

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-W-01-26

Issued at: Fairbanks, Tuesday
February 18, 2026.

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Thursday,
February 19, 2026.

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m.
Wednesday, September 30, 2026, unless
superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes sport fishing for king salmon in all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof in Northwest Alaska. This closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages.

All king salmon caught incidentally in the waters described above while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 70.011(c)(9)(A) and (B) are superseded and 5 AAC 70.011(c)(10) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are in effect 12:01 a.m. Thursday, February 19 through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, September 30, 2026:

5 AAC 70.011. Seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the Northwestern Area.

(c)(9) in the Unalakleet River drainage,

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

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

(c)(10) in all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof, king salmon may not be taken or possessed; king salmon caught 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: _____

Brendan Scanlon
Northwest and North Slope Area Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2026 Unalakleet River drainage king salmon run is expected to be insufficient to provide for a harvestable surplus. According to the *Subdistricts 5 and 6 of the Norton Sound District and the Unalakleet River King Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 04.395), when the inriver subsistence fishery is closed to the retention of king salmon, sport fishing for king salmon will be closed. At this time, closure of the Unalakleet River subsistence fishery to protect returning king salmon will take effect February 19, 2026. The department does not have reliable inseason stock assessment information for the Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages, but these king salmon runs generally trend similar to Unalakleet River stocks. The closure of sport fishing for king salmon in these rivers will provide protection for returning fish.

The department will continue to evaluate inseason run strength and take appropriate management actions to help meet escapement objectives. If inseason stock assessment indicates that the king salmon escapement objectives in the Unalakleet River will be achieved, restrictions may be relaxed.

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) 459-7207.