

RESIDENTS IN SEAFOOD PROCESSING

Resident workforces vary considerably by area

By **ROB KREIGER**

The seafood processing industry is well known for the many nonresidents who come to Alaska in the summer to work the slime lines. Seafood processing has had the highest percentage of nonresidents of any industry since we began collecting data more than 30 years ago. In 2014, nonresidents made up almost 72 percent of seafood processing workers and earned 65 percent of total wages.

With such a large nonresident presence, it's easy to forget that a significant number of Alaskans work in the industry as well. In 2014, 8,200 residents worked in seafood processing and earned more than \$140 million.

Resident seafood processing workers differ from nonresidents in more ways than just their numbers. Though they all work in the same occupations and in the same places across the state, residency percentages and the time worked vary significantly by area. The differences have to do with location, type of fishery, and the availability of local labor.

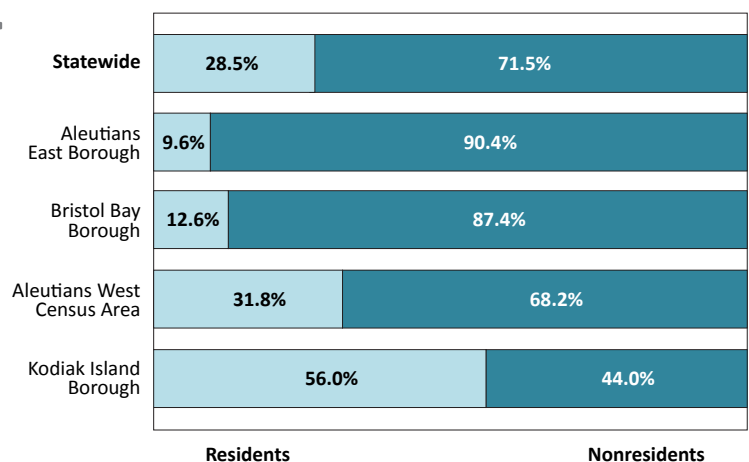
Bristol Bay

Bristol Bay is remote, with its largest season centering on salmon processing in July and August. Because of the location, the relatively short season, and the fact that the area had just 730 residents of working age in 2014, most seafood processing workers have to come from elsewhere.

Of the 3,254 Bristol Bay seafood processing workers

1 Percent Resident Processors by Area

2014



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

who worked at some point in 2014, 13 percent were Alaska residents — the second lowest of the four major seafood processing locations, after Aleutians East. Also, of the resident workers, just 5 percent were from Bristol Bay Borough.

The area's few resident workers tend to have more experience, though, with almost 70 percent having worked in seafood processing the prior year as well. Just 41 percent of the nonresidents worked the year before, which suggests Bristol Bay also has the highest turnover of the four major seafood processing locations.

Kodiak

Seafood processing is a big part of Kodiak's economy,

and Kodiak has a variety of fisheries that provide year-round work. The majority of seafood processing workers in Kodiak are Alaska residents, at 56 percent, and nine out of 10 of those live in Kodiak. The area's resident workforce is large enough that Kodiak has nearly a fifth of Alaska's resident seafood processing workers.

Unlike Bristol Bay, which is centered on salmon and has no significant local workforce, Kodiak had 9,300 residents of working age in 2014 and processed a range of species.

Seafood processing is a career for many of Kodiak's resident workers, with nearly 90 percent having worked in the industry the year before and nearly 60 percent for five consecutive years.

Aleutians East and West

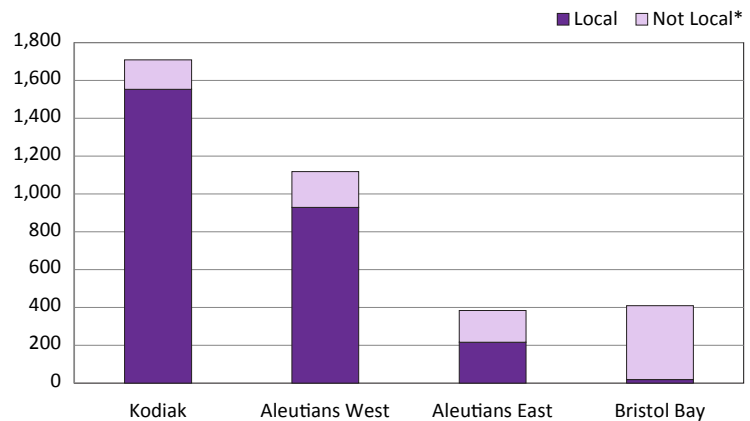
The Aleutians East Borough processes crab, pollock, halibut, and rockfish throughout the year as well as salmon in the summer. The largest cannery in Alaska is in King Cove, operated by Peter Pan Seafoods, and Akutan has a large onshore processing plant operated by Trident Seafoods — both are large national companies.

The area's onshore and offshore processing facilities require a large number of workers to operate, but the borough is small and only has around 1,000 working age residents. In 2014, its processing industry's workforce of 4,014 was 90 percent nonresident.

Of the 384 resident workers, 57 percent lived in Aleutians East. Unlike Bristol Bay, where 95 percent of resident workers come from outside the borough, this small group lives mainly in the area and has worked more years in the industry: 86 percent worked in the industry the prior year and 61 percent the last five years.

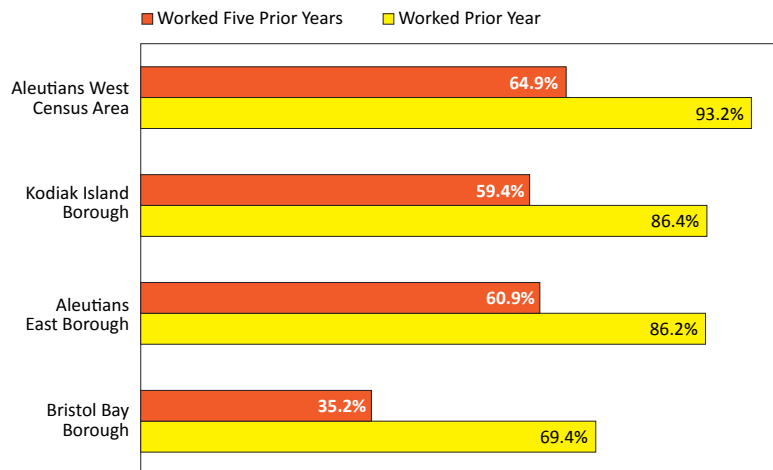
The Aleutians West Census Area includes Dutch Harbor, the largest fishing port in the United States in terms of pounds landed. Like Kodiak, the Aleutians West industry focuses on species other than salmon and has a large winter fishery.

2 Share of Residents Who Are Local Varies RESIDENT SEAFOOD PROCESSING WORKERS, 2014



*Local residents are those who live and work in the same borough or census area.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

3 Resident Worker Retention by Area ALASKA SEAFOOD PROCESSING WORKERS, 2014



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

For this area, the remote location is the biggest factor in its higher percentage of nonresidents. In 2014, it was 68 percent — still a majority, but a smaller share than Bristol Bay and Aleutians East. That's because it isn't the type of place where workers spend a season and move on. The industry in Aleutians West demands a more skilled worker with more experience, and 93 percent of its 1,100 resident workers in 2014 had also worked there the year before. Sixty-five percent had worked five consecutive years.

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