

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-I-15-26

Issued at: Glennallen, Wednesday,
July 8, 2026

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 10, 2026

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. August 10,
2026, unless superseded by subsequent
emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes the Upper Copper River drainage upstream of the south bank of Haley Creek to sport fishing for king salmon. King salmon may not be taken or possessed and must be released immediately. In addition, the use of bait and treble hooks in all flowing waters is also prohibited.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 52.022 (a)(3) and 5 AAC 52.023 (3)(A), (9)(B), (12)(C)(i) and (E) and (G), (22)(A), (25)(A)(i) and (ii) and (E), and (32) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 10 through 11:59 p.m. Monday, August 10:

5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

(a)(3) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

(3) in the Copper River drainage, in that portion of the mainstem of the Copper River downstream from the confluence of the Copper River and Slana River,

(A) only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used;

(9) in the Gulkana River drainage,

(B) only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used;

(12) in the Klutina River drainage, only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used;

(C) in all flowing waters upstream of the ADF&G regulatory markers located at Mile 19.2 on the Klutina Lake Road,

(i) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(E) in all flowing waters downstream of the ADF&G regulatory markers located at Mile 19.2 on the Klutina Lake Road, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(G) in all flowing waters downstream of the ADF&G regulatory markers located at Mile 13 on the Klutina Lake Road, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(22) in the Tazlina River drainage,

(A) in all flowing waters entering Tazlina Lake, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(25) in the Tonsina River drainage,

(A) in all flowing waters downstream from the outlet of Tonsina Lake,

(i) only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used;

(ii) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(E) in all flowing waters downstream of the downstream edge of the Alyeska Pipeline crossing bridge, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(32) in the Copper River drainage, downstream of the upstream bank of the Klutina River, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; all king salmon caught incidentally must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to: 

Tracy R. Hansen
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The *Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* (5 AAC 24.361) directs the department to manage the Copper River fisheries to achieve a sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 21,000–31,000 king salmon. The 2026 king salmon run to the Copper River is weak. As of July 6, a total of 18,623 large king salmon have been counted past the Miles Lake sonar. This is the lowest, large king salmon cumulative count on record for this date since species apportionment at the sonar project began in 2019. King salmon passage trends at Miles Lake from 2019–2025 indicate that, on average, approximately 91% of the run has passed the sonar site through July 6. Additionally, the Native Village of Eyak (NVE) fish wheel capture rates at Baird Canyon and fish wheel recapture rates at Canyon Creek also indicate low abundance and total king salmon passage past the Gulkana River counting tower, as of July 7, is tracking behind 20 of 24 seasons of fish passage data. Due to concerns that the king salmon escapement goal will not be met, closing the Upper Copper River king salmon sport fisheries is warranted.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order 3-KS-I-10-26, issued Tuesday, June 23, 2026, that reduced the annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length in the Upper Copper River drainage to 1 fish effective Thursday, June 25, 2026, and Emergency Order 3-KS-I-13-26, issued Wednesday, July 1, 2026, that prohibited retention of king salmon and the use of bait and multiple hooks in the Upper Copper River drainage sport fisheries, are superseded by this emergency order.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region III Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (907) 459-7357, and the Glennallen Area Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, PO Box 47, Glennallen, AK 99588, (907) 822-3309.