

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-37-12

Issued at Soldotna: Sunday, July 8, 2012

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, July 10, 2012

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-17-12, issued Tuesday, June 19, 2012. This emergency order prohibits the retention of king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, but less than 55 inches in length, while sport fishing in waters of the Kenai River drainage from its mouth, upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek beginning at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, July 10, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012. Harvest is allowed for king salmon less than 20 inches in length and 55 inches or greater in length.

This emergency order also maintains the king salmon sport fishing closure in waters of the Kenai River drainage from an ADF&G marker located approximately 100 yards upstream of the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to Skilak Lake and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway bridge through July 14. It then prohibits the retention of king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, but less than 55 inches in length, while sport fishing in those waters beginning at 12:01 a.m., Sunday, July 15, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012. Beginning July 15, harvest is allowed for king salmon less than 20 inches in length and 55 inches or greater in length.

In the waters described above, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used. King salmon 20 inches or greater in length but less than 55 inches in length may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. (2)(A)(i) and (3)(A) are superseded by this emergency order, and (2)(A)(v), (2)(A)(vi), (3)(B), and (3)(C) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, July 10, 2012 through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012:

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(2) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length as follows:

(A)(i) in that portion of the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway bridge, sport fishing for king salmon is closed from July 1 – July 14,

(v) in that portion of the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the

Sterling Highway bridge, only king salmon less than 20 inches in length or 55 inches or greater in length may be retained from July 15 – July 31, king salmon 20 inches or greater in length and less than 55 inches in length may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

(vi) in that portion of the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, only king salmon less than 20 inches in length or 55 inches or greater in length may be retained from July 10 – July 31, king salmon 20 inches or greater in length and less than 55 inches in length may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

(3) king salmon less than 20 inches in length as follows;

(A) in unstocked lakes and ponds and that portion of the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway bridge, sport fishing for king salmon is closed from July 1 – July 14;

(B) in unstocked lakes and ponds and that portion of the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake, and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway bridge, may be taken from July 15 – July 31; bag and possession limit of 10 fish;

(C) in unstocked lakes and ponds and that portion of the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, may be taken from July 10 – July 31; bag and possession limit of 10 fish;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

A primary purpose of 5 AAC 21.359 Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan is to ensure adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River.

King salmon runs to Cook Inlet, including early-run Kenai River king salmon, and throughout Alaska, are experiencing a period of low productivity and low run strength. The department's information, including data from inriver assessment programs as well as king salmon catch data in the Cook Inlet Central District Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery, indicates that the Kenai River late-run is also experiencing low strength. As of July 6, all indices used to assess inriver abundance indicate a run that is well below average. Inseason projections show all indices will not achieve their respective minimum inseason management objective by the end of the run in early August. Through July 6 the DIDSON sonar cumulative estimate of king salmon

passage into the Kenai River was 659. Inseason projections using DIDSON sonar are for a total run to the river of 6,000 to 9,000 late-run Kenai River king salmon. The department is still in the process of transitioning to DIDSON equipment, therefore current sonar passage data is only an index compared to the last two years of DIDSON data, not a measure of abundance relative to the existing escapement goal.

All of this information used in combination indicates the 2012 run is smaller than the 2011 run and may be the lowest on record. Therefore, these measures are warranted to ensure adequate escapement of Kenai River late-run king salmon.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-17-12, which closed a portion of the Kenai River Drainage to sport fishing for king salmon fishery, is superseded.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-18-12, which prohibited the use of bait while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake and in the Moose River from its confluence with the Kenai River upstream to the northernmost edge of the Sterling Highway Bridge, remains in effect.

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.