

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-19-16

Issued at Soldotna: Thursday, June 16, 2016

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Saturday, June 18, 2016

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Thursday, June 30, 2016, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order 2-KS-1-15-16, issued Friday, June 3, 2016. This emergency order allows the harvest of king salmon while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek. In addition, retention of king salmon is prohibited from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake.

In addition, when fishing for king salmon in waters where retention is prohibited only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure may be used. King salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area. (1)(A) and (B) are superseded by this emergency order. The following provisions effective beginning at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, June 18 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, June 30, 2016.

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for 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 June 18 – June 30, in 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 one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

(B) from June 18 – June 30, 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 an ADF&G regulatory marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake; only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when fishing for king salmon; retention of king salmon is prohibited, king salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

Sam Cotten,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of 5 AAC 57.160 *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Management Plan* (a), is to ensure adequate escapement of early-run king salmon into the Kenai River. The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for early-run Kenai River king salmon is 5,300 to 9,000 king salmon.

The 2016 preseason forecast for early-run Kenai River king salmon was for a total run of approximately 5,200 fish. As of June 15, the total estimated passage of early-run Kenai River king salmon at the river mile 14 sonar was 6,634 fish. For the 3 years data is available, about 50% of the run has migrated past the river mile 14 sonar from June 10 to June 14. Department information about several Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, indicate early-run king salmon stocks are showing early-timing in 2016 and are likely returning to Cook Inlet streams in a similar or earlier timing pattern than was observed in 2015.

For the Kenai River, run timing models including those based on early-timing patterns, sonar estimates, as well as catch rates in the in the test netting program and in the catch-and-release sport fishery, indicate the 2016 run is projected to be in the upper quartile of the optimum escapement goal (OEG). Therefore, based on the inseason assessment through June 15, a limited harvest in the area downstream of ADF&G markers near Slikok Creek for the remainder of June can be afforded while still achieving a spawning escapement in the mid to upper range of the OEG.

Additionally, in accordance with 5 AAC 57.121(1)(J), during times when the retention of king salmon is prohibited, only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when sport fishing for king salmon. "Barbless" means the hook is manufactured without a barb or the barb has been completely removed or compressed so the barb is in complete contact with the shaft of the hook;

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-15-16, issued Friday, June 3, 2016 which prohibited retention of king salmon in a portion of the Kenai River Drainage from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake is superseded by this emergency order.

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.