

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-50-12

Issued at: Palmer, Wednesday, August 8, 2012

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Friday, August 10, 2012

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., December 31, 2012, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### **EXPLANATION:**

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-SS-2-49-12, issued in Palmer on Friday, August 3, 2012. This emergency order closes the Little Susitna River to fishing for coho salmon and prohibits the use of bait effective 12:01 a.m., Friday, August 10, 2012. Only unbaited, artificial lures may be used. The area affected by this emergency order includes all waters of the Little Susitna River from its confluence with Cook Inlet upstream to the Parks Highway. The closure prohibits sport fishing for coho salmon, including catch-and-release fishing. Coho salmon may not be retained or possessed; coho salmon accidentally caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

### **REGULATION:**

The provisions of 5 ACC 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. (9)(B) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Friday, August 10, 2012;

#### **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.**

(9) in the Little Susitna River drainage,

(B) from August 10 - September 30, in the flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, only unbaited, artificial lures may be used; from August 10 – December 31, bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king salmon, greater than 16 inches in length is three fish, of which none may be coho salmon; bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king salmon, less than 16 inches in length is ten fish, of which none may be coho salmon; sport fishing for coho salmon is closed, coho salmon of any length may not be retained or possessed; coho salmon caught may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

Cora Campbell,  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

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Sam Ivey,  
Area Management Biologist

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The Little Susitna River coho salmon sustainable escapement goal (SEG) is 10,100–17,700 fish. In 2009-2011, the SEG was not achieved. Harvest can exceed escapement on average to below-average run years due to the high effort in this sport fishery. The sport fish exit survey conducted at the Little Susitna Public Use Facility indicates mostly below-average catch rates and is supported by guide and angler reports of below average fishing success under good fishing conditions. By August 8, about 40 percent of the run has historically passed upstream of the weir, which is located at river mile 32.5, with about 60 percent of harvest complete by this date in the lower river where the vast majority of harvest takes place. The weir count through August 7 was 515. Run timing can be highly variable for coho salmon; however, at this time, even based on a record late run timing model, the SEG is projected to not be met. Therefore, it is prudent to close the sport fishery in order to reduce the total harvest by approximately 50 percent and provide the greatest potential for achieving the escapement goal.

The department will continue to monitor weir counts. Restrictions to the sport fishery may be lifted if weir counts improve and the SEG is ensured through projections of escapement.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency order No. 2-SS-2-49-12, which restricted bait on the Little Susitna River beginning August 6, 2012, is superseded.

**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.