

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-12-24

Issued at: Homer, Thursday, March 14, 2024

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order reduces the bag limit for king salmon from two to one in the salt waters of Cook Inlet south of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.).

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 58.022 (b)(2)(G) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, May 1 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024:

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

(b)(2)(G) king salmon: may be taken from May 1 – August 15; bag and possession limit of one fish; no size limit; annual harvest limit of 5 king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, excluding the waters from the Homer city dock near the entrance of the Homer Boat Harbor, including the entire Homer Boat Harbor, northwest along the east side of the Homer Spit to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 200 yards northwest of the entrance to the fishery enhancement lagoon on the Homer Spit, including the enhancement lagoon, and to a distance 300 feet from the shore; and excluding the waters of Seldovia Bay starting at the entrance of the Seldovia Boat harbor including all waters east and south of the breakwater wall and upstream through the Seldovia slough and including the entire Seldovia Lagoon.

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Mike Booz
Lower Cook Inlet Sport Fish Area Manager

JUSTIFICATION:

Given the uncertainty of run strength in 2024 for all Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, including Kenai Peninsula and Northern Cook Inlet, it is justified to begin the season conservatively. Many of the inriver sport fisheries for these Cook Inlet stocks are starting with preseason emergency order closures or restrictions. The Upper Cook Inlet summer salt water fishery north of Bluff Point will be closed to king salmon fishing from May 1 – August 15. Despite preseason and inseason restrictions to both fresh and

salt water fisheries in 2022 and 2023, the sustainable escapement goals for most Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, including the Anchor River, Kenai River early-run and late-run, and Deshka River were not met. The king salmon harvest in the lower Cook Inlet summer fishery has continued to increase in recent years due to shifting effort from the upper Cook Inlet summer king salmon fishery resulting from preseason and inseason emergency order restrictions and closures. Guided effort towards king salmon in Cook Inlet salt waters may also be increasing with further restrictions to Pacific halibut from the IPHC Halibut Catch Sharing Plan. From 2002–2013, the king salmon harvest in this fishery averaged approximately 4,400 fish annually. In the last three years the harvest has doubled from the 2002–2013 average to an average of approximately 8,800 fish. Based on genetic mixed stock analyses of this fishery from 2014 through 2018, without restrictions, the fishery would likely harvest approximately 100-300 Cook Inlet king salmon in 2024.

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.