

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-32-22

Issued at: Palmer, Thursday, June 16, 2022

Effective Date: 6:00 a.m. Monday, June 20, 2022

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, 2022,
unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-05-22 issued in Palmer on January 26, 2022. This emergency order closes the Deshka River to sport fishing for king salmon. This emergency order continues to restrict sport fishing for king salmon in other tributaries of the Susitna River drainage to catch-and-release only. This emergency order continues to limit sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure in all flowing waters of the Susitna River drainage. A single hook is defined as a hook with only one point. Areas open to catch-and-release fishing for king salmon include waters normally open to king salmon fishing by regulation in Units 1 - 6 of the Susitna River drainage (except Deshka River), such as lower minor tributaries within Unit 1 of the Susitna River (except Deshka 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).

Fishing for other finfish species remains open. In the waters of Unit 2 normally open to king salmon fishing, fishing for trout and other species continues to be allowed seven days per week from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. per regulation. King salmon may not be targeted in the Deshka River and those caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 61.110. (1), 5 AAC 61.112. (1), (4), (6)(A), and (B), 5 AAC 61.114. (1) and (3), 5 AAC 61.116. (2), 5 AAC 61.118. (1), (4), (6)(A), and (7)(A) and (C), 5 AAC 61.120. (1) and (3)(B), and 5 AAC 61.122. (1) and (4)(A) are superseded and 5 AAC 61.112. (6)(F) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 6:00 a.m. Monday, June 20 through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, 2022:

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 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) 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 Deshka River drainage, including Trapper Lake,
 - (A) in flowing waters, including waters within a one-half mile radius of its confluence with the Susitna River, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;
 - (B) from its mouth upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers near Chujuk Creek (river mile 17), and in all waters within a one-half mile radius of its confluence with the Susitna River, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; 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;

(F) the remainder of the Deshka River drainage is closed to sport fishing for 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;

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 May 1 – 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 third Monday in June, and on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday for two consecutive weeks starting on the Saturday following the third 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;

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 May 1 – 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; in waters open to sport fishing for king salmon, sport fishing 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;
- (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;
- (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;

By delegation to:

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner



Sam Ivey,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Emergency order No. 2-KS-2-05-22 issued January 26, 2022, restricted king salmon sport fisheries in all units (Units 1-6) of the Susitna River to catch-and-release only in anticipation of a forecasted run to the Deshka River near the low end of the BEG and uncertainty in trend direction of the Eastside, Talkeetna, and Yentna River stocks.

The biological escapement goal (BEG) for king salmon in the Deshka River is 9,000 to 18,000 fish as measured at the weir located at river mile 7. As of June 15, 2022, only 1,096 fish have passed the weir at 34% of the historical run, second only to the lowest count in 27 years of weir operation. Fishing success at the mouth became good approximately six days later than is typically seen. Historically, late runs to the Deshka River result in poor runs. Even based on late run timing, the BEG is not likely to be attained. Since stock goals were established for Eastside, Talkeetna, and Yentna in 2021, management of these stocks has shifted toward post season analysis of recent year's performance in achieving escapement goals and trends in abundance. While not always a surrogate for managing other Susitna River stocks, Deshka River weir counts can and have been used to close the remainder of the Susitna River drainage on years of very low projected run strength on the Deshka River. If projected escapement on the Deshka River remains below goal as the season progresses past June 20, Eastside, Talkeetna, and Yentna River stocks, which demonstrate later run timing than king salmon of the Deshka River may be closed. Other areas of Cook Inlet and the state are experiencing very low king salmon runs this season. To date, all wild stock king salmon fisheries within Cook Inlet south of the Northern Cook Inlet Management Area have been closed. It is timely to now close the Deshka River in order to conserve all remaining fish to provide the greatest potential for achieving the Deshka River king salmon escapement goal in 2022.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-05-22, which restricted sport fishing for king salmon in Units 1-6 of the Susitna River to catch-and-release only and limited sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure only, 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.