

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-W-03-24

Issued at: Fairbanks, Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Thursday, March 21, 2024.

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes sport fishing for king salmon in all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof in Northwest Alaska. This closure includes, but is not limited to, the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in these drainages when fishing for other species.

All king salmon caught incidentally in the waters described above while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 70.011(c)(9)(A) and (B) are superseded and 5 AAC 70.011(c)(10) and 5 AAC 70.030(f) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Thursday, March 21 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024:

5 AAC 70.011. Seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the Northwestern Area.

(c)(9) in the Unalakleet River drainage,

(A) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;


(B) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(c)(10) in all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof, king salmon may not be taken or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish.

5 AAC 70.030. Methods, means, and general provisions – Finfish.

(f) In all fresh waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to: 
Brendan Scanlon
Northwest and North Slope Area Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

The 2024 preseason outlook for the Unalakleet River drainage king salmon run is expected to be insufficient to provide for a harvestable surplus. According to the *Subdistricts 5 and 6 of the Norton Sound District and the Unalakleet River King Salmon Management Plan*, when the inriver subsistence fishery is closed to the retention of king salmon, sport fishing for king salmon will be closed. At this time, closure of the Unalakleet River subsistence fishery to protect returning king salmon will take effect June 15, 2024. The department does not have reliable inseason stock assessment information for the Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Ungalik, Inglutalik, and Golsovia River drainages, but these king salmon runs generally trend similar to Unalakleet River stocks. The closure of sport fishing for king salmon in these rivers will provide protection for returning fish. Restricting terminal fishing gear to only one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure while sport fishing is in accordance with provisions set forth in 5 AAC 75.003(1)(A). This action should minimize catch-and-release mortality for king salmon incidentally caught while sport fishing for other species.

The department will continue to evaluate inseason run strength and take appropriate management actions to help meet escapement objectives. If inseason stock assessment information indicates that the king salmon escapement objectives in the Unalakleet River will be met, restrictions may be relaxed.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region III Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (907) 459-7207.