

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-06-15

Issued at: Soldotna, Thursday, February 19, 2015

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1, 2015

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2015, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the retention of naturally-produced king salmon on Sunday through Friday each week, reduces the bag and possession limit of hatchery-produced king salmon 20 inches or greater in length to one fish, and limits sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook artificial lure while sport fishing in the Kasilof River beginning 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1, 2015, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2015. Naturally-produced king salmon may not be possessed or retained; naturally-produced king salmon caught on Sundays through Fridays each week 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 for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area. (a)(8)(A)(i), (8)(A)(ii), and 8(B)(ii) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1, 2015 through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 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)(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, except as provided in (b) in this section; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006; from January 1 – June 30,

(i) the bag and possession limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one fish; a 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 hook 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 on Sunday through Friday each week; a person may not remove a naturally-produced king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(B) the following special provisions apply in that portion downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge:

(ii) in flowing waters, from May 1 – June 30, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Sam Cotten,
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, and to minimize the effects of conservation actions for the Kenai River on the Kasilof River.

The department has determined that an emergency order to close the early-run king salmon sport fishery in the Kenai River drainage, as well as other emergency orders to restrict other king salmon sport fisheries in the adjacent Lower Cook Inlet Management Area will likely result in an increase in the sport fishing effort and catch of naturally-produced king salmon in the Kasilof River. The department manages the Kasilof River king salmon sport fishery to achieve a sustainable escapement goal of 650–1,700 naturally-produced king salmon as monitored through a weir at a department facility located on Crooked Creek. The SEG for naturally-produced king salmon in Crooked Creek was not achieved in two of the past six years. Since 2009, low escapements have occurred despite restrictions to the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery which prohibited the retention of naturally-produced king salmon and prohibited the use of bait.

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 2013 and 2014, similar restrictions were taken for the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery to achieve the SEG and to provide broodstock for increased hatchery stocking in 2014 and 2015.

This emergency order to restrict the early-run king salmon sport fishery in the Kasilof River during 2015 will provide the best chance to once again achieve the SEG of naturally-produced king salmon in Crooked Creek and to meet stocking goals during this period of low king salmon production. This is necessary to assure natural production of Crooked Creek king salmon and to meet king salmon 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.