

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

**Emergency Order No.** 2-KS-1-46-21

**Issued at:** Soldotna, Monday, July 19, 2021

**Effective Date:** 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 21, 2021

**Expiration Date:** 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 31, 2021, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-42-21, issued July 12, 2021, and Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-21-21 issued June 15, 2021. This emergency order closes the Kenai River drainage to fishing for king salmon and prohibits the use of bait in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to ADF&G markers located at 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 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) and (a)(3)(A), and 5 AAC 57.121. (1)(B) are superseded by this emergency order. The following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 21 through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 31, 2021:

#### **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) from July 21 – July 31, in the Kenai River 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; king salmon may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

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

(A) from July 21 – July 31, in flowing waters and unstocked lakes and ponds and in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to ADF&G markers located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be possessed or retained and may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

#### **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 21 – 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:

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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 - 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer.

Through July 18, 2021, approximately 2,872 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer have passed the river mile 13.7 king salmon sonar, the mean quarter-point of the run is on July 17 and the mean midpoint of the late run is July 26. Inseason projections estimate an escapement of 10,068 large king salmon under the current management strategy which is well below the lower bound of the OEG. Without further restrictions, the OEG for Kenai River late-run king salmon is not expected to be achieved.

Consistent with the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*, it is necessary to close the king salmon sport fishery in order to achieve the OEG. As specified in the management plan, if the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than 15,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer, the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point will be closed to the taking of king salmon. In addition, the department shall close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River; and close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict and the Central District.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-42-21 issued on July 12, 2021, is superseded by this emergency order. EO 2-KS-1-42-21 prohibited the retention of king salmon 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. Only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when sport fishing in these waters.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-21-21 issued June 15, 2021, is superseded by this emergency order. EO 2-KS-1-21-21 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.

**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.