

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-RF-4-17-23

Issued at: Kodiak, Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, April 3, 2023

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Sunday, December 31, 2023, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the bag and possession limit for rockfish for nonresident anglers in the waters of eastern Afognak and Kodiak islands south of a line extending east from Big Fort Island near Shuyak Island (eastward from 58° 30.026' N. lat., 152° 24.292' W. long.), north of a line extending eastward from Dangerous Cape (eastward from 57° 16.596' N. lat., 152° 42.388' W. long.) and east of a line at 153° W. lat. in Kupreanof Straight, equivalent to groundfish statistical areas 525803, 525804, 515801, 515802, 525805, 525806, 525807, 525731, 525732, 525733 and 525701. The bag limit for rockfish in this area is three per day, six in possession, of which two per day, four in possession may be nonpelagic and only one per day, two in possession of the nonpelagic limit may be yelloweye. In addition, captain and crew of charter vessels may not retain rockfish in this area while clients are on board.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 64.022(b)(11) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, April 3 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, December 31, 2023.

5 AAC 64.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for the Kodiak Area.

(b)(11) in the waters of eastern Afognak and Kodiak islands south of a line extending east from Big Fort Island near Shuyak Island (eastward from 58° 30.026' N. lat., 152° 24.292' W. long.), north of a line extending eastward from Dangerous Cape (eastward from 57° 16.596' N. lat., 152° 42.388' W. long.) and east of a line at 153° W. long. in Kupreanof Straight, equivalent to groundfish statistical areas 525803, 525804, 515801, 515802, 525805, 525806, 525807, 525731, 525732, 525733, and 525701.

(A) the bag limit for rockfish for nonresident anglers is 3 fish, 6 in possession, of which 2 fish, 4 in possession may be nonpelagic and 1 fish, 2 in possession may be yelloweye.

(B) charter vessel operators and crewmembers may not retain rockfish while clients are on board.

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Tyler Polum
Kodiak Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Prior to implementation of the *Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan* (5 AAC 64.070) in 2020, the harvest of black rockfish exceeded 25,000 fish on several occasions. With reduced travel to the Kodiak Area in 2020 and emergency orders issued in 2021 and 2022 to restrict the harvest of rockfish for nonresident anglers, harvest estimates indicate that rockfish harvests and particularly black rockfish harvest was reduced from pre-2020 levels. As nonresident participation and interest in sport fishing for rockfish is expected to remain high, and possibly increase, in 2023, it is warranted to implement similar restrictions in this area as in 2021 and 2022 to ensure sustainable harvests of rockfish, given that they are long-lived, slow-growing, and vulnerable to overfishing, particularly in localized areas. The area affected by this emergency order encompasses about 75% of the total Kodiak Management Area sport harvest of rockfish and is the primary area of effort due to the proximity to the Port of Kodiak. To ensure sustainable harvests of rockfish and implement provisions of the *Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan*, it is justified to reduce the nonresident bag limit for rockfish for much of eastern Afognak and Kodiak islands for the 2023 season. The Alaska Board of Fisheries directed the Department to implement restrictions for nonresident anglers first and include resident anglers as needed for further restrictions according to a prioritized list of criteria adopted in the management plan. Resident bag limits remain the same at this time, as published in the 2023 *Southwest Alaska Sportfishing Regulations Booklet*.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 2 Office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218; Alaska Department of Fish and Game Kodiak Area Office; and the Alaska Department of Public Safety Fish and Wildlife Protection Kodiak Office.