

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-11-98

Issued at Soldotna: June 26, 1998

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. July 1, 1998

Expiration Date: 12:01 a.m. July 10, 1998,
unless superseded by subsequent emergency
order.

EXPLANATION:

Beginning July 1, king salmon less than 52 inches may not be retained in those areas of the Kenai River open to king salmon fishing which are upstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna. This includes that area of the Moose River open to king salmon fishing. This emergency order is effective at 12:01 a.m. July 1. Terminal tackle in the aforementioned area is restricted to one single hook (treble hooks prohibited) having a single point. Bait is prohibited. King salmon 52 inches in length as measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail may be retained during the period of catch-and-release. This regulation remains in affect through July 10. Closures to fishing around the confluence of the lower Killey and Funny Rivers remain in affect through July 14 as provided in regulation.

Downstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna king salmon may be retained beginning July 1 as provided in regulation. Bait may be used in this area. All other regulations pertaining to the harvesting of king salmon downstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna remain in affect.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.020 (a) and 5 AAC 56.035 (c) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order the following provisions are effective:

In that area of the Kenai River upstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna open to king salmon fishing and in that area of the Moose River open to king salmon fishing, king salmon less than 52 inches in total length may not be possessed or retained from 12:01 a.m. July 1 through July 10. Catch and release fishing for king salmon less than 52 inches in total length is permitted in the aforementioned areas of these rivers open to king salmon fishing.

In the Kenai River downstream from a department marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake (except in the fly-fishing-only area at the mouth of the Moose River), downstream to the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna from July 1 through July 10, only unbaited artificial lures with one single hook with one point may be used.

Frank Rue
Commissioner

By delegation to:

David C. Nelson
Area Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The Kenai River Early Chinook Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 56.070) directs the department to achieve a minimum spawning escapement of 5,300 early run fish; an optimum spawning escapement of 9,000. At this time a spawning escapement of 7,000 - 9,000 is projected. By July 1, early run king salmon have migrated upstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna.

Beginning July 1, the Kenai River Late Chinook Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.359) directs the department to manage the Kenai River king salmon fishery for late run king salmon. However, all early run king salmon will not have entered the spawning tributaries of Slikok Creek and the Killey and Funny Rivers by this date. A harvest oriented fishery directed at early run king salmon in the upper areas of the Kenai River in early July is therefore not justified as the spawning escapement goal of 9,000 fish has not been achieved. Therefore, the late run king salmon harvest must be limited to the lower section of the Kenai River through July 10. Those areas around the confluence of the Kenai River with the Killey River, Funny River and Slikok Creek remain closed by regulation through July 14 to provide maximum protection to early run fish "holding" in these areas.

To minimize injury to early run fish which are caught and released upstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna, terminal gear is limited to artificial lures with one single hook with one point. King salmon over 52 inches in length may be retained. Most early run king salmon are now "holding" at the confluence areas of the major spawning tributaries. These areas are closed to all fishing. The catch of early run fish will be relatively small and retention of king salmon 52 inches or larger insignificant. Providing catch-and-release fishing opportunity upstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge in Soldotna will therefore not jeopardize the reproductive potential of the spawning escapement.

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, and (907) 267-2221.