

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1- 46-13

Issued at: Soldotna, Tuesday, July 30, 2013

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Thursday, August 1, 2013

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Thursday, August 15, 2013, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the use of bait and limits sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the Sterling Highway bridge in Soldotna beginning at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, August 1, through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, August 15, 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 (1)(B) is superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, August 1, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, August 15, 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 August 1-August 15, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the Sterling Highway bridge in Soldotna, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon is 15,000 to 30,000 king salmon. As of July 29, the DIDSON sonar cumulative estimate of king salmon passage into the Kenai River was 11,746 fish. The projected sport harvest and catch and release mortality of king salmon in the Kenai River upstream of the sonar through the end of the season as estimated by an in-season creel survey is approximately 1,571 fish. Based on assessment of the inriver return, the projected escapement is less than the escapement goal.

Standard regulations for the Kenai River drainage downstream of Skilak Lake allow the use of bait and multiple hooks beginning August 1. Historically late-run king salmon continue to enter the Kenai River during the first two weeks of August while inriver anglers are targeting coho salmon stocks. Guide logbook

data, public reports, and staff observations confirm king salmon are occasionally caught incidental to coho salmon fishing. The most recent 4-year average (2009-2012) from guide logbook data indicates approximately 235 king salmon are caught incidentally during August with nearly all of the catch occurring prior to August 15 and downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna. Incidental catch of king salmon occurs in relatively few locations of the Kenai River because when fishing for coho salmon anglers use terminal gear configurations (line weight, hook and bait size) that could be similar to that used to fish for king salmon. Although the prohibition on the use of bait and multiple hooks during the first two weeks of August will greatly reduce the catch rates of coho salmon, it will more importantly also lessen the incidental catch of late-run king salmon that may be caught while fishing for coho salmon. Therefore, these measures are warranted to continue to conserve late-run Kenai River king salmon needed for escapement.

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.