

Kenai Current



2017: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2017 fishing season on the Kenai Peninsula and surrounding waters was excellent overall. It featured very few lows and countless highs and will be largely remembered as a rebound year for king salmon. After recent years with less than stellar king returns, this past season did feature some of the best king salmon action we have seen in several years.

The season began as usual on the Kasilof, a smaller glacially turbid river south of the Kenai. This year king salmon run projections for the Kasilof were on the healthy side so no preseason restrictions were in place and we started as we would on a "normal" year: bait and multiple hooks beginning on May 16. The bait opener did not disappoint and with only a handful of boats, several kings were landed, and the season was officially off to a great start. This combined run of both hatchery and wild king salmon never looked back and we fished it daily with great success well into mid-June. The annual peak of the run seemed to occur between late May and the second week of June. We are expecting a similar if not better season in 2018 as the hatchery portion of the run continues to build.

The Kenai river this summer stayed relatively low throughout most of the king season and this meant most of the best fishing occurred in the lower tidal portions of the river. The early run of kings was a very good one with lots of big fish. The peak of this return happened in the first two weeks of June and with the low flows, the fish made their way upriver and beyond the reach of fishing pressure in rapid fashion. The strong return even prompted ADF&G to open the lower river to the use of bait and retention of fish up to 46 inches beginning June 21, but

the liberalization came well after the peak of the run and resulted in very little change to fishing success.

July seemed to arrive very quickly this season as May and June were very busy. With it came several entirely new runs of king salmon and sockeye on both the Kenai and the Kasilof and much like the early runs, they were consistent and strong. The Kasilof late run of king salmon was good throughout the month of July with the last week to ten-days of the season being best. On the Kenai, the late run of Kings was up and down with the favorable tide cycles and commercial fishing openers, but overall it was good with lots of big, healthy fish. Again, fishing success was greatest in the lower, tidal reaches of the river and the last week to ten days of the season was game on. The sockeye salmon run on the Kenai was also very good. We did not see any stand out days where hundreds of thousands of fish passed the counters in a single day. Instead, the run spread itself out in a

(Continued on next page)



YEAR IN REVIEW: 2017

CONTINUED...

more even fashion with 15-30K fish days being more the norm. The run began in the first week to ten days of July and lasted for several consecutive weeks. We actually saw very good sockeye salmon fishing well into August, with the total run coming in at well over 1 million fish! Aside from a select few trips, we enjoyed limit catches on most days.

After a very poor silver return in 2016, many were anxious to see if the coho would be more plentiful in 2017. These hopes were rewarded as we saw a robust 2017 silver return to the Kenai River and really all drainages Cook Inlet wide. It was a welcome rebound and around August 10, we started to transition away from the still abundant sockeye in search of fresh silvers entering the lower river. With each passing tide, the run continued to build, and the average size of the fish was very impressive. The early run remained strong well into late August and was followed up by another strong run that peaked in mid to late September and continued well into October. Although the river was low for most of the summer, an ice dam in the mountains let go in late August and the river finally came up to just below flood level for the first time of the season. The Kenai stayed at moderate levels relatively late into the fall before overnight freezing temps finally dropped the river substantially and winter conditions ensued.

Trout fishing provided a lot of action this season as usual, and followed its typical peaks. One interesting detail about the June and early July season was the low clear water. In the section of the Kenai below Skilak Lake and above the Kiley River, visibility was up to ten feet with gin clear conditions. You could stand atop the bow of your boat and see pretty much every fish in the river. While it was fun to spot fish, the low, clear conditions were not the best for fishing. As the season progressed and more and more sockeye began to arrive in July, a large segment of the trout seemed to migrate lower in the river and into places where shore anglers were cleaning sockeye. We had many great trout



days, especially in the first week to ten days of August, when the carcass piles were at their peak. Trout fishing was excellent in the fall until the water came up from the ice dam release and then it seemed to spread out both the food and the fish. Now with the super low water and lots of spawning silvers still in the river, trout fishing is magical for those willing to hike or ski in and brave below freezing temps.

The Kenai has many different facets to explore and before we know it the 2018 summer season will be upon us. As we conclude our look back and say goodbye to an incredible 2017 season, it's always fun to look ahead to yet another summer on the horizon.

As always, we would like to thank everyone that chose to fish with us this past season, as without you our business would not be possible. I never take for granted the blessing of being able to do something I love for a career and all of you have helped make that a reality. Next year will be our 28th consecutive season guiding on the Kenai River and surrounding waters and Cindy and I sure hope you will consider joining us!

Great Fishing,

Mark, Cindy, Faith, Caleigh
and Emma Glassmaker

Fish On!



ALASKA FISHING WITH MARK GLASSMAKER
CALL TODAY: 1-800-622-1177

FISHING FOR GUIDES

Selecting guides to represent you and your business on the water is no easy task. Finding an individual willing to make the commitment and sacrifice to a full Alaska fishing season takes more than just the ability to catch a few fish, you really need to love doing it. The ability to make good money doing something you enjoy definitely comes at a cost. Long arduous hours and being able to adapt to a wide range of situations and personalities are just a couple factions of guide life. Cleaning boats, curing eggs, endless tackle prep and it soon becomes apparent actual fishing is only a small portion of the job. We feel abundantly fortunate to have a dedicated, well-rounded team of fishing professionals taking great care of our customers each and every day of the summer fishing season. From river guides on both the Kenai and the Kasilof to fly out guides to salt water captains, nothing is left to chance. We strive to provide the safest, most efficient and enjoyable fishing charters available. We absolutely appreciate how important the overall experience is and we want your trip to meet or exceed your expectations.



All that said, it is really all talk until the rubber hits the road or in this case, the aluminum hits the water. From that moment on you are really at the mercy of three things: Mother Nature, luck and your guide.

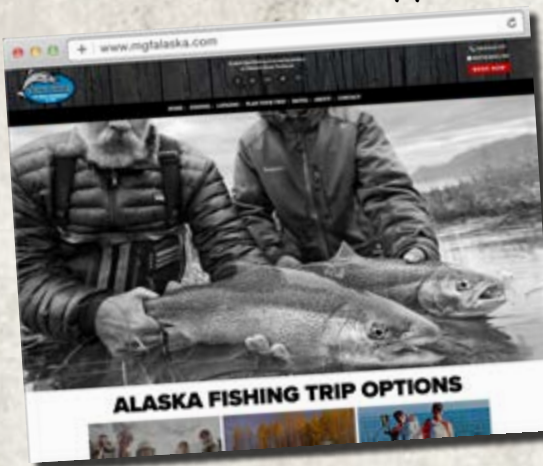
The first two you really have little to no control over but if you did your homework and made the right choice for an outfitter, you do have control over the third. Having the right guide truly can make or break your day and I'm not talking about catching fish or not. I'm referring to spending 8 plus hours with an individual and how that can either be a blessing or your worst nightmare. For me the ultimate affirmation of myself and my guides and the overall quality of the services that we provide is the percentage of return customers we see. Other

than a small budget for internet ads, we spend very little on advertising and therefore depend greatly on word of mouth and return business. We take every trip like its the only one we will guide all summer and it all starts with lots of prep work the night prior. Boats are washed, tackle is sorted and organized, bait prepared, there's always something else to get ready. Minimal sleep and early wake ups become the norm as the water becomes our home for months on end. Derek, Zack, Koehl and Scotty you all represent the highest level of sportfishing professionalism. I am lucky to work alongside you all and look forward to many great seasons ahead.



NEW WEBSITE DESIGN COMING SOON...

There will soon be a whole new look to www.mgfalaska.com While the current website has served us well for several years it was time to modernize the site. The newly designed www.mgfalaska.com will be live in early spring so please be sure to check it out. This site represents 28 years of helping people plan custom Alaska Fishing trips, it's truly hard to believe it has been that many years. So many individual and unique memories, and so many fish!



Thanks for the Reviews!

Cindy and I would also like to sincerely thank everyone that has taken the time to post such amazing reviews on Trip Advisor, Google, Yelp and the many other review sites out there these days. My guides and I approach each trip with 100% effort, professionalism and the sincere goal of giving you the best trip possible. Guiding is not just about catching fish, although we realize this is an important component, it's about the experience. After reading all the incredible reviews it is apparent we are achieving that memorable experience on our trips and our customers genuinely appreciate the attention to detail. That's very rewarding for us and again a huge thanks to those willing to take a moment and post a positive review, it really means a lot.

LOOKING FOR LOTS OF FISH AND LESS PEOPLE? TRY MAY AND JUNE!



With many excellent fishing options, May and June should not be overlooked.

May and June may be the most under-rated times to visit Alaska. For a variety of reasons, these months just do not seem to garner the attention that July, August or even September do. For us locals, May and June is spring time and things are still in an overall transitional state after Alaska's long cold winter months. But do not let the budding trees and the melting snow fool you, May and June offer some of the most unique and overall satisfying angling opportunities of the season.

Perhaps one of the most apparent trade-off is the number of people here. Unlike July and early August when we see the peak of our outside visitors combined with residents from across the state, May and June is largely a mix of locals, first time visitors and those that are here to specifically target early season fisheries.

Historically, one of the most popular early season fishing destinations is combination halibut and king salmon trips from Ninilchik/Deep Creek and Anchor Point. These two launches are done by skid loader tractors and the boats are launched directly into the Cook Inlet surf. From the beach you are 20 minutes to an hour from some of the best halibut fishing in Southcentral Alaska. Following schools of echelon (smelt), the halibut move in close from the Gulf of Alaska to feed. At the same time, migrating schools of kings are pushing north along the east side beaches and before or after putting a halibut limit in the box, boats will troll herring near shore for the chance at a strike. This trolling for kings can go from monotonous to full chaos in a matter of seconds and multiple hook ups are very common.

The salt water is far from the only show in town for those here in May and June. Despite a few not so distant years of low abundance, our early runs of king salmon have experienced a remarkable recovery in recent seasons. Early run king numbers on both the Kenai and the Kasilof have delivered some excellent fishing in the last two years. The Kasilof has been especially productive with its combined run of both hatchery and naturally produced kings. ADF&G has increased the amount of hatchery fish they stock in Crooked Creek, a small tributary of the Kasilof. This, combined with a strong return of wild fish, has resulted in lots of fresh kings arriving in May and June. From the opening day of bait on May 16, until as late as the third and fourth week of June, the Kasilof early run just keeps on delivering. The hatchery fish also allow for



more liberal rules including two-fish limit seven days a week and retention of either hatchery or wild fish on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Bait, multiple hooks, and the ability to fish after retaining a fish, all make the Kasilof a great choice in May and June. This fishery offers perhaps the best roadside king salmon fishing in the entire state.

May and June can also be a very good time to fish the Kenai for early run kings. Early season means lower water levels and limits the areas where fish will hold. Low water limits also where boats can run and most of the fishing is concentrated in the lower sections of the river and within tidal reach. This means the fish are fresh and the bites are especially violent as most of the fish are hours from being in the ocean. Doing battle with an ocean fresh king over 50 pounds that has only been in the river for a few hours is something few anglers will forget. These are some of the most genetically unique chinook on the planet.

Mid-June is definitely the peak of the early season here on the Kenai Peninsula and starting in the second week of the month, additional fishing options become available that are worth noting. Starting on June 11, both the Russian River and the section of river below Skilak Lake open to both sockeye and trout fishing. The Russian River, a mountain tributary of the Kenai, hosts the primary return of early run sockeye and this run averages around 30-40K fish. These fish are available in the main stem of the Kenai as they pass through on their way to the Russian, but only at select times and locations as they move through in rapid fashion. The confluence of the Russian and the Kenai and the Russian itself are better places to target this run as they will be concentrated and more likely to be holding in these locations. Walking up the Russian and fishing in and around current breaks and discarded salmon carcasses will yield some excellent rainbow trout fishing.

Below Skilak Lake, the river opens in its entirety to motor use beginning June 15 and trout fishing in this section can be outstanding in the first couple of weeks this area is open. Trout are concentrated in this area after wintering in nearby Skilak Lake and spawning in early spring.

May and June certainly have their own vibe and if you do not care for crowds or overall competitive fisheries, these months hold a great deal of appeal. The first big seasonal pushes of salmon are special. You can feel the excitement as they move up the Inlet and into area rivers, something that has repeated itself for thousands of years. And yet every season is different in its own unique way and like the tides, the runs of fish ebb and flow with abundance. But just as certain as the near 24 hours of daylight in May and June, the early runs of kings and sockeye will be here; how about you?



BUCKLE UP, IT'S A PINK YEAR!

Indeed 2018 is an even year and that means our bi-annual return of *Oncorhynchus gorboscha* (Pink or Humpback salmon) will arrive in force starting in late July and well into August. While no official enumeration is done for this return, estimates in the millions are far from exaggerated. Once the run has peaked, pink salmon can be seen from salt water all the way to Skilak Lake some 50 miles upriver and beyond. They enter at the same time as our early run silver salmon and if you have ever dreamed of catching a fish on every cast, pinks will fit the bill. Add in the bonus of silvers at the same time and you can see why pink years are very popular. While many do not consider pinks the best pacific salmon for eating, fresh from the salt water they are really very good. The limit is six and when you are landing hundred, you can easily sort through them and keep only the freshest fish possible. I overwhelmingly prefer the females as the males have a big humped back and it is difficult to filet. The limit for pinks is six fish in addition to the two-fish limit of silvers. Perhaps one of the most alluring things about pinks is not just their numbers but their willingness to bite a wide range of lures. There is a reason pinks are the fastest growing



of all the pacific salmon as their voracious appetite in the salt water takes them from tiny fry to mature 6-10 lb. adults in just two years. Probably the most efficient and enjoyable way to catch them is with a spinning rod and reel and a spinner. Blue Fox Vibrax work as well as anything and silvers happen to love them too. For a young angler or someone who has not had a ton of experience fishing and more importantly catching, the Kenai on a pink year is perfect. Catching and releasing countless ocean fresh salmon in a day is not something one soon forgets and will leave a lasting impression on even the most seasoned anglers.



Pinks are not just great to catch, they are great for the river. The transfer of energy from the ocean in the form of several million fish all arriving and dying in a 90 day time span represents a huge boost of nutrients for the river. Our trout population benefits greatly from all the pinks, both their loose spawn as well as the carcasses feed the trout and many other birds and animals to their fill for weeks on end. The timing is perfect as the feast arrives on the heels of Alaska's long harsh winter when food is not as easy to come by. The result is heavy, healthy rainbows the following season. You really do notice the difference in both the quantity and quality of the trout population after a pink year, but don't just take my word for it, see for yourself.



Alaska Fishing



WITH MARK GLASSMAKER

2018 SPORTFISHING RATES

For reservations or more information, please call us toll free: 1-800-622-1177 or email us at mgfish@gci.net or www.mgfalaska.com

Kings:

- Kenai Half Day \$225 (5.5 hours)
- Kenai Full Day \$275 (8 hour minimum)
- Kasilof Full Day \$275 (8 hour minimum)

Sockeye:

- Kenai Full Day \$275

Silvers:

- Kenai Half Day \$225
- Kenai Full Day \$275

Trout:

- Kenai Full Day \$275
- Upper Kenai Full Day \$295

Halibut:

- Full Day Cook Inlet \$295
- Full Day Homer \$295
- Full Day Seward/Homer \$395 (Multi-species)

Fly-Out Fishing*:

- Full Day Westside Cook Inlet: Sockeye, Silvers, Trout \$450
- Chuit, Crescent Lake: \$575
- Full Day Nushagak: King Salmon \$850

*All prices are per person, price may vary depending on location. Please call or visit our website for the many additional fly out options available.

All Fishing Trips Include: All fishing gear while guided (rods, reels, bait, etc.) and experienced guide with boat. Snacks and refreshments will be provided on both half and full day river trips. Your fish will be cleaned and prepared for freezing. Additional processing including vacuum sealing, smoking and shipping services are available for an additional fee. We recommend having your catch vacuum sealed and boxed for the flight home. You will be responsible for purchasing an Alaska Sportfishing License, including king stamp (if fishing for king salmon). River trips depart daily from one of several boat launches on the Kenai River.

***Trip duration may be shorter if and when a limit is achieved.**

For Reservations: Once you have decided on lodging and fishing dates, we will send you an invoice detailing the cost(s) for your trip and required non-refundable deposit. Once we receive your deposit, we will mail you a confirmation receipt, a detailed itinerary and directions to your accommodations. Final payment is due thirty (30) days prior to arrival. We accept Visa/Mastercard/American Express/Discover, personal checks and money orders.

Cancellation Policy: Deposits are non-refundable with limited exceptions in cases of extreme hardship.

Limits of Responsibility: "Alaska Fishing with Mark Glassmaker" reserves the right to alter any package or itinerary as existing conditions may require. All rates quoted are based on current rates at the time of this printing and are subject to availability and/or change without notice.

Not included with your trip: Gratuities, air fare, car rental, meals, Alaska state fishing license, fish processing and air freight charges for fish.

2018 LODGING RATES

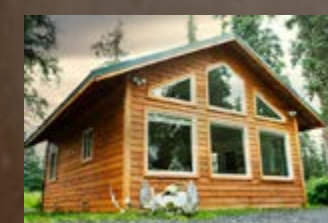
We have four individual cabins for you to choose from. Edgewater One and Two cabins are located on our riverside property and Moose Horn One and Two are on their own private 2 acre lot across the street. All cabin guests enjoy private fishing access to the Kenai River.

Cabins include all cooking and eating utensils, bed and bath linens, full-size gas range with oven, full-size refrigerator, microwave oven and outdoor gas barbecue. Cabins are additionally equipped with satellite television, WiFi and telephone.



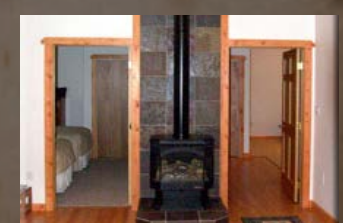
EDGEWATER ONE

\$200 per night for four (May, Sept.)
\$250 per night for four (July)
\$225 per night for four (June, Aug.)



MOOSEHORN ONE and TWO

\$175 per night for four (May, Sept.)
\$225 per night for four (July)
\$200 per night for four (June, Aug.)



EDGEWATER TWO

\$250 per night for four (May, Sept.)
\$300 per night for four (July)
\$275 per night for four (June, Aug.)



If you're planning to visit during the 2018 or 2019 season,
now is the time to make your reservations.
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Ever wonder what the Kenai River looks like right now?

Go streamside here: www.mgfalaska.com/views-of-the-kenai-river

Check back for frequent updates.

Cast From The Past



LANCE HELLER WITH A
JUMBO KASILOF KING IN JULY!



BOB SCHMIDT WITH ONE OF MANY
KASILOF KINGS HE CAUGHT IN JUNE.



MARILYN WELLS WITH A
NICE KENAI KING IN JULY.



THE MOSAKOWSKI FAMILY WITH A NICE
LIMIT OF KASILOF KINGS IN EARLY JUNE.



THE TRIPP PARTY WITH ONE OF
MANY SOCKEYE LIMITS IN EARLY JULY.



THE MILLER PARTY HAD NO TROUBLE GETTING
THEIR SOCKEYE LIMITS IN MID-AUGUST.