

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-01-10

Issued at: Glennallen, Tuesday June 15, 2010

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday June 21, 2010

Expiration Date: December 31, 2010, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length in the Upper Copper River drainage from four to two fish. In addition, no more than one king salmon of the two fish annual limit may be retained from any individual tributary or the mainstem of the Copper River after June 20, 2010. Any king salmon recorded prior to June 21 on the harvest portion of an Alaska sport fishing license or harvest card does not count against the two king salmon that may be harvested after June 21.

REGULATION:

Consistent with the Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan, 5 AAC 24.361, the annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length will be reduced to two in the Upper Copper River drainage. Effective 12:01 a.m. Monday June 21, only one king salmon of the annual limit of two for the Upper Copper River drainage may be taken from an individual tributary or the mainstem of the Copper River.

Denby S. Lloyd
Commissioner



by delegation to: _____

Mark A. Somerville
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2010 king salmon return to the Copper River drainage is currently less than expected. The Department has been directed by the Board of Fisheries to manage the commercial and sport fisheries to achieve a sustainable escapement goal in the upper Copper River of 24,000 or more king salmon. A total of 7,813 king salmon have been harvested within the Copper River District commercial gillnet fishery as of June 10. This is only slightly better than the 7,671 king salmon harvested by this date in 2009 and below the 2010 anticipated commercial harvest of 15,502 king salmon through this date. As of June 13, a total of 54 king salmon have passed the Gulkana River counting tower. Cumulative counts from 2002 – 2008, through June 13th, have averaged 89 king salmon with only 3 out of 8 years observing less than 60 king salmon past the tower by that date. In addition, the cumulative catch of king salmon in the Native Village of Eyak research fish wheels at Baird Canyon and recaptures at Canyon Creek indicate the king salmon return appears to be similar to the poor return of 2009. Copper River king salmon migratory timing and five year average harvest rates indicate insufficient numbers of king salmon to sustain the king salmon sport fishery and still attain a spawning escapement of 24,000 or more king salmon in the Copper River drainage.

Therefore, restriction of the king salmon sport harvest is warranted. Further action to restrict or liberalize the Upper Copper River king salmon sport fishery may be required dependent on run strength as the season progresses.

DISTRIBUTION:

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