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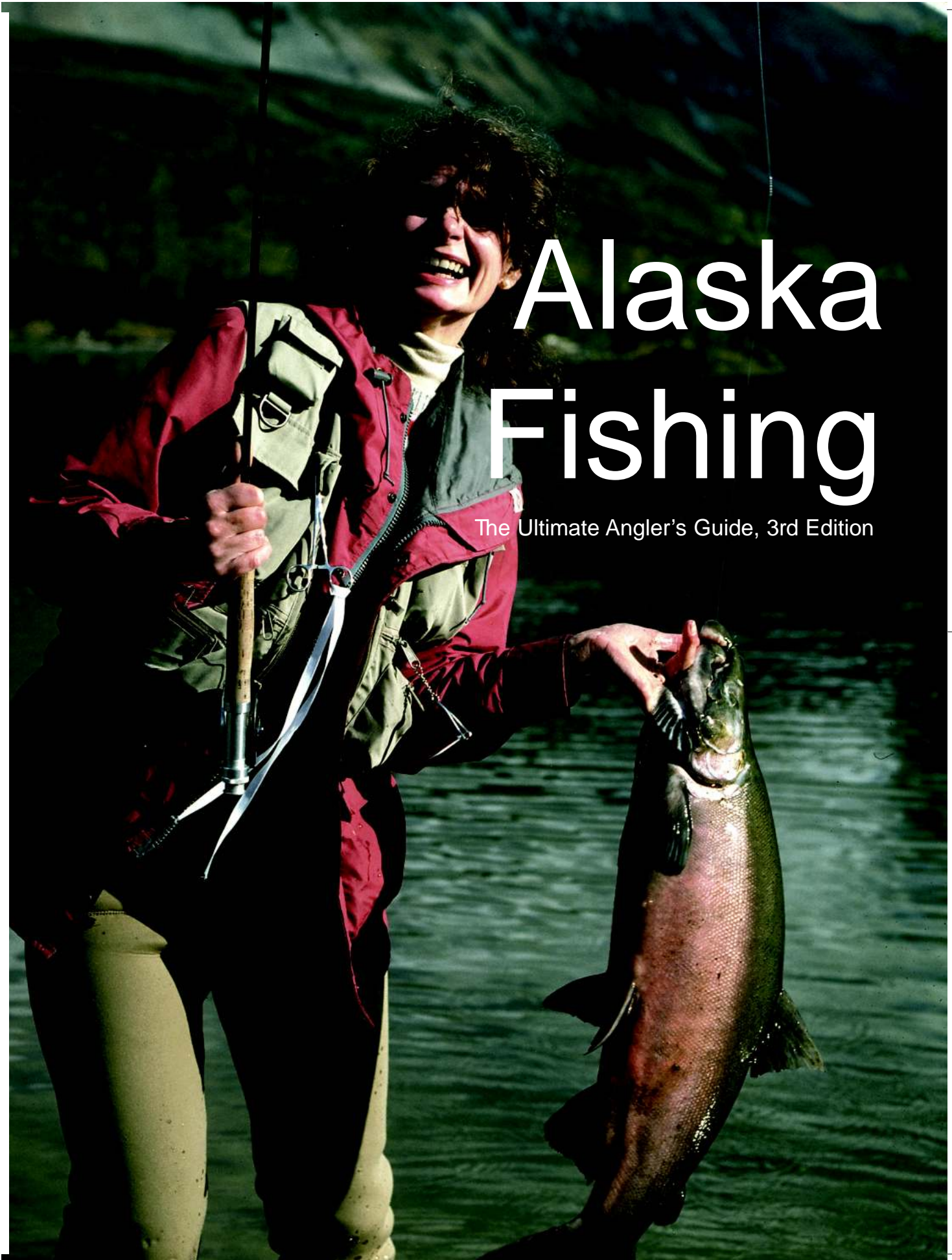
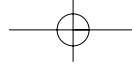
Alaska Fishing

The Ultimate Angler's Guide, Deluxe 3rd Edition

All species – All methods – Detailed info on over 300 of Alaska's best locations

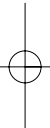
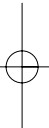


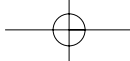
Compiled by René Limeres and Gunnar Pedersen



Alaska Fishing

The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition





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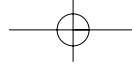
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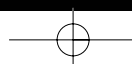
Alaska Fishing

The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition

Compiled by

Rene Limeres & Gunnar Pedersen

PUBLISHERS DESIGN GROUP
ROSEVILLE, CA 95678



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In compiling the information used in the various editions of *Alaska Fishing* we consulted with hundreds of folks all across Alaska—guides, charter boat captains, lodge owners, pilots, biologists, sport anglers, tackle and fly shops, etc.—who were kind enough to share their expertise to help us “fill in the blanks” on the vast and varied fishing possibilities in our behemoth state. To attempt to mention all who provided assistance over the years would be a massive undertaking, certain to fill many pages of this publication (and no doubt still miss many important individuals), so a giant heartfelt “Thanks!” must suffice here for those who helped with the earlier editions.

Among the many we are indebted to for this new book, foremost is the wonderful group of collaborators and advisors who worked long and hard on *Alaska Fishing II*. Special thanks must go to those who went above and beyond in their generosity answering countless questions and providing all kinds of material and necessary critique to make this book most complete, accurate, and comprehensive: Tony Weaver, Tom Cappiello, Gay Souza, Peter Hardy, Kurt Iverson, and others. Also worthy of mention are the great photographers who so willingly (and expeditiously) submitted so many of their most stunning images for consideration, many of which made it in to the pages of *Alaska Fishing II*: Ian O’Keefe, Tony Weaver, Nick Jans, Claus Lotscher, Greg Syverson, Tom Cappiello, Chris Palle, Doug Wilson, Bob Butterfield, Dave Vedder, Mark Emery, Corey Schwanke, Andy Hahn, Bill Buckley, Dody Morrison, and others.

We want to thank all the individuals who so graciously provided information and photos of record catches for the interesting sidebars that appear in some of the species chapters: Paul Kanitz, Daniel Thorsness, Ted Rainer, Larry Hudnall, Rick Thynes, and Les Anderson.

A very special thanks to William Hickman who spent countless hours laboring on the many fine maps and other numerous illustrations used in this new edition. For all your hard work and untiring support, Bill, a debt is owed that can never be fully repaid.

Gunnar Pedersen did a remarkable job of researching much of the original material that *Alaska Fishing II* is based on, and helped tremendously in updating and critiquing this new edition. We are very grateful for his involvement and the authority it adds to the book.

Countless individuals and businesses involved in the Alaska sport and commercial fishing industries shared generously of their knowledge of local waters and conditions, to whom we are most grateful. (Many are listed under “Recommended Services” throughout the locations descriptions sections of the book; please give them your support whenever you can.)

Numerous personnel—far too many to mention—within the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, US Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies were extremely forthcoming with assistance, providing considerable information on local fisheries. We are most grateful for all their help.

It would be remiss not to mention the considerable support and patience of our loving spouses and significant others through the long and difficult process of getting this book together. We couldn’t have done it without you; love to you all!

Last, but certainly not least, this book would never have happened without the extremely competent guidance and expertise (not to mention saintly patience) of Robert Brekke of Publishers Design Group, who oversaw the project from initial design to publication to fulfillment. To him, and his talented staff, we are indebted tremendously.

Alaska Fishing

The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition



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- Gunnar Pedersen
- William Hickman
- Tom Cappiello
- Peter Hardy
- Tony Weaver
- Gary Souza
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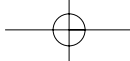
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THE CONTRIBUTORS

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Rene Limeres

Principal editor and major contributor for the new book. Has been involved in Alaska sportfishing and the media for years, as a professional guide (Southwest Alaska), outdoors writer/photographer, publisher of the award winning *Alaska Hunting and Fishing Calendar* and former editor of *The Alaska Professional Hunter*. Many of his photographs appear throughout the book as well.



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Gunnar Pedersen

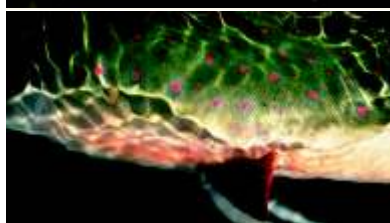
Spent his childhood in Norway and adolescence fishing the rivers, lakes and bays of Southcentral Alaska. Eventually became a top notch guide and successful author/publisher of the best selling fishing book on the 49th state *The Highway Angler*. Provided updates and compiled new information for many of the chapters in this new book.



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Thomas Cappiello

Biologist and lifelong hardcore sport angler (and IGFA World Record holder), he has over twenty years experience fishing and researching in Alaska. He provided updates on Cutthroat Trout and two new, detailed chapters on Rockfish and Lingcod, in addition to many superb photographs that appear throughout the book.



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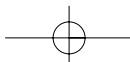
Resides in Ketchikan, a confirmed steelhead, trout, and salmon addict, who has fished extensively throughout the Northwest, conducted steelhead seminars, fly casting clinics, and been a guide, charter boat captain (and minister) in Southeast for many years. For this new edition, he revised and expanded his excellent Steelhead chapter, and generously shared his expertise to make the Saltwater Salmon chapter more complete and accurate. His assistance in checking facts in many of the southern Southeast locations descriptions was invaluable.



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Peter Hardy

A lifelong Alaskan of Anchorage, the state's "Halibut Guru" and extremely knowledgeable salmon fisherman (and super nice guy), he updated his thorough chapter on Halibut and provided information and critique on the King Salmon chapter and others.

Kurt Iverson

Lives in Juneau and has many years experience as a fishing guide, commercial fisherman, fish and wildlife technician, and currently fisheries analyst with the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. With his extensive expertise, he did a beautiful job revising and expanding the section on northern Southeast Alaska.

Les Palmer

Outdoors writer and avid angler of Sterling, has been living in and fishing Alaska for forty years. He writes a weekly column for the *Peninsula Clarion* and contributes regularly to *Alaska Magazine*. We were delighted to have him write a chapter on Salmon Sharks.

Tony Weaver

Resides in Anchorage and is a well recognized authority on flycasting and fly-fishing Alaska. The Alaska Council President for the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) and Certified Master Fly Casting Instructor, Tony is also chief technical editor for *Fish Alaska Magazine*. He's fished extensively all around Alaska and the world and, for this book, we were proud to have him as general flyfishing advisor and author of many of the flyfishing sections that appear in the species chapters.

William Hickman

Resides in Anchorage, and is a talented illustrator and retired Alaskan homesteader. From his initial renderings for the first two editions, Bill spent considerable time developing the many color illustrations and maps used in the new book.

Ken Alt

Resides in Fairbanks, and did pioneer fish inventories and research in western Alaska for ADF&G. He is now a fisheries consultant and, for this new edition, he updated his excellent chapter on Sheefish and critiqued many of the chapters.

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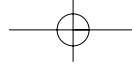


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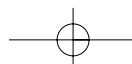




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Although the authors and publisher have made every effort to ensure the information contained in Alaska Fishing, The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition correct, certain inaccuracies may be unavoidable with the uncertainty of Alaska's fish runs and rapidly changing economic factors. (As this book went to press, oil prices were reaching record highs with predictable impact on nearly every facet of Alaska's tourist industry.) We apologize for any inconvenience or travel disruption caused by errors or omissions, but assume no responsibility for factors beyond our control that may affect the accuracy of this book.

We would appreciate if readers would call our attention to any errors or outdated information they find in the book by writing us at:

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PREFACE

This guide is the latest version of a book that had its beginnings during a long, snowbound winter over ten years ago, with an idea born among some Alaskan fishing guides to create a complete and authoritative reference on fishing their state.

The remoteness and immensity of Alaska place some very real limitations on anyone's ability to fully experience (and write accurately about) the vast range of fishing possibilities available across this state. For this reason, the plan from the start was to have a collaborative effort of experienced resident fishing guides, outdoors writers, biologists, hard-core sport anglers, etc., sharing their expertise to create a level of comprehensiveness, accuracy, and insight never before achieved in a guide to fishing Alaska's many waters.

There are many resources available for anyone who wants to take the time to research information on Alaska's fisheries. Like others who have written on Alaska's sportfishing, for baseline information on species' ecology, major fisheries, harvests, status, etc., we relied heavily on the published research, management reports, inventories, annual surveys, personal communications, etc., of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other agencies, state and federal.

Beyond that, however, for the detailed technical sections and much of the information that appears in the many locations descriptions, we drew more from the input of our collaborators and dozens like them—air taxi pilots, charter boat skippers, fishing guides, lodge owners, outfitters, etc., from across Alaska. Their years of experience over a wide range of conditions has given them a practical knowledge of local fishing that is second to none.

In our original development of the book, we wanted to give readers a much more complete and holistic understanding than could be conveyed through the standard rundown of major species and techniques, so we broadened the scope to include overviews of the state's six geographic regions and the various settings (and challenges) they provide for sportfishing. To be more thorough (and to please our publisher), we included detailed descriptions of the most important fishing locations—over 250 river, stream, lake, bay, island, and strait hotspots across Alaska.

With its encyclopedic treatment, including many appendices and cross-referenced index, *Alaska Fishing* broke new ground as the first truly complete and integrated reference of its kind. The response overall from the public and critics was positive; many hailed it as a definitive angling guide, the new "Alaska fishing bible." The book sold out and a revised second edition was released a few years later, which proved equally popular.

Now with this long overdue, completely updated, expanded, and reformatted *Alaska Fishing: The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition* we have fully realized the original dream by creating a guide that is most complete, comprehensive, and attractive, covering all major sport species in Alaska's fresh and salt waters, with many new locations, dozens of new maps and charts, and hundreds of color illustrations, including many gorgeous photos that capture the grandeur, beauty, and excitement of sportfishing in Alaska. We hope you find it very useful and enjoyable.

—Rene Limeres
Anchorage, 2004

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The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition

INTRODUCTION

Alaska looms in our imagination as a vast north-ethics, cultural and historical significance of fisheries, ern frontier, ich in mystique and natural wonders. and many other topics that, hopefully, will give greater The former prize of Russia, home of the Eskimo (and knowledge and awareness of Alaska and its emark- Tlingit and Athapascan), land of gold ash dreams, able fisheries.

and America's last great wilderness, it has always been But just as fishing Alaska is about so much more (and perhaps always will be) a place to inspire wonder than catching fish, this new guide, in its writing and and the adventurous spirit in us all. graphics, attempts to convey a sense of the consider-

Much about the 49th state is superlative and able romance involved in fishing the Last Frontier. unique. tl has North America's tallest mountains, With its undiminished wild fish populations, magnif- largest rainforests, biggest glaciers, most awesomeicent, unspoiled landscapes, and solitude, Alaska is scenery, largest animals, et., and just about every unique in a world of put-and-take hatchery fishing, school kid can tell you it's more than twice the size of crowds, and urban blight.

Texas. But less known, perhaps, is that—due to its In researching and compiling this book, we were location, physiography, lack of development, and the constantly amazed by the diversity of fishing experi- divine grace of Nature—Alaska sustains some of the ences possible in Alaska, each with its own flavor and most remarkably abundant and diverse cold water possibilities. You can visit remote lakes in the Brooks fisheries on the planet. While the rest of the world's Range and share the same camps, fishing and timeless fishing regions yield only a shadow of their former vistas as ancient Eskimo hunters did millenia ago, fish wild bounty due to the ravages of man, Alaska's watersparkling southwest rivers where fat rainbow trout continue to produce a staggering surplus of prime and charr fight each other for your fly (while thou- sand-pound brown bears ply nearby shallows for din-

For sport anglers, this richness is spread out over aer), or lose yourself for days on a Huck Finn log raft vast, diverse, and challenging environment. Thee are adventure down a giant Interior river, with fabulous countless rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, and ponds, and ike, sheefish, and gaying opportunities around a coastline longer than that of the contiguous states every bend. And then there are the countless sheltered filled with an amazing variety of coveted species, in bays along the southern coast, whee you can heave terrain that can vary from lush coastal rainforest to out some pots, drop a line or two and, in shot order, barren arctic tundra. have the makings for a feast fit for an emperor.

Understandably, the state's immensity, remote- (Just as interesting, perhaps, are the colorful char- ness, notorious conditions, and seemingly limitless actors who run the lodges, air taxis, and guide and fishing possibilities can overwhelm and even intimi-outfitting services in some of these farflung places. date potential Alaska anglers. Faced with so many They are the last of a vanishing breed, Alaska's true options, confusing claims and misinformation, even pioneers.)

seasoned world anglers may find it difficult, if not There is all this and more, of course, in the vast impossible, to make intelligent choices in their trip territory of fishing dreams that stretches from the coast of British Columbia to the Arctic Ocean. Thee

For these beleaguered, would-be Alaska anglers are endless, fish-till-you-drop summer days, frosty, and for the armchair dreamers of the world, we offer aurora-filled nights on fall trout safaris, an amazing this, the thid edition of the most comprehensive and pageant of wildlife through the seasons to liven every insightful guide to fishing the world's ultimate coldwa-outing, and a feeling of being connected to something ter angling destination. h its pages you will find every-so much bigger than the humdrum of everyday life thing you need to know (and a whole lot more) to sorback in "civilization."

through the hype and fill in the gray areas on the how, May it always be so.

when, and whee of fishing America's greatest state. It is our sincerest hope that you find this guide

Beyond the basic information that any decent useful in furthering your understanding, apprecia- guide should provide *Alaska Fishing III* delves into tion, and exploration of one of the last truly great fish behavior and habits, regional geography and cliplaces for the adventure angler.

mate, topy and record fish information, fishing

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is a comprehensive guide for anyone seeking greater knowledge on angling in Alaska regardless of previous fishing experience. It is designed and written to be an easy to use, integrated reference on the state's major sport species, and best fishing locations. It is highly recommended that you read it in its entirety. However, time and desire dictate otherwise, you can easily navigate through the various sections to access information on a particular species, region, or location of interest. If you know the name of the area you'd like to fish (bay, inlet, lake, creek, river system, etc.), use the index in the back of the book to find the corresponding page. If you'd like to travel to a particular part of Alaska and want to find out what kind of fishing is available there, turn to the region chapters to read about that area. If you're interested in knowing which areas provide good fishing for a particular species, turn to the appropriate species chapter and consult the summary pages at the end for a list of the major sportfishing locations for that species (many of which will be described in detail in the appropriate locations section).

Species Chapters

We expanded the Alaska Species Section to include all major gamefish in the state's fresh and salt waters—17 species—plus a chapter on the specific conditions and techniques involved in fishing Alaska's saltwater salmon. We have purposely omitted any detailed information on fishes of minor importance—burbot, whitefish, greenling, cod, etc. This certainly does not imply that you'll find no good opportunities to fish these species in Alaska. Readers who want more information on any of the minor sport species available in Alaska should contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (local, regional, and state offices listed throughout the book).

The species chapters can be an invaluable resource for trip planning. In addition to comprehensive information on the life histories, status, and habits of Alaska's major game species, and the most effective techniques and gear used, they feature tips on the best locations and times for fishing. For each species, we provide a list of top trophy specimens and the locations they were captured; this information is compiled from 40 years of records gathered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game under their annual

Trophy Fish Awards program. Keep in mind that, because of the vastness of the state and remoteness of many of the fishing locations, not all trophy hotspots are listed, and there may be some yet to be discovered. Detailed species summaries are provided at the end of each chapter, along with a list of the major Alaska locations where they are found.

Locations Descriptions

For each region, we describe in detail the major sportfishing areas and the very best lake, stream, and marine fishing locations. To aid in trip planning (and to save space), we list the following useful information at the beginning of each location description:

Location Name/Rating: The name of a lake, stream, river, bay, or strait, plus three or four star rating if it ranks among the best in Alaska.

Location: The distance and direction of each location from reference points, usually major cities or towns.

Access: The major access options for locations.

Facilities: The available public/private facilities for each location.

About River Running

For many rivers we use the following international scale to rate difficulty **floating** (by raft, canoe, kayak):

Class I Moving water with some riffles and waves, suitable for beginners.

Class II Small rapids with standing waves to three feet high, for boaters of some experience.

Class III Rapids with high waves, may require scouting or difficult maneuvering; for intermediate boaters.

Class IV Long, difficult rapids, canoe or small open boat unsafe; for high level experienced boaters.

Class V Extremely hazardous, long and/or violent rapids, requiring "lining" or portages; for experts only

Class VE Extreme white water, usually floodwater conditions and rare locations; top experts only.

This general scale is for normal water levels; Alaska river conditions can change swiftly and dramatically, so caution is the rule.

Alaska Fishing *xiii*

The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3rd Edition

Highlights: The major highlights of each location. (Here and elsewhere throughout the book we may use a variety of adjectives such as: "outstanding," "superb," "excellent," "great," "decent," "good," and "fair" to describe the fishing, which hopefully will be meaningful and not too subjective for most folks. Keep in mind that this is Alaska, where even "fair" fishing can far surpass anything most people are used to in home waters.)

Major Species: The major species of interest that each location is known for. (For a complete list of all the species available at each location, consult the fish charts at the end of each location section.) To save space, the following abbreviated versions of fish species are used:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| KS -king salmon | SS -silver salmon |
| RS -red salmon | KO -kokanee |
| PS -pink salmon | CS -chum salmon |
| RT -rainbow trout | CT -cutthroat trout |
| ST -steelhead trout | CHR -charr |
| DV -Dolly Varden charr | LT -lake trout |
| NP -northern pike | SF -sheefish |
| GR -arctic grayling | HT -halibut |
| LC -lingcod | RF -rockfish |
| BF -bottomfish (halibut, lingcod and rockfish) | |
| SHK -salmon shark | |

Additional information is compiled at the end of each locations section to help with trip planning: US Geological Survey topographic contour map (scale 1:63,360) and, where applicable, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Nautical Chart references for each listing; a list of recommended local contacts for services (guides, outfitters, air taxis, charters, etc.); state and federal contacts for public lands information; and a brief summary of pertinent area/regional Alaska Department of Fish and Game Regulations and contact information. We have made every effort to include the most current contact information, including web addresses. When planning your trip, please consult these contacts for assistance with your vacation planning.

Many of the rivers and lakes listed are on public lands, incorporated into national wildlife refuges, parks, forests, preserves or part of our Wild and Scenic River System. Contact the agencies listed (see appendix also) for important information on access, use and management of these waters.

Note: Use the information given on locations only as a general guide for trip planning. Conditions vary from year to year, even from month to month, on many Alaska waters. Consult with local sources before making any final trip arrangements. Check with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the latest Regulations Information and Emergency Orders that may affect your fishing.

Region Overviews

The region overviews provide synopses of the salient features and highlights of the state's six major fishing regions as pertains to the terrain, weather and fishing conditions, fisheries, and availability and relative costs of visitor services. Regional maps, climate tables, and sun timing charts provide additional useful information for trip planning.

For the purposes of this book, the state is divided into six separate regions, following, more or less, the standard physiographic provinces recognized by the state's geographers:

Arctic: (ARC) The north slope of the Brooks Range to the Arctic Ocean, from Point Hope to the Canadian border.

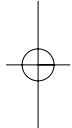
Interior: (INT) The central part of the state between the Alaska and Brooks ranges, bounded by the Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River on the west and the Canadian border on the east.

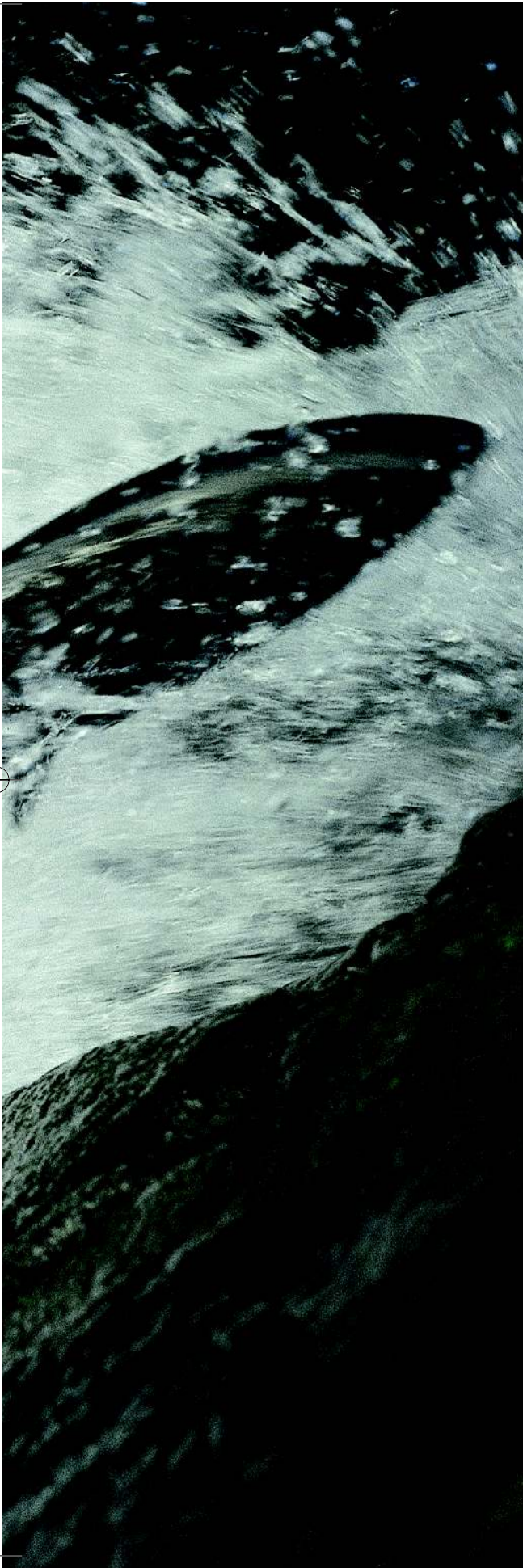
Northwest: (NW) The drainages of Norton and Kotzebue sounds and the Chukchi Sea, south of the northern Brooks Range lakes (southern slope).

Southwest: (SW) The Alaska Peninsula and Aleutians, Bristol Bay, and lower Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers.

Southcentral: (SC) Alaska's North Gulf Coast from Cape Suckling to Shelikof Strait, including the Kenai Peninsula and the Kodiak/Afog-nak/Shuyak Island complex.

Southeast: (SE) The Panhandle from Dixon Entrance to Icy Bay (and coastal streams to Cape Suckling).

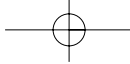




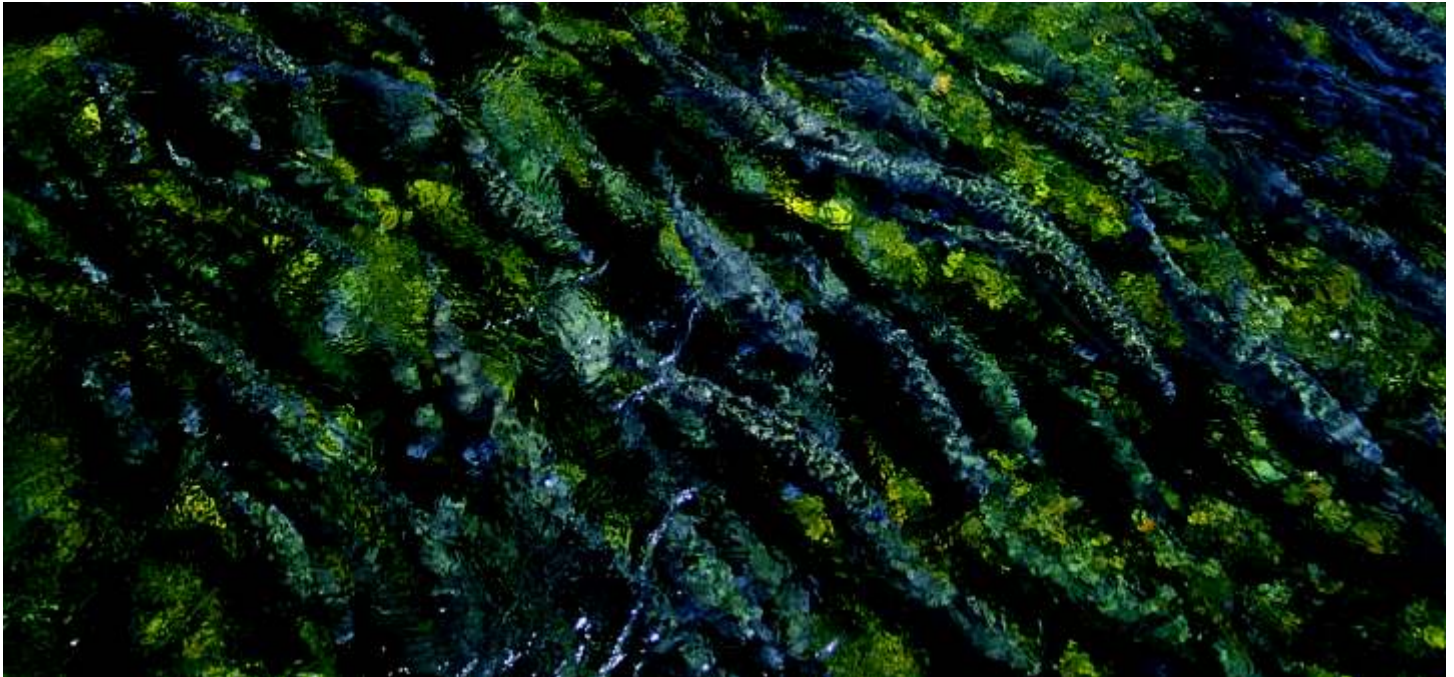
Gamefishes of Alaska

Of the 17 major Alaska gamefishes detailed in this publication, twelve belong to one of the world's most significant and successful families of coldwater fishes, the salmonids—the salmons, charrs, trout, whitefishes, graylings, and three other lesser groups of fishes (70 species in all), native to oceans, lakes, and streams of the northern hemisphere. Besides their preference for clean, cold, highly oxygenated water, all fishes of this family possess similar physical characteristics, like streamlined bodies, forked tails, and adipose fins (the small rounded fins topside just ahead of the tail), and live in fresh water or split their life residence between rivers and the sea (called anadromy). Alaska, encompassing most of the rich northeast Pacific basin, has an abundance of suitable habitat and forage to support large numbers of these coveted food and game fishes, much to the envy of the rest of the world.

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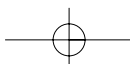
2 *Alaska Fishing: The Ultimate Angler's Guide, 3d Edition*

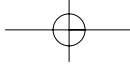


Alaska's Pacific Salmon

salmon are at risk from larger pelagic fishes like sharks, giant halibut, and lingcod, along with marine mammal (fifteen species of seals, whales, dolphins and sea lions prey on them) and high seas fisheries intercept salmon. Part of an ancient lineage that traces its beginnings some 40 million years ago, Pacific salmon evolved during the Pliocene (the period before the last ice age, over a million years ago) into the species now found in the North Pacific. (Five species are native to Alaska.) Their historical success is due to remarkable life history adaptations that allow them to exploit the region's abundant cool streams for protected spawning and rearing habitat, and the rich coastal and offshore marine waters to quickly attain adult size and complete their life cycle. Of the thousands of eggs laid and fertilized by a breeding pair, only a few offspring survive to return as mature adults to spawn and continue the cycle. (Breeding is terminal for all Pacific salmon.)

The annual return of millions of Pacific salmon into countless rivers, lakes, and streams along the southern and western coasts of Alaska has significance as a metaphor for life's perilous fight for survival. From the moment the eggs are laid, these fish face constant attrition from all manner of depredations. Other fish, including juvenile salmon, will actively seek out the rich roe for food and feed heavily on emerging fry or migrating smolts. Diving birds like terns, loons, kingfishers, and mergansers also take their toll. Alaska's capricious weather and fluctuating river conditions to the food chains of waters that would otherwise be quite sterile and unproductive.





Salmon-Steelhead Life Cycle Glossary

Alevin: newly hatched fish with yolk sac still attached.

Fry: post-alevin juvenile fish stage.

Parr: post-fry juvenile fish stage, prior to smolting.

Smolt: young salmon preparing to enter the sea (2-5").

Buck/Cock: a sexually mature male fish.

Hen: a sexually mature female fish.

Jack: precocious, sexually mature male fish.

Kelt: outmigrating, spawned out steelhead or Atlantic salmon.

Milt: salmon sperm.

Redd: salmon nest.

Roe: salmon eggs.

Alaska's Trout and Charr

Among the many creatures that benefit from the presence of so many salmon are Alaska's fabulously diverse trout and charr populations, unequaled anywhere else in the world for their variety and abundance (except perhaps the northeastern coast of Siberia and the Kamchatka Peninsula). Closely allied with the salmon, Alaska's five species of *Coregonus* and *Salvelinus* spp. share many of the same traits, including anadromy in some instances, and include some of our continent's most prized gamefishes (steelhead, rainbow, and cutthroat trout).

Except in waters of the Arctic and isolated lakes and ponds, most of Alaska's trout and charr have life histories that are intertwined with those of the Pacific salmon. Their feeding habits and seasonal movements revolve around the salmon life cycle activities, and many of the angling strategies used to entice them are not identical. This aspect is covered in great detail in the species chapters that follow.)

Alaska's Grayling and Whitefishes

This important group of salmonid fishes (comprised of two subfamilies) includes some eight species or more in Alaska, with only two of signifi-

cant sportfish potential, the arctic grayling *Thymallus arcticus* and the world's largest whitefish, the sheefish *Stenodus leucichthys*. These fish differ somewhat from the salmon, trout and charrs, having larger scales, smaller girth and, except for grayling, an absence of markings. Their distribution in Alaska is widespread.

Alaska's Pike

Alaska's sole representative of this unique worldwide group of fishes (order *Esoxiformes*) is the northern pike, *Esox lucius*. An important sport species, very widespread, particularly in the vast lowland habitat of Alaska's Interior (and parts of Southwest and Northwest), the northern pike has a distinctive appearance and demeanor that endears it to many anglers.

Alaska's Saltwater Gamefishes

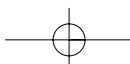
(For the purposes of this publication, the various species of salmon taken in saltwater are grouped together in the Alaska Saltwater Salmon chapter.)

The rockfishes are a very large and important group (family *Scorpaenidae*) of shallow to deep water, long-lived ocean fishes, with more than 30 species found along the southern coast of Alaska. Recognized by their bass-like shape, attractive coloration and spiny (venomous) fins, rockfishes are significant to Alaska sport anglers because of their abundance, vigor, and fine eating qualities.

The Pacific halibut, *Hippoglossus stenolepis*, is perhaps the most prized species of flatfish in the world because of the size it attains and unexcelled eating qualities. In Alaska it is pursued diligently by a well-developed commercial and charter fleet along the southern coast. It can be taken with simple techniques and stout gear in a variety of waters throughout the year.

The fearsome lingcod, *Ophiodon elongatus*, is an interesting bottom dweller and important sport species found throughout the open waters along Alaska's rocky Pacific and North Gulf coasts (usually occupying similar habitats as the ubiquitous rockfishes).

Salmon shark, *Lamna ditropis*, is a streamlined, high speed predator attracted in seasonal localized concentrations by the great numbers of returning salmon along the North Gulf Coast. It has only recently been recognized as a sport species, with a growing interest from the sport and charter fleets.



Arctic
 Extreme climate creates short open water season with limited diversity of game fish species. Remoteness and lack of infrastructure make for challenging logistics and the most expensive and limited services of any region of state.
 Main species: T, GR, CHR
 Climate: Arctic maritime to transitional arctic continental.

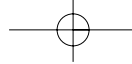
Interior
 Well-developed infrastructure with wide range of guided and unguided options for anglers, at comparable prices to other regions. Consistently offers the state's best weather and fishing conditions, June to mid-September.
 Main species: SF, NP, GR, IT, SS, KS
 Climate: Extreme continental.

Northwest
 More remote, with limited infrastructure, less visitor services and higher prices than most Alaska regions (but with unique angling potential).
 Main Species: GR, IT, NP, SF, SS, CHR
 Climate: Sub-arctic maritime to continental.



Southwest
 Remote, roadless, fly-in fishing exclusively with services geared to multi-day, guided fishing experiences—lodge, remote outpost, and float trips. Costs higher than comparable services in SC, SE, INT.
 Main Species: KS, SS, RS, CS, RT, GR, CHR, IT, NP
 Climate: Northern maritime to transitional continental.

Southcentral
 Centrally located with very well developed infrastructure (including good roads) and abundant visitor services; prices among the lowest anywhere in Alaska.
 Main Species: KS, SS, RS, PS, RT, HF, LC, DV, IT
 Climate: North Temperate Maritime-Transitional Continental.



Species Legend

- KS-king salmon
- SS-silver salmon
- RS-red salmon
- KO-kokanee
- PS-pink salmon
- CS-chum salmon
- RT-rainbow trout
- CT-cutthroat trout
- ST-steelhead trout
- CHR-charr
- DV-Dolly Varden charr
- LF-lake trout
- NP-northern pike
- SF-sheefish
- GR-arctic grayling
- HT-halibut
- LC-lingcod
- RF-rockfish
- BF-bottomfish (halibut/lingcod/rockfish)
- SHK-salmon shark



Southeast

Very well developed infrastructure, but no connecting roads to mainland. Abundant visitor services offering unmatched range of options for fishing vacations. Prices comparable or lower than elsewhere in Alaska. Has extended open water season, to twelve months in some areas.
 Main Species: KS, SS, CS, PS, HT, RF, LC, ST, CT, DV
 Climate: North temperate maritime.



Regions Overview

Southwest

Maritime region, from Alaska Peninsula to Norton Sound. Fabulously endowed with prolific salmon and trout fisheries and the state's best stream fishing. Known for trophy rainbow trout, king silver and red salmon, charr, and grayling. Country mostly rolling upland tundra with forested lowlands, clear flowing rivers, and Alaska's largest lakes.

Northwest

The coastal drainages from Norton Sound to Point Hope, including western Brooks Range. The country varies from broken boreal forests to arctic tundra, coastal lowlands to expansive mountain valleys and peaks. A lesser inhabited and visited region, with diversity of fine lake, river, and stream fishing opportunities, especially for trophy sheefish, charr, and grayling.

Interior

Alaska's heartland, province of giant rivers and countless associated lowland lakes and sloughs, vast birch and spruce forests and extremes of heat and cold. Fishing lacks the diversity of coastal regions, but offers perhaps Alaska's most abundant opportunities for northern pike, sheefish, and grayling.

Southcentral

The mainland along the north Gulf, Alaska's most populous region. Offers greatest diversity of fishing with marine, stream, and upland lake opportunities that are very representative of the broad range of fishing experiences Alaska has to offer. Country varied, from coastal rainforest to alpine tundra, lowland valleys to rugged mountains.

Arctic

The state's most northerly, remote, and uninhabited region. Known for its superlative wilderness, wildlife, and extreme climate. Country is treeless arctic tundra, from lake-dotted coastal plain to foothills and rugged mountain peaks and valleys. With exemplary wild rivers and lakes—among Alaska's most pristine—this region has potential for high quality angling experiences.

Southeast

Alaska's "panhandle," known for its superlative saltwater fishing—Alaska's best—and abundant stream fishing for cutthroat and steelhead trout. This region is comprised of rugged, densely forested coastline, with countless islands and protected waters; almost all streams and lakes are small compared to mainland.

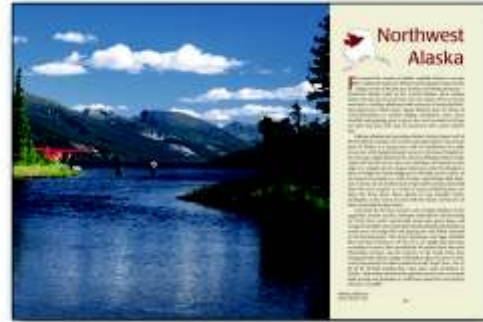


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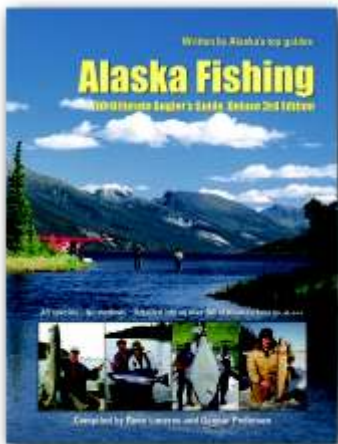


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