

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-08-14

Issued at: Palmer, Thursday, February 27, 2014

Effective Date: 6:00 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order restricts sport fishing gear and harvest in the Little Susitna River drainage. It limits gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure only. A single-hook is defined as a hook with only one point. In addition, this emergency order prohibits the retention of king salmon (any size) each Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday beginning Thursday, May 1, 2014. Fishing for king salmon is allowed, but king salmon may not be retained or possessed Tuesday–Friday; king salmon caught may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. King salmon may be retained on each Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in the Little Susitna River.

This emergency order is effective from 6:00 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainage Area. (9)(A) and (9)(B) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 6:00 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014:

5AAC 60.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainage Area.

(9) in the Little Susitna River drainage,

(A) from January 1 – July 13, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway sport fishing for king salmon is open; bag and possession limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one fish; from May 1 – July 13 king salmon may only be retained on Saturday, Sunday and Monday; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(B) from October 1 – April 30, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, only unbaited, artificial lures may be used; from May 1 – July 13, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used; from July 14 – August 5, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, only unbaited, artificial lures may be used;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Sam Ivey,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Little Susitna River king salmon, like other king salmon stocks throughout Cook Inlet, are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since 2007, below average run strength. The Little Susitna River king salmon sustainable escapement goal is 900–1,800 fish. The escapement goal was not achieved in 2010 and 2011. The goal was achieved in 2012 and 2013, but not without both preseason and inseason actions taken in 2012 that reduced harvest by up to 75 percent, and similar action implemented prior to the 2013 season. Below average runs over previous years, past performance of the king fishery under previous years' management strategies, and uncertainty over how returns may recover in the future justify starting the 2014 season with these restrictions. It is anticipated that these restrictions, combined with an annual limit reduction implemented under a separate emergency order, will again reduce harvest by as much as 75 percent. This can be expected to add approximately 700 fish to the escapement count and provide the greatest potential for achieving the escapement goal during 2014, yet continue to provide fishing opportunity throughout the season. A weir will be used to assess run strength during the season.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-07-14 establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length for fish harvested in the Susitna River drainage and the Little Susitna River. This emergency order remains in effect from 6:00 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region II Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.