

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SHR-6-20-25

Issued at: Anchorage, Thursday, March 20, 2025

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Monday, September 15, 2025, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order decreases the number of shrimp pots allowed to harvest shrimp in the Prince William Sound noncommercial (sport and subsistence) shrimp fishery from five pots per person with a maximum of five pots per vessel to two pots per person with a maximum of two pots per vessel. Additionally, this emergency order reduces the open season for the Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery from April 15 – September 15 to May 1 – July 31.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 55.022(b)(5)(A) and (B) and 5 AAC 55.055(a)(3)(A) and (C) are superseded and 5 AAC 55.022(b)(5)(E) and 5 AAC 55.055(a)(3)(D), (E), and (F) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, April 15 through 11:59 p.m. Monday, September 15, 2025:

5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

(b) Unless specified in 5 AAC 55.023, or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the following are the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means that apply to sport fishing for shellfish in the Prince William Sound Area:

(5) shrimp may be taken as follows:

(A) may be taken from May 1 – July 31; no bag, possession, or size limits;

(B) no more than two pots per person, with no more than two pots per vessel, may be used to take shrimp;

(E) a vessel may only have one shrimp pot in addition to the legal limit of shrimp pot gear;

5 AAC 55.055. Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery management plan

(a) The department shall manage the sport and other noncommercial shrimp fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area as follows:

(3) shrimp may be taken with pots as follows:

(A) only from May 1 through July 31;

(C) no more than two pots per vessel may be used to take shrimp;

(D) a vessel may only have one shrimp pot in addition to the legal limit of shrimp pot gear;

(E) pots operated to take shrimp may be longlined; at least one buoy on the longline must be marked as required in 5 AAC 75.035(1);

(F) a crab pot may not be fished on a longline with a shrimp pot.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Brittany Blain-Roth
Brittany Blain-Roth
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The Prince William Sound (PWS) noncommercial management plan (5 AAC 55.055) allocates 60% of the total allowable harvest (TAH) of shrimp in the area to noncommercial fisheries (sport and subsistence). This 60% of the TAH represents the guideline harvest levels (GHL) for the noncommercial shrimp fisheries.

During the 2024 season the noncommercial shrimp fishery had a GHL of 70,214 pounds. With a restriction of two pots close to the ports of Valdez and Whittier and three pots outside of the ports, harvest was estimated at 77,832 pounds of shrimp and was over the GHL by 7,618 pounds. The 2025 TAH is 80,646 pounds of shrimp, providing the noncommercial fishery a GHL of 48,388 pounds (60% of the TAH). The 2025 noncommercial GHL is the lowest GHL since the Prince William Sound noncommercial shrimp fishery management plan was implemented in 2009. While there is shrimp biomass available for harvest, Prince William Sound shrimp are in a period of declining productivity based on the fishery independent survey data and surplus production model results.

Due to the decrease in the 2025 GHL, both a pot and seasonal restriction is warranted to not exceed the noncommercial GHL. To maintain as much opportunity possible without exceeding the available GHL, participants will be limited to two pots throughout all of PWS, per person with no more than two pots per vessel in addition to a shortened season from May 1 – July 31.

DISTRIBUTION:

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