

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-15-16

Issued at Soldotna: Friday, June 3, 2016

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 4, 2016

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 31, 2016, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order 2-KS-1-03-16, issued Thursday, February 18, 2016. 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 at the outlet of Skilak Lake. Retention of king salmon is also prohibited 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 the outlet of Skilak Lake.

In addition, when fishing for king salmon in these waters only one unbaited, **barbless**, single-hook, artificial lure may be used. King salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately.

In addition, this emergency order prohibits the use of bait in waters of the Kenai River drainage from an ADF&G 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.

REGULATION:

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 (1)(A) and (B) are superseded and 5 AAC 57.121.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 at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 4 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 31, 2016.

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 June 4 – June 30, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, 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 1– July 31, that portion of 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 at the outlet of Skilak Lake; 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;

(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;

Sam Cotten,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of 5 AAC 57.160 *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Management Plan* (a), is to ensure adequate escapement of early-run king salmon into the Kenai River. The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for early-run Kenai River king salmon is 5,300 to 9,000 king salmon.

Kenai River king salmon are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since 2009, below average run strength. The 2016 preseason forecast for early-run Kenai River king salmon was for a total run of approximately 5,200 fish. As of June 1, the total estimated passage of early-run Kenai River king salmon at the river mile 14 sonar was 2,375 fish. The three-year mean of ARIS sonar data indicate approximately 16 percent of the run has passed the sonar by June 3. However, run timing models for early-run Kenai River king salmon are indicating a run that is likely returning earlier than observed historically and is projected to be larger than the forecast and within the OEG. Based on the inseason assessment, catch & release sport fishing opportunity can be afforded without jeopardizing achievement of the OEG.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-03-16, issued Thursday, February 18, 2016 which closed a portion of the Kenai River Drainage from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G marker located approximately 300 downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek through June 30, 2016 is superseded by this emergency order.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-03-16, issued Thursday, February 18, 2016 which closed a portion of the Kenai River Drainage to sporting for king salmon from an ADF&G marker located approximately 300 downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake through Friday, July 31, 2016, 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.