

Haines/Skagway Management Area “Featured Fisheries”



Fishing information

Haines and Skagway are the only two Southeast Alaska communities in Southeast Alaska with both ferry and mainland road access. Located at the northern end of Lynn Canal, the longest and deepest fjord in North America, these towns boast some of the most breathtaking scenery in Alaska. Skagway is the gateway to the lakes of southern Yukon Territory and northern British Columbia. Haines is surrounded by the [Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve](#), featuring the world’s largest concentration of Bald Eagles which occurs every fall. In addition to the beautiful surroundings, these communities host some of the best fishing opportunities in Southeast Alaska over a 12-month period. Sport fisheries include freshwater and saltwater angling; there are all five principal salmon species present, as well as halibut, Dolly Varden, and cutthroat trout. Saltwater fisheries target king salmon, pink salmon, halibut, and Dolly Varden. Freshwater fisheries target coho salmon, sockeye salmon, pink salmon, chum salmon, cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden.

Featured fisheries

Angling opportunities in the Haines/Skagway management area are diverse, include freshwater and saltwater fisheries, and occur year-round.

1. King salmon marine boat fisheries near Haines and Skagway:

- a. Haines –

In May and June the Haines saltwater troll fishery is primarily in Chilkat Inlet with boat ramp access at the Letnikof Cove. Later in the summer the Haines small boat harbor provides access to Chilkoot Inlet and Lutak Inlet, where there are populations of wild and hatchery-produced king salmon. The majority of king salmon anglers use herring; other artificial lures include



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spinners, hoochies, and spoons. There are numerous good fishing spots in Chilkat Inlet on the east and west shorelines. Please check the ADF&G “News Releases and Emergency Orders” webpage for current king salmon regulations or call the ADF&G Haines office at 766-3638.

b. Skagway –

King salmon anglers based in Skagway will find good fishing in Taiya Inlet June – August. The Pullen Creek king salmon enhancement project releases up to 250,000 king salmon smolt from Pullen Pond in downtown Skagway, and the returning adult king salmon are caught in Taiya Inlet. Most anglers use herring with some use of artificial lures.

2. Chilkat River spring Dolly Varden and trout fishing

The Chilkat River is on the Haines road system. Although it is glacially fed and colored with silt during the summer, it flows with clear green water in the the spring months of March through mid-May. Freshwater anglers have good success fishing for Dolly Varden and cutthroat during this time between mileposts 8 and 25 on the Haines Highway. Most anglers use pixies or salmon eggs, but fly fisherman also have success using fly patterns imitating salmon fry. Bag and possession limits for Chilkat River Dolly Varden are 10 daily and 10 in possession with no size restrictions.



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3. Chilkoot River sockeye salmon and pink salmon fishing

The Chilkoot River is one of the most popular freshwater fisheries in Southeast Alaska; principal fishing areas are located along a mile-long roadway within Chilkoot River State Recreation Site. Most anglers fish below the Chilkoot River weir from shore or in deep pools mid-river. Others fish at the Chilkoot Lake outlet and in Chilkoot Lake itself. Sockeye salmon fishing occurs June through August, with pink salmon showing up in July. Rod and reel anglers use salmon eggs and artificial lures; fly fisherman using red streamers or small red sponges are usually successful. Anglers can keep 6 sockeye salmon 16” or longer per day and 12 in possession. The same bag and possession limits apply to pink salmon.

4. Chilkat River / Chilkoot River coho salmon fishing

The Chilkat River has the third largest run of coho salmon in Southeast Alaska, and can be accessed from numerous locations along the Haines Highway, making it a very popular sport fishery in October and November. Chum salmon are also abundant on coho salmon fishing grounds, so there is plenty of excitement to be had whether by rod and reel or fly fishing gear. Typical fishing effort occurs between milepost 4 and 25 on the Haines Highway. Bag and possession limits for Chilkat River coho salmon 16” or larger is 3 daily, 6 in possession.

The Chilkoot River also hosts a popular coho salmon sport fishery during September and October. Escapement to the Chilkoot drainage has been estimated at less than 2,000 fish, however Chilkoot coho salmon can reach up to 20 pounds. Access is along the mile-long road in the Chilkoot State Recreation Site, and because water levels are low in the fall, numerous areas can be accessed above and below the weir. Because of the small population, bag and possession limits for Chilkoot River coho salmon 16” or larger is 2 daily and 2 in possession.

5. Mosquito Lake cutthroat trout fishing

Mosquito Lake, located in the upper Chilkat River drainage, provides easy access to a cutthroat trout population and consequently is designated as a high-use cutthroat trout lake. This means that the use of bait is prohibited; only unbaited artificial lures or flies may be used year-round. Also, cutthroat trout limits are 2 daily, 2 in possession, 14-inch minimum and 22-inch maximum size limit. Fishing for cutthroat trout is year-round, including ice fishing during the winter months. Fishing can be productive casting from

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shore, while the best fishing is at the north end of the lake, accessed by boat. When fishing on Mosquito Lake, target areas with cover as that is what cutthroat trout prefer.

6. Lower Dewey Lake Dolly Varden and Brook Trout fishing

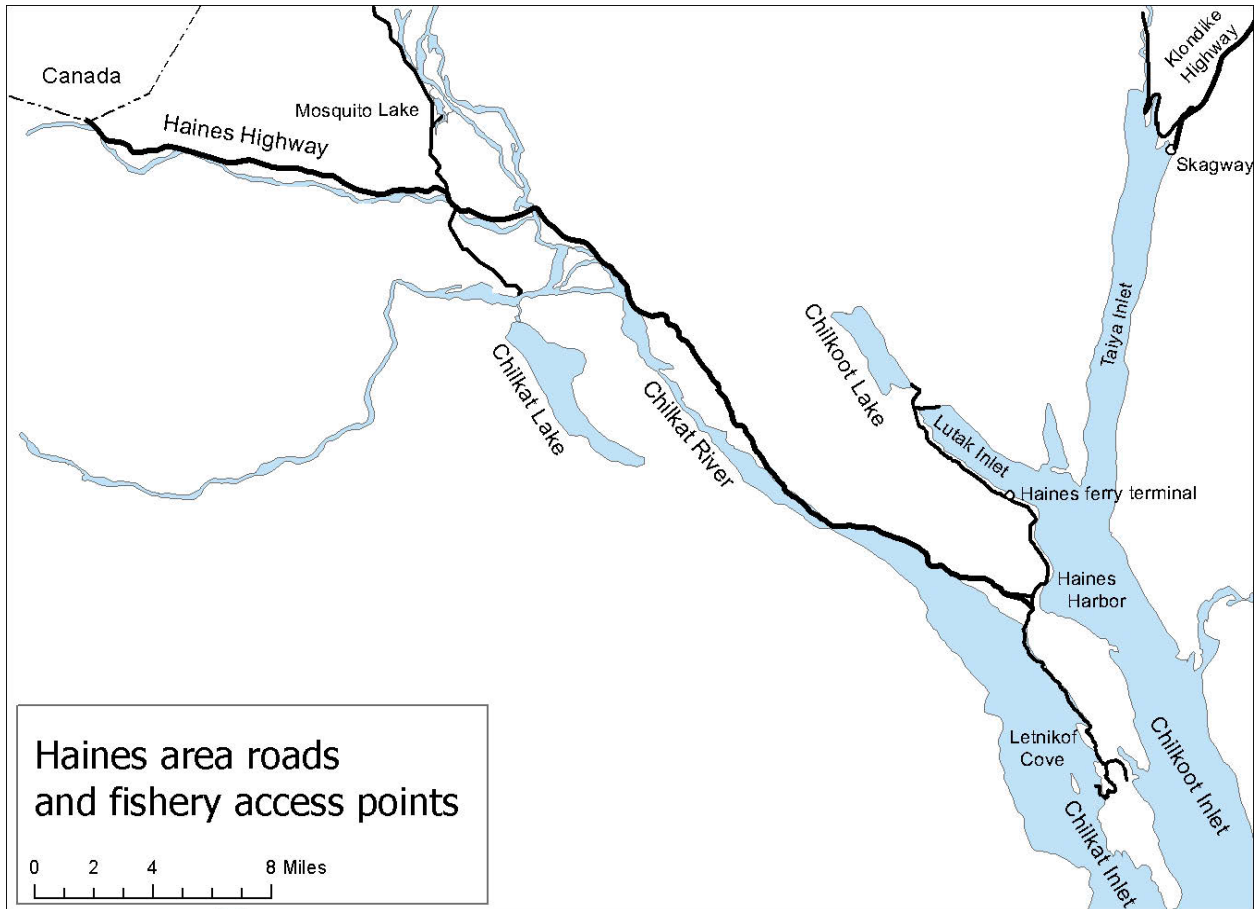
A short (1 mile) but rigorous (500 ft elevation gain) hike from 2nd avenue and the railroad tracks in Skagway leads you to Lower Dewey Lake, a scenic lake perched above the Skagway Harbor and downtown area. Good fishing for Dolly Varden and Brook Trout starts in spring and continues through the summer, and rod and reel and fly rods are both effective in catching fish in Lower Dewey Lake. Brook Trout were stocked before 1950 and reach sizes of 10 to 12 inches in the lake. Dolly Varden can often exceed that size. For more information on Brook Trout in Alaska, click [here](#).

Fishing Access



Haines is a unique Southeast Alaska community that features an extensive road system, easy access to 2 productive rivers, and several saltwater and freshwater boat ramps for anglers with skiffs or larger sport boats. Skagway is also connected to the Alaska Highway road system and features a newly improved boat ramp at the Skagway boat harbor. The diversified range of access provides excellent angling opportunity no matter what your preference.

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Haines has approximately 60 miles of roads to access fishing areas, including the Haines Highway, Lutak Inlet and Chilkoot Lake roads, and Mud Bay road leading to the Letnikof boat ramp and Chilkat State Park. Consulting a brief map will orient the angler to find the numerous fishing pots. Fishing areas on the Chilkat River range from mileposts 4 (near the airport) to 25 (near the Wells Bridge). Along this stretch of highway there are frequent pullouts with good river access. The Chilkoot State Park road hugs the Chilkoot River and is a combination of private land, ADF&G operations at the Chilkoot River weir, and public pullouts where the river can be accessed. There are 3 principal saltwater boat ramps: Haines small boat harbor for Chilkoot Inlet fishing, and Chilkat Inlet can be accessed at the widely-used Letnikof Cove boat ramp or Chilkat State Park.

The Skagway boat harbor ramp was recently improved and provides great access to Taiya Inlet and the summer-long saltwater king salmon fishery.

Sport charter guides and local Haines information can be found at the Haines Chamber of Commerce [website](#), and Skagway charter guides and additional fishing information can be found [here](#).

Overview

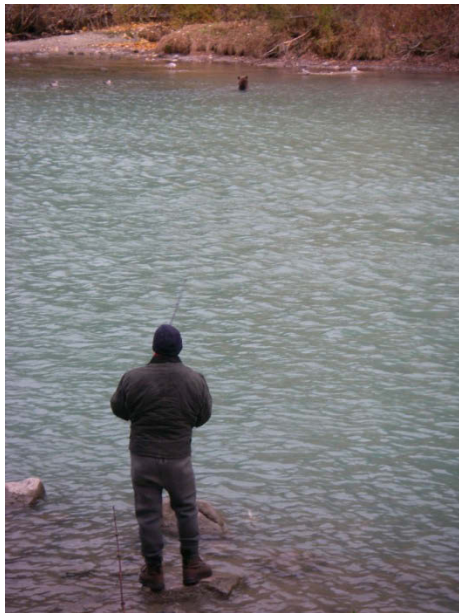
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Climate

Haines and Skagway receive the least amount of precipitation in Southeast Alaska, but are still located in a large temperate rainforest that receives an average of 50 inches of precipitation annually. The wettest months are September through December, where over 50% of the yearly precipitation falls in Haines. Snow usually arrives in mid to late October. Southeast Alaska is a cool climate, and Haines/Skagway is no exception, as temperatures in the summer months of July through August average 57 degrees. For additional weather data in Alaska, consult the [Alaska Interactive Climate Database](#).

Clothing and Gear

Appropriate clothing includes layered, non-cotton garments, along with a hooded sweatshirt and/or hat for insects and precipitation. Rain gear should always be at the ready; weather can



change fast so being prepared for anything is a must. Use of chest waders and/or hip boots will greatly increase access to freshwater fishing spots. Remember that as of January 1, 2012, felt-soled wading boots are prohibited; use of felt soles can transport invasive species between waterways. When saltwater fishing, remember that it is always colder on the water than on land, so dress appropriately.

Wildlife interactions

When fishing along salmon streams, the most likely wildlife encounter will be brown bears, which often reach heights of 10 feet and weights of 800 pounds. It is always important to keep an awareness of your surroundings, and give bears plenty of space no matter how enchanting the encounter may be. When fishing, fully dispose of fish waste in deep water with current, and do not keep your catch accessible to bears. When walking through the woods, reduce the chances of a surprise encounter by making plenty of noise and staying alert. Anglers on the Chilkoot River should be especially careful as brown bears roam the river daily, and often times approach within unsafe distances of anglers.

Biting insects can sometimes be a nuisance so be sure to bring repellent and cover exposed skin if necessary.

Management

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The Haines/Skagway management area includes upper Lynn Canal, Chilkat Inlet, Chilkoot Inlet, Lutak Inlet, and Taiya Inlet.

The Southeast Alaska King Salmon Management Plan sets region-wide bag and possession limits for king salmon in Southeast Alaska. The Lynn Canal and Chilkat River King Salmon Management Plan sets bag and possession limits for the Haines/Skagway management area.

Escapement goals are in place for king salmon, coho salmon, sockeye salmon, and chum salmon in local rivers. These stocks are managed for sustained yield and the preservation of these populations. Abundance estimation projects, including age, length, and sex sampling, helps managers understand population dynamics and manage sustainable fisheries.

The Haines/Skagway area has some exceptions to [Southeast Alaska freshwater regulations](#). Because of heavy angler effort for coho salmon on the Chilkat and Chilkoot Rivers, bag and



possession limits are reduced. There are also special regulations to conserve cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden, as well as different fishing seasons on various lakes and rivers. If you need further clarification on any regulations, call the Area Management Biologist at (907) 766-3638.

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Research

[Sport Fish Division in Haines](#) conducts several research projects, including our coded-wire tagging (CWT) projects for king and coho salmon. Data produced through our CWT projects include estimates of juvenile salmon abundance, smolt-to-adult marine survival, and harvest of adult salmon in various fisheries throughout Southeast Alaska.



Other research projects include estimating adult salmon escapements through mark-recapture experiments and spawning grounds index counts. Harvests of king salmon are also estimated through our angler interview program and the statewide harvest survey (SWHS) in Alaska.

The Chilkat River fish wheel project, operated by Commercial Fish Division, is used as a management tool for sockeye salmon, pink salmon, and chum salmon, as well as assisting with king and coho salmon sampling.

Contacts

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