

Fishing Facts & Fancies

Alaska Wild Salmon Are A Real Catch

(NAPSA)—Alaska is famous for its wild salmon. The flavor of Alaskan salmon depends upon fat content and the environment in which it matured. Alaska's pure waters and the abundance of natural food give Alaska salmon unparalleled flavor.

Although salmon are caught in Alaska's pristine waters year-round, fishing season in Anchorage and southcentral Alaska really heats up in late May, when the prized king salmon returns home to spawn in the area's glacier-fed, freshwater streams.

The remaining four varieties of Pacific salmon—sockeye, coho, chum and pink—are also found in the general area.

Many anglers are now trying to catch what's known as a "grand slam"—all five species of salmon. Some say an easy way to remember which kind is which is to match them up with the fingers on your hand.

- **Thumb—Chum salmon (Dog).** The best fishing for this fish is mid-July to late August. Chum salmon have a firm texture, tempting orange-pink color and delicate flavor that makes it a perfect fish for smoking. The average weight is eight pounds and they can grow to be 25 to 27 inches long.

- **Pointer finger—Sockeye salmon (Red).** Most available late May to early June or mid-July, sockeye salmon are the second most abundant Alaskan salmon species. This species turns from a silvery color to a bright red body and green head as they begin the journey upriver to spawn. Their average weight is six pounds and they can grow to almost three feet in length.

- **Middle finger—King salmon (Chinook).** The best fishing for



The five types of salmon abundant in Alaska's rivers can be found in the palm of your hand.

king salmon is mid-June to mid-July. The largest species of salmon in Alaska, they are prized for their color, high oil content, firm texture and succulent taste. Average weight is approximately 20 pounds and length ranges from 30 to 40 inches.

- **Ring finger—Silver salmon (Coho).** With its orange-red flesh, firm texture and delicate flavor, cohos are very popular among locals. The best fishing for them is found in early August to mid-September. Cohos are the second largest of the species, with average weights of 12 pounds, and range from 25 to 35 inches in length.

- **Pinky finger—Pink salmon (Humpy).** At the height of their run, millions of pinks swim up the freshwater rivers and streams to spawning grounds. Pinks are the smallest and most abundant of the species and average about two to three pounds. The best fishing for pinks takes place in mid-July to late August.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.anchorage.net.