

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-Y-01-2026

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September 30, 2026, unless superseded by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 all waters of the Yukon River drainage (excluding the Tanana River drainage) to sport fishing for king salmon. King salmon caught incidentally in the Yukon River drainage (excluding the Tanana River drainage) while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 73.010(b)(1) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Thursday, February 19 through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, September 30, 2026:

5 AAC 73.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Yukon River Area.

(b)(1) 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.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner



by delegation to: _____

Lisa Stuby
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

King salmon stocks in the Yukon River drainage continue to experience historically low productivity. Approximately 40-50% of Yukon River king salmon spawn in Canada and these fish are managed through the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement*, which requires a minimum number of 42,500 king salmon to cross into Canada to ensure adequate numbers for spawning. This minimum number has not been met since 2019. Border passage in 2023, 2024, and 2025 were 14,752, 24,183, and 23,863 king salmon, respectively, and were the second, third, and fourth lowest on record. Due to the persistent low runs of Canadian-origin king salmon that have failed to meet conservation objectives, an agreement between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has closed the mainstem Yukon River to all directed commercial, sport, and personal use fisheries until at least 2030 as part of a stock rebuilding plan. Yukon River drainage king salmon stocks within Alaska have also been experiencing low productivity. The 2025 cumulative king salmon count at the Pilot Station sonar, consisting of both Alaskan and Canadian king salmon stocks, was 60,442 fish and was the fourth lowest recorded at the project, and about 38% of the average annual passage of 157,615 fish (2005-2024). The 2024 cumulative king salmon count at the Pilot Station sonar of 64,198 was the fifth lowest. For 2026, Canadian king salmon stocks are again anticipated to fall below treaty obligations and Alaska king salmon stocks are not anticipated to meet escapement goals. Therefore, a preseason closure of sport fishing for king salmon in the Yukon River drainage is required to help protect these fish and comply with the international treaty agreement between Alaska and Canada.

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.