

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-26-08

Issued at: Palmer, Thursday, August 14, 2008

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, August 16, 2008

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Wednesday,
December 31, 2008, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order increases the daily bag limit of coho salmon from two per day to three per day in those waters open to fishing for salmon (other than king salmon) in waters of the Knik Arm drainage, excluding Jim Creek, commencing at 12:01 a.m., Saturday, August 16, through December 31. Some of the more popular streams in this area include the Little Susitna River and Fish, Wasilla, and Cottonwood creeks.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 60.120 (2)(A) GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SEASONS, BAG, POSSESSION, AND SIZE LIMITS, AND METHODS AND MEANS FOR THE KNIK ARM DRAINAGE AREA are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 12:01 a.m., Saturday, August 16, through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, December 31, 2008:

5 AAC 60.120 (2)(A) 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, of which all three may be coho salmon, excluding Jim Creek; in Jim Creek, bag and possession limit is three fish, of which only two per day and two in possession may be coho salmon;

Denby S. Lloyd,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Dave Rutz,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2008 return of coho salmon to several monitored Knik Arm Management Area waters of Northern Cook Inlet appears to be strong and above average recreational catch rates have been reported. As of August 13, information from a department weir on the Little Susitna River used to evaluate and index coho salmon run

strength indicates that the coho salmon return to the Little Susitna River will likely exceed the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 10,100 to 17,700 fish. In addition, an exit survey conducted by State Park Service personnel in the lower river indicates that sport harvest rates for coho from the Little Susitna River appear to be above the historical average. Based upon previous studies there is a strong correlation between runs to the Little Susitna River and Fish, Wasilla, and Cottonwood creeks.

Coho salmon returning to Fish Creek are counted at a weir located upstream of Knik-Goose Bay Road, and upstream of the sport fishery. This weir is primarily operated to count sockeye salmon, therefore it is only in operation during a portion of the coho salmon return. Historically, this weir was used to also count coho salmon and there was escapement goal of 1,200 to 4,400 fish. As of August, 13, 3,755 coho salmon had been counted past the weir and the current projected escapement of coho salmon into Fish Creek is estimated to exceed 9,000 fish.

It is not anticipated that the increased sport harvest from this emergency order will lower the escapement below desired escapement levels in Cottonwood, Fish, and Wasilla creeks, or below the lower bounds of the SEG range on the Little Susitna River.

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.