

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-09-11

Issued at: Palmer, Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Effective Date: 11:00 p.m., Friday, June 17, 2011

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Wednesday,
July 13, 2011, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes the Little Susitna River in the Knik Arm Drainage Area to fishing for king salmon effective at 11:00 p.m., Friday, June 17, 2011, through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 13, 2011. The closure prohibits sport fishing for king salmon, including catch-and-release fishing. King salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon accidentally caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. The area affected by this emergency order includes all waters of the Little Susitna River from its confluence with Cook Inlet upstream to the Parks Highway bridge.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainage Area. (9)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 11:00 p.m., Friday, June 17, 2011, through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 13, 2011:

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainage Area.

(9) in the Little Susitna River drainage,

(A) Beginning 11:00 p.m., Friday, June 17, 2011, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, sport fishing is closed for king salmon; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Sam Ivey,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The Little Susitna River king salmon sustainable escapement goal is 900–1,800 fish. In 2010, the escapement was 589 king salmon, despite the fishery being closed on July 2. An exit survey conducted by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to count sport anglers and king salmon harvests at the Little Susitna Public Use Facility (LSPUF) indicates that the harvest of king salmon is similar to last year and below average. Guide and angler reports suggest the 2011 king salmon run is weak, which is substantiated by low harvest rates. By June 14, the midpoint of the harvest at the LSPUF, only 334 salmon had been harvested, compared to the historical harvest of 550 fish for this date. The harvest to date is the lowest on record.

If the sport harvest is not restricted, it is likely the escapement goal will not be achieved in 2011. It is anticipated that closing the fishery after June 17 will reduce harvest by as much as 35 percent to 40 percent, adding an estimated 300 fish to the escapement, and providing the greatest potential for achieving the escapement goal this season. Therefore, it is warranted to close the Little Susitna River to king salmon fishing for the remainder of the season.

DISTRIBUTION:

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