

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-22-13

Issued at Soldotna: Tuesday, June 18, 2013

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Thursday, June 20, 2013

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 14, 2013, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-11-13, issued Thursday, May 9, 2013.

This emergency order closes the Kenai River to sport fishing for king salmon from the mouth 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 beginning at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, June 20, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, June 30, 2013. Sport fishing for king salmon will remain closed from 12:01 a.m., Monday, July 1, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 14, 2013 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 northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway bridge. This closure prohibits all sport fishing for king salmon, including catch-and-release fishing. King salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

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 (2)(A)(i) and 5 AAC 57.120 (3)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, June 20, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 14, 2013.

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

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

(A)(i) from June 20 – June 30, in the Kenai River from its mouth 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, is closed to sport fishing for king salmon; from July 1 – July 14, 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, is closed to sport fishing for king salmon;

(3) king salmon less than 20 inches in length as follows;

(A) from June 20 – June 30, in unstocked lakes and ponds and in the Kenai River from its mouth 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, are closed to sport fishing for king salmon; from July 1 – July 14, in unstocked lakes and ponds and 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, are closed to sport fishing for king salmon;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of 5 AAC 57.160. *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan*. (a), is to ensure adequate escapement of early-run king salmon into the Kenai River. The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for early-run Kenai River king salmon is 5,300 to 9,000 king salmon.

Under 5 AAC 75.003. *Emergency order authority*. (1)(B), the Alaska Board of Fisheries provided the department emergency order authority to utilize catch-and-release when the estimated hooking mortality is not projected to reduce the population of fish below the number required for spawning escapement. As of June 16, approximately 57 percent of the early-run of Kenai River king salmon is complete based on average run timing (2002-2012). The total inriver run estimated by DIDSON sonar and all indices of abundance indicate the run is below average and less than forecasted. Although there are indications that king salmon runs throughout Cook Inlet may be later than normal, inseason projections indicate the OEG will not be achieved by the end of the season on June 30. Through June 16, the DIDSON sonar cumulative estimate of king salmon passage into the Kenai River was 969 fish. Inseason projections using DIDSON sonar are for a total run to the river of 1,500 to 2,500 early-run Kenai River king salmon.

Therefore, as directed in the *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan*, it is warranted to close the Kenai River to sport fishing for early-run king salmon.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-11-13, which restricted the Kenai River Drainage king salmon fishery to catch-and-release trophy fishing, is superseded.

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.