

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SHR-6-16-23

Issued at: Anchorage, Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Saturday, April 15, 2023

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday, September 15, 2023, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order decreases the number of shrimp pots allowed to harvest shrimp in the Prince William Sound noncommercial (sport and subsistence) shrimp fishery from five pots per person with a maximum of five pots per vessel to three pots per person with a maximum of three pots per vessel. Of those three pots only two pots can be used near the Port of Valdez, near the Port of Whittier, and in portions of Port Wells and Culross Passage.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 55.022(b)(5)(B) and 5 AAC 55.055(a)(3)(C) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday, April 15 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, September 15, 2023:

5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

(b) Unless specified in 5 AAC 55.023, or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the following are the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means that apply to sport fishing for shellfish in the Prince William Sound Area:

(5) shrimp may be taken as follows:

(B) no more than three pots per person, with no more than three pots per vessel, may be used to take shrimp, except in waters defined below where only two pots per person, with no more than two pots per vessel are allowed.

(i) in western Prince William Sound, south from a line 61° 0.0' N. lat. in Port Wells to a line at the southern end of Culross Island (60° 37.4809548' N. lat., 148° 10.0944588' W. long.) that extends across the southern end of Culross Passage (60° 36.5251002' N. lat., 148° 11.3438250' W. long.) and west of a line between Pt. Esther (60° 47.8077894' N. lat., 148° 8.526759' W. long.) and Pt. Culross (60° 45.4245804' N. lat., 148° 8.8061592' W. long.) and west of line at 148° 0.0' W. long. within Esther Passage; and in eastern Prince William sound, north of 61° 0.0' N. lat. in Valdez Arm.

5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery management plan

(a) The department shall manage the sport and other noncommercial shrimp fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area as follows:

(3) shrimp may be taken with pots as follows:

(C) no more than three pots per vessel, may be used to take shrimp, except in waters defined below where no more than two pots per vessel may be used to take shrimp:

(i) in western Prince William Sound, south from a line 61° 0.0' N. lat. in Port Wells to a line at the southern end of Culross Island (60° 37.4809548' N. lat., 148° 10.0944588' W. long.) that extends across the southern end of Culross Passage (60° 36.5251002' N. lat., 148° 11.3438250' W. long.) and west of a line between Pt. Esther (60° 47.8077894' N. lat., 148° 8.526759' W. long.) and Pt. Culross (60° 45.4245804' N. lat., 148° 8.8061592' W. long.) and west

of line at 148° 0.0' W. long. within Esther Passage; and in eastern Prince William Sound, north of 61° 0.0' N. lat. in Valdez Arm.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Brittany Blain-Roth

Brittany Blain-Roth
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The Prince William Sound (PWS) noncommercial management plan (5 AAC 55.055) allocates 60% of the total allowable harvest (TAH) of shrimp in the area to noncommercial fisheries (sport and subsistence). This 60% of the TAH represents the guideline harvest levels (GHL) for the noncommercial shrimp fisheries.

During the 2022 season the noncommercial shrimp fishery had a GHL of 100,300 pounds. Using two pots close to the ports of Valdez and Whittier and three pots outside of the ports, this fishery harvested an estimated 84,949 pounds of shrimp, below the GHL by 15,351 pounds. The 2023 TAH is 157,819 pounds of shrimp, providing the noncommercial fishery a GHL of 94,700 pounds (60% of the TAH). It remains warranted to limit gear for the Prince William Sound noncommercial fishery. It is estimated that if three or more pots were allowed in Prince William Sound in its entirety, harvest would exceed the GHL. To maintain as much opportunity without exceeding the available GHL, participants will be limited to three pots per person with no more than three pots per vessel, but of those three pots only two pots can be used in areas that have been identified as areas of highest effort and harvest levels of noncommercial shrimp. The Port of Valdez, Passage Canal (Whittier), and a cluster of bays and passages near Port Wells (including Blackstone Bay and Culross Passage) represent approximately 60% of the annual noncommercial harvest. Reducing the pot limit to two pots in this portion of PWS while allowing three shrimp pots in lower usage areas in the remainder of PWS should maintain the noncommercial fishery harvest near to the GHL in 2023.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region II Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.