

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-20-11

Issued at Soldotna: Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Friday, July 15, 2011

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 31, 2011, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the use of bait and prohibits the retention of king salmon 20 inches or greater in length but less than 55 inches in length, while sport fishing in waters of the Kenai River drainage from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northern-most edge of the Sterling Highway Bridge, beginning 12:01 a.m., Friday, July 15, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 31, 2011.

In the waters described above, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used. King salmon 20 inches or greater in length but less than 55 inches in length may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately. Harvest is allowed for king salmon less than 20 inches in length and 55 inches or greater in length.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. (2)(A)(i) and provisions of 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area. (1)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Friday, July 15, 2011 through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 31, 2011:

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(2)(A) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length as follows:

(i) from July 15 – July 31, that portion of the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway Bridge, only king salmon less than 20 inches in length or 55 inches or greater in length may be retained, king salmon 20 inches or greater in length and less than 55 inches in length may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(1) sport fishing gear restrictions:

(A) from July 15 – July 31, in that portion of the Kenai River from and ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway Bridge, only one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used.

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

As provided by 5 AAC 57.160 Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Management Plan (d)(2), if the spawning escapement is projected to be less than the lower end of the optimal escapement goal, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, restrict as necessary the taking of king salmon in the sport and guided sport fisheries in the Kenai River to achieve the optimal escapement goal (OEG) of 5,300 to 9,000 king salmon.

Due to a high level of uncertainty whether the early-run king salmon escapement of 5,300 to 9,000 fish was achieved, it is warranted to continue to conserve Kenai River early-run king salmon that may still be transiting in areas outside of designated sanctuaries. In addition, all five indices used to assess the abundance of late-run king salmon in the Kenai River indicate a run that is well below average. All department assessment methods indicate the late run is similar to the runs of 2009 and 2010. The final 2009 escapement estimate was slightly below the sustainable escapement goal range and the 2010 escapement was likely below the lower bound of the sustainable escapement goal of 17,800 to 35,700 late-run king salmon. Therefore, it is warranted to continue to manage the early run conservatively and begin to slow down the harvest of late-run king salmon while the run continues to develop.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-17-11 which prohibited the use of bait and prohibited the retention of king salmon 20 inches or greater in length but less than 55 inches in length in designated waters of the Kenai River expired 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 14, 2011.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 2 Office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.