

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-04-11

Issued at: Fairbanks, Thursday, July 7, 2011

Effective Date: 8:00 P.M. Saturday July 9, 2011

Expiration Date: August 15, 2011, unless
superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes all waters to sport fishing for king salmon and prohibits the use of bait while sport fishing in all waters of the Unalakeet and Shaktoolik river drainages effective 8:00 p.m., Saturday July 9, 2011.

REGULATION:

In accordance with 5 AAC 04.395. King Salmon Management Plan for the Marine Waters of Subdistricts 5 and 6 of the Norton Sound District and the Unalakeet River the provisions of 5 AAC 70.011. Seasons and bag, possession, and size limits for the Northwestern Area (c)(9)(A and B) are superseded by this emergency order and the provisions of 5 AAC 70.030. Methods, means, and general provisions – Finfish (f) are added. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning 8:00 p.m. Saturday July 9, 2011:

5 AAC 70.011. Seasons and bag, possession, and size limits for the Northwestern Area.

(c)(9)(A and B) In all waters of the Unalakeet and Shaktoolik river drainages sport fishing for king salmon is closed. King salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon unintentionally caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

5 AAC 70.030. Methods, means, and general provisions - Finfish.

(f) In the Shaktoolik and Unalakeet rivers, the use of bait is prohibited.

Cora Campbell
Commissioner

By delegation to: _____

Brendan Scanlon
Northwest and North Slope Area Biologist

July 7, 2011

JUSTIFICATION:

Escapement counts of king salmon at the North River tower on the Unalakleet River are below historic averages. As of July 4th only 48 king salmon had passed the counting tower. From 2006– 2010 an average of 189 king salmon had passed the counting tower by this date. Consistent with 5 AAC 04.395. Subdistricts 5 and 6 of the Norton Sound and the Unalakleet River King Salmon Management Plan, when the projected escapement is below the lower end of the escapement goal, all fishing will be closed. Although it is still early in the run, it appears that the projected escapement goal for king salmon will not be reached in 2011.

The Department does not have a stock assessment project in the Shaktoolik River, but the king salmon run generally cycles in accordance with Unalakleet stocks. Unalakleet River test fishery indices are also below historic averages for this date. The elimination of sport fishing for king salmon in the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik rivers will provide protection for returning fish. The prohibition of bait should minimize catch-and-release mortality for king salmon incidentally caught while sport fishing for other species.

The Department will continue to evaluate inseason run strength and take appropriate management actions to ensure that escapement requirements are met. If inseason stock assessment information indicates that the king salmon escapement goal in the Unalakleet River will be met, restrictions will be relaxed.

DISTRIBUTION:

Office of the Governor; Lt. Governor; Commissioner, Governor's Fisheries Policy Advisor, Department of Fish and Game; Director, Division of Sport Fish; Regional Supervisors, Division of Sport and Commercial Fisheries; Members of Board of Fisheries; Director, Fish and Wildlife Protection; Detachment Commander and Area Officer, Board of Fisheries Members; Local Fish and Game Advisory Chairman; AYK Sport Fish Area Biologists, Division of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries; Juneau, Region I; Anchorage, Region II; Fairbanks, Region III; and selected area newspapers, and radio stations.

List is available at ADF&G, Sport Fish Division, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks 99701.