

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-7-10-21

Issued at: Homer, February 1, 2021

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Saturday, May 29, 2021

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Monday,
June 14, 2021, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order limits the king salmon bag and possession limit in the Ninilchik River to hatchery king salmon only. During the Memorial Day weekend (May 29 - 31, 2021), and the following two weekends and the Monday following each weekend (June 5 - 7 and June 12 - 14), the 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 9 the bag and possession limit is one hatchery king salmon of any size.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.122. (a)(6)(D)(i) and (a)(6)(G) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Saturday, May 29 through 11:59 p.m. Monday, June 14, 2021:

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:

(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 of 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 hatchery 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.

(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; a person who takes and retains a hatchery king salmon may not sport fish in the Ninilchik River for the rest of the day;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Mike Booz
Lower Cook Inlet Sport Fish Area Manager

JUSTIFICATION:

The Ninilchik River sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 750 - 1,300 naturally-produced king salmon has been met in most years, but emergency order restrictions were necessary in years of below average runs. The Ninilchik River is also stocked with hatchery king salmon to provide additional harvest opportunity for sport anglers, buffer the harvest of naturally-produced king salmon during years of below average runs, and provide broodstock to support the Kachemak Bay stocking program. Only naturally-produced king salmon can be used for broodstock for stocking the Ninilchik River. The broodstock collection goal for stocking the Ninilchik River was met in 2019 but not in 2020, even while restricting the sport fishery harvest to hatchery king salmon only.

Since 2013, hatchery fish in excess of those needed for broodstock have been culled during egg takes 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 excess of those needed for broodstock and helps reduce the hatchery contribution to the escapement.

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.