



Anchorage Area

The Anchorage area

The Anchorage area includes all lakes and streams from Eklutna River (northern boundary) to Ingram Creek in Turnagain Arm (southern boundary).

Anchorage is unique in the sport fishing world. Anglers can catch 20- to 30-pound king salmon and 8- to 10-pound silver salmon right in town. There's also excellent fishing for rainbow trout, Dolly Varden char, and Arctic grayling in area lakes and streams.

The majority of Anchorage-area sport fishing is the result of hatchery stockings. Though many streams within the Anchorage area support natural runs of one or all of the five Pacific salmon species, most of these native runs are too small to support sport fisheries. Check your regulation book carefully, or look at the quick guide on Page 7 of this handout, since many area flowing waters are closed to salmon fishing.



Anglers cast for Chinook salmon, locally called kings, on Ship

Managing Alaska sport fisheries

The Division of Sport Fish is charged with the management of Alaska's sport fisheries under the sustained yield principle, through regulations and management plans adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Enforcement of fishing regulations is primarily the responsibility of the Alaska Department of Public Safety, Division of Wildlife Troopers. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Anchorage is the management office for the area.

The Division occasionally issues in-season regulatory changes, called emergency orders, primarily in response to under- or over-abundance of fish. Emergency orders are sent to the media, and posted on our Web site at www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us

We also maintain a hot line recording at (907) 267-2510. Or you can contact the Anchorage Sport Fish Information Center at (907) 267-2218.

Regulations

Fishing regulations are often different for each water you fish. Please read the "Anchorage Bowl" section of the Southcentral Alaska regulation booklet before heading out to fish. Regulation booklets are available wherever fishing licenses are sold, and posted on the ADF&G Division

of Sport Fish home page at www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us

When fishing, be sure you have your sport fishing license or ADF&G permanent identification card in your possession. Also, anglers must purchase a king salmon stamp to fish for kings (exceptions are listed in the regulation booklet). Licenses and stamps can be purchased at most grocery stores and tackle shops or online at www.admin.adfg.state.ak.us/license

For opening dates, daily limits, regulations, and tackle requirements, consult the Southcentral Alaska regulations booklet.

Fish Identification

Silver salmon or king salmon? Rainbow trout or Dolly Varden? You'll find a fish identification guide in the Southcentral Alaska regulations summary booklet.

Boating and access

Boat motor regulations are the responsibility of the land manager. For horsepower restrictions, camping, and road conditions, contact the appropriate landowner:

Municipality of Anchorage

Division of Parks and Recreation

(907) 343-4474

www.muni.org/parks/

Chugach State Park

State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

(907) 345-5014

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/

Fort Richardson Army Post Wildlife Center

(907) 384-0296 or 384-2744

www.usarak.army.mil

Anglers wishing to fish on Fort Richardson are required to show a current sport fishing license, take an orientation course, and register for a tracking program. Anglers are required to check in and out with the military police at the main gate. Due to security concerns, access to Fort Richardson may be restricted at any time.

Elmendorf Air Force Base

(907) 552-2282 or 552-2436

www.elmendorf.af.mil/

Access to Elmendorf Air Force base is restricted to those with military I.D. and to those anglers they sponsor. When visiting Elmendorf, check in at the North Boniface Parkway gate.

Fishing in bear country

Just about anywhere outside a building is "bear country" in Alaska. Both brown bears and black bears are abundant in the Anchorage area, especially along the salmon streams. Be prepared for a bear encounter whenever you are enjoying the outdoors in Alaska, but especially while

you are fishing.

Never let a bear associate people with food. Keep all food in your vehicle. If you take food with you, keep it in your backpack and wear your backpack at all times. Don't let bears get your stringer of fish, and chop up your filleted fish carcasses into small pieces and throw the small pieces into deep, fast-moving water. The small pieces won't pile up on the bank and attract bears. If you encounter a bear while fishing, give the bear plenty of room, and move to another fishing spot.

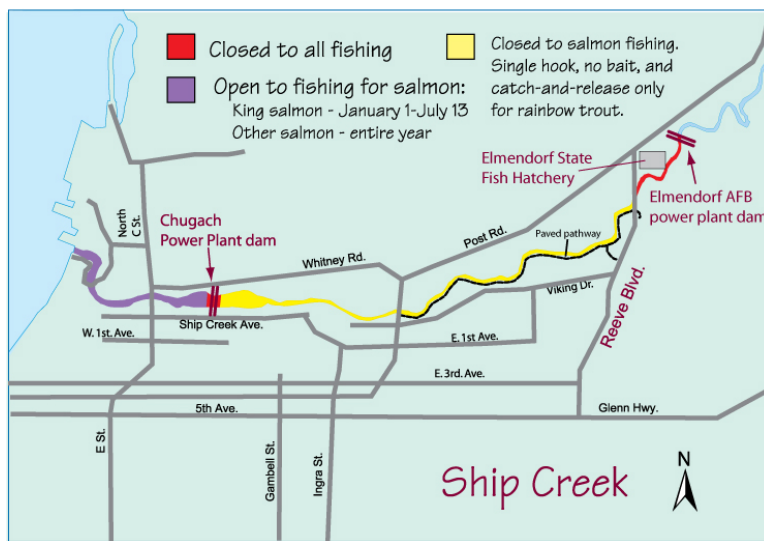
Keep yourself, your belongings, and your fishing opportunities safe by following these simple steps to avoid food-conditioning bears.

Fishing on Ship Creek

King salmon return to Ship Creek in mid- to late May, with the peak of the run in June. The majority of the Ship Creek king salmon are the result of hatchery stockings as smolt. Many people like to fish for Ship Creek salmon about two hours before high tide.

Sport anglers catch on average 6,200 Ship Creek king salmon and harvest about 3,100 annually.

A heavy-action spinning rod with 20- or 30-pound test line, or a 9- to 12-weight fly rod, is recommended to overcome the snags and current to successfully land a king salmon. Favorite tackle includes yarn flies (various colors), large spinners such as Pixees, Vibrax, Spin-n-Glos, as well as salmon roe and coho-type streamers.



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

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game administers all programs and activities free from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, or disability. The department administers all programs and activities in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire further information please write to ADF&G, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 300 Webb, Arlington, VA 22203; or O.E.O., U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington DC 20240.

For information on alternative formats for this and other department publications, please contact the department ADA Coordinator at (voice) 907-465-6077, (TDD) 907-465-3646, or (FAX) 907-465-6078.

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Silver salmon arrive in Ship Creek in mid- to late July, with the peak in mid-August. Silvers, also called coho, aggressively strike spinners, streamer flies, and salmon roe. Many anglers suspend salmon roe under a bobber.

Like kings, the majority of the Ship Creek silver salmon are the result of hatchery smolt releases. Since the urban silver salmon stocking program began in 1993, anglers harvest on average 9,000 fish every year. The stocking level was increased in 1996, which led to a record harvest of 26,400 silver salmon in 2001.

Small harvests of naturally-produced pink and chum salmon (about 400 fish per year) also occur in Ship Creek.

Most of these fish are caught by silver salmon anglers.

A section of Ship Creek is becoming more popular with anglers who like to wade and fish for rainbow trout. This upstream section is catch-and-release only for rainbows, and is single-hook, no bait. This section of creek is not influenced by the tide. For a map, refer to the "Anchorage Bowl" section of the Southcentral Alaska regulation booklet.

Access

On Ship Creek, the area open to salmon fishing is from its mouth upstream to a cable stretched across the creek about 100 feet downstream of the Chugach Electric power plant dam. The land along this lower section is owned by the Alaska Railroad and is in a major industrial area. Please be careful, and provide an extra level of courtesy when fishing here. Obey all parking and "No Trespassing" signs, and stay off railroad tracks and bridges. There is plenty of public parking, with fees charged in-season.

To reach the Ship Creek fishing salmon fishing area, head north on E Street through the light at Third Avenue, turn right at the three-way stop sign, and head down the hill on North C Street to the area. Foot trails are present along the north and south banks of Ship Creek.

Portions of the fishing area are very muddy, and every year several anglers get stuck and have to be res-

cued before the tide comes in. Be careful, and don't venture into the mud.

Eagle River

Eagle River may present a slim opportunity for king salmon fishing, with a very small run. A portion of Eagle



A Ship Creek angler works to fill his daily bag limit with a third silver salmon. (Photo courtesy of Ken Marsh)

River is open to fishing for king salmon for four consecutive three-day weekends (Saturday, Sunday, Monday) beginning on Memorial Day weekend, and closed for the rest of the year for kings. Be sure to check the regulation booklet for the exact dates. This portion of Eagle River is not influenced by the tides.

The area open for fishing for king salmon is from Bailey Bridge on the

Fort Richardson Army Post upstream to markers located in the Chugach State Park Eagle River Campground, at milepost 12 of the Glenn Highway (Hiland Road exit).

Fort Richardson lands are accessible only through the Fort Richardson guard station. Take the Arctic Valley Road exit, then turn north to enter Fort Richardson.

Anglers may also find a few silver salmon and Dolly Varden in Eagle River. The populations are very small, and may be fished according to the regulations.

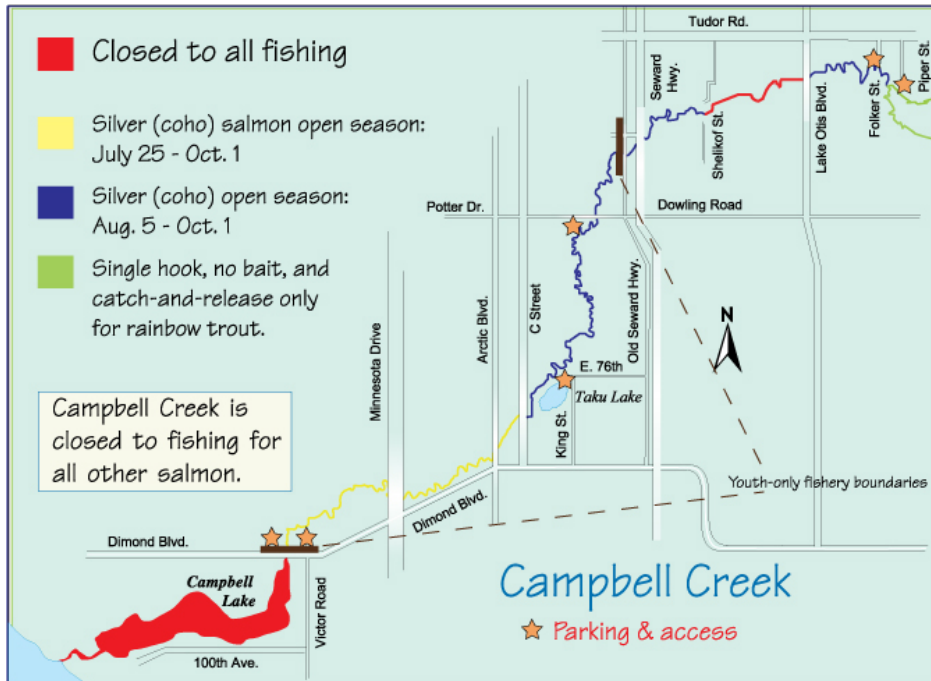
Campbell Creek

The Campbell Creek greenbelt runs through the center of Anchorage, through many residential and business areas. Please respect all private property, and keep our city clean of fishing tackle and trash.

Some portions of Campbell Creek are closed to all fishing, including catch-and-release and some portions are catch-and-release only. Please read the regulation book before going fishing. This portion of Campbell Creek is not influenced by the tide.

Silver salmon

A sport fishery for hatchery silver salmon in Campbell Creek was opened in 1993. Silvers are generally in the lower reaches of the creek by season opening in late July, with the peak of the run about mid- to late August. By mid-August, fishing just downstream of the forks at



Piper Street usually produces good catches. Anglers use lures, such as #4 Mepps or Pixees, sometimes sweetened with salmon eggs. About 1,500 silvers are harvested annually in this fishery.

Kids-only king salmon fishing

In late June, Campbell Creek is the site of a kids-only fishery for king salmon. During the kids-only fishing times, only youth 15 and younger may fish in a special section of Campbell Creek. These are the only anglers who can fish for Campbell Creek kings, and this is the only time that Campbell Creek is open to king salmon fishing. Full details are in the “Anchorage Bowl” section of the Southcentral Alaska regulation booklet.

Rainbow trout and Dolly Varden

A small population of rainbow trout and Arctic char/Dolly Varden are also available in Campbell Creek. For rainbows, try near the boardwalks at Folker Street, or downstream from the pullout on Potter Drive. For Dolly Varden, try the North Fork of Campbell Creek, upstream of Campbell Airstrip Road. This upstream area is also very popular with bears.

Access

1. Parking area on the north side of Dimond Blvd., just west of Victor Rd., small slope to boardwalk, unimproved trails.
2. Small parking area where Victor Road terminates north of Dimond Blvd., paved path to creek.
3. Municipality of Anchorage’s Taku-Campbell Lake

park, at the end of 76th Avenue and King Street.

4. Small pullout to the south of Potter Drive between C Street and Old Seward Highway.

5. Boardwalks at Folker Street, just east of Lake Otis, and south off Tudor Rd., paved trails.

6. Boardwalks at Piper Street, south of Tudor, two blocks to the east past Folker Street.

7. Southern terminus of Bragaw Road, turning south off Tudor Road.

8. Upstream section of the North Fork of Campbell Creek. Turn south on Campbell Airstrip Road which is off Tudor

Road about 1/2 mile east of Boniface Parkway. There’s a parking area at mile 1.1, then walk back to the North Fork, where there are foot trails along the banks.

Bird Creek

This stream is located about 25 miles south of Anchorage on the Seward Highway. Parking and trail access have recently been improved, but most of the Bird Creek stream banks are very muddy, so please be careful.

All land, as well as the stream bed, upstream of the ADF&G marker about 440 yards upstream of the Seward Highway bridge is private property and anglers must obtain landowner permission before fishing this area, including fishing below the ordinary high water mark.

Many people prefer to start fishing about two hours before high tide, as measured at Anchorage.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game stocks the silvers that return to Bird Creek. Watch for silver salmon from late July through late August. Cured salmon eggs, coho flies, medium Vibrax, and Pixees work well for silvers.

About 1,100 pink salmon are harvested in Bird Creek every other year (pink salmon have a two-year lifecycle). Streamer flies and small to medium lures such as Mepps, Pixees and Vibrax spinners are all effective.

Bird Creek supports a small (fewer than 300 fish per stream) red and chum salmon harvest. These fish are usually caught by anglers fishing for silvers. Fishing for king salmon is closed year-round.

Turnagain Arm salmon fishing

The Twentymile and Placer rivers, and Portage, Glacier, and Ingram creeks support sport fisheries for all species except king salmon (they are closed year-round for kings). They are usually accessed at their Seward Highway bridges. Like Bird Creek, most anglers fish about two hours before high tide, as measured at Anchorage.

Several Turnagain Arm streams, including Twentymile and Placer rivers and Portage Creek, support late-run wild stock silver salmon. These runs peak in late August or early September and are usually accessed by jet boat. Check the regulation booklet: bag limits are more conservative on these wild silver salmon stocks.

The Twentymile River supports the largest Anchorage-area wild stock silver harvest of about 2,500 fish annually. Silver salmon harvests in Placer River drainage and Portage Creek are smaller (less than 500 fish each annually). The Twentymile and Placer rivers support small (fewer than 300 fish per stream) red salmon harvests, usually caught by anglers targeting silvers.

Sixmile Creek area red salmon

Sixmile Creek is located on Elmendorf Air Force Base, and land access is restricted. Although this drainage supports the most sizeable population of red salmon in the Anchorage bowl, the run size is still small, and Sixmile Creek itself is closed to all fishing. The area open to sport fishing for salmon is the salt waters that are seaward of a steel cable stretched across the creek mouth.

Red salmon return to the mouth of Sixmile Creek from mid-July through mid-August, with peak fishing occurring around mid- to late July. Anglers use streamer flies and small spinners to harvest about 200 red salmon annually.

Hooligan/smelt

Hooligan, also called eulachon, smelt, or candle fish, return each spring to spawn in Turnagain Arm streams, mainly in the Twentymile River.

There is no bag or possession limit for smelt. However, this is a “personal use” fishery, **open only to Alaska residents (12 months); a resident sport fishing license, or state-issued PID or DAV license, is required to dipnet smelt.** Alaska anglers use small-mesh, long-handled nets near the mouths of Twentymile and Placer rivers from late April through late May. A high tide of at least 25 feet, as measured in Anchorage, usually produces the best harvest opportunity.

Anchorage-Area stocked lakes

Most Anchorage area lakes do not support natural populations of fish. So that sport anglers can enjoy a wide variety of year-round fishing opportunities, the Division

stocks many Anchorage-area lakes each year with one or more species of hatchery fish. All area lakes except Campbell Lake are open year-round to sport fishing. Campbell Lake is closed year-round to all sport fishing.

To check on when the lakes were stocked, and for maps, visit our web site and click on “Fish Stocking Updates.” Some of the more successful tackle includes small nymph-type and dry flies, small spoons or spinners, and single salmon eggs.

Landlocked king salmon

Hatchery-raised king salmon catchables are 7-10 inches long by the time they are stocked in many area lakes by November to improve ice fishing success. These fish aggressively strike small jigs, single eggs, and fresh cocktail shrimp.

Mid-November through March, when the lake ice is 5-plus inches thick, is the safest and best time to ice fish.

About the fish

King salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)

King, or chinook, salmon are the largest Pacific salmon, ranging from 12 to 40+ pounds, and are the first salmon available to anglers in spring. Most juvenile king salmon spend at least one year in fresh water, feeding first on plankton and then on insects, before migrating to sea. After feeding for one to five years in salt water on finfish, squid, or crustaceans, adult kings return to spawn. Adult king salmon have black spots on their back and entire tail, and teeth in a black gum line.

Red salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)

Red, or sockeye, salmon usually spawn only in those freshwater streams that have a lake attached. Juvenile red salmon stay in the lake, feeding mainly on plankton, for one to three years before migrating to salt waters. Adults return after spending one to four years at sea. While in the ocean, red salmon feed mainly on zooplankton, although they also eat young fish in the larval stage, such as sand lance larvae. Red salmon have silver sides, blue backs, and no black spots. They average about 4-8 pounds.

Silver salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)

Silver, or coho, salmon are spectacular fighters and are noted for their impressive runs and aerial displays after being hooked. As juveniles, silver salmon stay in freshwater sloughs, ponds, and backwater areas, feeding primarily on insects, for one to three years before migrating to salt waters. They feed for one year in salt waters, mostly on fish such as herring and sand lance, then return to spawn. Returning adult silver salmon range from 7 to 15 pounds and are identified by their bright silver

color, black spots on their back and upper lobe of their tail fin, and a black mouth with teeth in a white or gray gum line.

Chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*)

Chum, or dog, salmon are native to several Anchorage area streams, but the runs are not very large. Soon after they emerge from the gravel, juvenile chum salmon move out to sea and feed first on zooplankton and then on crustaceans, squids, and herring and other fish. Chum salmon feed for three to four years at sea before returning to spawn.

Adult chum salmon are similar in size to silver salmon (7-15 pounds). They don't have any distinct black spots on the back or tail, being mostly silver. After reaching fresh waters, their sides become mottled with purple and green vertical bars. Just before spawning the males develop the hooked snout and very large teeth typical of Pacific salmon. Their appearance at this time partially accounts for their nickname of "dog salmon." In the Anchorage area, run timing of chum salmon is similar to that of silver salmon and most chum salmon harvested are taken by sport anglers targeting silver salmon. Sport anglers harvest up to 300 chum salmon annually in Bird Creek. Smaller harvests (less than 150 fish per stream) also occur in Ship Creek, and Eagle and Twentymile rivers.

Pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*)

Pinks in the Anchorage area range from 2 - 10 pounds. Almost immediately after they emerge, the juvenile fish migrate to salt waters. They spend one winter feeding in the ocean on larval forms of various sea life and small fishes before returning to spawn the next summer. This creates an "every-other-year" cycle—in the Anchorage area, the strongest pink salmon runs and availability occur on even years (2006, 2008, 2010, etc.), with the peak in mid-July through early August.

Pink salmon have large oval spots on their back and tail, a green back, and a white belly. The males develop a pronounced humped back when they reach fresh waters, hence their nickname "humpies."

Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

There are very few native populations of rainbow trout

in the Anchorage bowl.

Hatchery rainbow trout are the first fish to be stocked each spring. There are over 25 lakes and two streams (Campbell and Chester creeks) in the Anchorage area that are stocked with rainbows, usually just before the Memorial Day weekend, and then a second time around July 4.

Rainbow trout vary in color from silvery to dark green, with most displaying a reddish stripe along their sides and small black spots covering the entire body. Hatchery rainbow trout average 8 - 10 inches at the time of stocking. If they're not harvested, some rainbows can reach 20 inches or more.

Dolly Varden/Arctic Char (*Salvelinus malma/ alpinus*)

Dolly Varden are native to many area waters. They are available to anglers throughout the year in several streams, including Eagle and Twentymile rivers and Bird, Campbell, and Chester creeks.

Many Dolly Varden spend their entire life in fresh waters, feeding on aquatic insects and the eggs of spawning salmon, while others are anadromous, spend-



Dolly Varden are distinguished by light-colored spots on their backs, and pink to orange spots on their backs and sides. (Photo courtesy Ken Marsh)

ing a portion of their lifecycle in salt waters before returning to fresh waters to spawn.

Dolly Varden are distinguished by light-colored spots on their backs, and pink to orange spots on their backs and sides. These colors become more pronounced during the fall when the Dolly Varden spawn. Hatchery-raised Arctic char, similar in appearance to Dolly Varden, are taking a more prominent role in Anchorage area lakes.

Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*)

There are no known native populations of Arctic grayling in the Anchorage area. Fingerling-sized grayling are stocked each year in Beach Lake, where they feed on small insects and grow to catchable size. These “sailfin” fish aggressively rise to small dry flies or strike at small



Grayling have been stocked in remote Symphony Lake near Eagle River. (Ken Marsh photo)

lures such as Mepps and Vibrax spinners.

For a nice backcountry experience right here in Anchorage, try fishing Symphony Lake for Arctic grayling. Symphony is stocked, and there is a naturally-reproducing population with fish ranging from 12 - 20 inches. This lake is located off the South Fork of Eagle River, with the trailhead off Hiland Road. The trail is about a five mile hike through beautiful country.

Salmon viewing

Salmon can be seen at the Chugach dam located about one mile upstream from the mouth of Ship Creek. Follow E Street north of 3rd Avenue, and watch carefully for industrial and railroad traffic. King salmon can also be viewed at Elmendorf Hatchery, on Reeve Boulevard and Post Road, approximately 2½ miles upstream from the mouth of Ship Creek.

Other sites include the Potter Marsh boardwalks just south of Anchorage off the Seward Highway; in Campbell Creek near the Folker Street boardwalks east of Lake Otis Parkway (turn south from Tudor onto Folker Street); off Campbell Airstrip Road; and in the South Fork Eagle River, off Hiland Road, between the falls and its confluence with Eagle River.

Salmon can also be seen at the Williwaw Creek viewing area in Portage Valley. Head south on the Seward Highway about 46 miles to the Portage Valley road.

Anchorage Area Stream Fishing Quick Reference Guide

◇ = Open to fishing for this species, but special seasons and bag limits. Read the regulation booklet before going fishing here.

✕ = Closed year-round to all fishing for this species, including catch-and-release.

The open portions of	King salmon any size	Silver, red pink, chum salmon any size	Rainbow Trout & Dolly Varden any size	Bait & treble hooks OK?
Bird Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
California Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
Campbell Creek	✕ ¹	✕ ²	◇	check regs
Chester Creek	✕	✕	◇	Y
Eagle River	◇ ³	◇	◇	Y
Eklutna River	✕	◇	◇	Y
Glacier Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
Indian Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
Ingram Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
Peters Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
Placer River	✕	◇	◇	Y
Portage Creek	✕	◇	◇	Y
Potter Creek	✕	✕	✕	N/A
Rabbit Creek	✕	✕	◇	Y
Ship Creek	◇	◇	◇	check regs
Sixmile Creek	✕	✕	✕	N/A
Twentymile River	✕	◇	◇	Y
Williwaw Creek	✕	✕	◇	Y

1. Except for youth-only king salmon fishery. 2. Except for silver (coho) salmon. 3. Selected weekends only: check regs.