

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

**Emergency Order No. 2-RF-4-23-26**

**Issued at:** Kodiak, Tuesday March 31, 2026

**Effective Date:** 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 1, 2026

**Expiration Date:** 11:59 p.m. Thursday, December 31, 2026, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### **EXPLANATION:**

This emergency order reduces the bag and possession limit for rockfish for all anglers on the Westside of Kodiak and Afognak Islands north of the latitude of Cape Ikolik (north of 57° 17.196' N. lat.) and on the east side of Kodiak and Afognak Islands north of the latitude of Dangerous Cape (north of 57° 16.596' N. lat.). This is equivalent to the Afognak, Westside 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 a yelloweye rockfish, and no more than one per day, two in possession can be a black rockfish.

Additionally, in the waters of Afognak and Shuyak Islands, north of Tonki Cape (north of 58° 21.181' N. lat.) and north of Black Cape (north of 58° 24.583' N. lat.), inclusive of all waters between these points, the bag limit for rockfish is 3 per day, 3 in possession and no more than one per day, two in possession, of any single species.

### **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The provisions of 5 AAC 64.022(b)(11) are superseded by this emergency order.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. Monday, June 1 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, December 31, 2026.

#### **5 AAC 64.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for the Kodiak Area.**

(b)(11) on the Westside of Kodiak and Afognak Islands north of the latitude Cape Ikolik (north of 57° 17.196' N. lat.) and on the east side of Kodiak and Afognak Islands north of 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 and only 1 per day, 2 in possession may be a black rockfish.

(B) in the waters of Afognak and Shuyak Islands, north of the latitude of Tonki Cape (north of 58° 21.181' N. lat.) and north of the latitude of Black Cape (north of 58° 24.583'

N. lat.), inclusive of all waters between these points, the bag limit for rockfish is 3 per day, of which no more than one may be of a single species.

Doug Vincent-Lang  
Commissioner



By delegation to:

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Tyler Polum  
Kodiak Area Management Biologist

**JUSTIFICATION:**

Implementation of the *Kodiak Black Rockfish Management Plan* (5 AAC 64.070) has been effective in reducing the harvest of rockfish; however, the portion of the harvest composed of black rockfish continues to be of concern for sustainability in several areas of the Kodiak Management Area. Preliminary black rockfish harvest estimates for 2025 were 8,834 in Northeast District, 3,595 in the Eastside District, 6,262 in the Afognak District and 5,176 in the Westside District. The most recent abundance estimates for rockfish management districts in Kodiak show significantly lower density and abundance of black rockfish from 2024 and a declining trend since 2021; this decline is most prominent in the Afognak and Northeast Districts. The Afognak and Westside districts also continue to see increasing harvest rates relative to the best-known estimates of abundance. To ensure sustainable harvests of rockfish and implement provisions of the *Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan*, it is justified to modify the bag limit for rockfish for the 2026 season. This emergency order will reduce the bag limit for black rockfish in the Northeast, Westside, Afognak and Eastside districts, which is the species and are the districts of primary concern. It also increases opportunity for rockfish as a species group for the Chiniak and Marmot Bays 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 of concern, 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 and restrictions for all anglers in the 2024 and 2025 seasons were effective in reducing the proportion of black rockfish in the overall harvest for all anglers to historical levels. Despite recent restrictions, harvests continue to be above sustainable levels in the Northeast and Afognak Districts, very near sustainable harvest thresholds in the Eastside District and harvests continue to increase in the Westside District. For the 2026 season, without further restrictions in the sport fishery, harvests are likely to exceed the upper bound of the guideline harvest range and be well above sustainable harvest in the Kodiak Area. Given the limitations that have previously been in place for nonresident anglers and the continued growth in participation in the fishery by resident anglers, it is warranted to include all anglers in the modified bag limits and restrict harvest by individual species of rockfish and in specific areas. Restrictions on harvest of rockfish by captain and crew of charter vessels are no longer in effect with this emergency order given the significant

restriction on harvest of black rockfish by reducing the bag limit to 1 per day for all anglers and limited harvest potential for harvest of rockfish by captain and crew of charter vessels.

In addition to restricting all anglers and the harvest of black rockfish, the increasing harvest in northern Afognak and Shuyak Island is of particular concern as the harvest of black rockfish has doubled since 2019 while recent hydroacoustic surveys indicate a significant decrease in abundance and density of black rockfish. The relatively small and confined area of northern Afognak and Shuyak Island account for approximately 40% of the harvest of black rockfish in the Afognak District on average, and this area has the lowest densities of black rockfish found in the Kodiak Management Area. Rockfish populations in the Afognak District are monitored annually, and harvest levels are unsustainable based on the best information available. Bag limits for rockfish in the northern Afognak and Shuyak Island area will be similar to the Cook Inlet bag limits for regulatory simplicity across management area boundaries in close proximity.

**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.