

Alaska's Fisheries



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2021 Commercial Fishing and Seafood Processing Facts

As Alaska's largest private-sector employer, commercial fishing and seafood processing is a vital component of the Alaska and US economies. The AK fishing industry employs tens of thousands of individuals producing billions of pounds of seafood for the US and the world. Commercial fishing permit holders represent small and family-owned business, supporting dozens of other services businesses such as hardware and marine suppliers, fuel, accountants, air and water travel, shipping, boat builders, hatcheries, restaurants, scientists, educators, and administrators. The seafood industry provides Alaskans and the public with access to local seafood through restaurants, grocery stores, and seafood markets. The state constitutional mandate ensures sustainable fisheries management for the benefit of future Alaskans and the world.

Virtually every U.S. State benefits from commercial fishing in Alaska!

Key Statistics – Alaska fishing & seafood processing (2021 data):

- **8,699 permit holders** fished in 2021 – 5,112 were Alaska residents¹
- **17,805 commercial crew** licenses purchased in 2021 – 8,237 resident, 9,568 non-resident with total crew license revenue of \$2.8 million.²
- **23,720 Seafood processor workers** – 5,153 AK and 18,567 non resident³
- **Processor wages** - \$472.7 Million³
- **Permit holders** live in 49 U.S. States (all states except WV)⁴
- **Crew members** come from every U.S State, 6 countries, 5 Canadian Provinces, and U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Armed Forces Pacific)⁴
- **Commercial fishing is vital to Alaska** - permit holders live in 206 AK communities⁴
- **Est. ex-vessel earnings to fishermen (2021): \$1.8 Billion**¹
- **The Alaska seafood industry provided about 62,200 jobs in Alaska in 2019**⁵
- **Seafood directly employs more workers than any other private sector industry in Alaska and is the foundation of many rural communities.**⁵
- **Approximately 5.7 billion pounds of seafood worth \$2.0 billion was harvested annually in 2019. Processors turned this harvest into 2.8 billion pounds of product worth \$4.7 billion.**⁵
- **Over \$163.2 million in commercial fishing taxes were collected in 2019. Of this, \$81 million went to state government and \$45 million to local governments**⁵

Sources:

1. Alaska Commercial Fishery Entry Commission - [CFEC Fishery Statistics - Participation & Earnings \(state.ak.us\)](#)
2. ADFG commercial crew licenses sold in 2021 – see table online at: [licenses_stamps_tags_issued_2021.pdf \(alaska.gov\)](#)
3. Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development data upon request.
4. UFA analysis of 2021 AK CFEC permit and ADFG Crew license lists downloaded from: [CFEC Public Search Database \(state.ak.us\)](#)
5. The Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry – ASMI [Economic Value Report: January 2022 | Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute](#)