

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Emergency Order No. 1-RS-H-18-04

Issued at Yakutat, Friday, July 16, 2004

Effective 12:01 A.M.
Date: Sunday, July 18, 2004

Expiration Date: 11:59 P.M. Friday,
December 31, 2004. Unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes the Situk River to all sport fishing upstream of an ADF&G regulatory marker located near the Middle Situk Airstrip. In addition it reduces the sport fishing bag and possession limit for sockeye salmon 16 inches or greater in length in the Situk River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located near the Middle Situk Airstrip from 6 to 2 fish per day from July 18 through December 31, 2004.

REGULATION: The provisions of 5 AAC 47.023 Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of Southeast Alaska (6)(E) and (F) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order the following provisions are effective:

(6) in the Situk River Drainage,

(E) all fishing is closed upstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located near the Middle Situk Airstrip;

(F) downstream of an ADF&G regulatory marker located near the Middle Situk Airstrip, the bag and possession limit for sockeye salmon 16 inches or greater in length is two fish.

JUSTIFICATION:

The Situk River drainage is managed for an optimum escapement goal of 50,000 sockeye salmon, with an escapement range of 30,000 to 70,000 spawners. The weir count on July 15 was 25,100 sockeye, which is close to the lower escapement goal range for this date when 61% of the run is generally past the weir. However, recent sockeye weir counts have declined. Sport anglers have harvested a significant number of sockeye in the river above the weir, further reducing the number of sockeye reaching the spawning grounds.

Additionally, extremely low water levels have crowded concentrations of sockeye salmon into a few available holding areas in the upper portions of the Situk River. As a result, sockeye salmon are exposed to a high rate of unintentional hooking and wounding.

As a result of the increased level of harvest in the upper river, the high rate of unintentional hooking and wounding of fish, and escapement counts near the low end of the desired escapement range, the area closure of the sport fishery is necessary with a reduction in the bag limit to achieve desired escapement levels. Managers will continue to monitor the situation and take additional management actions as necessary depending on water levels and future run strength.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 1 Office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P. O. Box 240020, Douglas, AK 99824, (907) 465-4270.

Kevin C. Duffy
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert Johnson
Yakutat Area Management Biologist