

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-04-04

Issued at: Fairbanks, June 25, 2004

Effective Date: 12:01 A.M. Monday, June 28, 2004

Expiration Date: December 31, 2003
Unless superseded by subsequent
emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order rescinds emergency order 3-KS-01-04 issued on April 29, 2004 and restores sport fishing bag and possession limits for king salmon and chum salmon. The bag and possession limit for king salmon in the Yukon River drainage is three fish per day, of which only two may be over 28 inches in length. The bag and possession limit for chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage is ten fish per day, with no size limit. These changes become effective 12:01 A.M. Monday, June 28, 2004.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5AAC 70.022 (c) (1 and 2) are restored by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 A.M. Monday, June 28, 2004:

(c)(1): In waters of the Yukon River portion of the Arctic–Yukon-Kuskokwim Area, the bag and possession limit for king salmon is three fish, of which only two may be over 28 inches in length.

(c)(2): In all waters of the Yukon River portion of the Arctic–Yukon-Kuskokwim Area, the bag and possession limit for chum salmon is ten fish, with no size limit.

Kevin C. Duffy
Commissioner

by delegation to: _____

John M. Burr
Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim
Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

In-season stock assessment data indicate that the 2004 king salmon run in the Yukon River is approximately average in strength and similar to runs in 2001 and 2002. The 2001 and 2002 king salmon runs supported escapements, subsistence, and a limited commercial harvest. It is anticipated that the 2004 king salmon run will also provide for escapement goals, subsistence needs and for a below average commercial harvest.

The summer chum salmon run is currently projected to be 1.0 to 1.4 million fish. According to the Summer Chum Salmon Fishery Management Plan, this run size will provide for directed summer chum salmon fishing by all users.

Most subsistence fishers in lower river districts have met their subsistence harvest needs. The subsistence net and wheel fisheries in the lower fishing districts (Y1 – Y3) have been taken off the weekly fishing schedule and are open continuously except prior to and immediately following commercial openings.

As of June 22, 2004 there have been a total of four commercial fishing openings in the lower river districts (Y1 and Y2) for a total commercial harvest of approximately 24,000 king salmon. Additional commercial openings are anticipated.

The sport fishing bag and possession limits were reduced prior to the beginning of the 2004 season because of uncertainty in the preseason outlook for king salmon and chum salmon returns. Yukon River king salmon and chum salmon were designated as Stocks of Concern by the Alaska Board of Fisheries following the 1998 through 2000 seasons when the stocks failed to attain desired escapement levels.

Based on current assessment, the strength of the 2004 king salmon and chum salmon runs are sufficient to provide for normal sport fishery management. The department will continue to evaluate in-season run strength and take appropriate management actions to ensure that 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.