

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-40-14

Issued at Soldotna: Thursday, July 17, 2014

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 19, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order 2-KS-1-26-14, issued Thursday, June 26, 2014. This emergency order prohibits the retention of king salmon while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek. Only one unbaited, **barbless**, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when fishing for king salmon in these waters. King salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately. These regulations are effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 19, 2014 through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2014.

The emergency order that closed sport fishing for king salmon (2-KS-1-04-14) 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 an ADF&G marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, remains in effect through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2014.

### REGULATION:

Consistent with the stipulations within 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. (e)(1), the provisions of 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area. (1)(A) and (B) are superseded and 5 AAC 57.121. (1)(J) is effective by this emergency order. The following provisions are effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 19, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2014:

#### **5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for 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:

(A) from July 19 – July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when fishing for king salmon; retention of king salmon is prohibited, king salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately;

(B) from July 19 – July 31, in the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake; only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

(J) during times when the retention of king salmon is prohibited under 5 AAC 57.160(d)(2)(A) or 5 AAC 21.359(e)(1), only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when sport

fishing for king salmon; in this subparagraph, "barbless" means the hook is manufactured without a barb or the barb has been completely removed or compressed so the barb is in complete contact with the shaft of the hook;

Cora Campbell,  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

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Robert N. Begich  
Area Management Biologist

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The purpose of 5 AAC 21.359 *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* (a), is to ensure adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River. The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for late-run Kenai River king salmon is 15,000 to 30,000 king salmon. As provided in 5 AAC 21.359 *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* (e) from July 1 through July 31, if the projected inriver run of late-run king salmon is less than 22,500 the Kenai River sport fishery may be restricted in order to achieve the sustainable escapement goal.

Kenai River king salmon and other king salmon stocks throughout Cook Inlet are experiencing a period of low productivity and below average run strength since 2009. That trend has continued during 2014. The 2014 preseason forecast for late-run Kenai River king salmon is for a total run of approximately 19,700 fish. This is less than one-half of the 1986–2013 average total run of approximately 57,000 fish. Early indications from sonar, test netting, and sport catch do not suggest the Kenai late run is stronger than forecast. Management restrictions have been taken to the sport, personal use, and commercial fisheries to allow passage of late run Kenai king salmon. As of July 15, an estimated 3,208 king salmon have passed the 8.6 mile sonar compared to an average 6,265 on this same date in recent years. At the current rate of passage and harvest, the sonar estimates indicate the escapement goal may not be achieved. Therefore reducing king salmon mortality by prohibiting the retention of king salmon in waters open to sport harvest is warranted as the run continues to develop and projections of escapement solidify.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-04-14, issued Thursday, February 27, 2014 which closed a portion of the Kenai River Drainage to sport fishing for king salmon through July 31, 2014, remains in effect.

Emergency Order 2-KS-1-26-14, issued Thursday, June 26, 2014 which prohibited 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 through Thursday, July 31, 2014 is superseded by this emergency order.

**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.