

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-05-14

Issued at: Soldotna, Thursday, February 27, 2014

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order restricts king salmon fishing in the Kasilof River. Specifically, it prohibits the retention of naturally-produced king salmon, 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 fly or lure while sport fishing in the Kasilof River beginning 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014. Naturally-produced king salmon may not be possessed or retained; naturally-produced king salmon caught 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 and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area. (8)(A)(i), (8)(A)(i)(ii), and 8(B)(ii) are superseded by this emergency order.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., Thursday, May 1, 2014 through 11:59 p.m., Monday, June 30, 2014.

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:

(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; annual limit of five king salmon 20 inches or greater in length; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 56.124; from January 1 – June 30,

(i) the bag and possession limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one hatchery king salmon; a hatchery 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; 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;

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 (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.

An emergency order to closing the early-run king salmon sport fishery in the Kenai River drainage, and emergency orders restricting other king salmon sport fisheries in the adjacent Lower Cook Inlet Management Area are likely to result in an increase in sport fishing effort and catch of king salmon in the Kasilof River. The department manages the Kasilof River king salmon sport fishery to achieve a sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 650–1,700 naturally-produced king salmon as monitored through the Crooked Creek weir. The SEG was not achieved in two of the past five years. Since 2009, low escapements have occurred despite restrictions to the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery that prohibited the retention of naturally-produced king salmon and prohibited the use of bait.

Hatchery-produced king salmon are used to enhance the Kasilof River early-run king salmon fishery. Hatchery fish are produced from naturally-produced king salmon surplus to Crooked Creek escapement needs. In addition, hatchery-produced Kasilof River fish are used to supplement king salmon stocking programs at other Southcentral Alaska locations. Kasilof River hatchery production thereby provides increased harvest opportunity in the Kasilof River early-run and other Southcentral Alaska king salmon sport fisheries. During 2013, similar restrictions were taken for the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery to achieve the SEG and to provide broodstock for hatchery stocking in 2014.

This emergency order will provide the best chance to achieve the SEG of naturally-produced king salmon in Crooked Creek and 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 harvest opportunity in the Kasilof River early-run and 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.