

Taku River Fact Sheet

- **Taku River** is a salmon-producing system of continental significance, vital for both the environment and economy.
- **Taku watershed** covers approximately **4.5 million acres**, including lakes, streams, and wetlands.
- **Taku River** is the largest intact river system on the Pacific coast of North America, flowing from **northwest British Columbia** to **Alaska's panhandle**.
- **Tulsequah Chief mine** produced copper, lead, and zinc until its abandonment; cleanup progress has been slow.
- **Tulsequah Chief Mine** has been discharging toxic wastewater into the headwaters of the Taku River since it was abandoned in 1957.
- **Mine pollutants**, including copper, continue to enter the Taku River, harming fish, particularly salmon.
- **British Columbia** committed to addressing the contamination, but **Alaskans are still waiting** for cleanup. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/site-permitting-compliance/tulsequah-mine>)
- **New Polaris gold mine proposal** is rapidly advancing, even as pollution from the Tulsequah Chief mine continues.
- **Even small amounts of copper** can impair salmon, affecting their ability to return to spawning grounds and making them more vulnerable to predators.
- **New Polaris mine proposal** is located just downstream of the Tulsequah Chief mine, near the critical spawning habitat at **Flannigan Slough**.

(<https://www.projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/63fe919f30ceae0022e0ca28/project-details>)

- **Taku River** produces the largest runs of **Chinook and coho salmon** in Southeast Alaska, supporting both commercial and sport fisheries.
- The **seafood industry** is the largest private-sector employer in Southeast Alaska, providing **12% of the workforce**.
- **9,050 seafood workers** generated **\$1.18 billion** in economic output for Southeast Alaska in **2021-2022**, with salmon making up **75% of the value**.

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Southeast fishermen produced **11% of the value** and **4% of the volume** of Alaska's \$6 billion harvest in 2022.

- **Salmon from the Taku River** are caught from **Yakutat to Ketchikan**, supporting both commercial and sport fisheries.
- **Taku River commercial fishermen** earned an estimated **\$1.9 million** in 2016, with additional economic impact from sport fishing and tourism.
- **The Taku watershed** generates the equivalent of **260 full-time, year-round jobs**, supporting the local economy.
- The **Taku River** is a vital ecological and economic resource for Southeast Alaska and local Tribes.

[\(The Economic Value of Alaska's Seafoods 2024\)](#)

[\(The Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry 2025\)](#)