

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-13-19

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July 15, 2019, unless superseded by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 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, 2019, 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.

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 (a)(6)(A), (a)(6)(D)(i), (a)(6)(D)(iii) and (a)(6)(G) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, April 1 through 11:59 p.m. Monday, July 15, 2019:

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)(6) Ninilchik River drainage:

(A) from May 25-July 15 and September 1-October 31, in flowing waters, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

(D) open to sport fishing for king salmon from its mouth upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately two miles upstream

(i) on Memorial Day weekend and the following two weekends and the Monday following each of those weekends; bag and possession limit is one hatchery king salmon, 20 inches or greater in length, 10 hatchery king salmon under 20 inches; naturally-produced king salmon may not be retained; A person who takes and retains a king salmon 20 inches or greater in length from the Ninilchik River may not sport fish in the Ninilchik River, Deep Creek, or Anchor River for the rest of that day.

(iii) with an annual 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; a harvest record 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; as part of the Cook Inlet region annual limit specified in (b) of this section, a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;

(G) the Ninilchik River from the outlet of the Ninilchik small boat harbor to ADF&G regulatory markers just upstream from the Sterling Highway Bridge is open to sport fishing to a person under 16 years of age during the designated youth fishery which occurs on the second Wednesday after Memorial Day between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:59 p.m.: king salmon bag and possession limit is one hatchery king salmon of any size; annual limit and other restrictions specified in (a)(6)(D)(iii) of this section apply; a person who takes and retains a king salmon may not sport fish in the Ninilchik River for the rest of the day;

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Carol Kerkvliet
Fisheries Biologist III

JUSTIFICATION:

The Ninilchik River sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 750-1,300 naturally-produced king salmon has been met in most years, except 2003, 2007, and 2009. The Ninilchik River is stocked with hatchery king salmon to provide additional harvest opportunity for sport anglers, buffer the harvest of naturally-produced king salmon during years of weak runs, and provide brood stock to support the Kachemak Bay stocking program on the Homer Spit and Seldovia Lagoon. In 2015, following years of poor king salmon production, stocking levels in the Ninilchik River were increased approximately 3-fold to 150,000 smolt annually. In 2019, a full complement of brood years from the increased stocking levels will return.

Since 2013, additional hatchery fish not needed for broodstock have been culled to minimize the hatchery contribution to the escapement and minimize genetic effects of hatchery king salmon on the stock. Harvest of hatchery king salmon in the sport fishery decreases the number of hatchery fish that return to the weir, in addition, to those needed for broodstock and helps reduce the hatchery contribution to the escapement.

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-7-14-19 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.).

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.