



# ENSURING THE FUTURE OF SALMON



## ALASKA: A Wild Salmon Paradise



The islands of Alaska's Kodiak Archipelago, with their expansive river valleys, countless streams and creeks, pristine lakes, and lush coastal wetlands, are home to some of the most outstanding wild salmon fisheries anywhere. The continued health of Alaska's wild salmon streams is critical to local communities and subsistence users as well as to numerous wildlife species, such as the majestic Kodiak brown bear. While still in pristine condition, some of these rivers and streams face imminent threats from development. **American Land Conservancy** is protecting the best of them on **Kodiak**, **Afognak**, and **Sitkalidak** islands in the Kodiak Archipelago.



*Chinook Salmon*

## THE KARLUK: KODIAK'S WORLD FAMOUS RIVER

The Karluk River is one of the most outstanding salmon streams in the world.

Located on the southwest coast of Kodiak Island, the Karluk is home to all five species of Pacific salmon and returns more salmon per linear mile than any other river on earth, with runs often numbering over two million annually. This abundant food source in turn supports prodigious numbers of Kodiak brown bears, and the island boasts the highest brown bear density on record. Along with the Ayakulik River, the Karluk sustains the only populations of native Chinook salmon in the Kodiak Archipelago. Additionally, the Karluk contains the largest population of steelhead on Kodiak Island, and offers outstanding habitat for the recovery of some species injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.



## PROTECTING THE KARLUK:



While much of the land along the Karluk River is permanently protected, the lower eight miles are not, and the risk of development is great. ALC is working in partnership with the Karluk Tribal Council and other partners to protect 1,860 acres along both sides of a three-mile stretch of this extraordinary river.

# AFOGNAK ISLAND'S RICH SALMON FISHERIES

The northern coast of **Afognak Island** is among the most habitat-rich areas in the Gulf of Alaska and includes many highly productive wild salmon fisheries. Four species of salmon, (Sockeye, Pink, Chum and Coho), spawn on Afognak, and Chinook salmon use the island's near-shore waters for year-round feeding. Steelhead, rainbow trout, and Dolly Varden are also found on Afognak, and Pacific herring spawn along the coastline. These pristine fisheries serve as a biological building block for the entire coastal ecosystem and support an array of wildlife, including Kodiak brown bears, 14 species of marine mammals, and some 160 bird species. Studies of the Exxon Valdez oil spill region found that Afognak's north coast ranked highest for nesting, breeding, feeding, and rearing habitat for species injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the area is particularly critical for their recovery.



*Sockeye Salmon*

## PROTECTING AFOGNAK

Without protection, Afognak's many pristine salmon streams could be lost to subdivision and development. ALC has helped to conserve more than 9,000 acres on Afognak Island to date, and is working to protect another 112,000 acres, working collaboratively with native corporations and other partners. These efforts are part of a long-term goal to create a 150-mile area of contiguous protected habitat along the northern coast of the island.



# THE SALMON STREAMS OF SITKALIDAK



The Kodiak archipelago is known for its exceptional natural wonders, but even among these, **Sitkalidak Island** stands out for its extraordinary ecological features. Its unique location in the Gulf of Alaska results in abundant aquatic food sources that attract huge numbers of seabirds and marine mammals. The 73,000-acre island includes sixteen wild salmon streams, where tens of thousands of salmon return to spawn each year. These salmon are part of extensive fisheries that support high densities of Kodiak brown bears, as well as common murrelets, marbled murrelets, pigeon guillemots, wintering seabirds, harlequin ducks, river otters, and harbor seals. Sitkalidak's outstanding salmon fisheries also support extensive commercial and subsistence fishing, and have been part of the cultural foundation for the Archipelago's native peoples for more than 7,000 years.



## PROTECTING SITKALIDAK

Sitkalidak Island lies directly across from the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge but falls outside its boundaries, leaving it extremely vulnerable to subdivision and development. ALC is working to conserve this unique island and protect its rich salmon streams and other outstanding natural and cultural resources.

