

People Need Salmon

Wild Alaskan salmon have fed the people of Southeast Alaska for more than 9,000 years, and are essential to the Alaskan way of life. Prized by commercial, sport and subsistence fishers, salmon are not only the backbone of the regional economy but are also integral outside of the cash economy: nearly 90% of rural households in Southeast Alaska use salmon. Along with supporting livelihoods, salmon are critical for nutrition and recreation, and are an important part of the rich culture of Southeast Alaskan Natives.



Top, Crew leader Tarz Snook discusses sockeye salmon returns at the Hatchery Creek weir with Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger District subsistence fisheries biologist Jeff Reeves.

Middle, Fisheries technician Joe Serio releases a marked salmon as part of a cooperative project between the Forest Service and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to monitor the health of the Redoubt Lake sockeye salmon run.

Previous page top, fishing boats unload at the Seafood Processor's Cooperative in Sitka, which is one of the top twenty seafood ports in the United States, and completely surrounded by the Tongass National Forest.

Previous page bottom, Forest Service biologist Marty Becker surveys a stream in the Sitkoh River watershed in preparation for restoration work.

1 in 10 jobs supported by salmon in Southeast Alaska

96% Alaskans who say salmon are essential to the Alaskan way of life

2 of 3 sport caught fish in Southeast Alaska are salmon

50 million average number of wild salmon caught from the Tongass National Forest each year

70% approximate percentage of salmon produced on all National Forest lands in the US that come from the Tongass NF

\$986 million combined economic value of commercial, sport, and personal use salmon fishing in Southeast Alaska in 2007



Student Conservation Association volunteer Jon Paquette counts fish as part of a Forest Service fisheries management project at Redoubt Lake, which supports an important subsistence fishery seven miles south of Sitka.

Salmon Feed the Forest

Chinook, coho, sockeye, pink and chum salmon all return to the nearly 17 million acre Tongass National Forest each year, where they support commercial, sport and subsistence fishing. Besides humans, more than fifty species of animals take advantage of the salmon, plus countless insects, bacteria and other smaller organisms. Salmon are also plant food—bears and other animals carry thousands of salmon into the forest, where they become a rich fertilizer.

Salmon Need the Forest

Our nation's premier salmon producing forest, the Tongass includes over 17,000 miles of salmon habitat, made up of freshwater streams and lakes where salmon return each year to spawn. Not only do the salmon fertilize the forest, they also rely upon the trees in streamside areas to create spaces for young salmon living in streams and rivers. Fallen logs create shade for young fish to hide in, and deep pools and slower water for them to rest in and feed. These areas are vital for rearing juvenile salmon to survive winter and gain strength before heading out to sea.



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Keeping Salmon in the Forest

In the past, logging practices damaged some salmon streams in the Tongass National Forest. Those practices changed years ago, and today salmon habitat is protected on federal lands. The Forest Service and many partners are now working to restore salmon streams on the Tongass.



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Restoration projects include:

-  Stabilizing stream banks
-  Removing or stabilizing old roads
-  Removing barriers to fish passage
-  Replacing large wood in streams to improve habitat
-  Restoring streams to historic channels
-  Thinning thousands of acres of dense young growth trees
-  Adding fish passes to allow salmon access to upstream spawning and rearing habitat



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Top, Forest Service fisheries technician Ben Mann winches a log into a stream to create salmon spawning habitat in the Nakwasina watershed on Baranof Island, north of Sitka.

Middle, students from Sitka's Stream Team collect data on Starrigavan Creek as part of an environmental education project, giving them a chance for hands-on experience with salmon habitat restoration.

Bottom, Forest Service staff review a map of restoration work in the Harris River watershed, a major salmon producing system on Prince of Wales Island.

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Salmon in the Tongass National Forest



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