

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-47-21

Issued at: Homer, Monday, July 19, 2021

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 31, 2021, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.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. (h) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 21 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2021:

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

(h) Notwithstanding (d) of this section, from July 21 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:

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 - 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer.

Through July 18, 2021, approximately 2,872 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer have passed the river mile 13.7 king salmon sonar, the mean quarter-point of the run is on July 17 and the mean midpoint of the late run is July 26. Inseason projections estimate an escapement of 10,068 large king salmon under the current management strategy which is well below the lower bound of the OEG. Without further restrictions, the OEG for Kenai River late-run king salmon is not expected to be achieved.

Consistent with the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*, it is necessary to close the king salmon sport fishery in order to achieve the OEG. As specified in the management plan, if the

projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than 15,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer, the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point will be closed to the taking of king salmon. In addition, the department 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.

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.