

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-07-13

Issued at: Soldotna, Thursday, April 18, 2013

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday,
June 30, 2013, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the retention of naturally-produced king salmon and reduces the bag and possession limit of hatchery-produced king salmon 20 inches or greater in length to one fish in the Kasilof River beginning 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, May 1, 2013, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, June 30, 2013. Naturally-produced king salmon may not be possessed or retained; naturally-produced king salmon caught may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. A naturally-produced king salmon is a king salmon with an adipose fin intact.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area. (8)(A)(i) and (8)(A)(ii) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, May 1, 2013 through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, June 30, 2013.

5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area.

(8) Kasilof River drainage, excluding Crooked Creek and Tustumena Lake and its tributaries:

(A) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length may be taken from January 1 – June 30, upstream of Sterling Highway Bridge, and from January 1 - July 31, downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge; bag and possession limit of one fish; annual limit of five king salmon 20 inches or greater in length; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 56.124; from January 1 – June 30,

(i) the bag and possession limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one hatchery king salmon; a hatchery king salmon 20 inches or greater in length that is removed from the water must be retained and becomes part of the bag limit of the person originally hooking it; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(ii) naturally-produced king salmon may not be retained or possessed; a person may not remove a naturally-produced king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Robert N. Begich
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

As provided by 5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan (c), the department shall manage the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport and guided sport fisheries to achieve the sustainable escapement goal (SEG), to provide reasonable harvest opportunities over the entire run while ensuring adequate escapement of naturally-produced king salmon.

The SEG for naturally-produced king salmon in Crooked Creek of 650–1,700 was not achieved in two of the past four years including 2012. The 2012 escapement of 631 naturally-produced king salmon and 163 hatchery-produced king salmon is the lowest total escapement of king salmon the department has observed at the Crooked Creek weir since complete counting of escapement began in 1999. This low escapement occurred despite restrictions to the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery which prohibited the retention of naturally-produced king salmon beginning June 15 and prohibited use of bait on June 19.

Production of hatchery-produced king salmon to enhance the Kasilof River early-run king salmon fishery originates from naturally-produced king salmon that are surplus to Crooked Creek escapement needs. In addition, hatchery-produced fish that reach the weir may be used to supplement king salmon stocking programs at other Southcentral Alaska locations, thereby providing increased harvest opportunity in the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery as well as other Southcentral Alaska king salmon sport fisheries. During 2012, the king salmon run strength was not sufficient to achieve the SEG and provide broodstock for hatchery stocking in 2013.

King salmon runs on the Kenai Peninsula and all of Cook Inlet, both wild (naturally-produced) and enhanced, during recent years have been of below average run strength. Consequently, escapements of naturally-produced king salmon and stocking levels of king salmon at Crooked Creek have been in decline. Restricting the early-run king salmon sport fishery in the Kasilof River during 2013 will provide the best chance to achieve the SEG of naturally-produced king salmon in Crooked Creek and to meet stocking goals. This will help to sustain natural production and maintain harvest opportunity in the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery as well as other Southcentral Alaska king salmon sport fisheries supplemented by Crooked Creek hatchery stock.

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.