



Kodiak

About Kodiak

Kodiak Island is a part of an archipelago of islands including Afognak, Shuyak, and 20 smaller islands. Kodiak Island is the second-largest in the United States; only the big island of Hawaii is larger. The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge covers two-thirds of Kodiak Island. The State of Alaska, various Alaska Native corporations, and private individuals own the remainder.

The city of Kodiak is 250 air miles southwest of Anchorage. Two airlines, Alaska Airlines (1-800-252-7522) and ERA Airlines (1-800-866-8394), have daily flights from Anchorage. The Alaska Marine Highway system offers a passenger and vehicle ferry from Homer and Seward to Kodiak four times a week during the fishing season (1-800-642-0066).

About 11,000 people live along the Kodiak road system, and 14,000 visitors arrive every year. Available services include approximately 70 charter operators, 33 remote lodges, six air taxi services, 12 state and federal public-use cabins, 10 private remote cabins for rent, five hotels and motels, 30 bed-and-breakfasts, three sporting goods stores, and other amenities usually found in a community this size.

Kodiak offers superb fishing for five species of salmon (king, red, silver, chum, and pink) halibut, rockfish, lingcod, Dolly Varden, steelhead and rainbow trout.



Kodiak Island's streams and lakes offer easily accessible and remote fishing opportunities for salmon, steelhead, Dolly Varden (above) and more. (ADF&G)

Fishing Kodiak – “Road System” and “Remote Area” overview

Road System fishing

Kodiak Road System is defined as all fresh waters of Kodiak Island east of a line from Crag Point south to the westernmost point of Saltery Cove, including the freshwaters of Woody, Long, and Spruce islands. **The Road System also includes all salt waters bordering the Road System within one mile of Spruce and Kodiak islands.**

Regulations on the Road System differ slightly from the Remote Area, so check the regulations book carefully. There are 75 miles of paved and hard-packed gravel roads that cross 10 significant streams and provide access to 18 stocked lakes. Another 15-mile-long gravel road requires 4-wheel-drive or all-terrain vehicle.

Road System anglers can find salmon, Dolly Varden, rainbow trout and steelhead in the freshwaters. Major waterways include the Buskin, Saltery, Pasagshak, Olds, and American rivers; and Roslyn, Salonie, Monashka, Pillar, and Chiniak creeks. Anglers will find Road System streams a delight—no raging currents or 50-yard casts, just clear riffles alternating with deep pools and gravel bars. Many streams have steep, brushy banks.

Upstream of low-lying coastal areas, most Road System rivers are braided, fast-flowing and shallow, making them unsuitable for rafts, canoes, or other watercraft. However, a number of road-accessible lakes are well-suited for small boats and personal watercraft. Lake Rose Tead, which borders the Pasagshak State Recreation Area, is popular with anglers who have small boats and float tubes as are Buskin Lake and Kalsin Pond.

Kodiak Archipelago and the Road Zone fisheries



The Kodiak Road Zone also includes all salt waters within 1 mile of Kodiak Island following the shoreline from Crag Point to Saltery Cove, AND all salt waters within one mile of the shore following the shoreline of Woody Island, Long Island, and Spruce Island.

This map is for informational purposes only, and is not to scale. Consult the United States Geological Survey for topographical maps (<http://store.usgs.gov>) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for nautical charts and navigation information (<http://chartmaker.ned.noaa.gov>)



These opportunities funded in part by Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration.

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Fishing Kodiak's Remote Area

Kodiak Remote Area (anything outside the Road System) provides excellent opportunities for salmon, Dolly Varden, and fall-run steelhead trout. Many Remote Area drainages are larger than those within the road zone and have a greater stream flow with less brush and debris, making them better suited for watercraft access.

Remote Area salmon begin to return in early June; few (if any) remote guiding services are in operation before this time. Remote areas are served by small aircraft and charter boat operations. Most anglers book an aircraft charter or arrange air travel with their lodge or guide service. Transportation and lodging arrangements for Remote Area angling should be made at least six months to a year in advance.

Planning your Kodiak fishing trip

Weather

Weather can range from mild and sunny to cold and rainy, with snow possible during all months except July and August. Autumn weather is typically cool and very wet. Winds are often prevalent regardless of the season. Summertime rainfall averages about 4-6 inches per month and temperatures can range from the low 40's to low 70's (Fahrenheit). Layered long-sleeved and long-legged clothing, including wool or fleece, and waterproof rain gear are necessary. At times, summer temperatures can remain warm for extended periods, but similar trends of high winds, cooler temperatures and rain are not uncommon.

Shorts and short sleeves generally are not recommended, since biting insects are prevalent in many areas. Bring insect repellent and/or mosquito netting for all fishing trips.




Heavy tackle, like these large jigs, are needed for halibut.

King salmon

Anglers targeting king salmon, also called Chinook, may troll in saltwater, fish the Monashka Creek beach in Monashka Bay, American and Olds rivers, or visit one of two Remote Area fisheries. In 1999, a king salmon stocking project was initiated on the Kodiak Road System

Kodiak Average Temperatures

	Avg. high F°	Avg. low F°	Avg. high C°	Avg. Precip
Jan	35.0	24.7	1.7	7.4"
Feb	36.1	24.9	2.3	5.3"
Mar	38.9	26.9	3.8	4.6"
Apr	43.7	31.4	6.5	4.2"
May	49.5	37.5	9.7	5.5"
Jun	55.6	43.6	13.1	4.8"
Jul	60.5	48.2	15.8	3.7"
Aug	61.9	48.4	16.6	5.2"
Sept	56.6	43.4	13.7	7.0"
Oct	47.2	34.2	8.4	7.2"
Nov	39.9	28.8	4.4	8.75"
Dec	36.4	25.2	2.4	6.8"

with the objective to establish saltwater and freshwater recreational fisheries. King salmon may be harvested in marine and inter-tidal waters near Monashka Creek during late June and July. A run of approximately 300-400 king salmon is expected to return to Monashka Bay. In 2007, the king salmon enhancement program expanded into the American and Olds rivers. Anglers can now expect at least several hundred kings returning to these drainages each year.

King salmon anglers must purchase a king salmon stamp in addition to a fishing license, and record the date, location and number of king salmon harvested in freshwaters. Check the regulations for specific requirements.

Saltwater trolling

Troll-fishing Kodiak's marine waters for king and coho salmon has become increasingly popular. Much trolling effort occurs in Chiniak Bay, a feeding area for kings which are present year-round, but harvested mostly between April and October. Kings average around 20 pounds, although fish weighing as much as 70 pounds are occasionally taken.

Best-known fishing spots along the Road System are Cape Chiniak and Buoy 4. In the last three years, the estimated annual Road System Chinook harvest has ranged between 5,000 and 8,000 fish.

Karluk & Ayakulik kings

Karluk and Ayakulik rivers support Kodiak's only native freshwater king salmon fisheries. Both drainages are located on the southwest end of Kodiak Island, approximately one hour by air from the city of Kodiak. Fish average 20-25 pounds, and kings over 35 pounds rare. Normally the Karluk River annually averages an in-river run of 8,000 kings, while the Ayakulik River averages 14,000. However, in recent years, king salmon runs have declined significantly.

Biological escapement goals have been missed due to poor runs several times for both the Karluk and the Ayakulik rivers in the last ten years prompting both pre-season and in-season management actions. Restrictions such as bag-limit reductions, bait-restrictions and complete closures to king salmon fishing have been implemented. The Karluk and Ayakulik king salmon returns will be continue to be monitored in-season by ADF&G. Consult current Kodiak sportfishing regulations or contact the Kodiak ADF&G Sportfish office for updated information concerning Karluk and Ayakulik king salmon fishing opportunities.

Red salmon

The majority of adult spawning red salmon (sockeye) move upriver to a lake, hold in lakes to ripen, then spawn along lakeshores and in tributary streams. Fishing is best when reds are migrating through the rivers. Generally, Kodiak red salmon—the first salmon to arrive on the Road System—are available from early June through the end of July. About two million reds enter Kodiak fresh waters annually.

Road System reds

The Kodiak Road System features three red salmon runs, at the Buskin, Pasagshak and Saltery rivers. The Buskin River return starts in early June, peaks later in the month and typically is over by mid-July. Estimated sport harvests average 1,500 fish per year. The Pasagshak River return typically starts in late June and peaks during mid-July. Average estimated harvest from Pasagshak is 1,200 fish.

The latest and typically largest run is at the Saltery River, which has recently averaged about 42,000 reds each year. Although Saltery River is located within the Road System, a rugged four-wheel-drive vehicle, ATV or float plane is necessary to access the fishery. The Saltery River return typically begins in early July and peaks later in the month.

Suggested tackle

Kodiak red salmon average around 5 pounds. Spin anglers should try a 6- to 7-foot medium-action rod outfitted with 8- to 12-pound test line. Vibrax® spinners (No. 2 or No. 3) are marginally effective; most anglers use yarn flies on a 12- to 18-inch leader attached to a swivel and weighted drop line.



Fly fishers use a 4- to 6-weight rod and reel outfitted with sinking tip or shooting head floating line. Or, when fishing deep holes and slow moving water, try floating line in combination with weighted flies or a small split-shot weight attached to the leader. A number of fly patterns are used for red salmon. Some anglers claim flies with chartreuse (fluorescent green) bodies or accents can be particularly effective.

Pink salmon

Pink salmon, also called humpback or humpies, are available to Kodiak anglers in great abundance. Pinks can be taken along ocean beaches near stream mouths between mid to late July with runs typically peaking by mid-August.

Pinks are bright silver in saltwater or when first entering rivers, but after a short freshwater residence their color changes to darker gray and develop a pronounced hump. Meat quality at this point declines substantially. For this reason, it's best to fish for pinks along ocean beaches near stream mouths or lower in the rivers. Pink salmon are the most numerous species on Kodiak Island. Road System returns of 500,000 pink salmon are not uncommon.

Fishing for pink salmon

Kodiak pinks average 3 pounds and readily take lures, eggs, and flies. Fishing for pinks is a lot of fun, and is an excellent way to teach children about salmon fishing. Pinks put up a good fight, and a fresh fillet on the grill from an ocean-bright pink is hard to beat.

Use lightweight spinning or bait-casting gear, or a 4-5 weight fly rod. Popular lures include small Pixees®, larger Vibrax® or Mepps® spinners, or any bright and flashy fly.

Silver salmon

Saltwater silver salmon fishing

Charter boats usually start trolling for coho salmon, also called silvers, during the last week of July as the fish school up and begin moving near shore. The troll fishery peaks the third week of August, and typically is over by mid-September. The average Kodiak silver salmon weighs 7 pounds, although silvers up to 16 pounds are occasionally taken. Areas close to town with good reputations include Cape Chiniak and Buoy 4.

Road System freshwater silvers

Silvers are the last salmon to arrive along the Road System, typically appearing in late August. Twenty-five percent of the run has usually entered the rivers by September 3, 50percent by September 14, and 90percent by September 27. Silver fishing stays good until about October 15, when the fish finally enter their spawning life stage.

The Road System offers excellent silver fishing. Some of the best waters include the Buskin, Pasagshak, Olds, and American rivers, and Saltery, Roslyn and Salonie creeks. The Buskin in-river escapement averages more than 11,000 silvers.

Since 1984, silver salmon fingerlings hatched from Buskin River stock and reared at the Pillar Creek Hatchery have been stocked into several Road System drainages. Returns from these efforts have established productive sport fisheries at Mill Bay, Mission and Monashka Bay beaches and, to a lesser extent, at Mayflower Beach.

Remote Area freshwater silver salmon

Silver salmon fishing in the rest of the Kodiak Archipelago can be excellent, with a total return to Remote Area averaging around 200,000 silvers per year. Run timing on Shuyak and Afognak islands is generally earlier than on the Road System and later on the south end of Kodiak Island.

On Shuyak and Afognak islands, silvers are abundant by mid-August and peak between the last few days in August and the first week of September. Popular systems on Shuyak include Shangin Bay, Carry Inlet, and Big Bay. On Afognak, the three largest returns are in Litnik (also called Afognak River), Paul's, and Discoverer bays. Silver salmon in these areas school up and hold near the stream mouths, waiting for rainstorms before entering the relatively small streams. The majority of the sport fishery occurs in the salt waters just off the stream mouths, since most of the streams are too shallow and brushy to fish effectively.

On Kodiak Island, the largest runs of silvers occur in the Ayakulik, Karluk, Little, and Uganik rivers, and in Olga, Spiridon, and Zachar bays, although many smaller systems also support fishable runs. The typical run timing on the Ayakulik is unusual for Kodiak Island, often starting in early August but still peaking by mid-September. The Karluk run is later, with lagoon fishing good in early September, and river fishing peaking in later in the month.

The remainder of the Kodiak Island silver runs typically peak in mid-September.

How to fish for Kodiak silvers



Many of Kodiak Island's Road System streams offer superb fishing for coho, or "silver," salmon. (Photo courtesy Ken Marsh)

Some Kodiak silvers can be exceptionally large averaging 10- to 12-pounds and ranging as high as 20-pounds. Spinning gear consists of a 7- to 9-foot medium- to heavy-action rod loaded with 12- to 20-pound test line. Silvers "on the bite" will usually strike at most bright and flashy lures, especially No.3 or No.4 Vibrax® spinners. Salmon eggs drifted in the current or fished with a bobber can be highly effective for catching silvers, and often produce fish when lures don't.

An 8- to 9-weight fly rod is the best option. Use a sinking tip or shooting head floating line for in-river fishing or a floating line with weighted flies for still water fishing. Purple Egg-Sucking Leeches are a fly-fishing favorite for silvers, although a wide variety of colorful and highly visible patterns will also produce fish.

Steelhead trout

Steelhead begin entering Kodiak Island fresh water tributaries in early September. Steelheads overwinter in lakes or rivers and spawn April-June. Adults that survive spawning return to the sea in June and July. Some fish will migrate between the sea and fresh water for up to 5 years.

Road System

Steelhead fishing opportunities are very limited on the Road System, with small runs found only in the Buskin, Miam and Saltery drainages. Returns occur between late September and mid-November.

In order to conserve this limited resource, fishing for steelhead and native rainbow trout populations is catch-and-release only year-round. To further protect these fish, only un-baited artificial lures may be used from November 1 through April 30.

Remote Area

ADF&G has identified 16 Remote Area steelhead streams. The Karluk River contains the largest population, averaging 8,000 fish. In recent years, however, estimated returns have been highly variable, ranging as low as 3,000 and as high as 11,000. The largest concentration of spawning adults can usually be found at the Portage area (see the “King Salmon” section).



Kodiak Island steelhead are fall-run fish. Road System and Remote Area opportunities are available. (Photo courtesy Ken Marsh)

The Ayakulik steelhead population is thought to be the second largest on the Kodiak Archipelago and has been more stable than the Karluk run, with an estimated typical spawning population of 1,500 – 2,000. Fishing pressure on the Ayakulik has increased slightly in recent years, although angler effort is still modest overall. The Dog Salmon River and the Litnik River have the next largest steelhead populations, probably averaging an estimated 500 – 1,500 steelhead in each drainage.

Mid- to late October is the best time in fall to fish for steelhead. Research on the Karluk shows only 10 percent of the return typically enters the river by September 25. Anglers may also successfully fish steelhead in mid-April to early May.

An annual limit of no more than two steelhead/rainbow trout per year; 20 inches or longer is in effect throughout the Remote Area. A harvest record is also required.

How to fish Kodiak’s steelhead

Although fly anglers especially covet steelhead, spin anglers can also find great action. A 6- to 8-foot medium-action rod with 10- to 12-pound test line works well for Kodiak steelhead, which average 6-7 pounds. Spoons and spinners are effective, along with salmon eggs and egg-pattern yarn flies drifted in swift water with a weighted and swiveled 12- to 18-inch leader.

Fly-fishers also take steelhead on egg patterns, but black Woolly Buggers and Egg Sucking Leeches can be effective as well. Since steelhead are often found in flowing waters, fly fishers commonly use sink tip lines (or floating lines with weighted flies) on a 6-weight fly rod.

Halibut, rockfish, lingcod

Halibut are abundant around Kodiak Island, and sport fishing is excellent from late April through early September. Halibut are usually in deeper water during the winter months and migrate into shallower water during the spring and summer. In a typical year, sport anglers hook more than 25,000 halibut in Kodiak waters. Most are 35-40 pounds, but the chances of taking a larger fish are good. Fish larger than 150 pounds are frequently harvested, and several fish larger than 300 pounds are caught each year.

Charter boat operators know many hot spots to fish and all the successful techniques for taking halibut. Herring, octopus, salmon heads, and artificial jigs are commonly used to take halibut. Heavy weights are needed in strong currents or deep water.

Well-known fishing spots near the city of Kodiak include Buoy 4, Cape Chiniak, and waters surrounding Long and Spruce islands.

More than 30 species of rockfish are found in Kodiak salt waters, and all bite readily. Rockfish live to be over 100 years old. They are also slow-growing, and slow to reproduce. The most commonly caught around Kodiak include dark, dusky, and yellow-eye rockfish. Dark and dusky rockfish average 3 – 4 pounds while yellow-eye average 9 pounds. They are good to eat, but do not keep well in the freezer so should be consumed within 3 or 4 months.

The average estimated rockfish catch in the Kodiak area is more than 25,000 fish, of which about 6,000 are harvested. Fish for them around underwater rock piles and pinnacles, away from strong currents. Rockfish can be found around 30 fathoms in spring and 10 fathoms in summer and fall. They eat small fish, shellfish, and large plankton, and most are caught while jigging. Monashka Bay offers excellent rockfish fishing and is near the city of Kodiak.

Lingcod are large fish with ferocious teeth and are excellent table fare. These long-lived and slow to reproduce fish need extra conservation protection, especially when the males are guarding the nests in spring and early summer. Because of their vulnerability during these activities, the fishing season is only open annually beginning July 1.

Average-sized lingcod harvested in Kodiak are 3 feet long and weigh 20 pounds. The estimated lingcod catch in the Kodiak Area has averaged 2,500 fish, of which about 1,500 are harvested.

Dolly Varden

Well before the first sockeye salmon show up in June, Dolly’s provide excellent sport on light tackle and are excellent to eat during most of the year.

Look for two peak fishing times. The earliest is in May, when Dolly’s are out-migrating to saltwater in order to feed. Schools can be found at lake outlets and near the mouths of freshwater systems feeding on out-migrating pink salmon fry. Then in mid-July through October, Dolly’s migrate back to freshwaters to spawn and overwinter. Road System opportunities include Mission

and Pillar creek beaches in the spring, while most of the larger Road System drainages offer excellent fishing during summer and autumn months.

Fishing in Kodiak's stocked lakes

In addition to native populations of salmon, steelhead, rainbow trout and Dolly Varden, ADF&G stocks 17 roadside lakes with hatchery rainbow trout fingerlings, which quickly grow to catchable size. These lakes offer excellent, uncrowned opportunities year round. In the last 10 years, less than 1,000 estimated angler days have been recorded at Kodiak's stocked lakes. (An angler-day is one angler making one trip.) The estimated harvest averages 250 rainbow trout per year and anglers usually release as many rainbows as they harvest.

For more information

For fishing information, call the Kodiak ADF&G office at (907) 486-1880. In season, a weekly sport fishing report is updated at the ADF&G Sport Fish webpage: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.ReportDetail&area_key=7

Bears

Kodiak bears are a unique subspecies of the brown or grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*). Kodiak brown bears are the largest bear in the world, with some weighing 1,500 pounds.

While anglers rarely encounter these shy animals, anglers should observe all the precautions normally recommended for travel through bear country. Keep a clean camp, throw fish carcasses well into the stream, and make lots of noise when traveling through brushy areas. To learn more about bear behavior and how to travel safely, please request the ADF&G "Bear Facts" handout, or take a look on the internet at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.bears.afety>

For state & federal lands info, contact:

Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

1390 Buskin River Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: (907) 487-2600
Toll Free: (888)408-3514
Fax: (907)487-2144
E-Mail: kodiak@fws.gov
Website: kodiak.fws.gov

State of Alaska

Alaska State Parks
Kodiak District Office
1400 Abercrombie Drive
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: (907) 486-6339
Fax: (907)486-3320
Email: dnr.pskskodiak@alaska.gov
Website:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/kodiak/index.htm>

For access to Native lands, contact:

Koniag Native Association

194 Alimaq Drive
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 486-2530 phone
(800) 658-3818 toll free
(907) 486-3325 fax
www.koniag.com

Lesnoi Inc.

Contact: Frank or Julie Bishop
Phone: (907) 486-2716

Karluk IRA Traditional Council

P.O. Box 22
Karluk, Alaska 99608
Phone: (907) 241-2218
Fax: (907)241-2208

Afognak Native Corporation

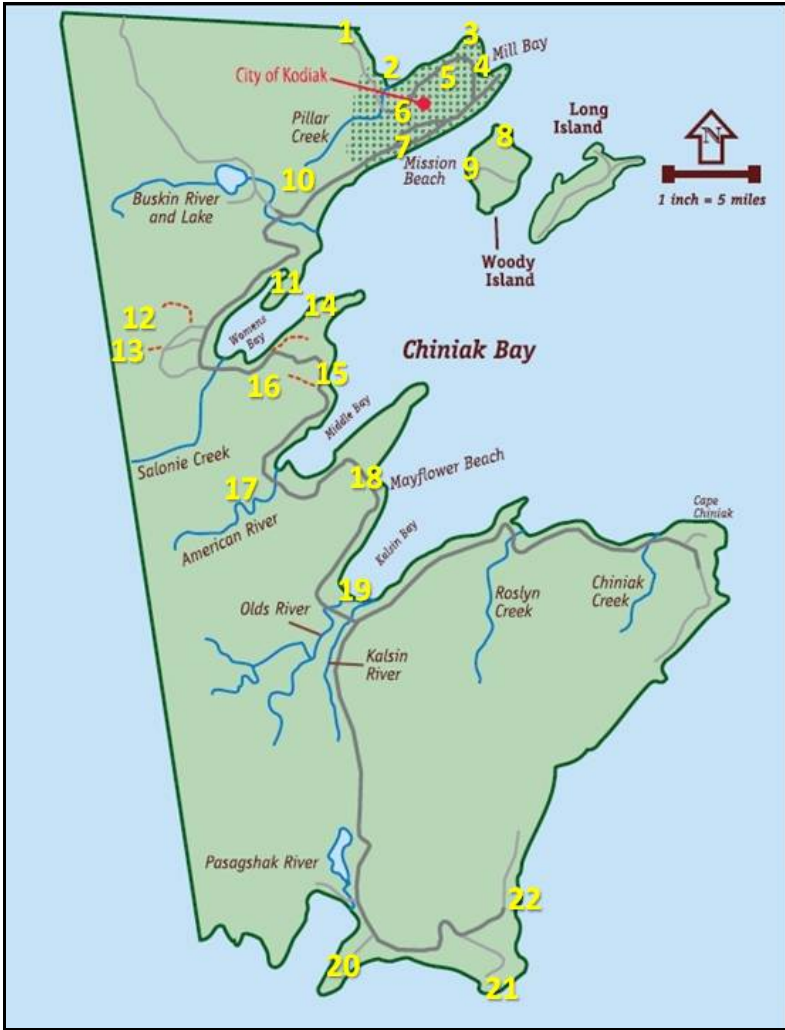
215 Mission Road, Suite 212
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: (907) 486-6014
Website: <http://www.afognak.com/pages/lands/land-use-permits-raquo.php>

For Kodiak Island Visitor Services

(Charters, accommodations, rental cars), contact:

Kodiak Island Visitor Information Center

100 Marine Way
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: (907) 486-4782
Toll-free: 800-789-4782
Fax: (907) 486-6545
Email: visit@kodiak.org
Website: kodiak.org



Stocked Lakes and Beaches on the Kodiak Road System

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Monashka Creek-SS/CH | 12. Lee Lake-RT |
| 2. Pillar Creek-SS | 13. Caroline, Aurel & Cicely lakes-RT |
| 3. Abercrombie Lake-RT/SS | 14. Dragonfly Lake-RT |
| 4. Mill Bay-SS | 15. Horseshoe Lake-RT |
| 5. Island & Dark lakes-RT | 16. Heitman Lake-RT |
| 6. Big/Lilly Lake-RT | 17. American River-CH |
| 7. Mission Beach-SS | 18. Mayflower Beach-SS |
| 8. Long Lake-RT | 19. Olds River-CH |
| 9. Tanignak-RT | 20. Bull Lake-RT |
| 10. Mosquito Lake-RT | 21. East Twin Lake-RT |
| 11. Lilly Pond-RT | 22. Barry's Lagoon-LSS |

Key: SS-anadromous silver salmon
 LSS-landlocked silver salmon
 RT-rainbow trout
 CH- chinook salmon



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