

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-02-15

Issued at: Homer, Thursday, February 19, 2015

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2015, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order limits sport fishing gear to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure when fishing in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, or Ninilchik River drainages beginning 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, April 1, 2015, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

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 (a)(2)(A), (a)(5)(A) and (a)(6)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, April 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)(2) Anchor River drainage, except the Bridge Creek reservoir:
 - (A) from April 1– June 30, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;
- (a)(5) Deep Creek drainage:
 - (A) from April 1– June 30, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;
- (a)(6) Ninilchik River drainage:
 - (A) from April 1– June 30, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Sam Cotten,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Carol Kerkvliet
Fisheries Biologist II

JUSTIFICATION:

The sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Anchor River king salmon is 3,800–10,000 fish. In 2014, the SEG was not achieved despite restricting the inriver and marine sport fisheries preseason and inseason. In 2012 and 2013, the SEG was achieved using a combination of inriver and marine preseason and inseason restrictions. From 2009–2011, the SEG was not achieved when only inseason restrictions were used to reduce the inriver and marine sport harvest of king salmon. The 2015 Anchor River king salmon run is expected to be below the historical average and may be similar to the 2014 run when escapement was the lowest since 2003.

The Niniilchik River SEG is 550–1,300 wild king salmon and the egg-take goal for hatchery-reared king salmon in 2015 is 134 pairs. The 2015 run is expected to be similar to the average since 2007. In 2007 and 2009, escapement was below the SEG. From 2007–2009 and 2012–2014, egg-take goals were not achieved. In 2010, egg-takes were not needed, but if they were, the number of king salmon was insufficient to meet egg-take goals. The inriver sport fishery was restricted from 2010–2014 and the nearby marine sport fishery restricted from 2012–2014.

Restricting gear is justified to reduce king salmon harvest on the Anchor and Niniilchik River. To minimize the shifting of effort due to conservation actions for the Anchor River and Niniilchik River, it is warranted to restrict sport fishing on Deep Creek as well.

The recent poor king salmon runs in Lower Cook Inlet streams and the uncertainty for how quickly the runs may rebound, justify starting the 2015 season more conservatively than in 2014. It is anticipated the suite of inriver and marine restrictions will provide the greatest potential for achieving escapement and egg-take goals and minimizing shifting effort due to conservation actions on the Anchor and Niniilchik rivers while providing some fishing opportunity.

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

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-01-15 closes the first and fifth opening weekend and the five Wednesday openings in May and June for the Anchor River drainage and decreases the waters of the Anchor River drainage open to sport fishing to the downstream side of the Old Sterling Highway Bridge approximately 550 feet below the junction of the North and South forks. This emergency order is effective from 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1, 2015, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-03-15 establishes a combined annual limit of two king salmon 20 inches or greater in length for fish harvested in the Anchor River, Deep Creek, and Niniilchik River and all marine waters south of the latitude of the mouth of the Niniilchik River (60° 03.99' N. lat.) to the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.). This emergency order remains in effect from 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, April 1 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, 2015.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-04-15 extends the date by two weeks of the closed saltwater area surrounding the Anchor River mouth and the special harvest areas north to 59° 52.98' N. located approximately one mile south of Stariski Creek and south to Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.). This emergency order is effective from 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, July 1, 2015 through 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, 2015.

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.