

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-10-26

Issued at: Soldotna, Monday, February 9, 2026

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Friday, May 1, 2026

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Saturday, August 15, 2026,
unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order provides limited harvest opportunity for hatchery produced king salmon while prohibiting the harvest of naturally-produced king salmon on the Kasilof River between May 1 – August 15. A portion of the Kasilof River downstream of the confluence of Crooked Creek is closed to all sport fishing from May 1 through July 31. The use of bait is prohibited and only one unbaited single hook, artificial lure or fly may be used. Once an angler retains a hatchery-produced king salmon over 20 inches in length, they are not allowed to fish for any species that same day in the waters of the Kasilof River drainage downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.122. (a)(8)(A)(i), (ii), and (B)(ii) are superseded, 5 AAC 56.122 (B)(i) is repealed and 5 AAC 56.122 (B)(viii) is established by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Friday, May 1 through 11:59 p.m. Saturday, August 15, 2026.

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)(8) Kasilof River drainage, excluding Crooked Creek and Tustumena Lake and its tributaries:
 - (A) king salmon may be taken from May 1 – June 30, upstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge, and from May 1 – July 31, downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge; king salmon 20 inches or greater in length will apply towards the Cook Inlet region annual limit specified for king salmon in (b) of this section. a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006;
 - (i) the bag and possession limit for hatchery king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is one fish; the bag and possession limit of hatchery king salmon less than 20 inches in length is 10 fish; 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 hooking it; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish; after retaining a hatchery king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, a person may not sport fish for any species that same day in the waters of the Kasilof River drainage downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge;
 - (ii) naturally-produced king salmon of any size may not be retained; a person may not remove a naturally-produced king salmon from the water before releasing the fish;
- (B) the following special provisions apply in the Kasilof River drainage:
 - (i) is repealed;
 - (ii) in flowing waters, from May 1 – August 15, only one unbaited single hook or artificial lure, may be used;

(viii) that portion of the Kasilof River downstream from a line between the regulatory marker at the upstream side of the mouth of Crooked Creek to the regulatory marker at the upstream point of the mid-channel island at the confluence of Crooked Creek, to a line between regulatory markers at the downstream point of the island and the south bank shoreline, is closed to all fishing from May 1 through July 31;

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Phill M. Stacey
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

As provided by 5 AAC 57.160. *Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-Run King Salmon Management Plan* (c), ADF&G 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.

ADF&G manages the Kasilof River king salmon sport fishery to achieve an SEG of 700-1,400 naturally-produced king salmon as monitored through a weir at an ADF&G facility located on Crooked Creek. Naturally-produced king salmon have an adipose fin present, while hatchery returns have been adipose clipped as juveniles. From 2018-2025, restrictions were necessary to ensure the SEG for naturally-produced king salmon and the broodstock goal for continued hatchery king salmon stocking were achieved. In 2021, 2023, 2024, and 2025 the SEG and broodstock goals for naturally-produced king salmon were not met despite implementing increasingly conservative management measures.

Production of hatchery-produced king salmon to enhance the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery originates from naturally-produced king salmon returning to Crooked Creek. In addition, hatchery-produced fish that reach the weir may be used to supplement king salmon stocking programs at other Southcentral Alaska locations, thereby providing increased harvest opportunity in the Kasilof River early-run king salmon sport fishery as well as other Southcentral Alaska king salmon terminal sport fisheries.

This emergency order to restrict the king salmon sport fishery in the Kasilof River during 2026 is a continuation of an incremental approach to maintain harvest opportunity for hatchery-produced king salmon while helping to ensure the SEG of naturally-produced king salmon and broodstock collection goals can be achieved.

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.