

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 1-RF-D-03-25

Issued at: Sitka, Monday,
February 24, 2025

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Saturday, March 1, 2025

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Wednesday,
December 31, 2025, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the nonresident sport bag limit of pelagic rockfish in the Sitka vicinity from three to two fish per day and from six to four fish in possession to stabilize the harvest of pelagic rockfish.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 47.021(g)(8) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, February 26, 2025, through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, December 31, 2025:

5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

(g) In the Sitka vicinity:

(8) in the waters of Central Southeast Outside (CSEO) Section, as described in 5 AAC 28.105(a)(4)(B), the bag limit for nonresidents for pelagic rockfish is two fish, possession limit four fish, no size limit.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to: _____

Troy Tydingco
Sitka Area Management Biologist
Division of Sport Fish

JUSTIFICATION:

The pelagic rockfish harvest in the Sitka area sport fishery gradually increased from 20,000 fish in 2009 to 60,000 fish in 2023 despite relatively stable effort and continual implementation of restrictions to stabilize harvest. In 2023 and 2024 the pelagic rockfish limit was reduced by emergency order in the CSEO area to a bag and possession limit of four and eight respectively for residents, and two and four respectively for nonresidents. In 2025, the Board of Fisheries took action to reduce the regionwide bag limit of pelagic rockfish, for all anglers, from 5 to 3 fish and the possession limit from 10 to 6 fish. The Board of Fisheries also established a delegation of authority for pelagic rockfish with direction to differentiate by residency when using emergency order authority to reduce the harvest of pelagic

rockfish. Following this guidance, this emergency order reduces the nonresident bag and possession limit in the vicinity of Sitka but does not reduce resident harvest opportunity within the marine waters of the State of Alaska (0-3 nautical miles from shore). In the waters of the exclusive economic zone, all anglers must comply with the regulations established for nonresident anglers, including those established by this emergency order.

Although there is limited stock assessment information, there is evidence of a slight, but gradual decline in average length since 2006 in the Sitka Area pelagic rockfish sport harvest, suggesting a change in the population structure that may be a result of recent increases in harvest. This additional restriction for nonresidents is aimed at stabilizing harvest until additional stock information is available.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 1 office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P. O. Box 110024, Douglas, AK 99811, (907) 465-4270.