

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-27-09

Issued at Palmer, Tuesday, August 18, 2009

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, August 19, 2009

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday,
December 31, 2009, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order increases the daily bag limit for coho salmon from two per day to three per day in those waters of the Knik Arm Drainage open to fishing for salmon (other than king salmon), excluding the Little Susitna River, commencing at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, August 19, through December 31, 2009. This emergency order also adds another day to the weekend only fisheries of Cottonwood, Fish, and Wasilla creeks extending the weekend from Saturday through Sunday to Saturday through Monday.

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 Drainages Area and 5 AAC 60.122 (4)(A), (5)(A), and (11)(D) Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, August 19, through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, December 31, 2009:

60.120 General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

(2) salmon other than king salmon,

(A) 16 inches or greater in length may be taken from August 19 – December 31; bag and possession limit is three fish, of which all three may be coho salmon, excluding the Little Susitna River; in the Little Susitna River, bag and possession limit is three fish, of which no more than two per day and two in possession may be coho salmon;

5 AAC 60.122 Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

(4) in the Cottonwood Creek drainage,

(A) from August 19 – December 31, from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G marker located one mile upstream from the Palmer Hayflat State Game Refuge access road, sport fishing is allowed on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.;

(5) in the Fish Creek drainage,

(A) the waters from ADF&G regulatory markers located at its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located one-quarter mile upstream from the Knik-Goose Bay Road, are open to sport fishing from August 19 – December 31 on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except that sport fishing for king salmon is closed;

- (11) the Wasilla Creek drainage, including Rabbit Slough,
(D) from August 19 – December 31, downstream of the Alaska Railroad bridge is open to sport fishing for salmon, except king salmon, on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; bag and possession limit of three fish, of which all three may be coho salmon; a person who takes the bag limit of salmon from Wasilla Creek may not sport fish for any species of fish that same day in waters open to sport fishing for salmon;

Denby S. Lloyd,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Sam Ivey,
Assistant Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2009 return of coho salmon to certain Knik Arm Management Area waters of Northern Cook Inlet appears to be strong and providing for above average recreational catch rates. Coho salmon returning to Fish Creek are counted at a weir located upstream of the Knik Goose Bay Road, and upstream of the sport fishery. This weir is primarily operated to count sockeye salmon, therefore it is typically only in operation during a portion of the coho salmon return. Historically, this weir has been used to count coho salmon and historically had an escapement goal of 1,200 to 4,400 fish. As of August 17, counts show 2,896 coho salmon have passed the weir and the current projected escapement of coho salmon into Fish Creek is estimated to exceed 7,000 fish.

Based upon previous studies there is a strong correlation between runs to Fish Creek and the other Knik Arm streams. A recent foot survey of McRoberts Creek also indicated the escapement goal for Jim Creek will likely be exceeded. Therefore it is warranted to increase the daily bag and possession limit from two per day to three per day in all waters of Knik Arm, except the Little Susitna River and to add another day on the weekend only fisheries of Cottonwood, Fish, and Wasilla creeks to Saturday, Sunday, and Monday.

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 Jim Creek (McRoberts Creek).

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.