

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order **DRAFT** ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-26-12

Issued at Soldotna: Wednesday, June 27, 2012

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Sunday, July 1, 2012

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits the use of bait and limits sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure while sport fishing in the Kasilof River downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge beginning 12:01 a.m., Sunday, July 1, 2012, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012. Single-hook means a fish hook with only one point.

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. (8)(B)(ii) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective beginning at 12:01 a.m., Sunday, July 1, 2012 through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 2012.

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.

(8) Kasilof River drainage, excluding Crooked Creek and Tustumena Lake and its tributaries:

- (B) the following special provisions apply in that portion downstream of the Sterling Highway bridge:
 - (ii) in flowing waters, from July 1 – July 31, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Cora Campbell,
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, 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 two emergency orders to close the early-run king salmon sport fishery in the Kenai River drainage and prohibit the use of bait in the Kenai River drainage during July, will likely result in an increase in the sport fishing effort and catch of naturally-produced king salmon in

the Kasilof River during July. The department manages the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery to achieve a sustainable escapement goal of 650 to 1,700 naturally-produced king salmon as monitored through a weir at a department facility located on Crooked Creek. The escapement of naturally-produced king salmon into Crooked Creek in 2011 was 654 fish. As of June 26, 44 naturally-produced king salmon have passed the Crook Creek weir. At this time it is uncertain if the sustainable escapement goal will be achieved and/or broodstock will be available for egg takes in 2012.

King salmon runs to Cook Inlet and throughout Alaska are experiencing a period of low productivity and low run strength. The department has no information indicating that the Kasilof River late-run will experience average or above average run strength. The prohibition on the use of bait and other restrictions at the Kenai River, and additional restrictions in Lower Kenai Peninsula streams as well as saltwater fishing areas of Lower Cook Inlet during July will likely result in an increase in the sport fishing effort and catch of both early- and late-run king salmon at the Kasilof River during July. Therefore, this measure is warranted to prohibit the use of bait and multiple-hooks to increase the escapement of naturally-produced Crooked Creek early-run and Kasilof River late-run king salmon.

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.