

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-36-07

Issued at: Palmer, Thursday, August 30, 2007

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, September 4, 2007

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. December 31, 2007, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the retention of coho salmon while sport fishing in all waters of the Knik Arm Management Area, excluding the Eklutna Tailrace and Fish Creek. This emergency order becomes effective at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, September 4, 2007.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 ACC 60.120 **GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SEASONS, BAG, POSSESSION AND SIZE LIMITS, AND METHODS AND MEANS FOR THE KNIK ARM DRAINAGE AREA. (2)(A)** are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, September 4, 2007:

5 AAC 60.120 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SEASONS, BAG, POSSESSION AND SIZE LIMITS, AND METHODS AND MEANS FOR THE KNIK ARM DRAINAGE AREA.

(2) Salmon other than king salmon;

(A) 16 inches or greater in length may be taken from January 1-December 31; bag and possession limit is three fish; coho salmon of any length may not be retained or possessed.

Denby S. Lloyd,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Dave Rutz,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2007 return of coho salmon to most of the Knik Arm Management Area streams of Northern Cook Inlet appears to be below average. Both commercial and recreational catch rates have been below average as well. The Department has a weir on the Little Susitna River to evaluate coho salmon run strength. As of August 29, which is the 43 percentile of the return, only 3,098 coho salmon have passed through the weir. Based on this year's weir count, the Department is projecting a total escapement of 7,746 coho salmon, well below the escapement goal range of 10,100 to 17,700 fish. Although there are currently no weir projects to count coho salmon on other Knik Arm area streams, data from previous projects on these systems indicate that when there is a weak return to the Little Susitna River, returns to these systems are weak as well. Fishing reports received from guides and anglers fishing Knik

Arm systems indicate below average returns, except for Fish Creek. Given the poor return of coho salmon to waters of the Knik Arm area of Northern Cook Inlet (NCI), it is warranted to restrict recreational fishing activity at this time. Fish Creek and the Eklutna Tailrace are excluded from this restriction because sport catch information and preliminary information from a sockeye salmon weir on Fish Creek indicate that the Fish Creek coho salmon return for 2007 is above average, and the Eklutna Tailrace is a stocked fishery.

DISTRIBUTION:

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