

like THEIR FATHERS *before* THEM

Alaska's Generations of Sustainability



Wild, Natural & Sustainable®



MAJESTIC SNOWY MOUNTAINS, FAST-RUSHING RIVERS, PRISTINE ICY WATERS

and rugged coastal shores. This is where many Alaskans go to work every day. They also live their lives here, amid the wild, unspoiled beauty that is Alaska. It has been this way for the

people of Alaska for hundreds, even thousands of years.

Families and whole communities depend on it.

These are the people who help bring the seafood to your table. Like all entrepreneurs, their success is all about sacrifice and hard work— and hope, sometimes against all odds. Each is a specialist, harvesting a particular variety of fish (salmon, whitefish, crab) by a specific method that represents the most ecologically sound sustainability practices. And each is a jack-of-all-trades: boat mechanic,

weather observer, net mender, hands-on small business

owner. But they all believe passionately in the product they sell:

some of the finest seafood the world has to offer.





FISHING IN ALASKA— A WAY OF LIFE FOR GENERATIONS

In Alaska, fishing is a family business, passed down from father to child, one generation to the next. It takes a certain kind of person to make a living from the sea: rugged, independent, hardworking and determined. And it takes a special feeling for the sea itself: not fear precisely, but respect and even awe, for the living creatures that the sea supports, the fish and the bears that hunt them, and the men and women who have fished these waters for hundreds of years. Commercial fishermen in Alaska follow a uniquely American dream of being their own boss and controlling their own destiny. They take an active role in the management and preservation of Alaska's fisheries, knowing that the resource has a value that goes far beyond their own needs. It's a way of life that's worth preserving, as surely as the sea must be revered and the environment must be protected. Alaskans are proud of their fishing heritage—a heritage they hope to sustain for the future of their children and for the economic stability of their communities.



THE TAKU RIVER

Just a two-hour boat ride from the capital of Juneau, the Taku River watershed is an incredibly unspoiled place. More than 7,000 square miles in size (50% larger than the entire state of Connecticut and almost as big as New Jersey) it is the largest unprotected roadless area on the west coast of North America, and a model for a salmon-driven eco-system.



HEATHER & KIRK HARDCASTLE | Taku River

Fishermen for Sockeye Salmon (gillnet)

THEIR COMPANY: *Taku River Reds, formed in 2003 with Heather's parents, Pete & Sheila Peterson, and co-owned with friends, Winston & Renee Warr, to market the family's carefully handled, premium catch to quality-conscious chefs, fishmongers and consumers. They also purchase and market the catch of five other families who gillnet for sockeye near the mouth of the Taku River. (www.takuriverreds.net)*

HOW THEY MET: *In 1998, in Maui, working on a whale-watching vessel. Heather has degrees in environmental management and biology; Kirk, in marine biology and environmental physiology.*

Kirk, did you ever expect to marry the daughter of a fisherman and move to Alaska?

I grew up in Northern California and worked as a chef in the wine country, so I understand that where food comes from affects its quality and flavor. But I always knew I'd get to Alaska. Heather grew up fishing with her parents, so I was able to take a shortcut.

What do you do in the winter?

HEATHER: Like many Alaskans who fish, we have second and even third jobs. We're both working with the Alaska Energy Authority on a grant project to convert fish waste into a renewable energy source. And we use our tender vessel to collect used cooking oil from cruise ships, and plan to convert this oil to biodiesel. I also teach, and Kirk travels up and down the Pacific coast captaining boats.

What does sustainability mean to you?

KIRK: The concept of sustainable fisheries isn't just about a system for the management of the fish and the ecosystem. It also includes the fishermen themselves and the entire pipeline of the market—the buyers, the retail markets, the restaurants. It's also about using as much of each fish as possible. For instance, we remove the "tenderloin" on either side of the backbone and use it ourselves or sell it as a value-added product. That's also the reason one of our side projects is getting the energy out of any fish waste, rather than just tossing it out.

Advice to anyone who wants to fish for a living?

HEATHER: You don't do it for a living; you do it for a lifestyle.

TAKU RIVER 



COMMUNITIES OF THE SEA



DUTCH HARBOR

The nation's top-landing seafood port, located within the city limits of Unalaska in the Aleutian Islands off mainland Alaska. The native Aleut or Unangan have lived on Unalaska Island for thousands of years. They developed an intricate and complex society long before their first contact with the Russian fur traders who would document their existence.

More than just a way for individuals to make a living, fishing is a tradition that supports entire communities all up and down the coast of Alaska, communities that owe their very existence to the sea and its bounty. Living in Alaska is a special experience requiring tenacity, independence and a certain spirit of adventure to make a life in a state with a population density of just over one person per square mile. The Alaska seafood industry is the single largest private-sector employer in the state, providing jobs and income for more than 52,000 people. Many of them are family fishermen, often living in small, remote communities where fishing is virtually the only occupation. Their livelihoods, indeed their entire way of life, depend on healthy wild fish stocks. That's why Alaska's fishermen have been crucial in reshaping the industry toward a goal of enlightened, science-based resource management and environmental stewardship that ensures long-term sustainability for the fisheries that support them.

- Alaska produces more than half of the nation's "catch of seafood," averaging 2.4 million metric tons with an economic output of \$5.8 billion
- The seafood industry is particularly important in rural Alaska, where employment opportunities are very limited
- The commerce associated with harvesting and processing generates economies of scale for local utility and commodity usage (fuel, electricity, potable water, etc.) and for the marine transportation infrastructure associated with moving supplies in and finished product out
- 10% of the annual quotas for Alaska Pollock, groundfish, crab and halibut fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands are allocated to the non-profit CDQ (Community Development Quota) groups, which fund such projects as docks, harbors and seafood processing facilities
- 222 Alaskan communities and 886 processors directly benefit from the salmon fisheries alone

JAMES STEVENS | Dutch Harbor

Fisherman for Halibut, Black Cod, Cod

Tell us about your boat.

The *Southern Seas* is a 66-ft. longliner that fishes for halibut and black cod from Yakutat, Alaska, to the Aleutian Islands. I also own the *F/V Jeanoah*, an 82-footer that fishes for cod with pots in the Gulf of Alaska and also longlines for halibut and black cod from southeast Alaska to the Aleutian Islands. She was built in 1971 and is the most fuel-efficient boat of her size.

What's the best day you ever had fishing?

82,000 pounds of halibut in 22 hours.

Why did you start fishing?

It's a very competitive business and that always interested me. It seemed very challenging and rewarding.

Are your children interested in fishing?

The kids come out on day trips, but haven't quite got their sea legs yet. I'm looking forward to my boys coming fishing with me and developing a good work ethic.

Favorite way to eat Alaska seafood?

I love cod, panko deep-fried.

How important is sustainable fisheries management to you and why?

It's an integral part of making a living as a commercial fisherman. It's very important to me to respect the environment and the fisheries I'm involved in.

What would your advice be to someone who wanted to fish for a living?

Take advantage of every opportunity you can and make it work.

DUTCH HARBOR ○





ALASKA SEAFOOD— WILD, NATURAL & SUSTAINABLE FROM THE BEGINNING

The land that is now Alaska has been a source of unsurpassed natural bounty for thousands of years. In a state where entire communities are defined by their relationship to the land and the seas, roads may be few and far between but nature provides in abundance. And Alaska's fishermen are committed to sustaining that abundance for the future of their families—for their children and their children's children. That's why protecting it has been law since 1959. In fact, since Alaska became a state, its Constitution has mandated that "fish...be utilized, developed and maintained on the sustained yield principle," setting a world standard for sustainability practices. All Alaska seafood is wild; finfish farming is actually illegal in the state of Alaska. It's not just for the sake of the fisheries and their economic value. To Alaskans, sustainability also means protecting the long-term health of the environment, and ensuring the long-term promise of a way of life that has existed for generations.



KODIAK

With an estimated population of just over 6,000, Kodiak is the largest of seven communities on Kodiak Island, part of an archipelago in the Gulf of Alaska—the word kadiak means island in native Alaskan, and it is the second largest island in the United States. Commercial fishing and fish processing have long been at the heart of the Kodiak economy.



THE HOLLAND FAMILY | Kodiak

Fishermen for Dungeness and Tanner Crab, Cod (pot), Halibut (longline)

KODIAK ○

THE BOAT: *The 72-ft. F/V Point Omega was built by Ken's dad (Ken Sr.) to fish crab around Kodiak. A few years later Ken Sr. decided to build a new boat and Ken Jr. bought the Point Omega, which he had been skipping since 1972. With two big live circulation tanks, the boat stays out for about three weeks at a time, and the catch is cooked, sectioned and frozen on shore.*

What is it like fishing together as a family?

CHRIS: Family fishing (sometimes known as Forced Family Fun in our family) has been good, and a very bonding experience.

How and why did you start fishing?

CHRIS: Both Kenny and I come from fishing families. Ken began fishing at about 6 years old. His father worked in a plywood mill during the day in Anacortes, Washington, and in the evening he would haul Dungeness gear by hand while his 6-year-old son ran

the outboard. On the weekends they would sell their cooked crab on the street corner.

KEN: We sold 'em three for a buck.

CHRIS: After a while Ken Sr. got into gradually bigger vessels and eventually headed to Alaska to fish. When Ken Jr. was 14 he was the only Dungeness deckhand for an entire summer. I have lived in Alaska most of my life. My grandfather came over from Norway as a boy and fished all over Alaska—at one time he fished in the Shelikof off a sailing ship that put dories out during the day to fish cod for salting. My father was a deckhand on a Fish & Wildlife boat and worked for the canneries, and then started fishing. I started my fishing career in Dutch Harbor in the mid '70s as a young mother working on our 32-ft wooden vessel, being a fill-in crewman for king and tanner crab.

What's the life like?

CHRIS: We love the water and we love the life we lead.

We fish year-round, except November and December. We have a cabin on Deadman Bay and we move there in the summer so Kenny can fish for Dungeness at the Trinity Islands.

How important is sustainable fisheries management?

CHRIS: The future of fishing depends on stock management to keep a healthy cycle in a healthy ocean. We have been active in our fishing association and involved in the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process. We are very committed to ensuring that fishing remains an important part of our coastal community. Ken worked in Washington in 1976 to help promote passage of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act—the primary law governing marine fisheries management in U.S. federal waters.

What three words best describe fishing in Alaska?

Independence, freedom and adventure.





WORLD CLASS SEAFOOD ONE MENU AT A TIME

When you care about what you do—and care about the impact it has on your family and your community—that impacts the quality, and how much other people benefit. That's true for fishermen and it's true for chefs, and it's also true with Alaska seafood. Taken wild from some of the most pristine waters on the planet, Alaska salmon, whitefish varieties and shellfish offer incomparable quality, flavor and texture. Many Alaskans fish as much for their own eating pleasure as they do for income, and enjoy their catch year-round in peak condition, fresh or frozen. Increasingly, today's consumers also want to know where their food comes from, and they want to buy from and support small, hardworking, independent communities. They also care about the impact their lives have on the planet. Menuing a product like wild seafood from Alaska has other benefits besides quality and sustainability.

- It's a statement of commitment to an important philosophy
- Alaska seafood enjoys a premium image among American diners
- There is a meaningful story to tell about where Alaska seafood comes from

BRISTOL BAY

The easternmost arm of the Bering Sea, and the terminus of a number of major rivers. Upper reaches of Bristol Bay experience some of the highest tides in the world. This, coupled with the extreme number of shoals, sandbars and shallows, makes navigation challenging.



LYLE WILDER | Bristol Bay

Fisherman for Sockeye Salmon

How did you get started fishing?

We've been a flying and fishing family in Alaska since the '40s, when my grandfather homesteaded here. My mom grew up set-netting salmon on Bristol Bay, and my dad got into the air taxi business the same time he started out as a commercial fisherman, and he taught me how to do both when I was a teenager. Now he and I operate Lake & Peninsula Airlines together, and I also fish for salmon in Bristol Bay. So I'm really carrying on the family heritage.

Who do you fish with?

I got married in December 2008 and my wife, Heidi, is my crew, along with one other guy on our 32-foot boat, *Maggie*. Heidi's from Montana—landlocked—and she

was a firefighter so I'm pretty honored that she traded in firefighting for fishing with me. And it's just amazing how well we get along, out for two or three weeks at a time in a small boat. But we traveled together all over the world for eight months after the first season, so I guess we can probably do anything together.

What do you like best about fishing?

It really fits in well with the Alaska mentality: being an individualist, being your own boss, long hard days of work with a paycheck at the end.

What's the sustainability situation in Bristol Bay?

Alaska Fish & Game has done such a wonderful job. It's an amazingly productive fishery. I'm also on the board of the Iliamna Advisory Committee, which is

always watching the fishery and making recommendations for what makes sense every season. Alaskan natives have been watching out for the resource for thousands of years so we also have that history to rely upon. And I'm looking forward to getting involved with the Subsistence Fisheries Board for Alaska after this season. Subsistence issues are really important for all of rural Alaska.

What's your advice for someone who wants to fish commercially?

Get a mentor. Find an old guy to follow around. That's the way it's worked in our family for three generations.

BRISTOL BAY



ASK FOR ALASKA

We hope that these stories of Alaska's proud and independent men and women will help everyone understand that supporting Alaska seafood is about more than just fish. It's about supporting sustainable communities committed to ensuring that there will always be fishing as a way of life in Alaska, and that there will always be an abundance of delicious wild Alaska seafood to enjoy.

While we were only able to provide a glimpse into a few of the fishing areas of Alaska here, hardworking fishing communities exist up and down the entire Alaskan coastline. Please visit our website for more fishermen stories from Alaska.

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