

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

**Emergency Order No.** 2-KS-2-23-21

**Issued at:** Palmer, Wednesday, June 16, 2021

**Effective Date:** 6:00 a.m. Friday, June 18, 2021

**Expiration Date:** 11:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 13, 2021,  
unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### **EXPLANATION:**

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-14-21 issued in Palmer on February 23, 2021. This emergency order restores methods and means and bag and possession limits for king salmon in the Deshka River sport fishery (bait and multiple hooks are allowed). All other waters open to king salmon fishing within the Susitna River drainage remain catch-and-release only by emergency order and in these waters, only one unbaited, single hook artificial lure is allowed. Fishing time remains reduced in Unit 2 or the Susitna River to allow catch-and-release fishing for king salmon on Sunday and Monday for three consecutive weeks starting Sunday, June 20. Areas open to catch-and-release fishing include waters normally open to king salmon fishing by regulation, except Deshka River, such as lower minor tributaries within Unit 1 of the Susitna River, Parks Highway streams within Unit 2, Yentna River (Unit 4), Talkeetna River (Unit 5), Chulitna River (Unit 6), and Upper Susitna River (Unit 3). In areas where only catch-and-release fishing is allowed, king salmon 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), 5 AAC 61.114. (1), (3), and (15), 5 AAC 61.116. (2), 5 AAC 61.118. (1), (2), (4), (6)(A), and (7)(A) and (C), 5 AAC 61.120. (1), (2), and (3)(B), 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 (1) and (4)(A) are superseded by this emergency order.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 6:00 a.m. Friday, June 18 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, July 13, 2021:

#### **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) 20 inches or greater in length may not be retained or possessed; king salmon 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) in flowing waters and unstocked lakes and ponds; may not be retained or possessed; king salmon 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) except in the Deshka River drainage, king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

**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) from June 18 – July 13, Unit 2 is open to sport fishing for all finfish species, except king salmon; sport fishing for king salmon is open through the second Monday in June, and on Sunday and Monday for three consecutive weeks starting on the Saturday following the second Monday in June; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon 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;
- (15) from June 18 – July 13, sport fishing for any finfish species is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.;

**5 AAC 61.116. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 3 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.**

- (2) from June 18 – July 13, king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish; sport fishing for any finfish species is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.;

**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;
- (2) from June 18 – July 13, sport fishing is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.;
- (4) king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;
- (6) in the Fish Lake Creek drainage,
  - (A) king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon 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;
  - (C) king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

**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;
- (2) from June 18 – July 13, sport fishing is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.;
- (3) in the Clear (Chunilna) Creek drainage;
  - (B) king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

**5 AAC 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 for all finfish species, including king salmon; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

Doug Vincent-Lang,  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

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Sam Ivey,  
Area Management Biologist

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The biological escapement goal (BEG) for king salmon in the Deshka River is 9,000 to 18,000 fish. As of June 15, 2021, a cumulative king salmon passage through the weir located at river mile 7 was 7,788 fish with a projected escapement of 22,747 fish nearing the 40% point of the historical run. Therefore, it is warranted to open the Deshka River king salmon fishery to harvest. An estimated harvest of about 900 fish due to this action is not expected to result in the final escapement being below the lower end of the escapement goal.

Other stocks of the Susitna River drainage where recent year abundance has been low relative to escapement goals will remain open to catch-and-release fishing with a continued gear restriction allowing one unbaited, single hook, artificial only lure only. These king salmon stocks will be assessed post season by aerial survey.

The Susitna River and other king salmon stocks throughout Cook Inlet are experiencing a period of low productivity. Below average escapements have resulted in preseason and inseason restrictions and closures on the Deshka, Eastside, Talkeetna, and Yentna king salmon stocks and other isolated streams since 2012.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-14-21, which prohibited the retention of king salmon in the Susitna drainage, limited sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure only, and reduced fishing time in Unit 2 of the Susitna River drainage 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.