

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-02-15

Issued at: Fairbanks, Monday, May 4, 2015

Effective date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, May 11, 2015

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday,
December 31, 2015, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes all waters of the Yukon River drainage (excluding the Tanana River drainage) to sport fishing for king salmon, effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, May 11, 2015.

All king salmon caught unintentionally in the Yukon River drainage (excluding the Tanana River drainage) while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 73.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Yukon River Area. (b)(1) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, May 11, 2015:

5 AAC 73.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Yukon River Area.

(b)(1) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed. Any king salmon incidentally caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

Sam Cotten
Commissioner

by delegation to:



John M. Burr
Yukon River Area Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

King salmon stocks throughout western Alaska are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since at least 2010, below average run strength. The 2015 preseason forecast indicates that the Yukon River king salmon run in 2015 will be very weak, with no or very little harvestable surplus available. In 5 of the past 8 years the interim management escapement goal for king salmon into Canada was not attained. In 2009, 2011, and 2014 the interim escapement goal was attained as a result of increasingly conservative management culminating in closure of subsistence fishing for king salmon in the mainstem

Yukon River, no commercial fishery directed at king salmon, and sport fishery closures. To conserve king salmon bound for Canada and to account for uncertainty in the preseason run forecast, the Alaska Board of Fisheries modified the *Yukon River King Salmon Management Plan* in January 2013. With this modification (5 AAC 05.360 (j)) the department shall not open any subsistence fishing periods in Districts 1 and 2 during the first pulse of the king salmon migration.

Under the 2015 preseason management strategy, the subsistence fishery for king salmon will close with the first arrival of king salmon in the coastal districts. This closure will be implemented chronologically in each district with the upriver migration of king salmon. No directed commercial fishery for king salmon or sale of king salmon caught incidentally in other commercial fisheries will be permitted. During the commercial fishery for summer chum salmon using selective fishing gear (dip nets, beach seines, and closely attended fish wheels) king salmon must be released immediately to the water alive. The anticipated low abundance of king salmon into the Yukon River, the recent failures to reach Canadian border passage goals and escapement targets in Alaska, and restrictions placed on the subsistence fishery, warrant a closure of sport fishing for king salmon in the Yukon River drainage.

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 99701, (907) 459-7228.