

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-I-04-21

Issued at: Glennallen, Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 21, 2021

Expiration Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2021,
unless superseded by subsequent emergency
order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length in the Upper Copper River drainage from four to one fish. Any king salmon harvested from the Upper Copper River drainage prior to June 21 does not count toward the one fish annual limit.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 52.022. (a)(3)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 21, 2021:

5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

(a)(3) king salmon: may be taken only from January 1 – July 19, as follows;

(A) 20 inches or greater in length; bag and possession limit of one fish; annual limit of one fish; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006;

Doug Vincent Lang
Commissioner

by delegation to:



Mark A. Somerville
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The *Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* directs the department to manage the Copper River fisheries to achieve a sustainable escapement goal in the upper Copper River of 24,000 or more king salmon. The 2021 king salmon run to the Copper River appears to be substantially weaker than the preseason forecast of 37,000 king salmon. The cumulative commercial harvest, as of June 15, is approximately 6,100 king salmon and is half the most recent five-year average for this date.

Only 18 king salmon have passed the Gulkana River salmon counting tower through June 15, which is the fourth lowest count on record for this date. Catch rates of king salmon in the Native Village of Eyak research fish wheels through June 14 are the third lowest on record since 2003. Additionally, recapture rates of king salmon at Canyon Creek indicate a potential inriver return near the escapement goal of 24,000 king salmon for the Copper River drainage, providing little to no surplus for harvest. Therefore, reducing the annual limit for king salmon from four to one fish in Upper Copper River sport fishery is justified to ensure the sustainable escapement goal is achieved.

The Department will continue to evaluate inseason run strength and may take additional management action as needed to ensure that escapement requirements are met while providing as much sport fishing opportunity as possible.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region III Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (907) 459-7357 and the Glennallen Area Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, PO Box 47, Glennallen, AK 99588, (907) 822-3309.