

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 1-KS-A-09-15

Issued at Ketchikan, Thursday, April
30, 2015

Effective 12:01 a.m. Tuesday,
Date: May 26, 2015

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday, July
31, 2015 unless superseded by subsequent
emergency order.

EXPLANATION: To reduce the harvest of Unuk River king salmon in the sport fishery this emergency order establishes an area of northern Behm Canal that is closed to salmon fishing May 26 through July 15; reduces the king salmon bag and possession in west Behm Canal from May 26 through June 30 to one fish; postpones liberalizing regulations in the Herring Bay Sport Terminal Harvest Area, and reduces the size of the traditional Herring Bay Terminal Harvest Area. Prior to July 1 in the Herring Bay Sport Terminal Harvest Area, regional king salmon bag, possession, and annual limit provisions established by Emergency Order 1-KS-R-08-15 apply. In addition, this emergency order establishes a bag and possession limit of 6 king salmon with no size limit and rescinds the nonresident annual limit in the terminal waters of Herring Bay near Ketchikan in order to increase harvest opportunity for hatchery king salmon surplus to broodstock requirements.

REGULATION: The provisions of 5 AAC 33.369(d) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are added:

5 AAC 33.369. District 1: Herring Bay Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan.

(d) The Herring Bay Sportfish Terminal Harvest Area is open for sport fishing from July 1 through July 31. The Herring Bay Sportfish Terminal Harvest Area consists of those waters of Nichols Pass north of the latitude of Driest Point, Revillagigedo Channel north of the latitude of Harbor Point, and Tongass Narrows south of the latitude of the Lewis Reef light. The following conditions apply to sport fishing in the Herring Bay Sportfish Terminal Harvest Area:

(1) the bag and possession limit is six king salmon, with no size limit; the bag and possession limit for king salmon may be reduced by emergency order to assure adequate return of hatchery broodstock;

(2) king salmon harvested in the terminal harvest area do not count toward the nonresident annual limit.

5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

(j) in the Ketchikan vicinity:

(7) in Behm Canal and the contiguous bays enclosed to the north by a line from Point Lees to Elsie Point and a line from Elsie Point to the longitude of the outlet of Long Lake (131°26.100' W. long.), and to the south by a line from the western entrance of Bailey Bay at 55°56.036' N. lat., 131°37.943' W. long. to the northern tip of Hassler Island at 55°54.276' N. lat., 131°37.798' W. long., and a line from Fin Point at 55°51.256' N. lat., 131°35.415' W. long. to Dress Point at 55°51.145' N. lat., 131°33.748' W. long., fishing for salmon is closed from 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, May 26, 2015 through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2015;

(8) in west Behm Canal enclosed to the north by a line from the western entrance of Bailey Bay at 55°56.036' N. lat., 131°37.943' W. long. to the northern tip of Hassler Island at 55°54.276' N. lat., 131°37.798' W. long. and a line from Fin Point at 55°51.256' N. lat., 131°35.415' W. long. to Dress Point at 55°51.145' N. lat., 131°33.748' W. long., and to the east in Neets Bay by the longitude of the eastern most tip of Bug Island, and to the south by a line from Niblack Point at 55°32.998' N. lat., 132°07.228' W. long., to South Vallenar Point at 55°22.878' N. lat., 131°52.747' W. long., from 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, May 26 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, June 30, 2015:

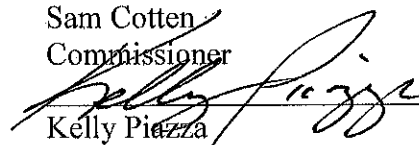
- (A) the bag and possession limit is one king salmon 28 inches or greater in length;
- (B) the nonresident annual limit is six king salmon 28 inches or greater in length;

(9) in the waters of Herring Bay west of a line from the southernmost entrance of Hole-In-The-Wall harbor at 55°19.110' N. lat., 131°31.187' W. long. to ADF&G markers located ½ mile north of Whitman Creek (signed and painted rocks) at 55°20.125' N. lat., 131°30.126' W long., to the fresh/salt water boundary signs located at the mouth of Herring Cove Creek from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 1 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, June 30, 2015;

- (A) the bag and possession limit is six king salmon, with no size limit; and,
- (B) king salmon harvested in the terminal harvest area do not count toward the nonresident annual limit.

By delegation to:

Sam Cotten
Commissioner



Kelly Piazza
Area Management Biologist
Division of Sport Fish

JUSTIFICATION: Unuk River king salmon, like other Southeast Alaska king salmon stocks, are experiencing a period of low productivity. The Unuk River king salmon escapement goal is 1,800–3,800 fish. In 2012, 2013, and 2014 after attaining its escapement goal for 35 consecutive years, the Unuk River king salmon stock failed to achieve the goal. That trend is expected to continue for the 2015 season. The 2015 preseason forecast is for a total run of approximately 2,900 king salmon. Given recent fishery and harvest trends, a run of that size is not expected to provide for the escapement goal without fishery restrictions.

Unuk River king salmon are caught in the sport fishery throughout the marine waters of Southeast Alaska. Unuk River king salmon are coded wire tagged as smolt and recaptured as adults in marine fisheries. From 1982-2014, 67% of the total Unuk River recoveries in the Ketchikan sport fishery were caught in the following three statistical areas: 101-90 (west Behm Canal), 101-80 (north Behm Canal) and 101-45. Based on tag recoveries in the marine sport fishery, the peak sport harvest of Unuk River king salmon in these areas occurs from May 24 – June 27.

Since the 2015 forecast is not expected to provide for the escapement goal given fishery and harvest trends similar to recent years, the actions implemented in this emergency order are necessary to reduce the harvest of Unuk River king salmon in an effort to ensure the escapement goal is achieved.

In addition to the protection of Unuk River king salmon, this emergency order reduces the size of the traditional Herring Bay Terminal Harvest Area. Whitman Lake hatchery king salmon in excess of broodstock requirements are expected to return to the saltwater terminal area of Herring Bay and few Unuk River king salmon are expected to be in the area. Therefore, the department is increasing the king salmon bag and possession limit to six fish, with no size limit and repealing the nonresident king salmon annual limit for the area.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 1 Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P. O. Box 110024, Douglas, AK 99811, (907) 747-5551.