

## Silver Salmon — Qakiiyaq

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### KUIGNUN ITERTUT QAKIIYAT. – THE SILVER SALMON ARE ENTERING THE CREEKS.

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Photo: Woman filets a silver salmon in the grass at Cape Alitak.

Silver salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), also known as coho salmon, begin to appear in Kodiak waters in June, but they do not typically enter streams till mid-August. Runs continue through the fall, and fish may be present in freshwater well into December. Silvers prefer larger watercourses for spawning and are most abundant in the river systems of southwestern Kodiak. Elsewhere, they tend to occur in the larger streams at the heads of bays.

In the past, Alutiiq people harvested silver salmon at weirs, using barbed harpoons and gaffs. Silvers were also captured in traps woven from roots, grass, and bark. Fishermen sunk these traps in intertidal waters surrounding stream mouths, with their openings toward the water's surface. As the tide receded, any fish that had ventured inside the trap was unable to swim away.

Silver salmon remain a favorite subsistence food and are prepared in many ways. Dried or smoked fillets are cut into strips and stored in oil. Silvers are also eaten raw with tender cow parsnip stems, roasted with cow parsnip leaves as a seasoning, or baked with a stuffing of chocolate lily roots, wild chives, and rice. They are also a common addition to perok, a fish pie made with rice and vegetables.