

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SS-6-62-24

Issued at: Anchorage, Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Friday, September 13, 2024

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday, October 31, 2024, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order restricts the retention of coho salmon in the Valdez vicinity - Terminal Harvest Area through October 31, 2024.

All coho salmon caught incidentally in the Valdez vicinity - Terminal Harvest Area while fishing for other species must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 55.023(1)(B)(ii) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Friday, September 13 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, October 31, 2024:

5 AAC 55.023. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

(1) the following special provisions apply to salmon, other than king salmon:

(B) within the following terminal harvest areas, the bag limit is six fish; and the possession limit is 12 fish:

(ii) Valdez vicinity: the salt waters north of a line from Point Freemantle to Rocky Point, excluding Jack Bay, Sawmill Bay, and Galena Bay; the bag limit for salmon, other than coho salmon, is six fish and the possession limit is 12 fish; sport fishing for coho salmon is closed; coho salmon may not be retained or possessed.

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Brittany Blain-Roth
Brittany Blain-Roth
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The Solomon Gulch Hatchery collects broodstock from coho salmon returning to the Valdez Terminal Harvest Area to provide coho salmon sport fishing opportunities in the Valdez vicinity. Historically, returns of coho salmon to the hatchery have been weaker on even years. At this time approximately 500 coho salmon have entered the hatchery holding area whereas on a fair return year there would be upwards of 2,000 coho salmon having entered the hatchery. Approximately 2,000 coho salmon are needed at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery to meet broodstock goal.

Early indicators were of a below average return of coho salmon and out of an abundance of caution, bag and possession limit restrictions were put in place effective August 19. At this time, given the current low return of coho salmon to the hatchery, it is necessary to further restrict the retention of coho salmon in the Valdez vicinity. This restriction will allow more fish to return to the hatchery and contribute towards meeting broodstock goals. Hatchery egg takes typically occur by the end of October and this emergency order will expire on October 31 to allow anglers opportunity on any late returning coho salmon, following the completion of egg takes at the hatchery.

DISTRIBUTION:

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

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order 2-SS-6-52-24 reduced the bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king salmon, to six fish per day and 12 fish in possession, of which only three per day, and 6 in possession may be a coho salmon in the Valdez vicinity - Terminal Harvest Area.