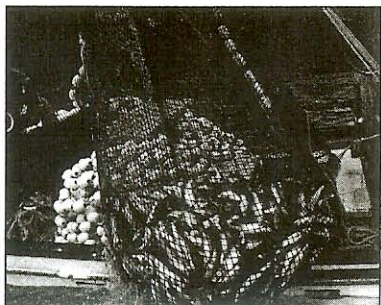


## READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14–26, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

### Endless Harvest



More than two hundred years ago, Russian explorers and fur hunters landed on the Aleutian Islands, a volcanic archipelago in the North Pacific, and learned of a land mass that lay farther to the north. The islands' native inhabitants called this land mass Aleyska, the 'Great Land'; today, we know it as Alaska.

The forty-ninth state to join the United States of America (in 1959), Alaska is fully one-fifth the size of the mainland 48 states combined. It shares, with Canada, the second longest river system in North America and has over half the coastline

of the United States. The rivers feed into the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska – cold, nutrient-rich waters which support tens of millions of seabirds, and over 400 species of fish, shellfish, crustaceans, and molluscs. Taking advantage of this rich bounty, Alaska's commercial fisheries have developed into some of the largest in the world.

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Alaska's commercial fisheries landed hundreds of thousands of tonnes of shellfish and herring, and well over a million tonnes of groundfish (cod, sole, perch and pollock) in 2000. The true cultural heart and soul of Alaska's fisheries, however, is salmon. 'Salmon,' notes writer Susan Ewing in *The Great Alaska Nature Factbook*, 'pump through Alaska like blood through a heart, bringing rhythmic, circulating nourishment to land, animals and people.' The 'predictable abundance of salmon allowed some native cultures to flourish,' and 'dying spawners\* feed bears, eagles, other animals, and ultimately the soil itself.' All five species of Pacific salmon – chinook, or king; chum, or dog; coho, or silver; sockeye, or red; and pink, or humpback – spawn\*\* in Alaskan waters, and 90% of all Pacific salmon commercially caught in North America are produced there. Indeed, if Alaska was an independent nation, it would be the largest producer of wild salmon in the world. During 2000, commercial catches of Pacific salmon in Alaska exceeded 320,000 tonnes, with an ex-vessel value of over \$US260 million.

Catches have not always been so healthy. Between 1940 and 1959, overfishing led to crashes in salmon populations so severe that in 1953 Alaska was declared a federal disaster area. With the onset of statehood, however, the State of Alaska took over management of its own fisheries, guided by a state constitution which mandates that Alaska's natural resources be managed on a sustainable basis. At that time, statewide harvests totalled around 25 million salmon. Over the next few decades average catches steadily increased as a result of this policy of sustainable

\* spawners: fish that have released eggs

\*\* spawn: release eggs