

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-51-23

Issued at Soldotna: Thursday, July 27, 2023

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, August 1,
2023

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, August 15, 2023,
unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the use of bait and restricts sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.121(1)(B) is superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, August 1 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, August 15, 2023.

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(1) sport fishing gear restrictions:

(B) from August 1 – August 15, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Jenny Gates
Acting Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon is 15,000 – 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer. In 2023, the king salmon runs to the Kenai River have significantly underperformed preseason expectations resulting in restrictions and closures of inriver and marine sport fisheries. Through July 26, 2023, approximately 6,250 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer have passed the river mile 13.7 king salmon sonar. Inseason projections estimate the run will not achieve the OEG.

General regulations for the Kenai River drainage downstream of Skilak Lake allow the use of bait and multiple hooks beginning August 1. Historically late-run king salmon continue to enter the Kenai River during early August while inriver anglers are targeting coho salmon stocks. To reduce the mortality of king salmon inriver it is warranted to remove bait and multiple hooks from the sport fishery at this time.

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.