

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-13-18

Issued at: Soldotna, Monday, June 11, 2018

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 13, 2018 Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 15, 2018,
unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the retention of king salmon of all sizes in the Kenai River from the mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake. Retention of king salmon will remain prohibited July 1 through July 15, 2018, 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.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. (2)(A)(i) and (3)(A) are superseded, and (3)(B) is added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 13 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 15, 2018

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.

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

(A) may be taken only from January 1-July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, with a bag and possession limit of one fish, as follows:

(i) from January 1 - June 30, from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, king salmon may not be retained or possessed; from July 1-July 15, from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of the Slikok Creek upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, king salmon may not be retained or possessed; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(3) king salmon less than 20 inches in length as follows:

(A) may not be retained or possessed from May 1-June 30, in unstocked lakes and ponds and in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake; from July 1-July 15, in unstocked lakes and ponds and 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;

(B) from July 1-July 15, may be taken in flowing waters and unstocked lakes and ponds and 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, bag and possession limit of ten fish;

Sam Cotten,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Matt G Miller
Fisheries Biologist IV

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 and Kasilof rivers, to conserve the unique large size early-run king salmon in the Kenai River, and to provide the department with management guidelines. The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for early-run Kenai River king salmon is 3,900 to 6,600 king salmon 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork length and longer.

Kenai River king salmon and other king salmon stocks throughout Cook Inlet are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since 2009, below average run strength. The 2018 preseason forecast for the early run of Kenai River king salmon in 2018 is below average, with a large fish (≥ 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork length or approximately ≥ 34 inches in total length) forecast of 5,499 fish.

Through June 10, an estimated 1,609 large king salmon have passed the RM 13.7 king salmon sonar. The inseason inriver run projection ranges from approximately 3,500 large king salmon based upon average run timing to approximately 4,700 large king salmon based upon a run timing of three days late.

As directed by the management plan, if the inseason inriver run projection is within the OEG, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, either open the fishery to standard regulations or prohibit the retention of king salmon. Therefore, based upon the current inseason inriver run projections, it is warranted to reduce king salmon mortality in the fishery down until run projections solidify. The department will continue to assess the run and take additional actions if necessary.

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.