

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-21-14

Issued at: Palmer, Wednesday, June 18, 2014

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Friday, June 20, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-08-14, issued in Palmer on Thursday, February 27, 2014. This emergency order closes the Little Susitna River to fishing for king salmon effective at 12:01 a.m., Friday, June 20, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014. The closure prohibits sport fishing for king salmon, including catch-and-release fishing. King salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon accidentally caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. The area affected by this emergency order includes all waters of the Little Susitna River from its confluence with Cook Inlet upstream to the Parks Highway bridge.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainage Area. (9)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 12:01 a.m., Friday, June 20, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 13, 2014:

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainage Area.

(9) in the Little Susitna River drainage,

(A) Beginning 12:01 a.m., Friday, June 20, 2014, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, sport fishing is closed for king salmon; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Sam Ivey,
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Emergency Order 2-KS-2-08-14 was issued February 27 to restrict gear and harvest in an effort to reduce harvest by up to 75% on the Little Susitna River. This strategy assumed a run size similar to below average runs experienced 2010-2013. To date, only 19 king salmon have passed the Little Susitna weir, which is located at approximately river mile 32.5 and four miles upstream of the Little Susitna Public Use Facility (LSPUF). The escapement goal for the Little Susitna is 900-1,800 king salmon based on a post season aerial survey. Over the past three weekends approximately 200 harvested king salmon have been reported in an exit survey conducted by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation at the LSPUF. Staff surveys and angler reports indicate king salmon holding in the lower river under conditions of low water making them vulnerable to harvest. Staff surveys, harvest reports, and weir counts to date indicate the escapement goal is not likely to be achieved without further restrictions. At this time it is prudent to prohibit further harvest until the run can be more fully assessed and close the Little Susitna River to king salmon fishing.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency order No. 2-KS-2-08-14, which restricted harvest to Saturdays-Mondays, and allowed the use of one, unbaited, single hook, artificial lure only, is superseded.

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.