

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-10-06

Issued at Soldotna: Friday, June 9, 2006

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, June 10, 2006

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Friday, June 30, 2006, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.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 10, 2006 through 11:59 p.m., Friday, June 30, 2006. 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 (c)(1)(A) are superceded by this emergency order.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 10 through 11:59 p.m., Friday, June 30, 2006:

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 10 – 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 its mouth upstream to a point 100 yards below the confluence of the Moose River and Kenai River. The slot limit remains in effect through June 30 below the Soldotna Bridge and through July 14 above the Soldotna Bridge. Only those 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, the total inriver run is approximately 5,450 king salmon and the estimated total harvest is approximately 350 king salmon below the Soldotna Bridge. Creel survey information indicates the harvest rates have been fair, 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 16,000 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 10 is approximately 4,500-5,700 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.