

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No.: 2-KS-5-09-99

Issued at: Dillingham, June 28, 1999

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Expiration Date: 11:59 P.M. Friday, December 31, 1999

Unless superseded by subsequent Emergency Order

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the seasonal limit for king salmon in the Nushagak/Mulchatna River drainage from four per season to two king salmon per season. This more restrictive seasonal limit provides for retention of a single daily bag limit (2 king salmon, one over 28 inches). Only one of the two king salmon taken from the Nushagak/Mulchatna River drainage may exceed 28 inches in length.

In addition, this emergency order requires Nushagak/Mulchatna River drainage anglers to record whether the length of their harvested king salmon is greater or less than 28 inches.

REGULATION:

5 AAC 67.024 therefore is amended to read:

5 AAC 67.024. HARVEST RECORD REQUIRED; SEASONAL LIMITS. (b)(2) immediately upon landing a king salmon, the angler shall enter the date, location (water body), and species of the catch in ink, on the harvest record. Anglers harvesting king salmon in the Nushagak/Mulchatna River drainage must also immediately record whether the harvested fish is greater or less than 28 inches;

(3) the annual limit is five king salmon per angler, not more than two of which may be taken from the Nushagak/Mulchatna River drainage; and not more than one king salmon taken from the Nushagak/Mulchatna drainage may exceed 28 inches in length.

Frank Rue
Commissioner

By delegation to: _____

Dan O. Dunaway
Area Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

This action is necessary to reduce the sport harvest of king salmon in the Nushagak/Mulchatna River drainage. Only 16,229 king salmon are estimated to have entered the Nushagak River through midnight, June 27. The department expected between 30,000 and 37,000 king salmon (50 percent of the inriver goal) to have entered the river by this date. Given the poor return to date, the department projects the inriver return will be less than 55,000 king salmon.

The Nushagak-Mulchatna Chinook Salmon Management Plan directs the department to restrict the sport fishery when the inriver return is projected to be less than 55,000 fish “. . .to ensure that the projected spawning escapement does not fall below 40,000 fish. . .”.

Current information suggests the total 1999 sport harvest is significantly below average at this time, due to the late appearance of fish in the river. However, with the current level of sport fishing effort, these restrictions are necessary to ensure adequate spawning escapement.

A seasonal limit of two king salmon, only one of which exceeds 28 inches, provides for retention of a single daily bag limit under the current regulations. This restriction to the seasonal limit is expected to reduce the sport harvest by more than 50 percent, ensure a spawning escapement greater than 40,000 fish, and preserve sport angling opportunity. This restriction is also expected to ensure inriver subsistence fishers the reasonable harvest opportunity as provided in the Nushagak-Mulchatna Chinook Salmon Management Plan.

DISTRIBUTION: Lt. Governor; Commissioner of Fish and Game; Office of Governor (Anchorage); Director, Sport Fish; Regional Supervisor, Sport Fish; Regional Supervisor, Commercial Fish; News Media, Radio, TV, and Newspapers; Department of Public Safety; Board of Fisheries Members; Sport Fish Area Offices; Commercial Fish Area Offices.