



# TRIP ESSENTIALS

PACKRAFTING – ARCTIC ALASKA





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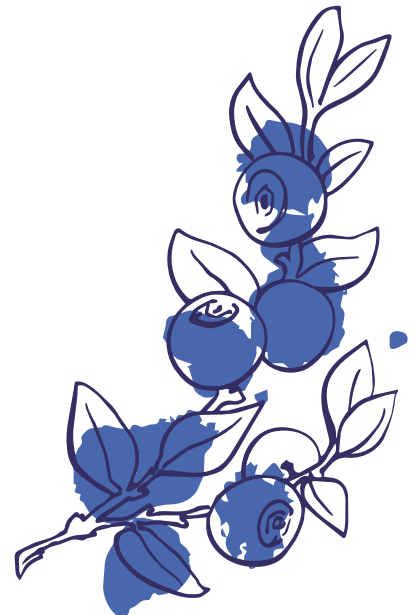
## WELCOME... AND THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING ARCTIC WILD

We are excited to share a wilderness experience with you. Once we have received your [Reservation Form](#) and deposit you are all set until 90 days prior to your trip. At the 90 day mark, we will need two more forms from you and full payment by check or bank transfer (we do not accept credit cards). We require all participants to read, consider and sign our [Participant Agreement](#). It is important that you understand the risks involved in wilderness travel. The [Equipment Request Form](#) is for those who wish to borrow camping gear during the trip. Equipment requests submitted less than 30 days prior to your trip cannot be guaranteed. In the meantime, please read these materials thoroughly. The better you are prepared mentally and physically, the more fun you will have on the trip. This packet includes information on:

This packet includes information on:

- Preparing For Your Trip
- Pre-Trip Meeting
- Wilderness/Expedition Etiquette
- Staying Safe
- Trip Equipment List

If you have questions at any point, just call us or send an email. We will be happy to answer your questions, give more details, or refer you to further resources as soon as we can. As our guest(s), we want you to feel prepared, content, and excited about your upcoming Arctic Wild trip. Happy planning. We look forward to traveling with you!



—Michael Wald and Sally Andersen



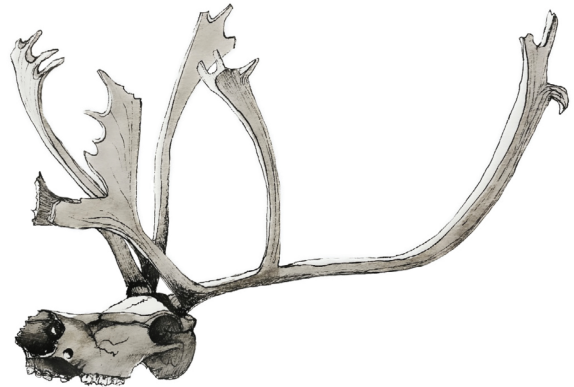
## PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

**Travel/cancellation insurance:** You should purchase travel/cancellation insurance. There are many options and [greg@expeditionbroker.com](mailto:greg@expeditionbroker.com) or a website like [insuremytrip.com](http://insuremytrip.com) can help you determine the right policy for your particular needs.

**Flights to/from Alaska:** Book your flights early and plan to arrive at the trip's start location (Fairbanks, Kotzebue, etc.) the day before your trip starts, and in plenty of time to attend the mandatory pre-trip meeting. Plan to depart Alaska no sooner than the evening of the day after your trip's end date (24 hours minimum after your scheduled return), budgeting time for possible weather delays.

**Return flights & possibility of delay:** Weather and flight connections permitting, you will return around 6:00 pm on your trip's end date. In case of delay, it is prudent to plan one or more extra days in the local area following your trip. Relatives and employers should be made aware both of delay possibilities and the fact that you cannot contact them from the wilderness. There is no cause for alarm if you are delayed and your family need not worry but please ask someone at home to help re-book hotel reservations, adjust flights etc. should you be delayed. We are happy to keep your family apprised of your situation but can't orchestrate your travel plans in the unlikely event that you are delayed at trips end.

**Maps:** Your guide will have detailed topographic maps for everyone's use. You can also order your own set through [caltopo.com](http://caltopo.com).

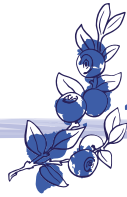


**Provisions:** The food we serve is wholesome and hearty. We have a wide variety of meals to please a wide range of tastes. Our ability to carry and store large quantities of fresh food is limited, but our meals get rave reviews. Dietary restrictions and preferences are usually easy to accommodate. Please make sure to tell us what you CAN eat as well as what you CAN'T eat. Alcohol is not provided, but you are welcome to bring a small amount. Please note that this will be subject to weight restrictions and that some communities in the north (i.e., Kotzebue) do not allow alcohol even in transit. Snack food is plentiful and we provide 3 solid meals a day. Snacks include chocolate, nuts, fruit, energy bars, and candy. If you want to bring some of your own snacks, feel free to pack a few bars, trail mix, and whatever pleases you most.

**Gratuities:** If your guide(s) did a great job, which we are sure they will, a per-person tip of 5 -10% of the trip price is very much appreciated.

### Concerns, requests, or confusion?

Let's talk about it. Please don't hesitate to pick up the phone. Feel free to contact us with questions about your trip. We have years of experience and are happy to share our knowledge. You are our guest, not just a customer. Call us at 907-479-8203.



## PRE-TRIP MEETING

*Please plan on attending a mandatory pre-trip meeting.*

A thorough and unhurried pre-trip meeting is critical to the success and safety of your trip, so please plan your travel so that you can give your full attention to the meeting. The details of your meeting vary slightly based upon the starting point for your trip.

You will need to bring EVERYTHING you intend to take on the trip with you to the meeting, preferably packed as you will carry it on your trip. We will be checking your gear and weighing it during the meeting to ensure we are within safe limits for the planes the following day.

During the meeting we will also distribute any equipment you have requested, answer your questions, discuss safety and brief you on the logistics for the following day. The meeting usually takes less than 2 hours.

**For trips starting in FAIRBANKS (unless otherwise noted):** When: 4:00 pm on the day before your trip's start date.

**Where:** Arctic Wild World Headquarters (2155 Alston Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99709).

**Transportation:** You will need to find your own transportation to the pre-trip meeting and we will send directions prior to the meeting. If you are staying at a nearby hotel (Sophie's Station, Pikes Lodge, Sven's Hostel or similar) we are happy to give you a ride back to your lodging after our pre-trip meeting, a ride to the airport on the morning of our trip, and a farewell ride back to your room at the trip's end. For Fairbanks accommodations further from the airport, or for trips starting and ending outside Fairbanks, you will need to arrange all your own ground transportation.

**For trips starting in KOTZEBUE (unless otherwise noted):** When: 6:45 pm on the day before your trip's start date. (6:15 arrival into Kotzebue is fine).

**Where:** Arctic Backcountry Flying Service/Golden Eagle Outfitters Hangar at the Noel Wien Airport.

**Transportation:** You will need to provide all your own transportation in Kotzebue. Cabs are cheap and most places are close enough for walking.





## WILDERNESS/ EXPEDITION ETIQUETTE

*These are important topics, so we include a quick primer here.*

In addition to our discussions during the pre-trip meeting, during the first days of your trip, your guide(s) will give other safety briefings and lead a discussion on how to minimize our impact on the wilderness.

**Leave it as you found it:** If you get the feeling that you are the first person to ever set foot on the tundra... it is because those who came before respected the wilderness. We ask that you help us preserve the wilderness experience for those who will come after.

**Bathroom:** With a little effort and planning, we can prevent fecal contamination and prevent others from seeing signs that we have traveled through. We almost always use a group latrine, in a location designated by the guide, which ensures that the water stays clean. Burn the toilet paper, completely, on site. Female menstrual supplies should be placed in a Ziplock and deposited in the "group garbage". When/ if no latrine is available: Dig a hole 6" deep with the trowel we provide, make your deposit, and cover it up again, again burning your toilet paper.

**Tent sites:** When choosing a tent site, look for places that will not require moving rocks or uprooting bushes. When we leave a camp we try and put everything back just how we found it. Being sure to pick up any garbage no matter how small.

**Souvenirs:** Please resist the understandable urge to take natural objects like feathers, bones, arrowheads, and antlers. If these things seem plentiful, it may be because they have been left in place by other conscientious travelers. (That said: rocks are fair game, our rationale being that rock appeal is extremely subjective and rocks are indeed plentiful).

**Campfires:** We enjoy campfires as much as anyone and will have them occasionally as site conditions and weather permit.

**Soap and washing:** We provide biodegradable soap and hand sanitizer, and ask that you always wash your hands after going to the bathroom, and prior to handling food.

**Cultural respect:** We will be traveling on Gwich'in and Inupiat Lands. Respect the privacy and customs of people living along our routes. Before taking pictures of people or their property, please ask for their consent. Respect private property and cultural differences. It is illegal to collect articles of historical significance.

**Fishing:** If you are not fishing for a meal, crimping the barbs on your hooks will make the fish much easier to release. If the fish is bleeding or injured in any way, we'll keep it for a meal. Bears love fish. Ask your guide how to fish in bear country without inviting a bear into camp.



## STAYING SAFE

**Remoteness:** All of our trips are in remote regions, far removed from civilization and rescue. Quite possibly, this is the most remote you will have ever been. Help each other and accept that offered hand. Always remember where you are, and how long it could take to be rescued.

**Free time:** There is ample free time on our trips. If you want to go off alone, it can be very rewarding. Please, however, be aware of the inherent risks and responsibility of wilderness travel. Please also tell us where you are going.

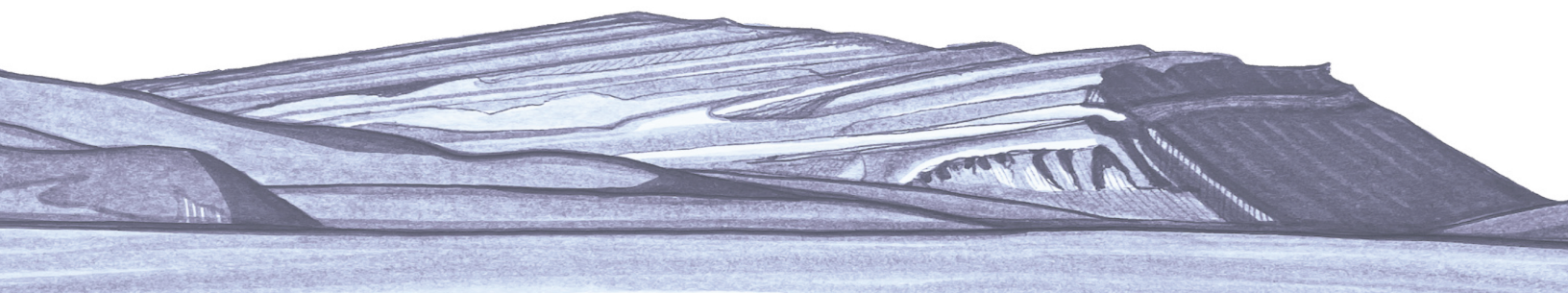
**Bears:** Rule #1— Watch where you are going. Rule #2— Watch where you are going. It is wise to move slowly and noisily while walking through brushy areas. It is also important to keep a clean camp and to properly store food. We will provide you with bear deterrent (pepper spray), and your guide(s) will have a shotgun on river and base camp trips. There will be a detailed briefing at the beginning of your trip about living in bear country.

**The cook area & food storage:** Your guide(s) will designate a “cook area” and will camp closest to it. Clients should set up their tents farther away from the cook area, without surrounding it. To reduce food smells overall, your toiletry items and snack food will be stored in the cook area with all of the other “smelly stuff.” Do not eat or store food in your tent, as this can attract bears not to mention tent-tearing ground squirrels.

**Water filter:** We provide a water filter and strongly encourage you to use it. If you choose to drink untreated surface water you might be fine, but...

**Communications:** We carry satellite phones for medical emergencies and for the safe conduct of every trip. We do not use them for any other reason. In addition to the satellite phone, we also carry a ground-to-air radio for line-of-sight communication with passing aircraft, if necessary. Please do not bring your own satellite phone.

*With these practices, Arctic Wild anticipates a safe and memorable journey, leaving minimal impacts on the wilderness, wildlife, and people of Alaska. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.*



# PACKRAFT EQUIPMENT LIST

## ARCTIC ALASKA

*Please follow this equipment list and do not bring extra gear.*

Packing for a backpacking and packrafting trip is a balancing act. Too much weight and you are miserable carrying your pack; missing essential items and you are uncomfortable in camp or worse.

By carefully following this list, you can keep your personal gear, including the weight of the backpack itself, to 30 pounds and you'll have what you need to thrive in the Arctic. Depending on the party size and duration of a trip, we'll give you from 15–25 pounds of food, fuel, and community gear to carry. Add on top of that the 10–15 pounds of the packraft, paddle and life jacket and you realize how important it is to pack carefully and limit what you bring. At trips start your pack will weigh between 55 and 65 pounds. If you can't handle a pack of that size, please consider an alternate trip.

You will be floating and paddling much of the trip but there will be some hiking with a heavy load. With the exception of warm clothing, when in doubt, leave it behind.

This checklist has been developed from years and years of wilderness experience. These are proven items. That said, personal clothing is indeed personal. Bring what you know to be comfortable and practical. All garments should be synthetic or wool because they are light, fast drying, and warmer when wet. Please leave your cotton clothes at home.

When packrafting you will want to be waterproof from the tips of your toes to your neck. Arctic Wild will provide a dry suit for your use.

**This is Alaska**, and it snows every month of the year! You should have five layers for your top and four for the bottom. For example, on top: a short-sleeve thermal shirt, one heavier long-sleeve thermal shirt, one fleece jacket, one down vest or parka, and a Gore-Tex shell over everything.

On the bottom: two pairs long johns, one pair of hiking pants, and Gore-Tex rain pants on top. With a warm hat and a neck gaiter, you're cozy even when the north wind howls.

Some of our packrafting trips have long backpacking sections other trips have shorter hikes with heavy packs. Some of the trips are on challenging rivers some are easier. Please call us to discuss the particulars of your trip if you are unsure. Previous backpacking experience is highly recommended. Paddling experience is essential on some trips and very helpful on all packrafting trips. We can teach most inexperienced people to be safe on many rivers but taking a packrafting or kayaking course prior is a great idea.

**Conditioning for packrafting trips:** The better shape you're in, the more you will enjoy the trip. Even if you are very athletic, we recommend walking as often as possible with 25–30 pounds in your backpack, wearing the boots you plan to hike in. You can alternate this with other cardiovascular and strength and balance routines. Be sure to build your upper body too, especially working on the strength and flexibility of your shoulders. Packrafting trips are difficult, and worth it!

We have a selection of camping equipment that we can lend you during your trip. If you have your own equipment you may prefer to bring it. If you do want to borrow ours please fill out our Equipment Request Form at least 30 days prior to your trip. Items that we can provide for you are denoted with "AW" below.

We suggest that you use this as a literal checklist. When all the boxes are checked, ✓ you are done. Anything not on the list doesn't belong.

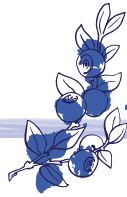
***Having trouble keeping your personal gear within the 35-pound limit? Please [contact us](#).***



<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Backpack:</b> Your backpack needs to be large enough to carry all of your personal gear, plus the food, fuel, packraft, paddle, dry-suit, PFD, and community gear we will give you at trip's start. Packs should not be smaller than 5,000 cubic inches (80 liters). Choosing a light pack that you can stow easily.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> AW	<p><b>Tent:</b> A 3- or 4-season tent able to withstand strong winds and medium snow load. The stakes you bring must hold in gravel. We highly recommend yellow, plastic 9" "Power Pegs."</p>	<p>We offer <a href="#">MSR Hubba NX</a> tents to use for packrafting trips. (3 pounds)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> AW	<p><b>Sleeping bag with stuff sack:</b> Your sleeping bag should keep you comfortable to 15 to 20 F. The stuff sack should be lined with a plastic bag or placed in a <a href="#">waterproof stuff sack</a>. Women often sleep colder than men, and a <a href="#">sleeping bag liner</a> is a good way to add warmth and versatility.</p>	<p>Available from Arctic Wild. (4 pounds)</p> <p>We also have sleeping bag liners to lend if you are concerned about your bag being warm enough.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> AW	<p><b>Sleeping pad:</b> Thermarest makes some really <a href="#">light ones</a> if you want to invest in comfort. Ours aren't quite that plush.</p>	<p><a href="#">"ProLite" Thermarest</a> available from Arctic Wild. (1 pound 6 ounces).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> AW	<p><b>Lightweight dry suit:</b> You will paddle in a dry suit to keep you comfortable and increase safety margins. If you have your own dry suit, bring it.</p>	<p>We provide semi-dry suits from <a href="#">Kokatat</a> and Stohlquist. These dry suits have attached bootie socks. You will need to bring shoes that will fit over the dry suit socks.</p>



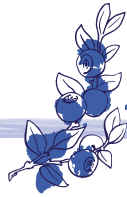
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Stuff sacks:</b> For packing gear and clothes. Waterproof stuff sacks from <a href="#">Sea to Summit</a> or similar are essential both while backpacking and to keep gear dry when stowed inside the packraft. 3 or 4 bags of different sizes is enough.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Hiking boots:</b> There are no constructed trails in the Brooks Range. We hike cross-country, on soft, wet tundra and across streams. <b>Make sure your boots fit well and are broken in.</b></p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Camp/ river shoes:</b> Many packrafters just bring hiking boots to keep packs light, but a pair of light tennies or Crocs make decent camp shoes and can be worn over your dry suit on the river too. You will wear either your camp shoes or your hiking boots over your dry suit.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Waterproof Socks:</b> Two pairs. Use these over heavy socks inside your boots and over your dry suit socks to protect them from abrasion. <a href="#">Sealskinz</a> are a good choice.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Rain Jacket:</b> Good quality, truly waterproof rain jacket. Don't skimp here. Multi-layer Gore-Tex or similar is good, the newer the better. <a href="#">Patagonia</a> has some good jackets. When the weather is really bad you might even wear this on the river over your dry suit.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Rain pants:</b> In theory, your dry suit can function as rain pants and jacket in one. But they are far from ideal, nearly unworkable. Bring a <a href="#">simple pair of rain pants</a> in addition to the dry suit.</p>	



<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Socks:</b> Three or four pairs, synthetic or wool.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>T-shirt and shorts:</b> Sometimes it is hot. Really! At least in June and July.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Lightweight long johns:</b> One to two tops.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Lightweight long johns:</b> One to two pairs of bottoms.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Heavyweight long johns:</b> One set of bottoms. Fleece pants are good too.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Warm layers:</b> Fleece jacket, wool shirt, and down sweater. You need to have five layers including long johns on your upper body. They should be sized so they can be worn together. A cozy configuration could be two long john shirts, one down puffy, one fleece jacket, and a down vest. Your rain gear should be able to fit on top of everything.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Parka:</b> This is for the really cold, bitter days or for the Arctic Coast. <a href="#">Marmot</a> makes one that is both light and WARM.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Hiking pants:</b> Synthetic and fast drying. Make sure these fit over long johns or fleece pants and under your wading pants.</p>	



<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Warm hat:</b> A nice warm comfortable winter hat. Do not skimp here. Many guides prefer two hats – a thick one for the day and a thinner one for sleeping.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Neck gaiter:</b> A little tube of fleece or wool to wear around your neck or to augment your hat. A scarf works too. <a href="#">Buff</a> makes some stylish ones.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Brimmed hat:</b> You will need something for the intense, ‘round the clock sun.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Paddling Gloves:</b> One pair of <a href="#">river gloves</a>. Another option is a rubber fishing glove, the <a href="#">Atlas 282</a> is excellent.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Fleece gloves:</b> Windstopper <a href="#">fleece gloves</a> for around camp.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Quart water bottle:</b> Reusable. One should be enough.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Personal toiletries:</b> <i>Scale down...</i> e.g. you won’t need a 6-oz. tube of toothpaste.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Toilet paper:</b> Place the roll in a quart-size Ziploc bag with a lighter.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Flashlight/headlamp:</b> August and September trips only. Really!</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Battery pack:</b> To recharge your camera, phone, or other electronic devices. <a href="#">Goal Zero</a> is a good brand.</p>	Optional



<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Mosquito head net:</b> You hope you won't need it, but you'll be so glad you have it.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Mosquito repellent:</b> 35% DEET – put in a plastic bag.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Emergency Kit:</b> Band-Aids, aspirin, Moleskin, sewing kit. We carry a full medical kit, but a few personal things come in handy.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Medications:</b> Inform the guide of your medications and bring a backup supply of essential medications for the guide to carry.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Glasses or contacts:</b> Bring an extra pair.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sunscreen:</b> 24 hour sun!	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lip balm, and hand cream:</b> High quality cream will help prevent splits and cracks.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sunglasses and croakies:</b> (strings that hold sunglasses on).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Binoculars:</b> Though optional, we strongly recommend bringing binoculars.	Highly Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Gaiters:</b> These help keep water and debris out of your boots when backpacking	Optional



<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>“Bug shirt”:</b> A very good idea during late June and July. The <a href="#">Original Bug Shirt Company</a> is a good brand.	Optional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Straps:</b> For attaching things to your pack. If your pack is less than 80 liters bring extras.	Optional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Pocket knife</b>	Optional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lighter:</b> For burning toilet paper. You can bring this on your airline flight as carry-on or purchase when you get to Alaska.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cell phone:</b> It won’t work.	Joke
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Watch:</b> Leave it at home with the cell phone and other worries.	Optional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Satellite Phone, InReach, Spot Tracker or other satellite communication device:</b> We carry a satellite phone for emergencies. Unplugging from communications is a valuable part of our trips. Call us if you want to discuss.	Not recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Identification and Credit Card:</b> In theory you won’t need any money or an ID on the trip. But sometimes plans change and planes get re-routed. An unexpected night in a village is possible. You might as well bring ID and a card just in case.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Trekking poles:</b> While theoretically optional, they can be essential on stream crossings and on tussocks (rough ground) but they are hard to pack in a packraft.	Highly Recommended



<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Camera, extra cards, spare batteries:</b> in a waterproof case.	Optional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Fishing rod, reel and lures:</b> Pack in rigid container. A small, folding backpack rod is ideal. Keep it light and simple.	Optional
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Fishing license:</b> Fishing licenses can be obtained at many stores around Alaska or <a href="#">online</a> . You may not fish anywhere in Alaska without a valid Alaska fishing license.	