

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-02-14

Issued at: Homer, Thursday, February 27, 2014

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

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Monday,
June 30, 2014, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and all marine waters south of the latitude of the mouth of the Ninilchik River (60° 03.99' N. lat.) to the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.).

This emergency order is effective from 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014.

King salmon harvested in these waters and recorded before Thursday, May 1, and after Monday, June 30, 2014 do not count against the two king salmon annual limit after 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, but do count against the Cook Inlet annual limit of five king salmon.

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. (a)(2)(E), (a)(5)(D) and (a)(6)(D)(iii), are superseded by this emergency order.

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. (a)(6)(D)(iv), and 5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag; possession, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area. (b)(1)(A)(iv) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014:

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.

(a)(2) Anchor River drainage except the Bridge Creek Reservoir:

(E) sport fishing is open for king salmon from its mouth upstream to the downstream end of the Old Sterling Highway Bridge, located approximately 550 feet below the junction of the North and South forks, only on the weekend, and the Monday following that weekend, before Memorial Day weekend and the following four weekends and the Monday following each of those weekends; for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, the bag and possession limit is one fish; a person may not retain more than two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length each year from the Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and all marine waters south of the latitude of the mouth of the Ninilchik River (60° 03.99' N. lat.) to the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.) combined; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006; a person who takes and retains a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length from either Ninilchik River, Deep Creek or Anchor River may not sport fish in any of these drainages for the rest of that day; a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length that is removed from the water must be retained and becomes a 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;

(a)(5) Deep Creek drainage:

(D) open to sport fishing for king salmon from its mouth upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located two miles upstream only on Memorial Day weekend and the following two weekends and the Monday following each of those weekends; bag and possession limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one fish; a person may not retain more than two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length each year from the Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and all marine waters south of the latitude of the mouth of the Ninilchik River (60° 03.99' N. lat.) to the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.) combined; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006; a person who takes and retains a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length from Ninilchik River, Deep Creek or Anchor River may not sport fish in any of those drainages for the rest of that day; a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length that is removed from the water must be retained and becomes a 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;

(a)(6) Ninilchik River drainage:

(D) open to sport fishing for king salmon from its mouth upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately two miles upstream

(iii) with an annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length from the Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and all marine waters south of the latitude of the mouth of the Ninilchik River (60° 03.99' N. lat.) to the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.) combined; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006; a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length that is removed from the water must be retained and becomes part of the bag and possession limit of the person originally hooking it; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(iv) a person who takes and retains a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length from Ninilchik River, Deep Creek or Anchor River may not sport fish in any of those drainages for the rest of that day;

5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag; possession, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area.

(b)(1) in waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.):

(A) king salmon:

(iv) bag and possession limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one fish; a person may not retain more than two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length each year from the Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and all marine waters south of the latitude of the mouth of the Ninilchik River (60° 03.99' N. lat.) to the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.) combined; a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length that is removed from the water must be retained and becomes part of the bag and possession limit of the person originally hooking it; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Carol Kerkvliet
Fisheries Biologist II

JUSTIFICATION:

Anchor River king salmon, like other king salmon stocks throughout Cook Inlet, are experiencing a period of low productivity. The 2014 outlook for the Anchor River king salmon run is below the historical average and is expected to be similar to the 2009–2013 runs. The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Anchor River king salmon is 3,800–10,000 fish. The SEG was achieved in 2012 and 2013 with preseason and inseason restrictions to the inriver and marine sport fisheries. From 2009–2011, the SEG was not achieved despite inseason inriver and marine restrictions to reduce king salmon harvest in the sport fishery.

The 2014 outlook for the Ninilchik River is below the historical average and expected to be similar to the 2007–2013 king salmon runs. The Ninilchik River SEG is 550–1,300 wild king salmon and the egg-take goal for hatchery-produced king salmon in 2014 is 111 pairs. King salmon escapement was below the SEG in 2007 and 2009, but the SEG was met in 2008, and 2010–2013. In 2007–2009, 2012 and 2013, egg-take goals were not achieved despite extending weir operations. In 2010, egg-takes were not needed for stocking, but if they were, the number of king salmon was insufficient to meet egg-take goal. Inriver sport fishing restrictions occurred each year from 2010–2013, and sport fishing restrictions occurred in the nearby marine sport fishery in 2012 and 2013.

King salmon originating from the Ninilchik and Anchor rivers and Deep Creek have a higher probability of being harvested in marine waters south of the Ninilchik River to Bluff Point from May through June. Therefore it is justified to include these waters in the reduced annual limit in an effort to reduce the harvest of king salmon and increase the probability that mature (spawners) fish make it to their stream of origin.

The recent poor king salmon runs in Lower Cook Inlet streams and uncertainty over how quickly the runs may rebound justify starting the 2014 season with restrictions in order to achieve the escapement and egg-take goals and provide fishing opportunity throughout the season. To minimize the shifting of effort due to conservation actions in any one stream, it is warranted to combine the restriction of the annual limit in all three streams and marine waters south of the Ninilchik River to Bluff Point from May through June.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-01-14 closes waters of the Anchor River drainage to sport fishing each Wednesday and reduces the waters of the Anchor River drainage open to sport fishing. This emergency order remains in effect from 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-03-14 restricts sport fishing gear in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik River drainages to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure. This emergency order remains in effect from 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014.

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.