

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-34-22

Issued at: Palmer, Monday, June 20, 2022

Effective Date: 6:00 a.m. Thursday, June 23, 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unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.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-2-32-22 issued in Palmer on June 16, 2022. This emergency order closes the Susitna River drainage to sport fishing for king salmon and continues to limit sport fishing gear for other species to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure when fishing in Units 1 – 6 of the Susitna River drainage in those waters normally open to king salmon fishing. Single hook is defined as a hook with only one point.

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 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), (2), (4), (6)(A), and (7)(A) and (C), 5 AAC 61.120. (1) and (2), 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 (1) and (4)(A) are superseded and 5 AAC 61.112.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. Thursday, June 23 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) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are 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) sport fishing for king salmon is closed;

(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 Chijuk 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 January 1 – July 13, Unit 2 is open to sport fishing for all finfish species, except king salmon; 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;
- (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 15 – July 13, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; sport fishing is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.; 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 61.118. 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 May 15 – July 13, sport fishing is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.;
- (4) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are 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) 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;
- (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) 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;

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 all flowing waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;
- (2) from May 15 – July 13, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; sport fishing is not allowed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.; 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;

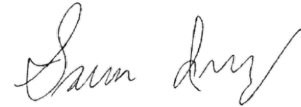
5AAC 61.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 6 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.

- (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, except for king salmon; 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;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Sam Ivey,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Other areas of Cook Inlet and the state are experiencing very low king salmon runs this season. All wild stock king salmon fisheries within Cook Inlet south of the Northern Cook Inlet Management Area have now been closed midseason. On June 16, 2022, emergency orders were issued to close the Deshka and Little Susitna rivers to fishing for king salmon due to historically low weir counts on these rivers. Deshka River weir counts can and have been used as an indicator of run strength to other areas of the Susitna River drainage and as a surrogate to close those areas on poor run years. This year's counts are exceedingly low, similar to other monitored runs of king salmon across Cook Inlet. 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. At this time, only 2,786 fish have passed the weir at 50% of the historical run, the lowest cumulate count by this date in 27 years of weir operation. The final count for 2022 will likely fall well short of the BEG. At this time, it is unlikely other Susitna stock goals will be achieved on the Susitna River drainage. Catch rates in fish wheels operated in the lower Yentna River as part of a king salmon study have been below anticipated levels, currently at about half of average catches observed during past years near the historical midpoint for passage at the wheels. Any additional mortality associated with continued catch-and-release fishing cannot be justified at this time and all fish within the Susitna River drainage must be conserved to provide the greatest potential for achieving escapement goals in 2022.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-32-22, which closed king salmon fishing on the Deshka River, while continuing to allow catch-and-release fishing for king salmon in the remainder of Units 1-6 of the Susitna River drainage and continuing to limit 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.