

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-05-12

Issued at: Glennallen, Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 30, 2012
Date:

Expiration Date: August 11, 2012, 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superseded by subsequent emergency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 one fish. This emergency order also prohibits retention of king salmon in the Gulkana River and that portion of the Copper River from the confluence of the Gulkana and Copper rivers to an ADF&G marker located approximately 500 yards downstream effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 30, 2012. The use of bait and treble hooks in the Gulkana River is also prohibited. Any king salmon retained prior to June 30 is counted toward the annual limit of one king salmon.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. (a)(3)(A) and 5AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. (9)(B) and (9)(G), and 5 AAC 52.024. Harvest record required; annual limit. (c) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 30, 2012:

5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

(a)(3) king salmon: may be taken only from January 1 – July 19, as follows;

(A) 20 inches or greater in length; bag and possession limit of one fish; annual limit of one fish; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 52.024; a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length that is removed from the water must be retained and becomes part of the bag limit of the person originally hooking it.

5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

(9) in the Gulkana River drainage,

(B) only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used in that portion of the mainstem of the Gulkana River upstream from the Richardson Highway Bridge to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately at an unnamed creek flowing into the Gulkana River about seven and one-half miles upstream from the confluence with the West Fork of the Gulkana River;

(G) all waters downstream of the confluence of the Middle Fork to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 500 yards downstream of the confluence with the Copper River;

(iii) king salmon may not be retained or possessed and must be released immediately and returned to the water unharmed;

5 AAC 52.024. Harvest record required; annual limit.

(c) In the waters described in (a) of this section, the annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one per person.

Cora Campbell
Commissioner

by delegation to: _____


Mark A. Somerville
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The *Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* directs the Department to manage the Copper River fisheries to achieve a sustainable escapement goal in the upper Copper River of 24,000 or more king salmon. A total of 11,269 king salmon have been harvested within the Copper River District commercial gillnet fishery as of June 22. This is the second lowest cumulative harvest through this date since 1981. Inriver assessment projects also indicate that the Copper River king salmon run is less than anticipated. As of June 24, a total of 162 king salmon have passed the Gulkana River counting tower. Cumulative counts from 2002 – 2011, through June 24, have averaged 796 king salmon with only 1 out of 10 years observing less than 162 king salmon past the tower by that date. 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. Additionally, Gulkana River king salmon migratory timing and average passage at the Gulkana River king salmon counting tower since 2002 indicate insufficient numbers of king salmon to sustain the king salmon sport fishery on that river and attain sufficient spawning escapement. 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:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region III Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (907) 459-7357 and the Glennallen Area Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, PO Box 47, Glennallen, AK 99588, (907) 822-3309.