

## **Buyers Hungry for Yukon River Salmon**

*By Jason Hale, Communications Director*

If you find yourself in Seattle, you should stop by Elliott's Oyster House. It sits right on Puget Sound and serves some of the best seafood around, including chum salmon from the mouth of the Yukon River. Customers may enter the restaurant thinking of chum salmon as a lesser fish to the might king or tasty red, but the chum from the mouth of the Yukon can hold its own.

As Jeremy Anderson, director of operations and executive chef, put it : "This fish is really high quality and has a better price point than other good fish. Its chum, but it's a different animal than your typical chum."

According to Chef Jeremy, the Yukon chum, or *keta*, is a good, steady mover on the menu, and the restaurant highlights it year-round. Elliott's serves more than 20,000 pounds of Yukon chum salmon annually, a number that is matched by its four sister restaurants—Steamers cafés.

### **Why Chum?**

Four years ago Kwikpak Fisheries from Emmonak approached Elliott's and asked them to cook and serve Yukon chum salmon at the annual Boston Seafood Show. The chefs experimented with it a bit and settled on a number of recipes. They tried serving Yukon chum in the restaurant and found that it filled a void with a new kind of salmon. It also gave customers an education on this type of fish. Since then Elliott's has built a valued relationship with Kwikpak and Emmonak.

Each year a portion of the sales of this fish goes to the Boys and Girls Club of Emmonak. This comes out to more than \$5,000 annually, and this year it may be as much as \$10,000.

Of course, if there is a commercial fishery on Yukon River king salmon Elliott's celebrates by offering it on the menu, as fresh as possible.

### **Other Markets for Yukon Salmon**

Fish buyers across the U.S. are lined up for commercially caught salmon from the Yukon River. These markets include high end supermarket chains from New York to Nevada and Texas to Seattle. They appreciate the quality of the fish and have forged strong relationships with lower Yukon River processors—[Kwikpak](#) and [Boreal](#).

Fish from the middle river will be processed by Kaltag Fisheries and sold through [established outlets](#) in Alaska, across the Lower 48, and beyond.

As in the past, [Interior Fish Processors, Inc.](#), in Fairbanks is ready to smoke and sell commercially caught salmon from the Tanana River and the upper stretches of the Yukon River drainage within Alaska.