

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-KS-01-14

Issued at: Fairbanks, Tuesday, April 29, 2014

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Thursday, May 1, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 25, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes all waters of the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area to sport fishing for king salmon, effective 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014. In addition, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area.

All king salmon caught unintentionally in the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 71.010. Seasons and bag, possession, and size limits for the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area. (b)(1), (c)(1)(A) and (c)(3)(A) are superseded and (d)(1)(G) is added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 25, 2014:

5 AAC 71.010. Seasons and bag, possession, and size limits for the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area.

(b)(1) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed.

(c)(1)(A) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed.

(c)(3)(A) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed.

(d)(1)(G) only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in the remainder of the Kuskokwim – Goodnews Area not specified in (d)(1)(A-F).

Cora Campbell
Commissioner

by delegation to:


John Chythlook
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

King salmon stocks throughout western Alaska are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since 2010 below average run strength. Most king salmon stocks assessed in the Kuskokwim River drainage have not achieved associated sustainable escapement goals (SEG) in recent years. In 2013, the Kuskokwim River experienced an estimated total run of approximately 94,000 fish and spawning escapement of approximately 47,500 fish, which is the lowest on record. This low abundance trend is expected to continue during the 2014 season. The 2014 preseason forecast for the Kuskokwim River king salmon run is similar in size to the 2013 run. Restrictions to the Kuskokwim River subsistence king salmon fishery are expected in 2014.

In 2013, king salmon escapements in the Kanektok and Goodnews River, the primary Kuskokwim Bay stocks, were below average and also failed to achieve established escapement goals. An aerial survey count on the Kanektok River did not achieve the king salmon SEG (range 3,500-8,000), with 2,346 fish observed. The king salmon biological escapement goal (BEG) of 1,500-2,900 at the Goodnews River was also not met, with an estimated escapement of 1,168 fish. Restrictions to the commercial fisheries of Kuskokwim Bay are planned in 2014. These actions will be implemented in conjunction with actions in the sport fishery; all are necessary to ensure king salmon escapement goals are met.

The projected poor king salmon runs and recent failures to meet escapement goals in the Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area warrant closing the entire Kuskokwim–Goodnews Area to sport fishing for king salmon and prohibiting the use of bait and multiple hooks.

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.