

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-RF-4-17-24

Issued at: Kodiak, Monday, April 22, 2024

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 1, 2024

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, December 31, 2024, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the bag and possession limit for a single species of rockfish for all anglers in the waters of Afognak Island and Northeastern Kodiak Island north of a line extending westward from Outlet Cape (north of 58° lat.) and eastward from Dangerous Cape (north of 57° 16.596' N. lat.). This is equivalent to the Afognak and Northeast Districts and the part of the Eastside District consisting of groundfish statistical areas 525701 and 525702 north of Dangerous Cape. The bag limit for rockfish in this area is five per day, 10 in possession, of which no more than two per day, four in possession may be of a single rockfish species and no more than one per day, two in possession can be yelloweye rockfish.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 64.022(b)(11) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective from 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 1 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, December 31, 2024.

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 Afognak Island and Northeastern Kodiak Island north of a line extending westward from Outlet Cape (north of 58° lat.) and eastward from Dangerous Cape (north of 57° 16.596' N. lat.).

(A) the bag limit for rockfish is 5 per day, 10 in possession, of which no more than 2 per day, 4 in possession may be of a single rockfish species and only 1 per day, 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



Tyler Polum
Kodiak Area Management Biologist

By delegation to:

JUSTIFICATION:

Implementation of the *Kodiak Black Rockfish Management Plan* has been effective in reducing the harvest of black rockfish to below pre-2019 levels, however, the portion of the harvest composed of black rockfish continues to increase. Preliminary harvest estimates indicate that the 2023 harvest of black rockfish was above the best-known sustainable harvest levels for the Afognak, Northeast and Eastside management districts. To ensure sustainable harvests of rockfish and implement provisions of the *Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan* (5 AAC 64.070), it is justified to modify the bag limit for rockfish for the 2024 season. This emergency order will reduce the bag limit for a single rockfish species, and as such, reduce the harvest of black rockfish in the Northeast, Afognak and Eastside districts, which are the species and areas of primary concern. It also increases opportunity for rockfish species as a species group for the Chiniak and Marmot Bay area if anglers catch multiple species of rockfish. Restrictions such as the reduced bag limit for Chiniak and Marmot Bays were primarily enacted to reduce the harvest of black rockfish, however, given the timeliness of current data and increased information available for both the sport fishery harvests and the rockfish population, it is warranted to allow an increased overall bag limit if limits are reduced for a single species, such as black rockfish.

Nonresident harvest of rockfish was restricted by emergency order for the 2021-2023 seasons according to direction outlined by the Board of Fisheries in the Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan. Resident angler participation in the fishery continues to increase, however, and the portion of the harvest comprised of black rockfish for all anglers continues to increase. For the 2024 season, without further action in the sport fishery, harvests are likely to exceed best-known sustainable levels. Given the limitations that have previously been in place for nonresident anglers and the continued growth in participation in the fishery, it is warranted to include all anglers in the modified bag limits.

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 Alaska Wildlife Troopers Kodiak Office.