

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 1-KS-H-14-24

Issued at: Yakutat, Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, December 31, 2024 unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION: This emergency order closes all fresh waters of the Yakutat management area to sport fishing for king salmon. 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REGULATION: The provisions of 5 AAC 47.022(c)(1) and 5 AAC 47.023(b)(6)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective from 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, May 1 through 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, December 31, 2024:

5 AAC 47.022. General provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

(c) In the fresh waters between the longitude of Cape Suckling and the longitude of Cape Fairweather:

(1) king salmon: 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 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska area.

(b) In the freshwater drainages in the Yakutat vicinity that are crossed by the Yakutat road system and all streams draining into Yakutat Bay between Ocean Cape and Point Latouche:

(6) in the Situk River drainage,

(A) 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;

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Jason Pawluk
Yakutat Area Biologist
Division of Sport Fish

JUSTIFICATION: The Situk River drainage is managed for a biological escapement goal (BEG) of 450–1,050 large king salmon. In 2008, 2010 through 2012, and again in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2023 the Situk River king salmon stock failed to achieve the BEG. In 2023, the Situk River saw its worst escapement of king salmon in the 36 years the weir has been operated at its current location. In 2013, 2014, 2017, and 2019–2022 the goal was achieved after restrictive management measures were implemented in the sport, commercial, and subsistence fisheries. A 2024 preseason forecast is not available for the Situk River due to low sample sizes in 2023 but poor productivity is expected to continue in the 2024 season. Given recent harvest and escapement trends, the Situk River large king salmon BEG is at risk of not being achieved without preseason king salmon fishery restrictions. The remainder of Yakutat area king salmon populations are data limited but are expected to be following similar trends of productivity observed in the Situk River. Given the lowest escapement on record was observed in the Situk River in 2023 and the regionwide trend of poor king salmon productivity, a conservative management approach warrants closing the fresh waters of the Yakutat management area to sport fishing for king salmon to start the season.

DISTRIBUTION: The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 1 Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P. O. Box 110024, Douglas, AK 99811, (907) 747-5551.