

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-02-04

Issued at: Fairbanks, April 29, 2004

Effective Date: 12:01 A.M. Monday May 3, 2004

Expiration Date: December 31, 2004
Unless superseded by subsequent
emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the sport fishing bag and possession limits for king salmon and chum salmon to either one king salmon or one chum salmon in all waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage effective 12:01 A.M., Monday, May 3, 2004.

All king salmon or chum salmon caught that exceed the bag and possession limit of either one king salmon or one chum salmon must be released immediately back into the water unharmed.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5AAC 70.022 (e)(1 and 2) are superseded by this Emergency Order. Under this Emergency Order, the following provisions are effective:

(e)(1 and 2) In all waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage, effective 12:01 A.M. Monday, May 3, 2004 the bag and possession limits for king salmon and chum salmon is either one king salmon or one chum salmon per day.

Kevin C. Duffy
Commissioner

by delegation to: _____

John M. Burr
Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim
Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Kuskokwim River king salmon and chum salmon were designated as Stocks of Concern by the Alaska Board of Fisheries following the 1999 and 2000 seasons when the stocks failed to attain desired escapement levels. King salmon and chum salmon escapements have improved since that time, but the below average size of these runs is still a concern to managers.

The preseason outlook for king salmon and chum salmon returns to the Kuskokwim River in 2004 is uncertain. The preseason forecast for Kuskokwim salmon returns relies heavily on previous season run strength and on parent year escapements. Until in-season assessment information is available, conservative fishery management is warranted given persistent below average run abundance, low parent year escapements and uncertainty concerning the strength of the 2004 Kuskokwim salmon runs.

This preseason reduction in the sport fishery bag and possession limit is consistent with the Board of Fisheries' Kuskokwim Salmon Rebuilding Plan and the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy. The plan emphasizes improving salmon spawning escapements and, when surpluses are available, providing opportunities to maintain subsistence uses and other uses. The Department will evaluate in-season run strength and take appropriate management actions to ensure escapement requirements are met.

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 Fisheries, 1300 College Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (907) 459-7234.