

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 1-RF-D-05-26

Issued at: Sitka, January 27, 2026

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Saturday, January 31, 2026

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday,
December 31, 2026, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the sport bag limit of pelagic rockfish in the Sitka vicinity for nonresidents from three to two fish per day and six to four fish in possession to stabilize the harvest of pelagic rockfish.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 47.021.(g)(8) are modified by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday, January 31, 2026, through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, December 31, 2026:

5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

(g) In the Sitka vicinity:

(8) in the waters of Central Southeast Outside (CSEO) Section, as described in 5 AAC 28.105(a)(4)(B),

(A) the bag limit for nonresidents for pelagic rockfish is two fish, possession limit four fish, no size limit.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to: _____

Jake Wieliczkievicz
Sitka Assistant Area Management Biologist
Division of Sport Fish

JUSTIFICATION:

The pelagic rockfish harvest in the Sitka area sport fishery has gradually increased from 20,000 fish in 2009 to 60,000 fish in 2023 despite relatively stable effort and continual implementation of restrictions to stabilize harvest. In 2016 and 2017, the CSEO area was restricted to a bag and possession limit of three and six respectively for all anglers via emergency order (EO). The Board codified these regulations for nonresidents in 2018 and left resident limits at the regional regulations. In 2023 and 2024 the pelagic rockfish limit was again reduced by EO in the CSEO area to a bag and possession limit of four and eight respectively for residents, and two and four respectively for nonresidents. In 2025, the Board of Fisheries provided the authority for the Department to differentiate by residency in the application of regulations but reduced all

anglers' bag limit from five to three fish and possession limit from ten to six. Nonresidents were again restricted by EO in 2025 to a bag and possession limit of two and four respectively.

Although there is limited stock assessment information, there is evidence of a slight, but gradual decline in average length since 2006 in the Sitka Area sport harvest, suggesting a change in the population structure that may be a result of recent increases in harvest. This additional restriction for nonresidents is aimed at stabilizing harvest until better stock information is available.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 1 office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P. O. Box 110024, Douglas, AK 99811, (907) 465-4270.