

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-14-19

Issued at: Homer, Monday, February 25, 2019

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, April 1, 2019

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Monday,
July 15, 2019, unless superseded by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.).

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 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag; possession, annual and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area. The annual limit in (b)(1)(A)(i) for the above described waters is superseded and (b)(1)(A)(i)(1) is added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, 12:01 a.m., Monday, April 1, 2019, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, July 15, 2019:

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:

(i) From April 1-August 31; bag and possession limit of one fish; no size limit; except as provided in (b)(1)(A)(i)(1) below, an annual harvest limit of five king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, except as provided in (c) of this section; a harvest card 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;

(1) an annual harvest 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,

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Carol Kerkvliet
Fisheries Biologist III

JUSTIFICATION:

Anchor River and Deep Creek king salmon stocks experienced weak runs in 2018. The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Anchor River king salmon is 3,800-7,600 fish. The Deep Creek SEG lower bound is 380 king salmon based on an aerial survey. In 2018, the SEG was not achieved for Anchor River or Deep Creek king salmon despite closing the fisheries early in the season and closing nearshore marine waters to king salmon fishing. Escapement projects on both streams indicated late run timing with over half of the escapement being counted in July. The late run timing suggests that most of the run spent a large amount of time staging in the nearshore marine waters before entering the Lower Cook Inlet streams.

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 1 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 fish (spawners) make it to their stream of origin. To minimize the shifting 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.

In response to the weak 2018 runs and with uncertainty of the 2019 run strength, it is justified to begin the 2019 season conservatively. It is also justified to combine the bag limit for the nearshore marine waters with the Lower Cook Inlet streams to avoid transferred effort between fisheries. It is anticipated the suite of inriver and marine restrictions will provide the greatest potential for achieving escapement needs while providing some fishing opportunity.

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

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-11-19 closes the first and fifth opening weekends and Mondays and the five Wednesday openings in May and June for the Anchor River drainage; restricts gear to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure; and establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length for the waters of 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.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-12-19 restricts gear to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure and establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length for the waters of 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.) to two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length combined.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-13-19 limits the king salmon bag and possession limit in the Ninilchik River to only hatchery king salmon. During the Memorial Day weekend and following two weekends and the Monday following each weekend, bag and possession limit is one hatchery king salmon, 20 inches or greater in length, and 10 hatchery king salmon under 20 inches. During the Youth-Only Fishery on Wednesday June 5, the bag and possession limit is one hatchery king salmon of any size. Additionally it establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length for the waters of 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.) to two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length combined.

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.