

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-17-20

Issued at: Soldotna, Monday, June 8, 2020

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes sport fishing for king salmon of all sizes in the Kenai River from the mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake from June 10 through June 30, 2020. Fishing for king salmon will remain closed July 1 through July 31, 2020, in waters of the Kenai River drainage from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake. This closure prohibits all 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.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.120. (a)(2)(A)(i) and (3)(A) are superseded, and (3)(C) is added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, June 10 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020.

5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(a)(2) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length as follows:

(A) may be taken only from January 1 – July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, with a bag and possession limit of one fish, as follows:

(i) from June 10 - June 30, from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, is closed to sport fishing for king salmon; from July 1 - July 31, from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of the Slikok Creek upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, is closed to fishing for king salmon; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(a)(3) king salmon less than 20 inches in length as follows:

(A) from June 10 - June 30, in unstocked lakes and ponds and in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake, are closed to sport fishing for king salmon; from July 1 - July 31, in unstocked lakes and ponds and that portion of the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake, are closed to sport fishing for king salmon;

(C) from July 1 - July 31, may be taken in flowing waters and unstocked lakes and ponds and in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker

located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, bag and possession limit of 10 fish;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Colton G. Lipka
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Consistent with 5 AAC 57.160. *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Management Plan*, From January 1 - June 30, from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of the Slikok Creek, if the inseason inriver run projection is below the lower end of the optimal escapement goal, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon. In addition, from January 1 - July 31, from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of the Slikok Creek upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, if the inseason inriver run projection is below the lower end of the optimal escapement goal, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon.

The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for early-run Kenai River king salmon is 3,900 - 6,600 large king salmon (75 cm mid eye to tail fork length and longer). Current projection indicates that the 2020 total run will be significantly less than the forecast of 4,794 large early-run Kenai River king salmon. Through June 7, an estimated 583 large king salmon have been enumerated past the RM 13.7 king salmon sonar falling well below the preseason forecast. The inseason escapement projection ranges from approximately 1,475 based on average run timing to 2,193 based on a run timing of 3 days late. Therefore, it is warranted to close fishing on the Kenai River for early-run tributary spawning king salmon as directed in the management plan.

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.