

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-24-13

Issued at: Soldotna, Tuesday, June 25, 2013

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Monday, July 1, 2013

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 31, 2013, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the use of bait while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at 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., Monday, July 1, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 31, 2013.

REGULATION:

The 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 (1)(B) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Monday, July 1, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 31, 2013:

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:

(B) from July 1 – July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at 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 of June 24, approximately 78 percent of the early-run of Kenai River king salmon is complete based on historical run-timing. The total in-river run estimated by DIDSON sonar and all indices of abundance indicate the run is below average and less than forecasted. Through June 24, the DIDSON sonar cumulative estimate of king salmon passage into the Kenai River was 1,384 fish. In-season projections using DIDSON sonar are for a total run to the river of 1,700 to 2,200 early-run Kenai River king salmon as compared to the preseason forecast of approximately 5,300 fish. All of this information used in-season to assess run strength indicates the 2013 early-run is less than forecasted.

King salmon runs to Cook Inlet, including early-run Kenai River king salmon, and throughout Alaska are experiencing a period of low productivity with the 2013 runs being less than preseason forecasts and of low run strength. Based upon the relationship between early-run king salmon abundance and late-run abundance, it is likely the Kenai River late-run will also experience below average run strength and be well below the preseason forecast. The prohibition on the use of bait during July will reduce the harvest rate of both early- and late-run stocks. In addition to conserving these stocks, this action may delay or avoid further restrictions to the in-river sport fishery as well as other fisheries harvesting late-run Kenai River king salmon. Therefore, these measures are warranted to ensure adequate escapement of Kenai River early- and late-run king salmon.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-22-13, which closed a portion of the Kenai River Drainage to sport fishing for king salmon, remains in effect.

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.