

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-34-20

Issued at Soldotna: Monday, July 13, 2020

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday,
July 31, 2020, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order 2-KS-1-22-20, issued Monday, June 15, 2020. This emergency order prohibits the retention 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. Only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when sport fishing in these waters. King salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately.

The closure for sport fishing for king salmon 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 an ADF&G marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, remains in effect through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020.

REGULATION:

Consistent with the stipulations within 5 AAC 21.359. *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*. (e)(1), the provisions of 5 AAC 57.120. (a)(2)(A), (a)(3)(A) and (C) and 5 AAC 57.121. (1)(A) and (B) are superseded by this emergency order. The following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 15 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020:

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

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

(A) may be taken only from July 15 – July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, as follows:

(i) from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, 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; 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, sport fishing for king salmon is prohibited;

(a)(3) king salmon less than 20 inches in length may be taken, as follows:

(A) from July 15 – July 31, 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, are closed to sport fishing for king salmon;

(C) from July 15 – July 31, may not be retained 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;

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 July 15 – July 31, 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 July 15 – July 31, in 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 located at the outlet of Skilak Lake; only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to: _____

Colton Lipka,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of 5 AAC 21.359 *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* is to ensure adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River system and provide management guidelines to the department. The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for late-run Kenai River king salmon is 15,000 to 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork and longer.

In 2020, king salmon runs throughout Cook Inlet have consistently and significantly underperformed preseason expectations resulting in restrictions and closures of inriver and marine sport fisheries. Through July 12, 2020, approximately 1,699 king salmon 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork and longer have passed the river mile 13.7 king salmon sonar, the quarter point of the late run is historically around July 17. Inseason projections estimate an escapement of approximately 11,400 large king salmon under the current management strategy. Without further restrictions to harvest and effort, the OEG for Kenai River late-run king salmon is not expected to be achieved. Therefore, consistent with the management plan, it is warranted to prohibit retention of king salmon of all sizes in the sport fishery. As further specified in the management plan, if the use of bait and retention is prohibited in the sport fishery, the retention of king salmon is prohibited in the personal use fishery, and commercial fishing periods of the Upper Subdistrict will be open for no more than 24 hours a week with a 36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-22-20, issued Monday, June 15, 2020, which prohibited the use of bait and retention of king salmon 34 inches and greater in length 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 is superseded by this emergency order. Additionally, this emergency order closed sport fishing for king salmon from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake.

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.