

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

**Emergency Order No.** 2-KS-7-42-20

**Issued at:** Homer, Wednesday, July 22, 2020

**Effective Date:** 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 24, 2020

**Expiration Date:** 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### **EXPLANATION:**

This emergency order prohibits king salmon fishing (including catch-and-release) in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.). King salmon incidentally caught while fishing for other fish may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

### **REGULATION:**

The provisions of 5 AAC 58.055. (g) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 24 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020:

#### **5 AAC 58.055. Upper Cook Inlet Summer Salt Water King Salmon Management Plan.**

(g) Notwithstanding (d) of this section, from July 24 through July 31, in the Cook Inlet salt waters north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat) sport fishing is allowed, sport fishing for king salmon is prohibited; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

Doug Vincent-Lang,  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

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Mike Booz  
Lower Cook Inlet Sport Fish Area Manager

### **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 21, 2020, approximately 4,520 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer have passed the river mile 13.7 king salmon sonar, the midpoint of the late run is historically around July 26. Inseason

projections estimate an escapement of approximately 12,700 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 close sport fishing for late-run king salmon in the Kenai River. As further specified in the management plan, if the projected late run escapement is less than 15,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork the department shall close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the taking of king salmon. In addition, it shall close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai river; and close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict and the Central District.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-16-20 issued Monday, June 1, 2020, prohibited king salmon fishing (including catch-and-release) while sport fishing within one mile of shore in the saltwaters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.). King salmon incidentally caught while fishing for other fish may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

**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.