

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-40-24

Issued at: Soldotna, Thursday, July 11, 2024

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 15, 2024

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 31, 2024, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes emergency order 2-KS-1-25-24 issued June 19, 2024. This emergency order closes king salmon sport fishing in the Kasilof River downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge to the river mouth from 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 15 through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 31, 2024. Additionally, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used when sport fishing from the river mouth upstream to the outlet of Tustumena Lake while this closure is in effect. This closure prohibits all sport fishing for king salmon, including catch-and-release fishing. King salmon may not be retained or possessed, may not be removed from the water, and must be released immediately.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 56.122 (8)(A) and (B)(i) and (ii) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, July 15 through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, July 31, 2024.

5 AAC 56.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, 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) from the Sterling Highway Bridge to the outlet of Tustumena Lake, from July 15 – July 31; sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately; only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

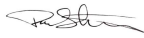
(B) the following special provisions apply in that portion downstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge:

(i) in flowing waters, from July 15 – July 31, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

(ii) in flowing waters, from July 15 – July 31, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Phill Stacey
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

In 2024, the king salmon runs throughout Cook Inlet have consistently and significantly underperformed preseason expectations resulting in restrictions and closures of inriver and marine sport fisheries.

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-25-24 was issued to prohibit retention of wild king salmon and remove bait from the Kasilof River to allow wild king salmon passage to Crooked Creek, while still providing opportunity for anglers to harvest hatchery king salmon. Currently, the escapement of king salmon to Crooked Creek is weak and is not projecting to achieve the wild escapement goal for 2024. Therefore, to maximize the escapement of the Crooked Creek run, the closure of the king salmon sport fishery is warranted to ensure adequate escapement of Kasilof River late-run king salmon.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-25-24, issued Wednesday, June 19, 2024, prohibited the use of bait in the Kasilof River. From June 21 through July 31, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure or fly may be used. This emergency order maintained a bag limit of two hatchery king salmon 20 inches or greater in length through June 30, and prohibited the retention of naturally-produced king salmon from June 21 through July 31, 2024.

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.