

## Management

The recreational fisheries of the Bristol Bay area are managed by the Division of Sport Fish Dillingham office, 546 Kenny Wren Road, P.O. Box 230, 99576 (907) 842-2427. The Division manages fisheries for sustainability and opportunity, often under management plans adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Regulations may change by Emergency Order if the sustainability of a stock is at risk, or if additional fishing opportunities are available.

Emergency Orders are sent to newspapers, radio and television stations, other agencies, recorded on telephone hotlines, and posted right away on our web site. Call the office, or the regulation hotline at (907) 842-7347, or visit [www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us) and click on "Emergency Orders and News."

The information published in this brochure is not a complete listing of regulations for the Naknek area. For complete regulations, carefully consult the *Bristol Bay Sport Fishing Regulation Summary*, widely available at tackle shops, grocery stores, on our web site, and by request from ADF&G.

## About the Naknek River area

The Naknek River flows into Bristol Bay, in southwest Alaska. Communities along the river include Naknek, South Naknek, and King Salmon. Over 30,000 visitors per year come through Naknek and King Salmon, headed for the great fishing as well as bear viewing at nearby Brooks River.

Both King Salmon and Naknek have some visitor services, such as lodges, fishing guides, aircraft charters and boat rentals, but no established campgrounds at this time.

The Naknek River system is made up of several large lakes and their interconnected rivers. It's a large system, and a boat or float plane is necessary for much of the fishing.

Most fishing takes place in the main stem of the river, with some in the tributaries, and in Naknek Lake.

The Naknek system currently receives the highest sport angler effort of any river in southwest Alaska, in part because of its world-renowned rainbow trout and salmon fishing, and in part because of its easy access.

### Access and land ownership

Most of the Naknek River system, including Naknek Lake, is surrounded by the United States' Katmai National Park and Preserve, which is also home to the Brooks River, a popular bear viewing destination accessible by boat and float plane. For information about Brooks River and Brooks Camp contact the national park at their King Salmon office at (907) 246-3305.

Much of the rest of the land along the Naknek belongs to Native organizations and private individuals. Please respect private property as if it were your own, and contact land owners before crossing their lands.

### King salmon

The Naknek River supports one of the largest king (Chinook) salmon sport fisheries in southwestern Alaska. Over 28% of Bristol Bay's sport-harvested king salmon come from the Naknek, and a recent ADF&G study suggests that between 15,000 and 25,000 king salmon return each year to the river.

Kings begin to enter the river in early June and are available through the July 31 season closure. The three peak weeks for king salmon fishing are June 22 - July 14. Most anglers are backtrolling diving plugs such as Wiggle Warts, Brad's Wiggles, and Kwikfish, or trolling large spinners in the 12-mile stretch of river near King Salmon. This section of river is somewhat influenced by the tides. Bait is not allowed.

King salmon also enter Big Creek, which flows into the Naknek about 5 miles upstream of King Salmon. Big Creek, which is catch-and-release only, is a popular fly-fishing destination.

A king stamp and harvest record may be required, please read the regulations carefully, and be sure to pick up these items before coming to the area, as local vendors may be out.



Bristol Bay

Recreational Fishing Series

Southcentral Region Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Sport Fish

## Sport fishing at the Naknek River



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[www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/Region2/areas/bbay/bayhome.cfm](http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/Region2/areas/bbay/bayhome.cfm)

## Red salmon

There's a large run of red (sockeye) salmon to the Naknek — escapements in recent years have numbered over two million fish. Red salmon enter the Naknek by late June, with the peak of the run near July 4. Most of the red salmon fishing takes place upstream of Rapids Camp. The Brooks River is also popular, but be aware that the National Park Service has special regulations, and contact them before arranging a trip. Most anglers use medium-sized flies to catch reds.

## Silver salmon

Strong numbers of silver (coho) salmon also enter the Naknek, and fishing can be very good at times. The silver run starts in late July and continues into September, with the best fishing usually between August 7-21. Most anglers fish for silvers from Paul's Creek up to Naknek Lake, by casting spinners, flies, or marabou jigs toward shore from their boat.

## Chum and pink salmon

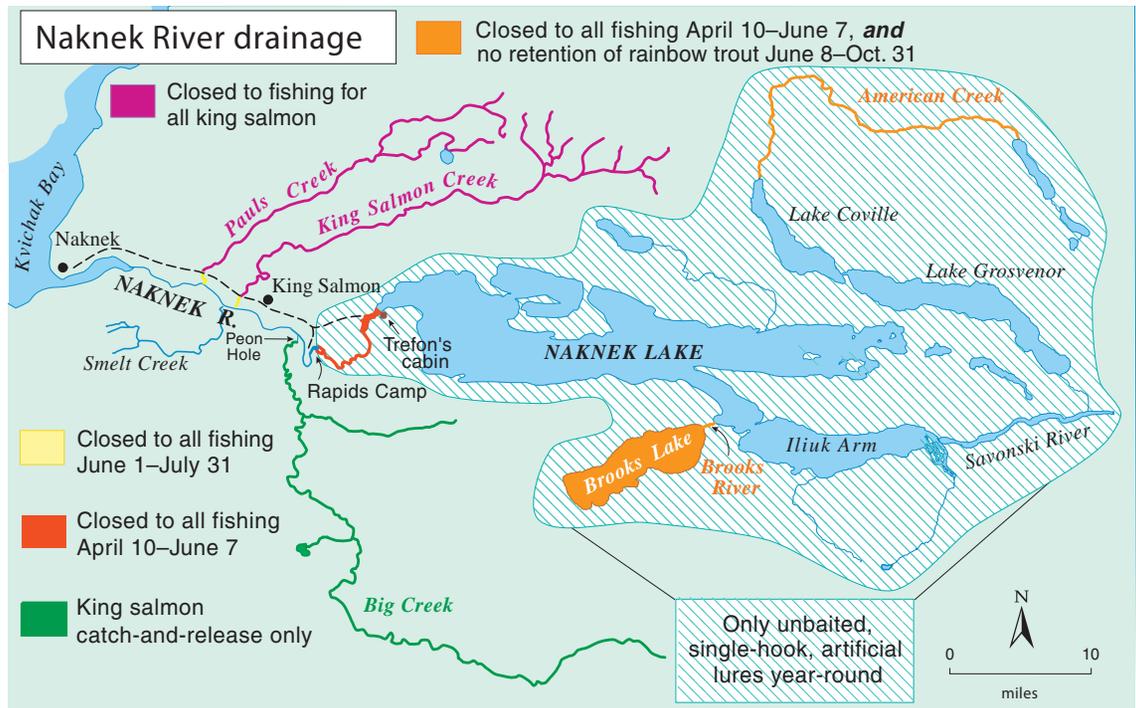
These fish are not as popular as the others, but can provide excellent fishing. Chum (dog) salmon enter the river from late June through August, with the best fishing in early August. Pink (humpy) salmon enter the system in good numbers on even-numbered years from late July through August. Anglers typically use the same gear as for silver salmon.

## Naknek rainbows

The rainbow trout of the Naknek River are well known for their abundance and ability to reach large sizes. Fish over 30 inches long and 10 pounds can be caught. There is a long history of special regulations and intensive management for Naknek River rainbow trout stocks, dating back to statehood. The trout are currently managed to protect the large fish and maintain the historical size composition.

Most anglers targeting rainbows fish the upper river, from Rapids Camp to the outlet of Naknek Lake, in one of three prime times. In spring, after ice-out sometime between early March and April 9, anglers fish the upper river for trout that have not yet spawned. Techniques include fly-fishing with large, dark attractor patterns, and traditional spinning gear. This time of year, the weather can change quickly, and snow storms and ice on the river are not uncommon. The upper river is closed to all fishing from April 10 - June 7 in order to protect spawning trout.

The next good time is during the June and July migration of red salmon



smolt, using small narrow spoons, silver spinners, or smolt patterns. And in August through October, rainbows feed on salmon eggs and flesh, prompting anglers to use egg patterns and flesh flies.

Rainbow trout (as well as Arctic grayling and Dolly Varden) are also present in Paul's and King Salmon creeks, along the road system.

## Other fish

Naknek Lake provides good fishing for rainbow trout, as well as lake trout, Arctic char, and northern pike, with the best fishing on the eastern end of the lake, near Bay of Islands. Anglers troll spinners and spoons from boats.

## Bears

Bristol Bay's waterways are a rich source of food for brown (grizzly) bears, and anglers are advised to be extremely cautious. Keep your camp and fishing site clean, make noise while walking through the brush, and give bears plenty of room. See "Fishing with Bears" in the fishing regulation booklets, or request a copy from ADF&G. Some areas have special management plans in place to reduce conflicts between bears and humans.

## Enforcement

To report a fishing violation, call the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Safeguard at 1-800-478-3377, or Dept. of Public Safety Fish and Wildlife Protection in King Salmon at (907) 246-3307.