Year	Total Harvest per Household (lbs.)	Salmon Harvest per household (lbs.)	Percent of Household Harvest that is salmon	Total Harvest per person (lbs.)	Salmon Harvest per person (lbs.)	HHs Using Salmon (%)	HHs Harvesting Salmon (%)	HHs Giving Salmon (%)	HHs Receiving Salmon (%)
Chiniak	1982	856	290	34%	217	74	100%	94%	-	-
Kodiak City	1993	459	145	32%	151	42	93%	69%	61%	73%
Kodiak City	2021	224	102	45%	74	34	83%	53%	35%	57%
Kodiak Road Zone	1991	580	209	36%	168	61	91%	80%	60%	59%
Road Zone Remainder	2021	240	85	35%	86	31	89%	63%	38%	54%
Kodiak Station	1991	416	118	28%	115	33	97%	90%	55%	45%
Kodiak Station	2021	166	73	44%	46	20	87%	71%	16%	48%
Road System Average		420	146	36%	123	42	91%	74%	44%	56%
Akhiok	2003	873	455	52%	185	96	100%	100%	73%	45%
Akhiok	2004	-	396	-	-	89	100%	100%	100%	85%
Akhiok	2018	1277	817	64%	370	236	91%	91%	73%	45%
Karluk	1991	1240	887	72%	269	192	100%	100%	100%	69%
Karluk	2003	-	-	-	-	-	86%	-	43%	57%
Larsen Bay	2003	666	369	55%	326	181	96%	56%	44%	56%
Larsen Bay	2004	-	874	-	-	368	100%	89%	78%	89%
Larsen Bay	2005	-	332	-	-	153	91%	63%	49%	77%
Larsen Bay	2012	-	485	-	-	164	100%	76%	57%	57%
Larsen Bay	2018	536	250	47%	239	112	100%	57%	57%	71%
Old Harbor	2003	948	441	47%	357	166	96%	85%	54%	69%
Old Harbor	2004	-	581	-	-	126	100%	90%	97%	76%
Old Harbor	2005	-	443	-	-	162	96%	80%	76%	78%
Old Harbor	2012	-	426	-	-	165	100%	81%	63%	77%
Old Harbor	2018	1755	1123	64%	578	370	100%	83%	77%	77%
Ouzinkie	2003	971	402	41%	316	131	98%	74%	67%	82%
Ouzinkie	2004	-	384	-	-	93	98%	79%	67%	93%

Community	Study Year	Total Harvest per Household (lbs.)	Salmon Harvest per household (lbs.)	Percent of Household Harvest that is salmon	Total Harvest per person (lbs.)	Salmon Harvest per person (lbs.)	HHs Using Salmon (%)	HHs Harvesting Salmon (%)	HHs Giving Salmon (%)	HHs Receiving Salmon (%)
Ouzinkie	2005	-	386	-	-	138	98%	69%	65%	84%
Ouzinkie	2022	586	379	65%	216	140	100%	76%	54%	76%
Port Lions	2003	599	258	43%	220	95	98%	78%	68%	76%
Port Lions	2004	-	379	-	-	160	100%	83%	64%	81%
Port Lions	2005	-	468	-	-	154	96%	71%	68%	75%
Port Lions	2022	434	193	44%	185	82	96%	71%	61%	69%
Off-Road Average		899	488	54%	296	163	97%	80%	67%	72%

Table 3. Estimated household harvests of salmon by species and community, based on subsistence surveys conducted in the Kodiak Area between 1982 and 2022 (Fall 2006, Williams et al. 2010, Marchioni et al. 2016, Sill et al. 2021, Keating et al. 2024, 2026, ADF&G CSIS 2026).

Community	Study Year	Sockeye Harvest (lbs.)	Coho Harvest (lbs.)	Pink Harvest (lbs.)	Chinook Harvest (lbs.)	Chum Harvest (lbs.)	Total Salmon Harvest (lbs.)
Chiniak	1982	62	160	24	17	28	290
Kodiak City	1993	55	55	14	13	7	145
Kodiak City	2021	63	24	3	11	0	102
Kodiak Road Zone	1991	100	73	16	11	10	209
Road Zone Remainder	2021	37	37	4	5	2	85
Kodiak Station	1991	13	63	35	3	3	118
Kodiak Station	2021	17	41	12	2	0	73
Road System Average		50	65	15	9	7	146
Akhiok	2003	286	102	45	0	22	455
Akhiok	2004	288	33	68	1	7	396
Akhiok	2018	487	146	100	10	74	817
Karluk	1991	618	159	15	83	13	887
Karluk	2003	-	-	-	-	-	-
Larsen Bay	2003	268	77	9	15	1	369
Larsen Bay	2004	510	292	14	48	9	874
Larsen Bay	2005	263	52	5	11	3	332
Larsen Bay	2012	422	44	15	5	0	485
Larsen Bay	2018	184	59	3	5	0	250
Old Harbor	2003	108	203	48	25	56	441
Old Harbor	2004	178	267	75	2	59	581
Old Harbor	2005	129	203	67	18	26	443
Old Harbor	2012	145	162	64	26	30	426
Old Harbor	2018	288	538	115	33	150	1123
Ouzinkie	2003	150	184	27	15	27	402
Ouzinkie	2004	162	146	28	27	20	384
Ouzinkie	2005	146	172	37	14	16	386
Ouzinkie	2022	242	88	28	8	13	379
Port Lions	2003	132	87	13	24	2	258
Port Lions	2004	138	174	8	54	5	379
Port Lions	2005	182	143	25	94	25	468
Port Lions	2022	81	58	6	44	3	193
Off-Road Average		246	154	37	25	25	488

Table 4. Kodiak Coast Guard Housing Units in Kodiak Station CDP (Dobroth 2022, USCG Base Kodiak Housing Office. n.d.).

Housing Community	Number of Housing Units	Location
Aviation Hill	120+	~1 mile off Base
Lake Louise	85+	~3 miles off Base
Nemetz	50	~3 miles off Base
Upper Government	90+	On Base
Lower Government	75+	On Base
Unaccompanied Housing	Barracks	On Base

Table 5. Demographic and economic information for Kodiak City, Kodiak Station CDP, and the Road Zone Remainder in 2021 (Keating et al. 2024).

Community	Mean years of residency for head of household	Mean age of sampled households	Maximum age of sampled households	Employed adults working year-round	Average household income ^a
Kodiak City	46	38	90	69%	\$94,298
Kodiak Station	5	21	47	78%	\$60,589
Road Zone Remainder	47	38	89	69%	\$97,444
Entire Road Zone	40	35	90	70%	\$91,551

^a Includes income from sources other than employment (Keating et al. 2024).

Off-Road Communities

Kodiak Island off-road communities include: Akhiok, Aleneva, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions. Today, these communities are generally smaller, with fewer employment options, lower household incomes, older residents, and fewer stores and community services than road-zone communities (Carothers 2010; Williams et al. 2010; Marchioni et al. 2016; Sill et al. 2021; Keating et al. 2024, 2026). Accordingly, residents of off-road communities generally harvest a greater diversity and quantity of subsistence resources (per person and household) than their neighbors living along the road system (**Table 2**). On average, these off-road households also share many of these resources at higher rates than their road system neighbors (**Table 2**). As Carothers explained in 2010 (98):

From the first journey leaving the town of Kodiak, an outsider, sitting in a tiny plane, small against the enormity of the mountainous islands, fjords, and the vast expanse of the sea below, easily perceives the physical remoteness of the outlying villages in the Archipelago. Upon arrival on the small gravel airstrips, planes are instantly greeted by a handful of trucks and all-terrain vehicles waiting to pick up packages from town or returning family members. Here, visitors witness the first of many displays of the cultural and economic distinctiveness

of the village communities. A trip to the village store in Larsen Bay, for example, teaches outsiders that formal commerce here is only open for one hour a day, every other day, provided that the storekeeper is in town. Currently, no village has a restaurant. While groceries from the small village stores and the town of Kodiak are regularly utilized, village residents actively engage in a rural subsistence-based lifestyle and depend upon wild resources for a large portion of their diet.

Over the course of subsistence surveys conducted among off-road communities between 1991 and 2022, the average off-road household harvested a total of 899 pounds of wild resources, with salmon accounting for 54% of this harvest (**Table 2**). Similarly, in the most recent annual report on subsistence salmon fisheries in Alaska, Brown and colleagues (2023: 168) noted that “residents living along the Kodiak Island road system comprised approximately 96% of the Kodiak Island Borough population in 2020, and harvested 12,526 salmon, or 62% of the total salmon harvest for Kodiak Island Borough residents.” This means that the remaining 4% of the Borough’s population residing in off-road communities accounted for 36% (7,054 salmon) of the total salmon reported harvested under State subsistence regulations (Brown et al. 2023).

However, there are often close social ties involving the sharing of subsistence resources, knowledge, and gear across Kodiak Island communities located on and off the road system (Sill et al. 2021, Keating et al. 2024). The population of off-road communities has also been decreasing over the past thirty-five years as residents relocate to the Kodiak road system or elsewhere due to declining commercial fishing opportunities, advancing age, and increasing costs of living in remote communities (Carothers 2010, Keating et al. 2024).

Akhiok (*Kasukuak*)

Akhiok is a small, remote Alutiiq community located on the southern tip of Kodiak Island, at Alitak Bay (Sill et al. 2021). There is limited information about the early history of Akhiok, but there is evidence of prehistoric occupation of Cape Alitak (Sill et al. 2021), and the current community site is located on a very old shell midden¹¹ (Fall and Utermohle 1995). The original community in the area was a sea otter hunting settlement called Kashukugniut, located across Alitak Bay near Humpy Cove (DCRA 2025a). Akhiok residents moved to the current community location in the late 1880s, after Kashukugniut had been occupied by Russians for several decades (Kodiak Island Borough 1986, Sill et al. 2021). The location at Alitak Bay provided abundant resources and more shelter from the wind and weather of the area (Sill et al. 2021). The economy of Akhiok increasingly transitioned toward fishing as sea otter populations declined (Sill et al. 2021). Akhiok was officially incorporated as a city in 1972 (DCRA 2025a), and it had a population of 63 residents in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). The Akhiok grocery store closed in 1983, and residents now get most of their store-bought foods and goods from Kodiak City via plane or boat (Davis 2006a, Sill et al. 2021). For this reason and many others, subsistence harvests continue to be a key aspect of Akhiok’s culture and economy. Service industry and local and

¹¹ Middens refer to old refuse disposal sites where past human communities discarded domestic waste. These sites provide archaeologists important insights into the diets, practices, and environments of past societies.

Tribal government jobs have accounted for the vast majority of Akhiok residents' income (68%) in recent years (Sill et al. 2021), as jobs in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector have declined.

Comprehensive surveys of Akhiok residents' harvest and use of subsistence resources have been conducted since the early 1980s. Like other residents of the more remote communities on Kodiak Island, Akhiok residents generally harvest and use subsistence resources at substantially greater rates than their neighbors residing along the road system. During the most recent comprehensive subsistence survey conducted in Akhiok in 2018, the average household reported using just under 19 different subsistence resources and harvesting about 16 different resources (Sill et al. 2021). This equated to an average total harvest of about 1,277 pounds of wild resources per Akhiok household, with salmon (64%), non-salmon fish¹² (11%), marine invertebrates (10%), and large land mammals¹³ (9%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**; Sill et al. 2021). Salmon accounted for a greater proportion of Akhiok households' average total harvest in 2018 than it did during the previous subsistence survey (52%) conducted in 2003 (Davis 2006a). However, marine invertebrates were the subsistence resource given (82%) and received (82%) by the greatest proportion of Akhiok households in 2018 (Sill et al. 2021).

Sockeye, Coho, and Pink salmon were the primary salmon species harvested by Akhiok households in terms of weight in 2018 (**Table 3**). Set gillnet was the primary gear type used to harvest salmon during this study period, with the majority of all Sockeye (98%), Coho (67%), Pink (62%), and Chum (83%) salmon taken with this method (Sill et al. 2021). As Sill and colleagues (2021: 54) explained:

Salmon fishing occurred all around Akhiok: as far north as Olga Bay and as far south as Cape Alitak. Households trolled for salmon from Lazy Bay to Cape Alitak, along Akhiok Bay, and up into Deadman Bay. According to respondents, setnets and rod and reel gear were used throughout Olga and Moser bays, adjacent to the community, and south into Kempff and Lazy bays.

In 2018, approximately 36% of Akhiok households reported that they used about the same amount of salmon as they had typically used in the previous five years, while 27% of households reported using less salmon, and another 27% of households reported using more salmon (Sill et al. 2021). Households' most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2018 were: lack of equipment (33%), working/no time (33%), needed less (33%), and family/personal reasons (33%) (Sill et al. 2021).

Unlike road zone communities, however, the average total subsistence harvest of Akhiok households was about 46% higher in 2018 than it was during the survey conducted in 2003 (Davis 2006a). The diversity of subsistence resources used and harvested by Akhiok households in 2018 was also somewhat higher than the levels reported in the previous study¹⁴ (Davis 2006a). However, for the 2003

¹² Primarily halibut (Sill et al. 2021).

¹³ Deer (Sill et al. 2021).

¹⁴ The average Akhiok household used about 15 different subsistence resources and harvested about 13 different resources in 2003 (Fall 2006a).

study, Akhiok residents noted that recent declines in key resource populations had led to declines in total harvests, as well as declines in the range of resources used and shared (Davis 2006a).

Aleneva

Aleneva is currently a Russian Old Believers' community that occupies the site of historic Afognak Village (DCRAb 2025). There were an estimated eight residents of Aleneva in 2025 (ADLWD 2025), as the population has been trending downward since it first appeared in the US Census in 2000 (DCRA 2025b). Aleneva residents speak an older dialect of Russian as a first language and adhere to traditional Russian Orthodox practices, while also engaging significantly in subsistence activities (DCRA 2025b) and commercial fishing (Rostad 2023). However, no subsistence surveys have been conducted for this community.

Prior to the existence of Aleneva, Afognak Island had been occupied and shaped by the culture and traditional subsistence practices of the Alutiiq for generations (Pullar 2004). Russian sailors and traders first arrived on Afognak Island in the mid-1700s (Pullar 2004). During the Russian period, the Northeast Company and the Russian American Company that succeeded it, both forced many Alutiiq to work as sea otter hunters in service of the fur trade (Pullar 2004). By the 1820s, the Russian American Company was faced with the problem of an aging Russian workforce, many of whom had started families with Alutiiq women and did not desire to return home to Russia in their retirement (Wessels pers. comm. 2026). The Company eventually addressed this issue by offering retirement-age employees the option to return to Russia or homestead near fish streams on Afognak Island (Pullar 2004). This policy contributed to the convergence of two neighboring communities into one community at Afognak Village with two distinct areas called Aleut Town (*Nasqualek*) and Russian Town (*Derevnya* [Village] *Rutkovskoe*), by the late 1800s or early 1900s (Pullar 2004, Wessels pers. comm. 2026). It also increased the competition that Native villagers faced for subsistence resources in the area (Pullar 2004).

The development of the commercial fishing industry further impacted traditional subsistence practices in the area (Pullar 2004). In 1964, the Good Friday Earthquake generated a tsunami that destroyed Afognak Village (*Aq'waneq*). A new community called Port Lions was subsequently developed on northeastern Kodiak Island with the assistance of the Lions Club, and most of the former residents of Afognak moved there permanently in late 1964 (DCRA 2025b). Aleneva is currently the only permanently occupied community on Afognak Island.

Karluk (*Kal'ut*)

Karluk is a small Alutiiq village located near the Shelikof Strait and Karluk River, on the western side of Kodiak Island (Fall 2006b, Steffian 2025). Approximately thirty-one people lived in the community in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). However, archaeological research documents that Alaska Native peoples have lived near the mouth of the Karluk River for at least 7,000 years, with thirty-six identified archaeological sites in the area (DCRA 2025c). Karluk was the site of a fort and trading post during the Russian colonial period (Fall 2006b). Many tanneries, salteries, and canneries were established in the

area by the mid-1800s, and Karluk became known for having the largest cannery and greatest salmon stream in the world by 1900 (DCRA 2025). Yet, overfishing and cannery closures caused many residents to move to Larsen Bay by the late 1930s (DCRA 2025c). A severe storm in 1978 led the community to relocate to its present site (DCRA 2025c). Subsistence harvests have been and continue to be a key part of life in Karluk (Fall 2006b, DCRA 2025c).

The most recent subsistence survey conducted in Karluk took place in 2003 (Fall 2006b).¹⁵ However, the harvest data collected from household interviews at this time were too incomplete to be used to develop accurate community harvest estimates. Comments from Karluk residents captured during this survey suggested that commercial fishery openings had been interfering with subsistence fishing, and researchers speculated that this may have been a reason for residents' reluctance to share their subsistence harvest information. Prior to 2003, subsistence survey information was collected for Karluk for five years between 1982 and 1991. However, the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill greatly impacted commercial and subsistence harvests in the area for several years during and after the spill. Even so, across all five study years, salmon was the largest component of Karluk's subsistence harvests, accounting for between 66% of the total harvest in 1986 to 77% of the total harvest in 1989.

In 2003, all Karluk households noted that their subsistence harvests were generally lower than they had been five years earlier, and about 67% of households noted that their salmon harvests were lower. Most respondents did not provide a reason for the change, but some listed resource access as the primary issue. Survey respondents also noted that many key subsistence resource populations, like salmon, were less available than they had been in the past. No respondent believed that resources in the area had recovered from the effects of the oil spill. About 66% of respondents noted that sharing of subsistence resources had also declined in recent years due to a variety of factors including environmental concerns, personal reasons, and lack of resources available to harvest and share.

In 1991, Karluk households had an average total subsistence harvest of about 1,240 pounds of wild resources, with salmon accounting for 72% of this total harvest (**Table 2**). Salmon were used and harvested by 100% of Karluk households at this time (**Table 2**). Salmon were also regularly shared by Karluk residents, with 100% of Karluk households giving salmon away and 69% of households receiving salmon in 1991 (**Table 2**).

Larsen Bay (*Uyaqsaq*)

The community of Larsen Bay is located along the shores of the bay that shares its name, on the western side of Kodiak Island. Substantial archaeological evidence has been found near Larsen Bay, indicating that the area has been occupied by Alutiiq groups for at least 2,000 years (Clark 1996, Sill et al. 2021, DCRA 2025d). Russian fur traders began coming to the area in the mid-1700s, but the contemporary community did not start to develop until the late 1800s, when the Alaska Packing Company built a cannery across the bay (Sill et al. 2021). The cannery was relocated to the current Larsen Bay site in 1911, and by the 1930s, families from the Uyak Bay area, Karluk, and Uganik

¹⁵ All of the information in this paragraph comes from Fall 2006b.

began moving there (Sill et al. 2021). Larsen Bay was officially incorporated as a city in 1974, and the local economy remains primarily focused on commercial fishing and subsistence harvesting (DCRA 2025d). Approximately 42% of Larsen Bay residents' total income came from the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector in 2018 (Sill et al. 2021). The Larsen Bay cannery was still operational in 2018 (Sill et al. 2021), but more recent reports indicate that it has since been permanently closed due to economic challenges in the seafood industry. There were approximately 30 people living in Larsen Bay in 2025 (ADLWD 2025).

The most recent comprehensive subsistence survey was conducted here in 2018 (Sill et al. 2021). At this time, the average Larsen Bay household used about 16 different subsistence resources and harvested about 11-12 different resources (Sill et al. 2021). This equated to a total average harvest of 536 pounds of wild resources per household, with salmon (47%), non-salmon fish¹⁶ (17%), large land mammals¹⁷ (15%), and marine invertebrates¹⁸ (12%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**, Sill et al. 2021). Salmon also accounted for a greater proportion of Larsen Bay's total subsistence harvest (55%) during the previous subsistence survey conducted in 2003 (Davis 2006b). Still, salmon was regularly shared in Larsen Bay in 2018, with about 57% of households giving salmon away and roughly 71% of households receiving salmon (Sill et al. 2021). Only deer¹⁹ were received by a larger percentage of households (81%), and only vegetation (81%) and marine invertebrates (71%) were given away by a larger percentage of households during this period (Sill et al. 2021).

Sockeye and Coho salmon were the primary species harvested in terms of weight by Larsen Bay households in 2018 (**Table 3**). Sockeye Salmon were primarily harvested with seine and set gillnet (66%) or removed from commercial catch (34%), while Coho Salmon were harvested with rod and reel (58%), set gillnet and seine (24%), or removed from commercial catch (19%) (Sill et al. 2021). "Larsen Bay residents fished for salmon around the community and in multiple locations throughout Uyak Bay, including Amook Bay and Zachar Bay. Salmon fishing also took place along Sevenmile Beach, the mouth of Uyak Bay, and on the eastern side of Spiridon Bay" (Sill et al. 2021: 208). These salmon harvest areas utilized in 2018 were generally similar to those noted in studies conducted in 1982 (Schroeder et al. 1987) and 2013 (Marchioni et al. 2016).

In 2018, the majority of Larsen Bay households reported that they either used about the same amount (57%) or less (24%) salmon than they had typically used in the previous five years (Sill et al. 2021). Households' most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2018 were: lack of equipment (40%), working/no time (40%), less sharing (20%), and family/personal reasons (20%) (Sill et al. 2021).

¹⁶ Primarily halibut, herring, and cod (Sill et al. 2021).

¹⁷ Primarily deer, but also some mountain goat and brown bear (Sill et al. 2021).

¹⁸ Primarily octopus, Butter Clams, and Dungeness Crab (Sill et al. 2021).

¹⁹ Many Larsen Bay residents reported receiving deer meat from hunting lodges in the area that attract trophy hunters who do not always want to keep the harvested meat (Sill et al. 2021).

Overall, the average total subsistence harvest by Larsen Bay households was about 19% lower in 2018 than it was during the previous study period²⁰ (Davis 2006b). The diversity of subsistence resources used and harvested by Larsen Bay households in 2018, however, was substantially higher than the levels reported in 2003²¹ (Davis 2006b).

Old Harbor (*Nuniatq*)

Old Harbor is located on the southeast coast of Kodiak Island, along Sitkalidak Strait (Sill et al. 2021). Archaeological evidence suggests that the area has been serially or continuously occupied by Alaska Native peoples for at least several thousand years (Mishler 2001). It is called *Nunyuq* in Alutiiq (Williams 2006a). However, the name Old Harbor derives from the Russian phrase *stáraya gavan'*, reflecting the history of Russian colonization that began here in 1784 (Williams 2006a). A sea otter trading post was established soon after but only following heavy resistance that culminated in a bloody battle with the Alutiiq residents of the area (Tikhmenev 1978). Conflict, hardship, and disease would continue to greatly impact Alutiiq populations in the area throughout the next several decades of Russian and American occupation (Clark 1987, Sill et al. 2021).

The Alaska Commercial Company continued the sea otter trade following the sale of Alaska in 1867, but sea otter populations were largely depleted by the end of the century (Mishler 2001). By the mid-1920s the area economy had shifted to focus on commercial cod, herring, and salmon fishing (Mishler 2001). Some Old Harbor residents also engaged in commercial whaling around this time (Sill et al. 2021). Commercial fishing and subsistence harvesting have remained key aspects of the local culture and economy to this day (Williams 2006a, Sill et al. 2021).

Like other Kodiak Island communities, Old Harbor was greatly impacted by the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake and the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (Williams 2006a). The earthquake destroyed almost all the buildings in the community, and as the community rebuilt, the population and town regrew into three distinct parts – Downtown, Middle Town, and New Town or Up Town (Sill et al. 2021). Downtown is the site of the original town, whereas Middle Town and New Town were built with U.S. Housing and Urban Development grants in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Sill et al. 2021). The oil spill significantly impacted commercial and subsistence fisheries for several years following the spill (Williams 2006a). Still, the local economy remains primarily focused on the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector today (Sill et al. 2021). Many Old Harbor residents are also employed by local government organizations, and the retail and service industries (Sill et al. 2021).

Old Harbor was home to approximately 186 residents in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). The most recent comprehensive subsistence survey was conducted here in 2018 (Sill et al. 2021). At this time, the average household in Old Harbor used about 20 different subsistence resources and harvested about 14

²⁰ The confidence intervals for the subsistence survey data from the 2003 and 2018 study years do overlap, indicating the difference in harvest estimates between the two study periods may not be statistically significant (Sill et al. 2021).

²¹ The average Larsen Bay household used about 8 different subsistence resources and harvested about 5 different resources in 2003 (Davis 2006b).

different resources (Sill et al. 2021). This equated to a total average harvest of about 1,755 pounds of wild resources per household, with salmon (64%), non-salmon fish²² (11%), large land mammals²³ (10%), marine mammals (6%), and marine invertebrates²⁴ (6%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**, Sill et al. 2021). Salmon was the resource given away by the greatest percentage of Old Harbor households (77%) and it was the resource received by the second greatest percentage of households (77%), trailing only marine invertebrates (80%) (Sill et al. 2021).

Coho, Sockeye, and Chum salmon were the primary species harvested by Old Harbor households in terms of weight in 2018 (**Table 3**). Coho Salmon were primarily taken by seine (38%) or removed from commercial catch (32%), while Sockeye Salmon were primarily removed from commercial catch (77%) (Sill et al. 2021). Chum (70%) and Pink salmon (54%) were primarily taken with subsistence net gear (Sill et al. 2021). As Sill and colleagues (2021: 130) noted:

Old Harbor residents fished for salmon mostly around the community, going as far as Kiliuda Bay in the northeast, Cape Barnabas to the east, and Cape Kasiak in the south. Some salmon fishing also occurred near the community of Ouzinkie on the northern end of Kodiak Island, likely by individuals visiting friends and family in that community. Close to town, Sitkalidak Strait was a popular fishing location, as was Big Creek.

In 2018, the majority of Old Harbor households reported that they either used less (47%) or about the same amount (37%) of salmon as they had in the previous five years (Sill et al. 2021). Households' most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2018 were: the resource was less available (29%), lack of effort (21%), needed less (14%), and family/personal reasons (14%) (Sill et al. 2021). Yet, salmon still accounted for a greater proportion of Old Harbor's total subsistence harvest in 2018 than it did in 2003 (46%) (Williams 2006). Similar to Akhiok, the average total subsistence harvest by Old Harbor households was also about 85% higher in 2018 than it was during the previous study period (Williams 2006a, Sill et al. 2021). The diversity of subsistence resources used and harvested by Old Harbor households in 2018 was also somewhat higher than the levels reported in 2003²⁵ (Williams 2006a). In 2003, Williams (2006a) noted that harvest of salmon, marine mammals, and marine invertebrates had not rebounded to the levels witnessed prior to the 1989 oil spill, though it was difficult to draw definitive conclusions about why that was the case.

Ouzinkie (*Uusenkaa*)

The Native Village of Ouzinkie is a relatively small Alutiiq community located on the northwest coast of Spruce Island, just across the Narrow Strait from Kodiak Island (Keating et al. 2026). Alutiiq peoples have resided in, and made their living from, the lands and waters in this area for thousands of years (Williams 2006b, Langdon 2014). However, the current site of Ouzinkie was initially established

²² Primarily halibut, herring, Black Rockfish, and cod (Sill et al. 2021).

²³ Primarily deer, with some brown bear, moose, elk, and mountain goat (Sill et al. 2021).

²⁴ Primarily Butter Clams, Dungeness Crab, and Tanner Crab (Sill et al. 2021).

²⁵ The average Old Harbor household used about 18–19 different subsistence resources and harvested about 12 different resources in 2003 (Williams 2006).

in the mid-1800s as a retirement community for employees of the Russian American Company and their families (Williams 2006b). Subsistence hunting and fishing, gardening, and cattle ranching were important economic activities during this initial period (Williams 2006b). Commercial fishing and fish processing became important aspects of the culture and economy after the first cannery was built here in 1889 (Keating et al. 2026). Unfortunately, the community was greatly impacted by the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake and resulting tsunami (DCRA 2025e). The cannery and many other community structures were destroyed during this disaster (DCRA 2025e). The community recovered and a new cannery was built in the late 1960s, but it subsequently burned down in 1976, and there has not been a cannery in Ouzinkie since this time (DCRA 2025e). Commercial fishers in the area now depend on floating processors or other locations to sell their fish (Keating et al. 2026).

Ouzinkie had an estimated population of 102 people in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). There is no grocery store in town, but the community does have a post office, fire station, community hall, and health clinic (Keating et al. 2026). Many residents use the ferry to buy food and other commercial goods in Kodiak during the summer months (Keating et al. 2026). Residents also tend to have close ties that involve sharing subsistence resources with family and friends residing in the Kodiak Road Zone, or in other remote communities like Old Harbor and Port Lions (Keating et al. 2026). Like other remote communities, Ouzinkie's population has declined in relation to declines in the commercial fishing industry over the past several decades (**Table 1**, Williams 2006b, Keating et al. 2026). In 2022, jobs in local and Tribal government accounted for the greatest proportion of Ouzinkie residents' wage-based income (29%), followed by employment in the services industry (14%) (Keating et al. 2026). Employment in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector only accounted for about 4% of Ouzinkie residents' total income at this time (Keating et al. 2026).

The most recent comprehensive subsistence survey was conducted in Ouzinkie for the 2022 harvest year (Keating et al. 2026). At this time, the average Ouzinkie household used about 14 different subsistence resources and harvested about 10 different resources (Keating et al. 2026). This equated to a total average harvest of about 586 pounds of wild resources per household, with salmon (65%), non-salmon fish²⁶ (21%), vegetation²⁷ (6%), and large land mammals²⁸ (4%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**). Salmon was the resource received by the greatest percentage of Ouzinkie households (76%), and it was the resource given away by the second greatest percentage of households (54%), trailing only vegetation (56%) (Keating et al. 2026).

Sockeye, Coho, and Pink salmon were the primary species harvested by Ouzinkie households in terms of weight in 2022 (**Table 3**). All these salmon species were primarily harvested with subsistence net gear (95%) (Keating et al. 2026). Mishler (2001: 168) previously explained that one of the main places that Ouzinkie residents look for Sockeye Salmon early in the season is at Litnik on southwest Afognak Island, but that Coho Salmon "are probably the favorite fish for subsistence in both Ouzinkie and Old

²⁶ Primarily halibut, cod, and trout (Keating et al. 2026).

²⁷ Primarily berries (Keating et al. 2026).

²⁸ Primarily deer, but also some elk (Keating et al. 2026).

Harbor because they are large and can be put up in quantity for winter. As Keating and colleagues (2026: 63) noted:

In 2022, Ouzinkie households fished for salmon directly from the shore lining the community of Ouzinkie and northwest into Marmot Bay, along the northern portion of Spruce Island near North Cape, throughout Narrow Strait between Spruce and Kodiak islands, north of Ouzinkie in Afognak, Kazakof (Danger), and Duck bays, as well as west of Ouzinkie in Dry Spruce Bay. One long-time resident described the benefit of the introduced salmon run near Ouzinkie Harbor, which provided more easily accessible salmon. He shared, “Before [the introduced run], we’d have to go back side of the island, North Cape ... A hit-or-miss supply there. But then when you’re out there you get a mixture of fish.

In 2022, roughly 49% of Ouzinkie households reported that they used about the same amount of salmon as they had in the previous five years, while 41% reported using less salmon, and 10% reported using more salmon (Keating et al. 2026). Households’ most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2022 were: family/personal reasons (27%), working/no time (20%), lack of equipment (13%), did not need (13%), and unsuccessful harvest efforts (13%) (Keating et al. 2026).

Overall, Ouzinkie households’ average total salmon harvest was just slightly lower in 2022 than it was in previous surveys conducted in 2003, 2004, and 2005 (**Table 2**). However, Ouzinkie households’ average total subsistence harvests were about 385 lbs. lower in 2022 than they were during the previous comprehensive survey conducted in 2003 (**Table 2**). The harvest of deer and non-salmon fish species like halibut, cod, char, and trout were all substantially lower in 2022 (Keating et al. 2026). Likewise, the diversity of subsistence resources used and harvested by Ouzinkie households in 2022 was also lower than the levels reported in 2003²⁹ (Williams 2006b).

Port Lions (*Masiqsiraq*)

Port Lions is a small Alutiiq community located along Kizhuyak Bay, on the northeast side of Kodiak Island (Williams 2006c). Alutiiq peoples have resided in, and made their living from, the lands and waters of this area for thousands of years (Williams 2006c, Langdon 2014). However, contemporary Port Lions was established by former residents of Afognak Village (*Ag’waneq*) who were forced to relocate following the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake (DCRA 2025f). The community was named Port Lions due to the assistance provided by the Lions Club in this process (Williams 2006c). Harvesting traditional subsistence foods was important to the local culture and economy throughout the transition from Afognak Village, and it remains so today (Keating et al. 2026). Commercial fishing and seafood processing have also been important industries in and around Port Lions since the community was established (Williams 2006c).

However, like other communities in the area, participation and income received from commercial fishing has been declining along with the local population over the past few decades (**Table 1**, Keating

²⁹ The average Ouzinkie household used about 25 different subsistence resources and harvested about 13–14 different resources in 2003 (Williams 2006b).

et al. 2026). Employment in the service industry recently accounted for the largest proportion of Port Lions residents' wages (15%), followed closely by positions in local and Tribal government (14%), the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector (9%), and manufacturing (7%) (Keating et al. 2026). Port Lions had an estimated population of 168 people in 2025 (ADLWD 2025). There is currently a K–12 rural school, public library, post office, gas station, airport, public dock, and several wilderness lodges in the community (Keating et al. 2026). The Alaska Marine Highway ferry travels to Port Lions year-round, providing regular access to Kodiak City and Homer.

The most recent comprehensive subsistence survey was conducted in Port Lions for the 2022 harvest year (Keating et al. 2026). At this time, the average Port Lions household used about 12 different subsistence resources and harvested about 9 different resources (Keating et al. 2026). This equated to a total average harvest of about 434 pounds of wild resources per household, with salmon (44%), non-salmon fish³⁰ (31%), large land mammals³¹ (14%), and vegetation³² (8%) accounting for most of this harvest (**Table 2**). Salmon and non-salmon fish were the resources received by the greatest percentage of Port Lions households (69%), while vegetation (63%) and salmon (61%) were the resources given away by the greatest percentage of households (Keating et al. 2026).

Sockeye, Coho, and Chinook salmon were the primary species harvested by Port Lions households in terms of weight in 2022 (**Table 3**). About 76% of all Sockeye Salmon were harvested with subsistence net gear, while Coho Salmon were primarily harvested with subsistence net gear (36%) and rod and reel (26%). The majority of Chinook Salmon were harvested via trolling (73%), which typically requires more resources than other harvest methods (Keating et al. 2026). As Keating and colleagues (2026: 150) noted:

Salmon fishing locations in 2022 reflect the fact that few salmon species return to systems adjacent to the community of Port Lions. As one respondent explained, “We just don’t get the natural returns. There used to be a strong silver [Coho Salmon] return at the head of Settler Cove, and a couple pink runs, and we’re just seeing them disappear.” While households documented fishing around Port Lions in Settler Cove and through Kizhuyak Bay and into Whale Passage, they also fished on the northwest side of Spruce Island near Ouzinkie, in Kazakof Bay, and in Marmot Bay.

In 2022, most Port Lions households reported using less salmon than they had in the previous five years (60%), while 29% of households reported using about the same amount, and 12% of households reported using more salmon (Keating et al. 2026). Salmon was the only resource category where more than half of households reported using less than normal (Keating et al. 2026). Households' most frequently cited reasons for using less salmon in 2022 were: the resource was less available (42%), working/no time (23%), and family/personal reasons (19%) (Keating et al. 2026).

³⁰ Primarily halibut and cod (Keating et al. 2026).

³¹ Primarily deer and elk (Keating et al. 2026).

³² Primarily berries (Keating et al. 2026).

Overall, the average Port Lions household harvested about 65 lbs. less salmon in 2022 than it did during the previous survey conducted in 2003 (Williams 2006c). The only time Port Lions households' average salmon harvests were lower was in 1989, following the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill (Mishler and Cohen 1996). Similarly, the average total subsistence harvest by Port Lions households was about 165 lbs. lower in 2022 than it was during the previous study period (Williams 2006c). The diversity of subsistence resources used by Port Lions households in 2022 was also slightly lower than the levels reported in 2003, but the number of resources harvested was about the same³³ (Williams 2006c). Declining harvests in Port Lions could be related to a number of factors, including: (1) the declining availability of salmon near the community, (2) the community's ageing population, (3) declining commercial fishing opportunities reducing home-pack harvest opportunities, and (4) the loss of high harvesting households due to age or relocation (see Keating et al. 2026).

Although residents of off-road communities typically harvest salmon and other subsistence resources at higher per person and per household levels, Kodiak Road Zone residents have accounted for over 90% of the permits issued and salmon harvested under Federal regulations in the Kodiak Management Area over the past 14 years (**Table 6**). This discrepancy is likely due to the relative size of the Kodiak Road Zone population, as well as the fact that for many years these permits have only been available in person at the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, which is located on the road system (Stone 2026, pers. comm.). The waters under Federal subsistence jurisdiction in the Kodiak Area are also generally discrete, small areas such as locations at the mouth of the Buskin River, and in Womens and Afognak bays. These locations are popular because of their accessibility and proximity to town, as well as the strength of the salmon runs typically available (Stone 2026, pers. comm.).

Table 6. Permits issued and salmon reported harvested under Federal regulations in the Kodiak Area from 2012 to 2025 (Brown et al. 2023, OSM 2026).

Year	Community Of Residence	Permits Issued	Chinook Harvested	Sockeye Harvested	Coho Harvested	Pink Harvested	Total Salmon Harvested
2012	Kodiak	2	0	0	0	0	0
2013	Kodiak	7	0	24	0	0	24
2014	Kodiak	20	0	112	0	0	112
2015	Kodiak	19	0	53	10	0	63
2016	Kodiak	51	20	168	75	3	266
2017	Kodiak	55	0	487	68	12	567
2018	Kodiak	35	0	119	0	45	164
2019	Kodiak	40	0	109	0	0	109
2020	Kodiak	43	0	151	79	0	230
2021	Kodiak	18	24	81	0	0	105
2022	Kodiak	17	0	223	40	0	263
2023	Kodiak	20	7	52	26	0	85
2024	Kodiak	33	3	380	87	6	476

³³ The average Port Lions household used about 14 different subsistence resources and harvested about 8 different resources in 2003 (Williams 2006c).

Year	Community Of Residence	Permits Issued	Chinook Harvested	Sockeye Harvested	Coho Harvested	Pink Harvested	Total Salmon Harvested
2024	Port Lions	5	0	158	0	0	158
2025	Kodiak	88	85	297	62	5	451*
2025	Ouzinkie	1	0	0	21	0	21
2025	Port Lions	5	10	50	0	0	60
Total		459	149	2464	468	71	3154
Average		33	5	155	29	5	225

* This total includes two Chum Salmon harvested by residents of Kodiak in 2025 (OSM 2026).

Alternative Considered

Exclude all residents of Kodiak Station CDP: The average resident of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing likely does not reside in these units for more than a few years after beginning their positions at the Refuge. Most long-term Refuge staff members tend to reside in, or move to, private housing elsewhere along the Kodiak road system. For these reasons, most residents of Refuge housing are likely to share similarities with residents of Kodiak Station military communities in terms of their average length of residence, subsistence knowledge, and subsistence practices. If this is the case, it does not seem appropriate to include one group in the customary and traditional use determination for salmon while excluding the other.

Discussion and Effects

Active-duty Coast Guard service members may reside anywhere along the Kodiak road system, however, most active-duty members likely reside within Kodiak Station CDP. Kodiak Station CDP includes the Coast Guard Base as well as surrounding military lands and off-base military housing communities like Aviation Hill, Lake Louise, and Nemetz (**Map 1, Table 4**). Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge facilities are also located within Kodiak Station. If this proposal is adopted, all residents of Kodiak Station CDP except for those permanently residing in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing will be removed from the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the “Kodiak Area Except the Mainland District.” This means that these residents will not qualify to harvest salmon under Federal subsistence regulations in this area. Coast Guard service members residing outside of Kodiak Station CDP would maintain this customary and traditional use determination.

If this proposal is not adopted, residents of the Coast Guard Base proper will continue to be excluded from the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area Except Mainland District, but residents of off-base military housing within the broader Kodiak Station CDP would maintain this customary and traditional use determination.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support proposal FP27-04 **with modification** to revise the customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area to exclude all residents of Kodiak Station CDP, including those residing in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing.

Proposed Federal Regulations

Customary and Traditional Use Determination—Salmon

Kodiak Area except the Mainland District

Residents of the Kodiak Island Borough, except those residing ~~on the Kodiak Coast Guard Base~~ in Kodiak Station CDP.

Kodiak Area Mainland District: all waters along the south side of the Alaska Peninsula bounded by the latitude of Cape Douglas (58°51.10' North latitude) mid-stream Shelikof Strait, north and east of the longitude of the southern entrance of Imuya Bay near Kilokak Rocks (57°10.34' North latitude, 156°20.22' West longitude)

All rural residents

Justification

Salmon have been customarily and traditionally harvested and used by residents of the Kodiak Archipelago for generations. These harvest, use, and preservation practices are based on knowledge and beliefs that have been passed down through generations. Today, residents of off-road communities typically harvest and use more salmon and other subsistence resources than Kodiak road system residents. However, the long-term importance and pattern of salmon use are clear throughout the Kodiak Area. Available subsistence survey and harvest permit data from the past several decades also indicate that salmon continue to account for the majority of all Kodiak Island residents' subsistence harvests. There are also strong, multi-generational social networks grounded in the sharing of subsistence resources and knowledge between road system residents and residents of the more remote communities on Kodiak Island. Residents of these more remote communities are also increasingly relocating to the Kodiak road system due to declining commercial fishing opportunities, age, and the increasing costs of living in off-road communities.

However, it does seem appropriate to exclude residents of the U.S. Coast Guard Base and off-base military housing located within Kodiak Station CDP from this customary and traditional use determination. Exclusion of Kodiak Station CDP from this customary and traditional use determination is based on research and Council testimony indicating that military personnel typically reside in the area for relatively short periods of time, do not harvest and use subsistence resources to the same degree or in the same manner as longer-term residents, do not share subsistence resources to the same degree as longer-term residents, and do not possess the same degree of intergenerational subsistence

knowledge as longer-term residents. It also seems appropriate to exclude residents of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing from this customary and traditional use determination for similar reasons.

The original customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Kodiak Area was carried over from State regulations at the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Management Program in 1992, at a time when several of the current off-base military housing communities located in Kodiak Station likely did not exist. Maintaining different regulations for on-base and off-base military housing communities going forward does not seem justified. It also does not seem equitable to maintain different regulations for residents of Kodiak Station military communities and residents of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge housing.

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WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

None