

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-10-05

Issued at Soldotna: Friday, June 17, 2005

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, June 18, 2005

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Thursday, June 30, 2005, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order allows the use of bait in the following waters of the Kenai River drainage open to fishing for king salmon, beginning 12:01 a.m., Saturday June 18, 2005 through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, June 30, 2005. The waters in which bait may be used extends from the mouth of the Kenai River upstream to a point one hundred yards downstream of the confluence of Moose River and the Kenai River.

The slot limit prohibiting the retention of king salmon between 44 and 55 inches in length remains in effect.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.023 SEASONS; BAG, POSSESSION, AND SIZE LIMITS; AND SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE KENAI RIVER DRAINAGE. (c)(1)(A) are superceded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Saturday, June 18 through 11:59 p.m., Thursday, June 30, 2005:

5 AAC 56.023 SEASONS; BAG, POSSESSION, AND SIZE LIMITS; AND SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE KENAI RIVER DRAINAGE.

(c)(1)(A) from January 1 - June 30, in the Kenai River, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used except that, from June 18 – June 30, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to a point 100 yards below the confluence of the Moose River and Kenai River, only one single hook may be used.

McKie Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

George E. Pappas,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

As provided by 5 AAC 56.070 KENAI RIVER AND KASILOF RIVER EARLY-RUN KING SALMON CONSERVATION PLAN (d)(3), the commissioner shall liberalize the sport fishery in the Kenai River by allowing the use of bait to achieve the optimal escapement goal when the spawning escapement is projected to exceed the upper end of the optimal escapement goal. This emergency order will allow the use of bait in the Kenai River from a point 100 yards downstream of the confluence of the Moose River and Kenai River downstream to the mouth of the Kenai River. The slot limit remains in effect through June 30 below the Soldotna Bridge and through July 14 above the Soldotna Bridge; only king salmon less than 44 inches in length or 55 inches or greater in length may be retained while the slot limit is in effect.

The Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Conservation Management Plan (5 AAC 56.070) directs the department to achieve the optimal spawning escapement goal range of 5,300 to 9,000 king salmon. To date, total inriver run is approximately 8,400 king salmon and the estimated total harvest is approximately 1,800 king salmon. Creel survey information indicates the harvest rates have been good, but angler effort has been low compared to historic trends. The department expects a total run of early-run king salmon of approximately 13,000 to 15,000 fish and a spawning escapement in excess of the upper range goal of 9,000 fish. Liberalizing the sport fishery for Kenai River early-run king salmon through the allowance of bait is projected to approximately double the estimated exploitation rate in the lower Kenai River to about 30%. The projected sport harvest of Kenai River early-run king salmon with the use of bait beginning on June 18 is approximately 5,500-6,500 fish through the end of June. Therefore, it is warranted to liberalize this fishery.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 2 Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.