

Remote, Fly-in Lakes

There are approximately 10 lakes in northern Southeast that are accessible only by float plane—or also, in some instances, by boat and then trail—and which have one or more U.S. Forest Service recreational cabins onsite. These cabins provide excellent opportunities for people to fish and experience wilderness, but have the comfort of the cabin and stove to get dry and warm after a day of play in the rain. These cabins are very popular, and reservations must be booked well in advance of the planned stay.

Photo by Mark Schwan



Turner Lake cabin, in northern Southeast Alaska.

Most of these lakes are landlocked, containing resident populations of cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden, and kokanee. The combination of cutthroat trout and kokanee has resulted in some large, trophy-sized cutthroat, and these lakes have been popular fishing destinations for years.

Boats are available at lakes with Forest Service cabins, and in general they are in good condition, but sometimes they can be in poor shape. When fishing a lake with no boats on-site, take an inflatable boat or float tube—it will greatly increase your chances for a successful outing.

In recent years there were increasing effort but declining harvests of cutthroat trout throughout most of Southeast Alaska, and the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted more restrictive regulations aimed at preserving cutthroat trout as well as steelhead populations.

Anglers need to refer to the current Alaska sport fishing

regulations summary (more on page 22) to make sure they know existing bag limits, size restrictions, and bait use restrictions before they fish.

As a general rule, bait cannot be used in fresh water except from mid-September through mid-November, but most remote lakes with cabins in the northern Southeast management area are restricted year-round to artificial lures. The general restriction on the use of bait is aimed at reducing the hook-and-release mortality rates for cutthroat and steelhead trout.

Fly Fishing

Fly rods in the 8 to 10 weight class, usually 8 feet or longer, are used for salt-water salmon fishing. Both floating and sinking lines are used, sometimes with shooting heads. Coho flies, maribous, hair-wing tarpon flies, and imitations of small bait fish work well.

Eight-weight class rods are fine for steelhead, and 5–6-weight gear is a good choice for Dolly Varden and trout. Egg imitation patterns work well for Dolly Varden, whereas a variety of attracting patterns or nymph patterns are normally best for trout.

Packaging Your Catch for Shipment

Fish can be frozen and packed in waxed 40- or 70-pound fish boxes for shipment. Fish packed in this way are good for several hours of air travel. Charter boat operators and guides will usually pack your catch for shipment or deliver them to a processor for packaging.

Anglers can also have their catch frozen and packaged at meat departments in local grocery stores or cold storage facilities. There are local businesses that specialize in smoking, freezing or packaging fish for shipment.

Catch-and-release Fishing

If you've planned your trip well and have put in some time fishing, you are probably catching fish. If you don't intend to keep a fish you catch, or can't keep it because of our regulations, let it go in the manner described below. Because there are minimum size requirements for king salmon and cutthroat, rainbow, and steelhead trout harvested in essentially all Southeast waters,

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