

Wild Style by The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Harvest Section Transcript

V/O: All Alaska Salmon are wild...

They're never penned in...

never cooped up...

They live as they have since the ice age...

And are caught in ways that date back decades... and even centuries.

Fishermen...

families...

and Alaska natives...

bring in the harvest.

Each of these small, independently owned businesses rely on salmon to feed and shelter their families.

But because of the importance of sustainability, the three ways they can catch salmon are closely regulated by the state of Alaska.

Trollers work offshore, and are the first to encounter salmon each year, before the fish move to their spawning rivers.

The crew, typically just a person or two, baits hooks or attaches flashy artificial lures to each line.

The lines are then fanned out behind the small boat. When salmon are caught, each is brought in by hand.

It's a slow, time-consuming process, but the Coho and King Salmon caught this way are premium seafood... pound for pound, the most valuable of all Alaska Salmon.

Almost all troll-caught salmon go into the fresh, frozen or smoked market.

Purse seining is done from larger boats. A circular net, or purse seine, is set around a school of migrating salmon, typically Keta and Pink. The net is then drawn closed at the bottom, like a huge string bag, capturing the fish.

Because salmon migrate in such tight schools, an Alaskan seiner can catch anywhere from 250 to more than 1,500 salmon with a single net.

Gillnetting comes into play as Coho, Keta and Sockeye Salmon leave the ocean behind and make their way to the river mouth.

A net is either deployed from a boat, or set from land, to intercept the incoming schools.

Salmon swim part way through the mesh and become entangled. The net is then hauled onboard or ashore, where the salmon are harvested.

Boats upload their catch to a tender vessel for transfer to shore. The use of brailer bags reduces handling and helps ensure a high-quality product.

However the salmon are caught, the restrictions on the gear fishermen use are tight. This does more than just help ensure the sustainability of salmon. It helps ensure the well-being of other species. State regulations on gill nets and mesh size, for instance, have greatly reduced the incidental catching of marine

mammals or birds.

And because salmon school so tightly, other species of fish are rarely caught.

How salmon are caught is only one part of wise management.

Seasons are kept short. Salmon fishermen can sometimes fish only a few days per year, and sometimes, only a few hours per day. The season coincides with the return of salmon to their spawning streams – but before fishing is opened, state biologists make sure ample numbers have already passed upstream to lay eggs.

When the quota for a particular run has moved past the tower, word goes out by radio to boats waiting beyond the river mouth. Fishing is open for the next few hours.

By being smart about how they fish, the fishermen, families and Alaska natives who depend on salmon know this wild natural resource will be available for generations to come.

QUIZ

Correct answers are **highlighted**.

1. **Which form of salmon fishing—trolling, gillnetting or purse seining—is closely regulated by the state of Alaska?**
 - a. Trolling.
 - b. Gillnetting.
 - c. Purse seining.
 - d. **All three forms of catching salmon are closely regulated by the state of Alaska.**

2. **What limits marine mammals and birds from getting caught in gillnets?**
 - a. **State regulations on gillnets and mesh size have greatly reduced the incidental catching of marine mammals and birds.**
 - b. Marine mammals and birds that are caught are donated to local animal preserves.
 - c. State regulations require that marine mammals and birds that are caught are immediately set free.
 - d. Marine mammals and birds are treated by veterinarians and later released.