

# ALASKA FISH HARVESTING EMPLOYMENT

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Nonagricultural wage and salary employment statistics do not include self-employed persons. About 90% of Alaska fish harvesting employment is categorized as self-employment, and has not been included in nonagricultural employment statistics published in *Trends*. Fish harvesting employment for the period 1977 to 1981 has now been estimated by Research and Analysis staff. These data will be available in October in a publication titled *Alaska Fish Harvesting Employment 1977-1981*. It is anticipated that fish harvesting employment estimates will be compiled on an ongoing basis. This article briefly discusses the method used to estimate fish harvesting employment, and summarizes the results.

## Methodology

Estimates are compiled for each month from January 1977 through December 1981. The data are disaggregated by area (statewide and four regions) and specie/gear type.

Estimated employment is based on Alaska Department of Fish and Game fish tickets, and "crew factors" derived from a vessel survey. Fish tickets provide a count of vessel landings and catch value by area, specie and gear type. An estimate of the number of vessels fishing each month in each category is derived from fish ticket data. Crew factors are used to convert vessels fishing into employment. Due to the volatility of the fish harvesting industry and minor methodological differences, the estimates of fish harvesting employment are probably slightly high relative to the nonagricultural employment estimates normally published in *Trends*.

## Summary of Results

Annual average fish harvesting employment grew from 6,000 in 1977 to 7,800 in 1981, a 30% increase. Of the 1981 total, 66% was attributable to salmon harvesting, 20% to shellfish, 7% to halibut, and the remaining 7% to bottomfish, herring and other.

Employment was highest during the second and third quarters, peaking in July with the height of the salmon runs. July 1979 was the peak employment month during the 1977-81 period, with 25,950 jobs. The number of winter fishing jobs, while far below summer, increased during the period.

The specie/gear type with the highest employment was salmon drift gillnet, accounting for 32% of 1981 salmon harvesting employment. Set gillnet accounted for another 30%.

**Total Monthly Statewide Employment  
1977-1981**

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
January	1242	1448	1177	1579	1480
February	1036	1362	1227	1888	1598
March	1033	1491	2123	2323	2802
April	1976	2505	2659	3291	3288
May	5127	5735	7604	10699	5629
June	14663	17188	21744	15003	20578
July	20102	23297	25945	23861	22401
August	15096	19036	17746	18042	20516
September	6785	8288	6695	8420	8114
October	1950	2234	3192	2983	3099
November	1447	1414	1591	2074	2156
December	1630	1329	1292	1273	1939
Total Annual Average	6007	7111	7750	7620	7800

**1981 Average Employment by Specie**

