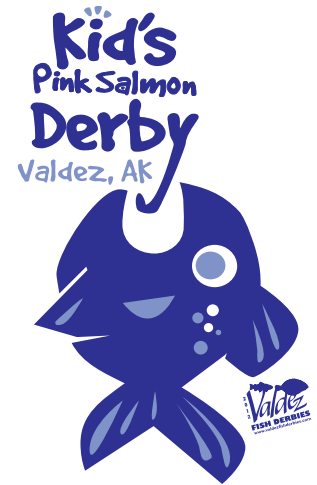


For the Love of Fishing Valdez Pink Salmon Derby Is All About Kids



Left, 2011 Winner, Westley Eastham of Anchorage, with his 6.04 pound pink salmon.
Photo courtesy Valdez Fish Derbies

The Valdez Pink Salmon Derby is sponsored by the Valdez Fish Derbies and was created five years ago to introduce kids to the sport of fishing and to take advantage of one of Valdez's most abundant resources; pink salmon.

Young anglers from Alaska and beyond come to Valdez in mid-July each year hoping to catch the largest pink salmon in the Valdez Kid's Pink Salmon Derby.

During the Kid's Derby, young anglers will cast from boats and line the shores of Allison Point in hopes of catching a big one, and winning great prizes like skateboards and fishing poles. The age divisions are: 5 to 7 years; 8 to 10 years; 11 to 13 years and 14 to 16 years. There is also a Boy Scout prize sponsored by Prospector Outfitters for the Cub Scout/Boy Scout catching the largest fish.

The Valdez Harbor will be hopping with excitement as kids bring their fish to the weigh-in station kitty corner to the Harbormaster's office. Young anglers are encouraged to bring their fish to the weigh-in station for a quick picture and a chance to win prizes.

In 2011, it was 9 year old Westley Eastham of Anchorage, Alaska, who took top honors with a 6.04 pound pink salmon. Eastham won a long board skateboard and five year subscription to Fish Alaska magazine for bringing in the largest fish in the 8 to 10 year age division. As an added bonus, Eastham also

won an Alps Mountaineering tent in the Cub Scout division.

Eastham said he fished just off Allison Point and knew he had a big one on the line because it was "running like crazy". When asked for advice on how to catch a large fish, Eastham responded, "You just have to believe in yourself".

Eastham's fish outweighed the runners up by a hefty sum, but it was just a few ounces short of breaking into the top 10 list of pink salmon caught in the Kid's Pink Salmon Derby over the last four years. The largest fish on record in the Valdez Kid's Pink Salmon Derby was reeled in by Janaea Koch of Valdez. In 2010, the 9 year old reeled in a 7.78 pound pink salmon.

Here are the Top 10 pink salmon weighed in during the four years of the Kids Pink Salmon Derby:

Janaea Koch (2010)	9 yrs	7.78 lbs.	Valdez, AK
Janissa Arzie (2010)	14 yrs	7.60 lbs.	Chugiak, AK
Canyon McAllister(2010)	11 yrs	6.92 lbs.	Valdez, AK
Blake Morrison(2010)	7 yrs	6.80 lbs.	Valdez, AK
Cole Lenart(2008)	11 yrs	6.78 lbs.	Albert Lee, MN
Joshua Curtis(2008)	14 yrs	6.76 lbs.	Tok, AK
Noah McAllister(2010)	12 yrs	6.72 lbs.	Valdez, AK
Jake Becker(2010)	15 yrs	6.54 lbs.	Fairbanks, AK
Annika Hansen(2008)	9 yrs	6.50 lbs.	Seattle, WA
Zach Howard(2009)	11 yrs	6.28 lbs.	Valdez, AK



Above, 2011 Kid's Pink Salmon Derby participants

Photo courtesy Valdez Fish Derbies

This year's Kid's Derby is Saturday, July 14. With an anticipated return of approximately 18 million pink salmon (Valdez Fisheries Development Association estimate from Dave Cobb), it should be easy for all kids to catch a fish in Valdez.

There is no cost for kids to participate in the derby, nor is there registration for the event. All the participants, and their family and friends are invited to join in the fun at a free barbeque at Dock Point at 5 p.m. Kids should stop by the weigh-in station to check in and get a ticket to the free barbeque. At the barbeque, kids themselves emcee the awards ceremony and award prizes for the top fish in four different age divisions.

The Valdez Fish Derbies Halibut Derby is underway and runs through September 2. The Silver Salmon Derby will run July 21 through September 2. Both the Halibut and Silver Salmon derbies boast a \$15,000 grand prize for the largest fish caught, \$5,000 for 2nd place and \$2,000 for 3rd place.

The Halibut Hullabaloo runs June 15 through the 24, and the angler catching the largest halibut during that period will win \$1,000 cash in addition to the regular prizes. The Women's Silver Salmon Derby is set for Saturday, August 11, with an opening ceremony Friday, August 10. Silver Salmon Big Prize Fridays are bonus days when anglers can win additional \$500 cash and the dates this year are July 27 and August 31.

In addition to the regular derby prizes, one lucky person who purchases a derby ticket will win a 4x4 F-150 truck from Valdez Fish Derbies and Seekins Ford. Every ticket purchased, whether someone catches a fish or not, will go into a drawing for the truck to be held Sunday, September 2 at the Spawn 'til Dawn



Above, Jaimie Crisp of Valdez shows off her catch of the day at the 2011 Pink Salmon Derby

Photo courtesy Valdez Fish Derbies

Derby Awards Party.

More information about the Valdez Fish Derbies can be found at www.valdezfishderbies.com. ■