

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-11-13

Issued at Soldotna: Thursday, May 9, 2013

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 16, 2013

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 14, 2013, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

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 downstream 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 beginning at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 16, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, June 30, 2013. Harvest is allowed for king salmon less than 20 inches in length and 55 inches or greater in length.

In addition, this emergency order prohibits the use of bait and 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 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, beginning 12:01 a.m., Monday, July 1, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 14, 2013. 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 provisions of 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area. (1)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 16, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 14, 2013:

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

- (i) from May 16 – June 30, that portion of the Kenai River downstream 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, and from July 1 through July 14, 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, 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;

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(1) sport fishing gear restrictions:

(A) from May 16 – June 30, that portion of the Kenai River downstream 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 one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used; from July 1 through July 14, 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 one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used.

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

As provided by 5 AAC 57.160 Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Management Plan (a), the purpose of this management plan is to ensure adequate escapement of early-run king salmon into the Kenai River. The department's management strategy for 2013 is to achieve the optimal escapement goal (OEG) while providing sport fishing opportunity throughout the run.

The early-run Kenai River king salmon OEG is 5,300 to 9,000 king salmon. The preseason outlook for early-run Kenai River king salmon is for a total run of approximately 5,300 fish. If realized the 2013 run would rank as the lowest run measured (28th out of 28 years), be similar in abundance to the 2012 run, and be less than one-half the 1986-2012 average run of approximately 14,000 fish. Under this scenario, the early run can sustain little harvest without jeopardizing achievement of the OEG. In 2012 the total run was 5,600 fish for the early run. There is little indication to date of a change in the low Chinook production trend observed statewide. It is therefore prudent to start the early run fishery as catch-and-release until inseason data indicates some harvest can be allowed or alternatively further restriction is necessary to meet the OEG.

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.