

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-I-05-17

Issued at: Glennallen, Friday, June 2, 2017

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 5, 2017

Expiration Date: August 11, 2017, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order rescinds Emergency Order 3-KS-I-01-17 issued on Monday, March 6, 2017 and opens the season for king salmon in the Upper Copper River drainage with an annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or more in length of two fish. In addition, no more than one king salmon of the two fish annual limit may be retained from any individual tributary or mainstem of the Copper River.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 52.022. (a)(3)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 5, 2017:

5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

(a)(3) king salmon: may be taken only from January 1 – July 19, as follows;

(A) 20 inches or greater in length; bag and possession limit of one fish; annual limit of two fish; no more than one king salmon of the two fish annual limit may be retained from any individual tributary or mainstem of the Copper River; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006;

Sam Cotten

Commissioner

by delegation to:



Mark A. Somerville
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The *Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* directs the department to manage the Copper River fisheries to achieve a sustainable escapement goal in the Copper River of 24,000 or more king salmon. On March 6, 2017 the department closed the king salmon sport and personal use fisheries of the Copper River drainage and imposed and reduced the annual limit of king salmon in the subsistence fishery in response to a preseason run forecast of only 29,000 fish and generally poor return strength since 2009. However, greater than expected commercial harvest of king salmon during extremely limited fishing time and area indicate the 2017 run of king salmon may be greater than forecast, providing potential for a harvestable surplus of king salmon above the escapement goal in the Copper River drainage. It is therefore justified to relax the preseason restrictions and provide harvest opportunity in the sport fishery.

The department will continue to monitor the 2017 Copper River king salmon run as it develops. If indicators of abundance suggest the 2017 run is weaker than current indicators suggest, the department may again take further restrictive action.

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, AK 99701, (907) 459-7357 and the Glennallen Area Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, PO Box 47, Glennallen, AK 99588, (907) 822-3309.