

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-03-15

Issued at: Homer, Thursday, February 19, 2015

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m.,  
Wednesday, July 15, 2015, 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superseded by subsequent emergency  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 for fish harvested 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., Wednesday April 1, 2015 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, 2015.

Any king salmon recorded for the above waters on an Alaska sport fishing license or harvest record card will also count against the Cook Inlet annual limit of five king salmon.

### REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, 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 (a)(2)(E), (a)(5)(D) and (a)(6)(D)(iii), are superseded by this emergency order.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 for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, 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, annual, 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., Wednesday, April 1 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, 2015:

### **5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, 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 side of the Old Sterling Highway Bridge, located approximately 550 feet below the junction of the North and South Forks, only on Memorial Day weekend, and the Monday following that weekend, and the following two 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, annual, 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;

Sam Cotten  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

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Carol Kerkvliet  
Fisheries Biologist II

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Anchor River king salmon is 3,800–10,000 fish. In 2014, the SEG was not achieved despite restricting the inriver and marine sport fisheries preseason and inseason. In 2012 and 2013, the SEG was achieved using a combination of inriver and marine preseason and inseason restrictions. From 2009–2011, the SEG was not achieved when only inseason restrictions were used to reduce the inriver and marine sport harvest of king salmon. The 2015 Anchor River king salmon run is expected to be below the historical average and may be similar to the 2014 run when escapement was the lowest since 2003.

The Ninilchik River SEG is 550–1,300 wild king salmon and the egg-take goal for hatchery-reared king salmon in 2015 is 134 pairs. The 2015 run is expected to be similar to the average since 2007. In 2007 and 2009, escapement was below the SEG. From 2007–2009 and 2012–2014, egg-take goals were not achieved. In 2010, egg-takes were not needed, but if they were, the number of king salmon was insufficient to meet egg-take goals. The inriver sport fishery was restricted from 2010–2014 and the nearby marine sport fishery restricted from 2012–2014.

King salmon originating from the Anchor and Ninilchik rivers and Deep Creek have a higher probability of being harvested in marine waters south of the Ninilchik River to Bluff Point from April through July 15. Therefore it is justified to include these waters in the reduced annual limit in an effort to reduce the harvest of king salmon during this period to increase the probability that mature (spawners) fish make it to their stream of origin. 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.

The recent poor king salmon runs in Lower Cook Inlet streams and the uncertainty for how quickly the runs may rebound, justify starting the 2015 season more conservatively than in 2014. It is anticipated the suite of inriver and marine restrictions will provide the greatest potential for achieving escapement and egg-take goals and minimizing shifting effort due to conservation actions on the Anchor and Ninilchik rivers while providing some fishing opportunity.

Increased harvest opportunity may be allowed by subsequent emergency order if inseason assessment indicates the runs are stronger than anticipated and sufficiently strong enough to achieve goals.

**PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:**

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-01-15 closes the first and fifth opening weekend and the five Wednesday openings in May and June for the Anchor River drainage and decreases the waters of the Anchor River drainage open to sport fishing to the downstream side of the Old Sterling Highway Bridge approximately 550 feet below the junction of the North and South forks. This emergency order is effective from 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1, 2015, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-02-15 limits sport fishing gear to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure when fishing in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, or Ninilchik River drainages beginning 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, April 1, 2015, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-04-15 extends the date by two weeks of the closed saltwater area surrounding the Anchor River mouth and the Special Harvest Areas north to 59° 52.98' N. located approximately one mile south of Stariski Creek and south to Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.). This emergency order is effective from 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, July 1, 2015 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, 2015.

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.