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SPORT FISHING IN SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
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1880Alaskan Sport Fishing Waters

As a guide to newcomers and visitors, fishery biologists have compiled a list of some of the well-known fishing waters in Alaska. The list is merely a starting point and makes no pretense at completeness. It will, however, serve to point out a number of the fishing spots, the important sport fish there and a guide to facilities available. With a little experience the new angler will seek out his own fishing spot, not to be found in this brief list.

For convenience, fishing waters are tabulated for Southeastern Alaska, Anchorage - Kenai Region, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula and Northern Alaska.

Good luck and good fishing!

Sport Fishing in Southeastern Alaska

In contemplating fishing in Southeastern Alaska, the visitor must remember that there are few roads in the area and transportation is mostly by boat or plane. Facilities for the comfort of the fisherman afield are few and rainy weather can be expected. However, there is wonderful fishing for those willing to rough it.

Salmon fishing is available close to the various towns and is usually done from outboard powered skiffs. Skiffs, as well as tackle, can usually be rented. Charter trips aboard cabin cruisers can be arranged through guides and outfitters. The king salmon are large and good catches are made. The silver salmon enter the fishery later in the season usually August and September. They are also taken in the lower reaches of the streams where they are a very sporty fish on proper tackle.

Tackle needs depend upon the likes or dislikes of the sportsman. The usual salmon reel is a star-drag affair with 300 to 400 yards of line. Baits are plugs, spoons or herring. The rod is generally 7-9 feet long and fairly limber.

The trout fisherman would do well to have a fly rod and a casting or spinning rig. Where the fish are rising, they will take flies very well but one all too frequently hooks into fish larger than a flyrod was designed to handle and either the rod is ruined or the fisherman discreetly breaks the fish off.

The time of year best suited to sport fishing is from mid-April to November. The salmon and trout can be depended upon to furnish sport during this period. Transportation from town will depend on location but plane or boat is the usual method of travel. There are

Southeastern Alaska			Boats	Motors	Bait	Guides	Packle	Camping	Cottages	Hotels	Nor. Trout	Brook Trout	Rainbow Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Dolly Varden	King Salmon	Silver Salmon
Fishing Waters	Location (nearest town)	Area (Acres or Length)															
Tee Harbor Area	Juneau	10 mi.	X	X	X	✓	X			✓						X	X
Marmion Is. Area	Juneau	4 mi.	X	X	X	✓	X			✓						X	X
Sitka Sound	Sitka	15 mi.	X	X	X	✓	X			✓						X	X
Mountain Pt.	Ketchikan	3 mi.	X	X	X	X	X			✓						X	X
Clover Pass	"	2 mi.	X	X	X		X		X	✓						X	X
Cone Island	"	5 mi.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						X	X
Grindall Island	"	6 mi.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						X	X
Camaano Pt.	"	3 mi.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						X	X
Vallenar Rocks	"	3 mi.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						X	X
Humpback Lake	"	9 mi.	X					X						X			
Wilson Lake	"	7 mi.	X					X						X			
Manzanita Lake	"	9 mi.	X					X						X			X
Mirror Lake	"	2½ mi.	X						X					X			
Fish Creek	"	¾ mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Naha R. & Lakes	"	8 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Orchard Lake	"	6 mi.	X					X					X				
Reflection Lake	"	7 mi.	X					X					X	X			X
Eagle Lake	"	4 mi.	X					X					X				
McDonald Lake	"	5 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Thorne River	"	10 mi.						X					X	X	X		X
Karta River	"	4 mi.											X	X	X		X
Luck Lake	"	4 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Winstanley Lake	"	3 mi.	X					X					X				
Anan Cr. & Lakes	Wrangell	10 mi.											X	X	X		X
Thoms Cr. & Lake	"	10 mi.											X	X	X		X
Stikine R. Tribs.	"	25 mi.	X	X	X	X							X	X	X		X
Petersburg Cr. & Lake	Petersburg	9 mi.	X	X	X		X	X	✓				X	X	X		X

X - Available at or near fishing waters.

✓ - Available at nearest town.

Southeastern Alaska Cont'd.			Boats	Motors	Bait	Guides	Tackle	Camping	Cottages	Hotels	Nor. Trout	Brook Trout	Rainbow Trout	Cutthroat Trout	Dolly Varden	King Salmon	Silver Salmon
Fishing Waters	Location (nearest town)	Area (Acres or Length)															
Blind Slough	Petersburg	1 mi.	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			X	X	X		X
Kah Sheets Cr. & Lake	"	8 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Castle R.	"	10 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Salt Chuck	"	2 mi.						X					X	X	X		X
Red Bay Lake	"	4 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Salmon Bay Lake	"	4 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Neck Lake	"	7 mi.	X					X						X	X		
Tunehean Creek	"	5 mi.						X					X	X	X		X
Kadake Creek	"	3 mi.											X	X	X		X
Rezanof Lake	Sitka	7 mi.											X				
Plotnikof Lake	"	6 mi.						X					X				X
Davidof Lake	"	1½ mi.											X				
Port Armstrong Lakes	"	2½ mi.	X					X					X				
Sashin Lake	"	1 mi.	X					X					X				
Baranof Lake	"	3½ mi.	X						X					X			
Sitkoh Lake	"	2 mi.	X					X					X	X	X		X
Hasselborg Lake	Juneau	9 mi.	X					X						X			
Thayer Lake	"	7 mi.	X	✓		✓	✓	X						X			
Florence Lake	"	4 mi.												X	X		
Youngs Lake	"	2 mi.												X			
Chilkat Lake	"	8 mi.	✓	✓		✓	✓							X			X
Windfall Lake	"	1 mi.	X					X						X	X		
Salmon Cr. Res.	"	1½ mi.											X				
Turner Lake	"		X					X						X			
Situk River	Yakutat					✓		X					X		X	X	X
Italio River	"					✓		X					X		X	X	X
Lost River	"					✓		X					X		X	X	X

X - Available at or near fishing waters.

✓ - Available at nearest town.

many good lakes and streams where shelters are available and one can camp out quite comfortably. An outfit containing cooking gear, food and sleeping bags is all that is necessary.

#### Anchorage-Kenai Area

Due to the increase in both military and civilian populations in this area, most waters with easy access along the less than 700 miles of highway linking Seward, Homer, Anchorage, and Glen Allen are already heavily fished. Only a few major waters continue to sustain truly satisfactory yields. However, the angler who will walk a short distance can still find good fishing. Most fishermen in search of a full creel travel to remote fishing locations by light aircraft.

Spring fishing, beginning June 1st, is eagerly awaited by the roadside anglers. This is the period of king salmon and steelhead runs in the streams of the lower Kenai Peninsula. By the time the season is open these fishes are moving into fresh water in numbers. The best catches from the popular waters occur during June and early July. Yields then drop off (except in the remote waters) until fall when trout returns increase and silver salmon fishing is available. Dolly varden, lake trout, and rainbow trout fishing continues throughout the summer on the Kenai Peninsula.

In the Palmer Lakes area, which also opens June 1st, rainbow trout are subjected to extremely heavy fishing pressures. Much of the angling is done in conjunction with picnicking and boating, and as a result the yield of this area is below the average for the Greater Anchorage region in pounds of fish taken per hour of effort. Other species of fishes taken in the Palmer area include dolly varden, silver salmon, and suckers.

Adjacent to the Glenn and Richardson Highways, and particularly between Sheep Mountain and Paxson, good fishing for grayling and lake trout is available. The lake trout fishing is best in the spring and fall when these fishes are in shoal water. Grayling fishing, although best in the spring can be found in accessible waters throughout the summer.

The tackle requirements are as varied as the species sought. Salmon fishermen use salt water gear, and casting and spinning rods. Steelhead are taken on similar equipment. The smaller trout are usually taken by fly rod or light spinning tackle.

#### Kodiak-Afognak Islands

Streams on the Kodiak-Afognak group of Islands provides some very excellent fishing for the sportsman. The primary spots of excellence are remote from the town of Kodiak which is the hub of travel connections for the region. Small amphibian airplane

<u>Anchorage-Kenai Area</u>			Boats	Motors	Bait	Guides	Tackle	Camping	Cottages	Hotels	Rainbow Trout	Cutthroat	Dolly Varden	King Salmon	Silver Salmon	Grayling	Chee	Lake Trout	
Fishing Waters	Location (nearest town)	Area (Acres or Length)																	
Kenai River	Kenai, 40 mi.	75 mi.			✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X							
Anchor River	Homer, 17 mi.	30 mi.			X		X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X					
Deep Creek	Homer, 30 mi.	25 mi.			✓		✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X					
Lakes on Kenai Flats	Kenai, 20 mi. (air)	500 ea. 300 A. av.			✓		✓	X	✓		X								
Creeks of Turnagain Arm	Anchorage, 30 mi.	45 mi. (total)			✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓			X	X					
Finger Lake	Palmer, 15 mi.	350 A.	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓			X						
Big Lake	Wasilla, 30 mi.	5000 A.	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X							
Lakes or Cottonwood Chain	Wasilla, 5 mi.	1000 A.	X	X	X		X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X						
Creeks and Lakes Glenn Highway	Palmer, 100 mi.	100 mi. 1000 A.			✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	X								X
Creeks of the Railbelt	Wasilla, 50 mi. (rail)	100 mi. (total)			✓		✓	X	✓		X	X	X	X	X	X			
Tonsina River	Copper Center, 20 mi.	8 mi.			X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				
Chitna Lakes	Chitna, 3 mi.	1000 A.			✓		✓		✓										X
Remote Waters	Foothills of Alaska Range	100 to 200 mi.	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Lakes and Creeks Gulkana River	Gulkana, 30 mi.	20 mi. 5000 A.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X							X
Lakes and Creeks Tok Road	Tok, 60 mi.	10 mi. 1500 A.			✓		✓	X	✓										X

X - Available at or near fishing waters.

✓ - Available at nearest town.

service provides available transportation to the many fishing areas, and all streams are within 60 minutes by air from the town. Small boats can also be chartered for trips as the majority of fishing sites are within walking distance of salt water.

The fishing pressure on game fish is concurrent with the movements of the fish into the bays and within the watersheds. The dolly varden trout which receives the greatest pressure, begin to show in the bays during the middle of May. At this time, sport fishing is almost limited to surf casting and as many as a dozen enthusiasts can be seen fishing at Mission Beach near the town of Kodiak. These early sea run "dollys" enter mainly the streams that originate from lakes such as the Buskin River which is fished extremely hard during this upstream migration of trout. Many of the streams in remote areas have large numbers of dolly varden trout but due to inaccessibility are not fished to any great extent. This early run of trout tapers off rapidly and sport fishing lulls until the second run in mid July when salmon and trout move into the streams together. Fishing for "dollys" then, remains consistently excellent until late fall in most all of the streams. There is an exception to this early fishing of dolly varden trout, the Karluk, Red, Uganik, and Afognak Rivers provide good "dolly" fishing from early spring until late fall. The fish in these streams do not leave the river proper but remain throughout the period. Some of the largest dolly varden trout caught measure 24 inches but the average fish measures from 12 inches to 18 inches.

Steelhead trout fishing on Kodiak-Afognak Islands is excelled in few places in North America. Most famous of the rivers producing this fishing are the Karluk, Red and Afognak River. The steelhead begin to move into the watersheds of this region in late September and by November are amassed in the streams. This is the period that fishing is greatest, for the trout are fresh and prime. These fish remain in the upper parts of the stream systems throughout winter and in May move down stream to spawn. Good fishing is again enjoyed in May and June after the spring break-up. A comparatively small number of rainbows remain over the summer in the streams and are available to the sport caster. Winter weather conditions limits fishing in these systems during the remainder of the year.

In September, the silver salmon take the brunt of fishing pressure for sportsmen near the centers of population. Silvers move into the streams in large numbers and provide excellent sport fishing. Large numbers of these fish are taken each year by sportsmen.

King salmon fishing is confined entirely to the Karluk and Red Rivers and is a sport almost untouched by local fishermen. The best fishing for this fish occurs near the mouth of the streams in June and July, however, only a few sportsmen can take advantage of this activity as both areas are remote from the normal places of fishing on these rivers.





Equipment used for fishing here does not differ from other places where sport fishing occurs. Casting rods, spinning equipment and fly casting gear are commonly used. The usual bait is salmon eggs, with or without a spinner, various types and sizes of spinners, or any one of the variety of spoons on the market. Many steelhead and dolly varden trout are caught on flies and streamers in the Karluk River and spinning equipment is becoming more popular each year.

#### Alaska Peninsula

The Alaska Peninsula streams and lakes offer excellent fishing in remote locations and reasonable good fishing in the few readily accessible locations. Fishing camps have been developed in the country adjacent to King Salmon and air service is available to reach the fishing grounds.

In the large lakes and streams tributary to Bristol Bay are found good populations of large fish: rainbow trout, dolly varden, lake trout and grayling; northern pike are also present, especially in the small lakes. Flies and spoons have proved to be very satisfactory lures in these waters, live bait is not needed.

Farther out along the Peninsula, Becharof lake and river system produces dolly varden trout and salmon; Oil Lake is well populated with rainbow and dolly varden, and the Cold Bay area provides dolly varden trout and silver salmon fishing.

#### Sport Fishing in Northern Alaska

Sport fishing in Interior Alaska is devoted primarily to three kinds of fish: the grayling, lake trout and northern pike.

The grayling is outstanding not only for the ease with which it will take a fly, but also for the manner in which it rolls, its large banner-like dorsal fin, as it takes a dry fly. It can be taken on any of the usual trout flies; the mosquito gnat being most used by Alaskan sportsmen, but other patterns such as the blue dun, royal coachman, silver doctor, and quill gordon are equally effective. Grayling, however, do appear to prefer the smaller flies, sizes 12 to 16.

In the spring when the grayling first enter the small streams they are more apt to take a salmon egg or some of the spinning or casting lures than flies, but during the remainder of the spring and summer, flies seem to be preferred.

Many of the deeper grayling lakes also abound in lake trout. This fish is especially sporty in the spring when it is feeding close to the surface and can be taken on large flies, or casting and spinning lures; the red and white spoon is especially effective at this time. During the summer they can sometimes be taken by these same lures but are more often taken by trolling of either

Alaska Peninsula	Fishing Water	Location (nearest town)	Area (Acres or Length)	Boats	Motors	Bait	Guides	Tackle	Camping	Cottages	Hotels	Nor. Pike	Rainbow	Dolly Varden	King Salmon	Silver Salmon	Grayling	Lake Trout
	Naknek River	King Salmon (Naknek)	36 mi.				✓	✓	✓	✓			X	X	X		X	
	Brooks River	" "	1 mi.	X	X		X	X	X	X	✓		X				X	X
	Naknek Lake	" "	20 mi.	X	X		X	X	X	X	✓		X	X			X	
	Kuik Lake	" "	10 mi.	X	X		X	X	X	X	✓		X	X				
	Battle Lake	" "	15 mi.	X	X		X	X	X	X	✓		X	X				
	Nanwhyunuk Lake	" "	12 mi.				✓	✓	✓	✓			X	X			X	
	Kvichak Lake	" "	20 mi.				✓	✓	✓	✓			X					
	Mortenson's Lagoon	Cold Bay	5 mi.						X				X	X			X	
	Russell Creek	" "	12 mi.						X				X	X			X	
	Frosty Creek	" "	5 mi.						X					X			X	
	Oil Lake and River	Port Heiden	8 mi.						X				X	X				

X - Available at or near fishing waters.

✓ - Available at nearest town.



artificial or live bait. Lake trout provides some desirable sport fishing in interior lakes.

The northern pike is found in many sloughs and shallow weedy lakes throughout the interior. Its large size coupled with its willingness to take large artificial lures such as the red and white spoon make it reasonably attractive to sportsmen.

For the angler interested in an unusual species the chee (sheefish) or iconnuo, is an attraction. A large fish with reasonably good fighting qualities the chee is taken on a variety of lures in fresh water during the summer in Western and Northwestern Alaska.

For the fisherman based in Fairbanks, or at any location on the highway system, travel by automobile is feasible to many fishing spots. Aircraft flights are the mode of transportation to remote fishing waters.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
1211 E. Tudor Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99703