

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-42-14

Issued at Soldotna: Thursday, July 24, 2014

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 26, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-04-14 issued Thursday, February 27, 2014 and Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-40-14, issued Thursday, July 17, 2014. This emergency order closes the Kenai River drainage to fishing for king salmon and prohibits the use of bait in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to ADF&G markers located at the outlet of Skilak Lake beginning 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 26, through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31. 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:

Consistent with the stipulations within 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan. (d)(1), 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 (3)(A) and 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 (1)(B) are superseded by this emergency order. The following provisions are effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Saturday, July 26, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, July 31, 2014:

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 July 26 – July 31 in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to ADF&G markers located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, is closed to sport fishing for king salmon; king salmon may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

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

(A) in unstocked lakes and ponds and in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to ADF&G markers located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, sport fishing for king salmon is closed from July 26 – July 31; king salmon may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

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:

(B) from July 26 – July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake; only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

A primary purpose of 5 AAC 21.359. *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* is to ensure adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River. The plan specifies that, if the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than 15,000 king salmon, the department shall close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the taking of king salmon.

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon is 15,000 to 30,000 king salmon. As of July 23, the cumulative estimate of king salmon passage into the Kenai River was 8,023 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 645 fish. Based on average run-timing models, the projected spawning escapement over the last four days has stabilized at an estimate of 13,500 to 14,000 fish, indicating the sustainable escapement goal will not be achieved. Therefore, it is warranted to close sport fishing for late-run king salmon in the Kenai River as specified in the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*.

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.