

More Restrictions on King Salmon Sportfishing

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The shortage of king salmon this summer is forcing the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to enact more restrictions on their catch in various parts of the state.

Effective Sunday the Chignik River drainage sport fishery for kings 20 inches and greater is restricted to catch-and-release only and the use of bait is prohibited. The king salmon target range for escapement in the Chignik drainage is 1,300 to 2,700 fish, however the weir count as of July 11 was just 298, which is the lowest on record for the time period. Based on historical run timing, approximately 40 percent of the escapement has likely already occurred, and the concern is the biological escapement goal will not be reached. The restrictions will be in effect through the end of the season, which closes by regulation August 9th.

Read about Cook Inlet and Kenai Peninsula restrictions after the jump.

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Meanwhile

the catch-and-release restrictions in the marine waters of Cook Inlet have been extended. Kings may not be retained in the salt water within one mile of shore south of the mouth of the Ninilchik River to the latitude of Bluff Point. That reg went into effect at 12:01 this (Monday) morning and will last through the end of the month. The restriction has been put into place to ensure escapement for the Kenai River trophy fishery as any late run kings migrate through the area. The Kenai River regulations allow harvest for king salmon less than 20 inches in length, and for trophy fish greater than 55 inches in length.

In

addition, the Ninilchik River hatchery king salmon sport fishery is closed as of today in an effort to meet the king escapement and egg-take goals there. The closure prohibits all sport fishing for kings, including catch-and-release. The escapement goal is 111 king salmon pairs for the hatchery fish, but only two have crossed the weir this month. Fishing is allowed on the Ninilchik River, Deep Creek, Stariski Creek and the Anchor River, but anglers are restricted to one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure or fly, and must release any kings caught without taking them from the water.