



Fishing in the Kodiak Area

Kodiak Island

Kodiak Island, located in the Gulf of Alaska, is part of an archipelago of islands including Afognak, Shuyak, and more than 20 other smaller islands. Kodiak Island is the second largest island in the United States. Kodiak offers excellent fishing for all five species of Pacific salmon, halibut, rockfish, lingcod, steelhead, rainbow trout, and Dolly Varden. In addition, Kodiak Island offers spectacular opportunities for wildlife viewing, hiking, sightseeing, and hunting. The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge covers two-thirds of Kodiak Island. The other one-third of the island is owned by the State of Alaska, local governments, various Alaska Native corporations, and private individuals.

Kodiak Archipelago is home to about 13,000 residents. The City of Kodiak is 250 air miles or a 40-minute flight southwest of Anchorage. Anglers can also take a 10-hour boat ride via the Alaska Marine Highway System.



Understanding Sport Fish Regulations

Every year ADF&G releases four sport fishing regulations booklets for the Northern, Southcentral, Southeast, and Southwest areas. Sport fishing regulations specific to the Kodiak area such as bag and possession limits, seasons, or tackle can be found in the current Southwest Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet.

These booklets are free of charge and are available at ADF&G offices, wherever sport fishing licenses are sold, and online at www.adfg.alaska.gov under the Regulations tab. Before you cast out your line, make sure you read all the regulations for the waters you are fishing. Don't forget



to check for advisory announcements and emergency orders on the ADF&G website at www.adfg.alaska.gov.

ADF&G may issue an advisory announcement and emergency order to open, liberalize, close, or restrict any fishery at any time due to biological needs. In the event an advisory announcement and emergency order is issued, ADF&G attempts to release the documents a minimum of 24 to 48 hours before it becomes effective. Anglers can find advisory announcements and emergency orders on the ADF&G website under the Sport Fishing tab. Select the Fishing Information link and then the Emergency Orders and Advisory Announcements tab. Once there, anglers can select the region and management area they intend to fish.

During the summer ADF&G posts weekly inseason fishing reports online. Anglers can find these under the Fishing Reports tab under the Fishing Information tab. Anglers can also subscribe to receive the notifications via their email. Updates are also posted on the ADF&G - Sport Fishing Southcentral Alaska Facebook page. If you have any questions, please contact the Kodiak ADF&G office at (907) 486-1880.





Road Zone and Remote Zone

The Kodiak Island Road Zone is defined as all freshwaters of Kodiak Island that are east of a line extending south from Crag Point on the westside of Anton Larsen Bay to the western most point of Salityer Cove, including the waters of Woody and Long islands. The Road Zone also includes all saltwaters inside or landward of the boundary lines illustrated in the map.

Road Zone - Freshwater

The Road Zone offers an abundance of fishing opportunities for novice and experienced anglers alike. There are 75 miles of paved and hard-packed gravel roads that cross more than 15 fishable streams and provide

access to 17 stocked lakes.

Road Zone anglers can find all five Pacific salmon species, steelhead, rainbow trout, and Dolly Varden in the freshwaters. Major road accessible drainages include Buskin, American, Olds, and Pasagshak rivers; and Monashka, Pillar, Sargent, Russian, Salonie, Roslyn, and Chiniak creeks. Major drainages accessible via all-terrain vehicle include Salityer and Miam rivers.

Near the river mouth, streams meander through gravel bars, deep pools, and clear riffles. Upstream of low-lying coastal areas, most Road Zone streams are braided, fast-flowing and shallow, making them unsuitable for rafts, canoes, or other watercraft. However, several



road-accessible lakes are well-suited for small boats and personal watercraft such as Buskin Lake, Kalsin Pond, and Lake Rose Teed.

Remote Zone - Freshwater

The Kodiak Island Remote Zone consists of all drainages and waters outside of the Road Zone. Many of the drainages are larger than those within the Road Zone and have a greater stream flow with less brush and debris, making them better suited for watercraft access. The Remote Zone areas are served by small aircraft and charter boat operations. Most anglers book an aircraft charter or arrange air travel with a lodge or guide service.



Chinook Salmon

Chinook or king salmon are a world-famous sport fish and are commonly caught trolling in the saltwater around Kodiak. Chinook salmon also return to three road accessible streams (American and Olds rivers and Salonie Creek) and two remote streams (Karluk and Ayakulik rivers) on Kodiak Island.

Enhanced Freshwater Streams

In 2000, a Chinook salmon stocking project was initiated on the Kodiak Road Zone with the objective to establish enhanced saltwater and freshwater sport fisheries. In 2007, the Chinook salmon enhancement program expanded into the American and Olds rivers. In 2014, Salonie Creek was added to the list of stocked rivers.

Depending on the year, every spring ADF&G stocks Chinook salmon smolt into either American or Olds



rivers, or Salonie Creek depending on the previous seasons eggtake numbers. Adult Chinook salmon are captured from one or more of the three stocked Kodiak Road Zone streams in July and early August. In mid-August, an egg take occurs. The collected Chinook salmon are reared by Pillar Creek Hatchery on Kodiak Island.

As a result of this program, anglers can target runs of Chinook salmon on the American River, Olds River, and Salonie Creek each year, though returns to these rivers have been small in recent years. Chinook salmon start returning to stocked streams in late June and run through early August. Access is mostly from the Chiniak Highway at the Olds River, American River, and Salonie Creek bridges. Anglers have success hiking upstream and looking for Chinook salmon in deep pools.



Freshwater Tackle

Chinook salmon are powerful, aggressive fish, even after returning to freshwater. Spin anglers should try a heavy-action rod outfitted with 25 to 30 pound test line. Popular lures include Vibrax spinners (No. 4 or No. 5) and Pixees. Fly fishing anglers should use a 9, 10, or 11wt fly rod. Bright and colorful streamer flies with purple, pink, light blue, chartreuse and orange are often used; egg pattern flies can also work well.

Wild Freshwater Streams

Karluk and Ayakulik rivers support the only native runs of freshwater Chinook salmon fisheries on Kodiak Island. Both drainages are located in the Remote Zone on the southwest end of Kodiak Island, approximately one hour by air from the city of Kodiak. In recent years, to protect these native runs, ADF&G has issued preseason

advisory announcements and emergency orders closing or restricting these fisheries. In the last fifteen years, Karluk and Ayakulik rivers have seen low returns of Chinook salmon, prompting both pre-season and in-season management actions.

Anglers must record the date, location, and number of king salmon harvested in freshwaters; there is an annual limit of five fish.

Saltwater Fishing

Trolling for Chinook salmon in Kodiak's marine waters has become increasingly popular. Chinook salmon are commonly harvested in the 10 to 30 pound range, although fish weighing 50 pounds are occasionally harvested by anglers. Much of the trolling effort occurs in Chiniak Bay, which is a feeding area for Chinook salmon that are present year-round. The majority of Chinook salmon harvest in this area typically occurs between April and October. The best-known fishing spots close to the city of Kodiak are Cape Chiniak, Buoy 4, Inner Humpback Rock, Kalsin Reef, and Woody Island channel.

Saltwater Tackle

Many anglers targeting Chinook salmon in saltwaters use 5 inch spoons when trolling. Apex and Coyote spoons are popular, and green and blue colors work well. A flasher and herring is often added to the trolling setup.



Sockeye Salmon

Sockeye or red salmon begin to arrive to freshwater streams each year beginning in May. Returning adult sockeye salmon migrate upriver to a lake and spawn along the lakeshore and in tributary streams. Fishing is best when sockeye salmon are moving upstream. On Kodiak Island, the sockeye salmon run continues through the end of July or into mid-August, depending on the location.

Road Zone

Anglers target sockeye salmon on the Buskin, Pasagshak, and Saltery rivers. Sockeye average around five pounds. The Buskin River return starts in late May, peaks in late June, and typically is over by mid-July. A weir is located on Buskin River and the run averages about 9,000

sockeye. Popular access points include the river mouth, Pumphouse Hole, Island Hole, and the Buskin Lake outlet.

The Pasagshak River return typically starts in late June and peaks in mid-July. A weir is located on Pasagshak River and the run averages about 5,000 sockeye. The most popular access point is the river mouth.

The Saltery River return typically starts in early July and peaks later in the month. A weir is located on Saltery River and the run averages about 37,000 sockeye. Saltery River



is located within the Road Zone, but can only be accessed by ATV, rugged four-wheel drive vehicle, or float plane. Popular access points include the river mouth, Bedsprings Hole, and Town/Locals Hole.

Tackle

Spin anglers should try a 6 to 7 foot medium action rod outfitted with 8 to 12 pound test line. Vibrax spinners (No. 2 or 3) are marginally effective; most anglers use yarn flies on a 12 to 18 inch leader attached to a swivel and weighted drop line.

Fly fishing anglers use a 6 to 8wt rod and reel outfitted with sinking tip. When fishing deep holes and slow-moving water, try floating line in combination with weighted flies or a small split-shot weight attached to the leader. A number of fly patterns are used for sockeye salmon. Some anglers claim flies with chartreuse (fluorescent green) or red bodies can be particularly effective.



Pink Salmon

Pink or humpy salmon are available in great abundance. The best fishing for pink salmon occurs along ocean beaches near stream mouths or lower in the streams. On the Road Zone, the pink salmon return typically starts

in mid- to late July and continues through August. Pink salmon are the most abundant Pacific salmon species found in Kodiak Island waters. The Buskin River run alone averages about 65,000 pink salmon.

Tackle

Pinks average about three pounds and will readily take lures, eggs, and flies. Fishing for pink salmon is a great way to teach children about salmon fishing. Use lightweight spinning gear or a 5wt to 6 wt fly rod. Popular lures include small Pixees, larger Vibrax or Mepps spinners, or any bright and flashy fly.

Coho Salmon

Coho or silver salmon are aggressive and readily strike at lures, eggs, and streamer flies. For these reasons, coho salmon are a prime target of spin and fly anglers. Coho salmon are commonly caught trolling in the saltwater and also return to numerous road accessible and remote streams on Kodiak Island. Coho salmon are the last salmon species to arrive each year. The run typically starts in mid-August and continues through early October, with



the run peaking in mid-September.

Road Zone

The Road Zone offers excellent coho salmon fishing. Anglers typically target coho salmon on the following road accessible drainages: Buskin, American, Olds, and Pasagshak rivers; and Monashka, Pillar, Salonie, and Roslyn creeks. In addition, Saltery and Miam rivers are popular among anglers with ATV access. A weir is located on the lower Buskin River and the run averages about 5,000 coho salmon. Popular access points on Buskin River include the river mouth, the fishing platform, Pumhouse

Hole, Island Hole, and Beaver Pond.

Lake Rose Teed, which borders the Pasagshak State Recreation Area, provides a unique opportunity for anglers with access to a float tube, kayak, or small watercraft. Coho salmon hold in the lake before migrating into the upper tributaries.



Since 1984, coho salmon have been reared at Pillar Creek Hatchery and stocked into several Road Zone drainages as smolt. Stocked coho salmon help diversify sport fishing opportunities for anglers and help take pressure off wild coho salmon runs. Returns from the enhanced stocking efforts have established productive sport fisheries at Mill Bay, Mission Beach, and Monashka and Pillar creeks.

Remote Zone

The Remote Zone offers the largest wild runs of coho salmon on the Kodiak Archipelago. On Kodiak Island, anglers target coho salmon on the Ayakulik, Karluk, Little, and Uganik rivers, and in Olga, Spiridon, and Zachar bays. Many smaller systems also support coho salmon runs.

The Ayakulik River coho salmon run timing is typical for Kodiak Island. The run starts in early August and peaks by mid-September. Ayakulik River can be accessed by float plane just north of the Bear Creek confluence. The Ayakulik River often floods during fall months, resulting in dynamic river changes. Use caution if fishing during this time.

The Karluk River coho run is later, with lagoon fishing being good in early September, and river fishing peaking in later in the month. Karluk River can be accessed via float plane or ATV at the Portage area. The river can also be accessed at the lagoon, just upstream of the river mouth.

For the rest of the Kodiak Archipelago, coho salmon fishing can be excellent. Anglers target coho salmon on Afognak and Shuyak islands. The coho run typically starts in early August and peaks between the last few days in August and the first week of September.

Popular coho fishing locations on Afognak Island include Litnik or Afognak River, Pauls Bay, and Discoverer Bay. Shuyak Island coho fishing locations include Shangin Bay, Carry Inlet, and Big Bay. In these areas, coho salmon school up and hold near the stream mouths until



significant rain events occur. Since the stream mouths are too shallow and brushy to fish effectively, the majority of the sport fishery occurs in the saltwater just off the stream mouths. A boat is required to access these fisheries.

Saltwater

Trolling generally begins during the first week of July, when coho salmon start to form schools. Peak fishing occurs in the first half of August and is typically over by mid-September. Similar to Chinook salmon, the best known coho salmon fishing spots close to the city of Kodiak are Cape Chiniak, Buoy 4, Inner Humpback Rock, and Woody Island channel.

Tackle

Some Kodiak coho salmon can be exceptionally large. Coho salmon average 8 to 9 pounds but can weigh up to 20 pounds. Spinning gear consists of a 7 to 9-foot medium-to-heavy action rod with 12 to 20 pound test line. Coho salmon will usually strike at most bright and flashy lures, especially Vibrax spinners in size No. 3 or 4. Green, purple, pink, and orange are popular colors. Cured salmon eggs drifted in the current under a bobber can be highly effective for catching coho salmon.

For fly fishing, an 8 to 9wt fly rod is the best option. Purple Egg Sucking Leeches are a fly fishing favorite for coho salmon, although a wide variety of colorful and highly visible patterns will also produce fish.

Steelhead Trout

Steelhead trout begin entering Kodiak Island freshwater tributaries in September, with peak run timing in mid- to

late October. Steelhead overwinter in lakes or rivers, and spawn from April to June. Adults that survive spawning return to the ocean in May and June. Some fish will migrate between the ocean and freshwater for up to five years. There are 16 identified streams on Kodiak Archipelago with steelhead present, although the run sizes can vary. Steelhead on Kodiak average between six to ten pounds.



Road Zone

Steelhead fishing opportunities are very limited on the Road Zone, with a small run found in the Buskin River. Popular access points for Buskin River include the mouth of the Buskin River, Pumphouse Hole, Island Hole, and the Beaver Pond. In these drainages, steelhead return between late September and mid-November. In order to conserve this limited resource, steelhead fishing is catch-and-release only on the Road Zone. In addition, only unbaited, artificial lures or flies may be used from November 1 through April 30.

Remote Zone

Popular remote steelhead fishing locations include Karluk and Ayakulik rivers. Dog Salmon and Litnik rivers have smaller steelhead populations as well.

Karluk River contains the largest steelhead population, averaging around 8,000 fish. The largest concentration of spawning adult steelhead can usually be found at the Portage area on the river, which can be accessed via ATV or float plane. Karluk River steelhead return beginning in September. Peak fishing usually occurs in mid-October and is typically over by November. Anglers may also successfully fish for steelhead from mid-April to early May.

The Ayakulik River steelhead population is thought to be the second largest on the Kodiak Archipelago and has been more stable than the Karluk River run. The Ayakulik River steelhead run starts in late-September and is over by November. Steelhead can also be found into May. For the Remote Zone, there is an annual limit of no more than two steelhead that are 20 inches or longer. A harvest record is also required.

Tackle

Since steelhead are often found in flowing waters, fly anglers commonly use sink tips or floating lines with weighted flies on a 6/7wt fly rod. For flies, egg patterns, black Woolly Buggers, and Egg Sucking Leeches can be very effective.

For spin fishing, a 6 to 8 foot medium-action rod with 10 to 12 pound test line works well. Spoons and spinners are effective, along with salmon eggs and egg-pattern yarn flies drifted under a slip bobber with a weighted and swiveled 12 to 18 inch leader.



Dolly Varden and Arctic Char

Dolly Varden are present in a majority of Road Zone and Remote Zone streams and provide an excellent sport fishing opportunity on light tackle. Dolly Varden can be present all year round, but there are two peak fishing times. In May, Dolly Varden out-migrate to saltwater to feed. Schools of Dolly Varden can be found at lake outlets and near the mouths of freshwater systems feeding on out-migrating pink salmon fry. From July to October, Dolly Varden migrate back to freshwater to spawn and overwinter.

On the Road Zone, popular Dolly Varden fishing locations include Mission Beach and Pillar Creek beach in the spring, and Buskin Lake. In addition, most of the larger Road Zone and Remote Zone drainages offer excellent Dolly Varden fishing during the summer and fall months. Dolly Varden can be found throughout the streams, particularly in riffles. Access Buskin Lake from a spur road off of Anton Larsen Bay Road at the last Buskin River Bridge or via a trail that borders the driving range at the golf course on Anton Larsen Bay Road.

Tackle

Popular tackle include small spinners, beads (size 0, 1 or 2) or leech and alevin flies. A 6 to 8 foot light-action rod with 6 pound test line works well for catching Dollies. Fly anglers commonly use a 3 to 5wt fly rod with leech or alevin flies.



Stocked Lakes

In order to provide additional angler opportunities, ADF&G stocks rainbow trout into 17 local lakes. Rainbow trout fry are released into lakes in late July and quickly grow to catchable size. Stocked lakes offer excellent fishing opportunities for the whole family. Lakes can be fished from shore, by personal watercraft, or on the ice in winter months.

- Abercrombie Lake
- Aurel Lake
- Big (Lilly) Lake
- Bull Lake
- Caroline Lake
- Cicely Lake
- Dark Lake
- Dolgoi Lake (located on Long Island)
- Dragonfly Lake
- East Twin Lake (last stocked 2020)
- Heitman Lake
- Horseshoe Lake
- Island Lake
- Lee Lake
- Lily Pond Lake
- Long Lake (located on Woody Island)
- Tanignak Lake (located on Woody Island)

You can find directions to the lakes, bathymetric maps, and stocking information on the ADF&G Alaska Lake Database webpage at adfg.alaska.gov/SF_Lakes/.

Tackle

Spin anglers commonly use small Vibrax or Mepps spinners, or Pixee spoons. Sizes 0-3 are common. Fly anglers find success with small egg patterns or flies that imitate the hatch.



Halibut

Halibut are found in abundance around Kodiak Archipelago waters. Sport fishing for halibut is excellent from late April through September. Halibut are usually found in deeper water during the winter months and migrate into shallower water during the spring and summer. Halibut weighing 35 to 40 pounds are commonly found, and fish larger than 150 pounds are frequently harvested. Halibut fishing is closed during the month of January. NOAA manages the halibut fishery including the daily bag and possession limits for halibut in the Kodiak area.

Tackle

Popular fishing methods include herring or fish heads on a circle hook, or artificial jigs. Heavy weights are needed in strong currents or deep water. The best-known fishing spots close to the city of Kodiak are Cape Chiniak, Buoy 4, Woody Island channel, Williams Reef, and Kodiak Rocks. Fishing from these popular spots is only accessible from a boat or a personal watercraft.

Rockfish and Lingcod

Alaskan waters are home to roughly 40 different types of rockfish, but only about 10 species are regularly caught in the sport fishery. Rockfish and lingcod are found in abundance around Kodiak Archipelago waters.

Rockfish are a remarkable, diverse, and extremely long-lived species, and slow to reproduce. Some rockfish have been aged at over 100 years old. Certain species of

adult rockfish can reach 40 inches and 30 pounds. For the purposes of sport fishery management, rockfish are divided into two groups: pelagic and nonpelagic. Pelagic rockfish are found mid-water in schools (e.g., black, dusky, and dark rockfish) and nonpelagic rockfish are found on or near the ocean floor (e.g., yelloweye, tiger, and quillback rockfish). Common rockfish species caught in the Kodiak sport fishery include black, dusky, and yelloweye rockfish. Black and dusky rockfish typically average 3 to 4 pounds, while yelloweye rockfish typically average 10 pounds.

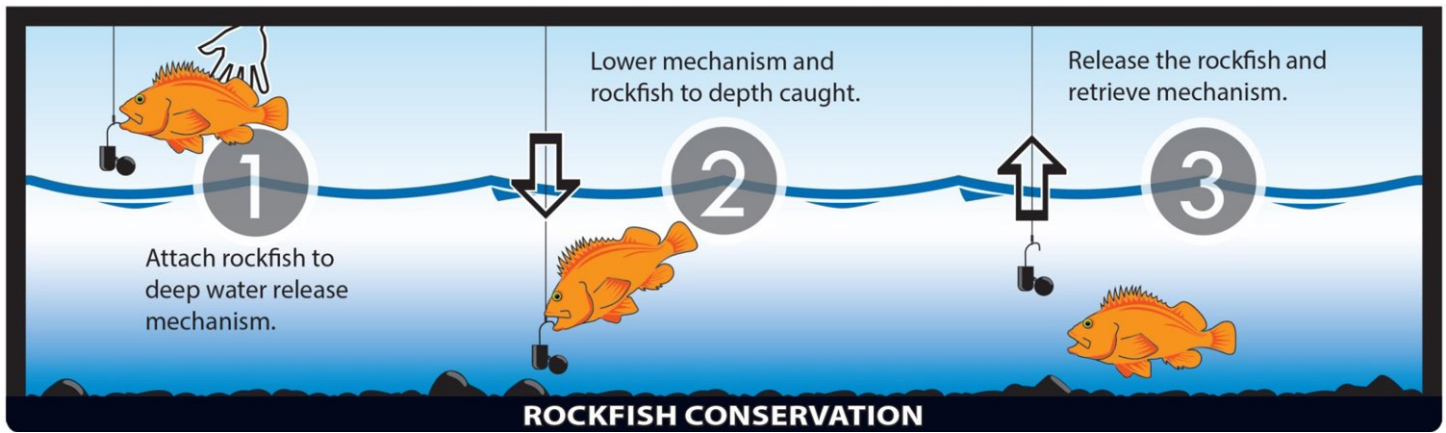


Lingcod spawn during the winter months and males will defensively guard their nests through June. Because of added vulnerability during these months, lingcod season is open from July 1 through December 31.

Barotrauma

Compared to most fishes, rockfish grow slowly and live a very long time. Many do not reach sexual maturity until age 15 or older, and some can live over 100 years. Rather than laying and fertilizing eggs in the open waters, like most fish, rockfish mate internally, then give live birth to as many as 2.5 million tiny larvae. Survival of these larvae is usually very poor, depending on predation levels and ocean conditions. Because of the high mortality of larval rockfish, relatively few offspring reach adulthood.

Also, rockfish have a closed swim bladder system, which just about assures that a rockfish pulled up from over 65 feet will have difficulty re-submerging unassisted if not quickly released at depth of capture. If a swim bladder is punctured, and the fish released, infection is likely to occur, and the fish could die. Rockfish can be released safely with the use of a deep water release mechanism. These devices are available for purchase in most sporting good stores in Alaska. For more information on how deep water release works check out our rockfish page which includes a helpful deep water release video: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingRockfish.main>. Please note, effective 2020, all anglers must carry a



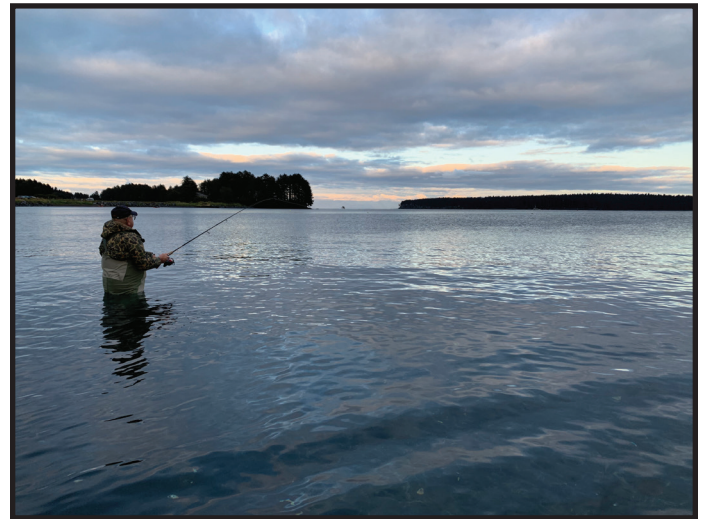
deepwater release device onboard their vessel when sport fishing in salt water and use the device to release rockfish that are not harvested at depth of capture or 100 feet.

As a result of their unique biology, all Pacific rockfishes are highly susceptible to overharvest. Regulations are very conservative, and fisheries managers also ask that you limit your harvest of these fish to what you will actually consume. The best way to minimize catching rockfish is to avoid rockfish habitat while targeting other species.

Tackle

The best-known rockfish and lingcod fishing spots close to the city of Kodiak are Buoy 4, Kodiak Rocks, Williams Reef, Cape Chiniak, and on the backside of Long Island. Rockfish can be found around underwater rock piles and pinnacles, and away from strong currents. Popular fishing methods include small jigs, although some rockfish are caught incidentally while trolling.

Lingcod are aggressive fish with ferocious teeth. Lingcod can be found around rocky structures and steep rocky banks, particularly those with open ocean exposure. Large white jigs are commonly used. Lingcod average 10 pounds, but fish larger than 40 pounds are sometimes harvested.



Weather and Wildlife

The northern end of the Kodiak Archipelago is a temperate rainforest, while the southern end is similar to the Aleutian Islands and annual rainfall averages 80 inches. Weather can range from sunny and mild to cold and rainy. Winds are often prevalent regardless of the season. At times, summer temperatures can remain warm for extended periods, but similar trends of high winds, cooler temperatures and rain are not uncommon. Layers (wool and fleece) and waterproof clothing (jacket, pants, and hat) are recommended to stay comfortable and dry. Bring insect repellent and/or mosquito netting for fishing trips.

Brown Bears

Kodiak brown bears are the largest bears in the world and can weigh up to 1,500 pounds. Anglers should make noise while traveling through brushy areas. Splashing fish attract bears. If a bear approaches while you are fighting a fish, give the line some slack or cut the line to eliminate splashing. Keep stringers in the water and close to you at all times. After filleting fish, cut fish carcasses into smaller pieces and throw the pieces into the current. Do not give up fish to a bear. This teaches bears that anglers provide an easy meal.





Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, & Aleutians Run Timing

Always read the current Southwest Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet and emergency orders before you fish any of the waters in Southwest Alaska.

Buskin River	Sockeye Salmon	Mid-May through end of July
	Pink Salmon	Mid-July through mid-August
	Coho Salmon	Early August through early October

Pasagshak River	Sockeye Salmon	End of June through mid-August
	Coho Salmon	Early August through early October

Saltery Creek	Sockeye Salmon	End of June through mid-August
	Coho Salmon	Early August through early October

Other Road System Creeks: American, Olds, Salonie, etc.

Chinook Salmon (stocked)	Mid-June through end of July (American, Olds, & Salonie Only)
Pink Salmon	Mid-July through mid-August
Coho Salmon	Early August through early October

Afognak and Raspberry Island Streams

Coho Salmon	August and occasionally through September
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Uganik River	Coho Salmon	Mid-August through early October
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Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers

Steelhead Trout	Late April through end of May
	Early October through early November
Sockeye Salmon	Mid-May through end of September
Coho Salmon	Mid-August through early October

Alaska Peninsula Streams

Chinook Salmon	Mid-June through end of July
Coho Salmon	Early August through early October
Steelhead Trout	Late April through end of May
	Early October through early November

Unalaska Bay Streams

Sockeye Salmon	Late June through early August
Pink Salmon	Mid-July through mid-August
Coho Salmon	Early August through early October

Please review the Southwest Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary booklet before you go fishing. All of these waters have regulations affecting bag and possession limits, tackle, areas open to fishing, and hours open to fishing. **Don't forget to check for emergency orders!** ADF&G may either close, restrict, open, or liberalize all or part of these fisheries at any given time.

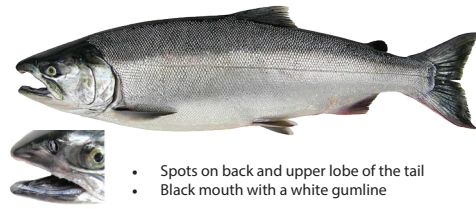
Pacific Salmon Identification

Chinook (king) Salmon



- Spots on back and both lobes of the tail
- Black mouth with a black gumline

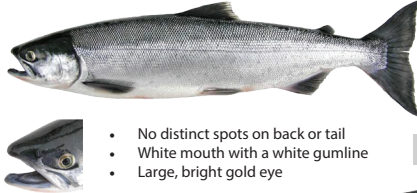
Coho (silver) Salmon



- Spots on back and upper lobe of the tail
- Black mouth with a white gumline

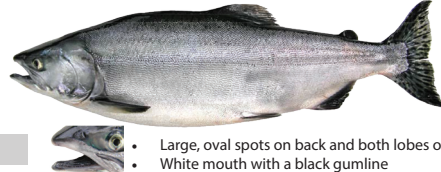
Marine Phase

Sockeye (red) Salmon



- No distinct spots on back or tail
- White mouth with a white gumline
- Large, bright gold eye

Pink (humpy) Salmon



- Large, oval spots on back and both lobes of tail
- White mouth with a black gumline

Chum (dog) Salmon



- No spots; calico bands on body (often faint in salt water)
- White mouth with a white gumline

Photographs courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Chinook (king) Salmon



- Spawning adults turn maroon or olive brown
- Spots on body and both lobes of the tail remain

Coho (silver) Salmon



- Males develop pronounced "kype" (hooked-nose)
- Spots on back and upper lobe of the tail remain
- Male and female turn dark maroon and have dark backs

Spawning Phase

Sockeye (red) Salmon



- Spawning adults develop dull-green heads
- Males develop hump on back
- Both female and male turn red

Pink (humpy) Salmon



- Spawners turn dull gray on their backs and upper sides
- Lower sides appear cream color or white
- Large, oval spots on back and both lobes of tail remain

Chum (dog) Salmon



- Spawners develop pronounced, vertical calico bands on sides
- Males exhibit large, canine-like teeth



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Southcentral Region
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Sport Fish

333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99518

Sport Fish Information Center
(907) 267-2218
M-F 8am - 5 pm
Except on state holidays



These opportunities funded in part by Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This summary is available in alternative communication formats. If you need assistance, please contact the ADF&G ADA Coordinator at (907) 465-6078; TTY/ Alaska Relay 7-1-1; or 1 (800) 770-8973.