

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-24-17

Issued at: Palmer, Friday, June 30, 2017

Effective Date: 6:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 4, 2017

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday,  
July 13, 2017, unless superseded by  
subsequent emergency order.

### EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-08-17 and Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-09-17, issued in Palmer on March 24, 2017, and Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-17-17, issued in Palmer on June 21, 2017.

This emergency order closes the Susitna River drainage to sport fishing for king salmon and limits sport fishing gear for other species to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure when fishing in Units 1 - 6 of the Susitna River drainage in those waters normally open to king salmon fishing. Single hook is defined as a hook with only one point. Bait remains closed on the Deshka River.

Fishing for other finfish species remains open. King salmon may not be targeted and those caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. The area affected by this emergency order includes all waters open to king salmon fishing in Units 1- 6 of the Susitna River drainage.

### REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 61.110. (1)(A) and (B)(i), 5 AAC 61.112. (1), (4), (6)(A) and (B), 5 AAC 61.114. (1) and (3), 5 AAC 61.118. (1), (4), and (7)(A), 5 AAC 61.120. (1), and 5 AAC 61.122. (1) and (4)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 6 a.m. Tuesday, July 4 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, July 13, 2017:

#### **5 AAC 61.110 General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

##### **1) king salmon**

(A) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(B) less than 20 inches in length

(i) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

#### **5 AAC 61.112 Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 1 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

(1) in flowing waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

(4) sport fishing for king salmon is closed;

(6) in the Deshka River drainage, including Trapper Lake,

(A) in flowing waters upstream of the Moose/Kroto Creeks, only one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used;

(B) from its mouth upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located 300 feet downstream of the weir (river mile 7), and in all waters within a one-half mile radius of its confluence with the Susitna River, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish; from its mouth upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers near Chijuk Creek (river mile 17), and in all waters within a one-half mile radius of its confluence with the Susitna River, only one, unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used; the remainder of the drainage is closed to sport fishing for king salmon;

**5 AAC 61.114 Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

(1) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(3) in flowing waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

**5 AAC 61.118 Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 4 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

(1) in flowing waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

(4) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(7) in the Lake Creek drainage,

(A) from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 100 yards upstream of its mouth to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately one-quarter mile upstream of Bulchitna Lake, only one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used;

**5 AAC 61.120 Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 5 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

(1) in flowing waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

**5AAC 61.122 Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 6 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

(1) in flowing waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

(4) in the East Fork of the Chulitna River drainage, including all waters within a one-quarter mile radius of its confluence of the East Fork and West Fork and including the Middle Fork of the Chulitna and the first quarter mile of Honolulu Creek,

(A) the waters are open to sport fishing, except for king salmon; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

Sam Cotten,  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

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Sam Ivey,  
Area Management Biologist

**JUSTIFICATION:**

Emergency orders issued prior to the season targeted a 50% reduction in harvest, all management units of Susitna River Drainage Area included, based upon harvest and escapement data and performance of fisheries over recent years. To date, all indices of abundance suggest king salmon run strength in the Susitna drainage are lower than anticipated at the outset of the season.

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for king salmon in the Deshka River is 13,000 to 28,000 fish, as measured at the weir located at river mile 7. Based upon average run timing, approximately 80 percent of the escapement should have passed the weir by June 29, 2017. At this time, only 9,960 fish have passed the weir and the total escapement is projected to be approximately 12,472 fish. The anticipated sport harvest on Deshka River for a below-average run is approximately 3,300 fish with at least 80 percent occurring prior to June 29. With fewer than 700 fish expected to be conserved through closure of the fishery, any additional harvest cannot be justified, and all fish entering the lower Deshka River must be conserved. The department monitors escapement by post season aerial count of spawners on 12 streams within the Susitna River drainage that have SEGs. The Prairie Creek goal of the Talkeetna River drainage (Unit 5) has missed its SEG in three of the past five years and most recently in 2016, a year in which the majority of Susitna River Area SEGs were attained. The Chulitna River SEG in Unit 6 of the Susitna River has been missed in four of the past five years, most recently in 2016. Any additional mortality associated with continued catch-and-release fishing cannot be justified, and all fish within these units and upper Susitna River (Unit 3) must be conserved. King salmon fisheries of the Yentna River drainage (Unit 4), with the exception of the Talachulitna River, have been restricted to four day per week harvest since 2013 and under this strategy, SEGs have been attained at Lake Creek and Peters Creek near the low end of their respective SEG ranges. The SEG on the Talachulitna River has been attained since 2012 under a catch-and-release only fishing restriction. With a harvestable surplus observed in 2016, harvest was again allowed on the Talachulitna River in 2017 with emergency regulations that matched the rest of the Yentna River drainage. An aerial survey conducted on June 26 indicated fewer numbers in these areas than observed in recent years. Angler and guide reports on fisheries of the Susitna River combined with recent staff surveys indicate a weaker than anticipated run to the Susitna River drainage, commensurate with the Deshka River run size assessment, and all areas of the Susitna River drainage must be conserved to provide the greatest potential for achieving escapement goals in 2017.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-08-17, which prohibited the harvest of king salmon and limited sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure only in Units 2, 3, 5, and 6 of the Susitna River, is superseded by this emergency order.

Emergency order No. 2-KS-2-09-17, which reduced the annual limit to two king salmon over 20 inches in length and restricted harvest to Fridays – Mondays in Unit 4, prohibited the harvest of king salmon in Unit 1, except the Deshka River, and limited sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure while sport fishing in Unit 1 and Unit 4, except the Deshka River, is superseded by this emergency order.

Emergency order No. 2-KS-2-17-17, which closed the Deshka River to use of bait, is superseded by this emergency order.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region II Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.