

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-24-21

Issued at Soldotna: Thursday, June 17, 2021

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Thursday, July 1, 2021

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 31, 2021, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the use of bait while sport fishing 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.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.121(1)(B) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m. Thursday, July 1 through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 31, 2021:

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(1) sport fishing gear restrictions:

(B) from July 1 – July 31, 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, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used.

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Colton G. Lipka
Fisheries Biologist III

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of 5 AAC 21.359 *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* is to ensure adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River system and provide management guidelines to the department. The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for late-run Kenai River king salmon is 15,000 to 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer.

The 2021 forecast for the stock of large (> 75 cm mid eye to tail fork [METF] or approximately > 34 inches in total length) late-run Chinook salmon in the Kenai River is 18,406 fish. Based upon the variability between the forecast and actual total run from 2016–2020 there is an 80% chance the total run will be 8,039 to 31,762 fish. This prediction interval is fairly wide and indicates a 20% chance the total run could be outside the prediction interval. The 2021 forecasted total run of large fish is within the large fish optimal escapement goal range of 15,000 to 30,000 fish. If realized, this run will: rank the 5th lowest (32nd out of 36 years); be approximately 50% (6,100 fish) larger than the 2020 preliminary estimated

total run of 12,219 large fish; be less than half of the 1986–2020 average of approximately 42,400 large fish and less than the recent 5-year 2016-2020 average total run of approximately 20,100 large fish.

Beginning the fishery by prohibiting bait is necessary in order to achieve the OEG. As specified in the management plan, if bait is prohibited in the sport fishery, the retention of king salmon is prohibited in the personal use fishery and if the use of bait is prohibited then commercial fishing periods of the Upper Subdistrict, excluding the East forelands, will be open for no more than 48 hours a week.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-21-21 issued June 15, 2021, which prohibited retention of king salmon of all sizes in the Kenai River from the mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake through June 30, 2021, and from Slikok Creek to Skilak Lake through July 31, 2021, remains in effect. Fishing for king salmon in the Kenai River from an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 300 yards downstream from the mouth of Slikok Creek, upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake will remain prohibited to retention of king salmon through July 31, 2021.

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.