

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-03-14

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Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.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 restricts sport fishing gear in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik River drainages to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure beginning 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014.

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 (a)(2)(A), (a)(5)(A) and (a)(6)(A) are superseded by this emergency order.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., 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:
 - (A) from May 1– June 30, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;
- (a)(5) Deep Creek drainage:
 - (A) from May 1– June 30, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;
- (a)(6) Ninilchik River drainage:
 - (A) from May 1– June 30, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Carol Kerkvliet
Fisheries Biologist II

JUSTIFICATION:

Lower Kenai Peninsula 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.

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 for the Anchor River and Ninilchik River, it is warranted to restrict sport fishing on Deep Creek as well.

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 decreases the waters of the Anchor River drainage open to sport. 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-7-02-14 establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, and 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 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.