

# SPORT FISHING

## *Emergency Order*

ALASKA DEPARTMENT  
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

**Emergency Order No.** 2-KS-7-07-24

**Issued at:** Homer, Thursday, March 14, 2024

**Effective Date:** 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, May 1, 2024

**Expiration Date:** 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

### EXPLANATION:

This emergency order prohibits sport fishing for king salmon (including catch-and-release) in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.). King salmon incidentally caught while fishing for other fish may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

### REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 58.022 (b)(1)(A) are superseded by this emergency order. The provisions of 5 AAC 58.055 (g) are added by this emergency order. Under this emergency order the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, May 1 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 15, 2024:

#### **5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area.**

(b)(1) in the waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.):

(A) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon caught incidentally may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

#### **5 AAC 58.055. Upper Cook Inlet Summer Salt Water King Salmon Management Plan**

(g) Notwithstanding (d) of this section, from May 1 through August 15, in the Cook Inlet salt waters north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.) sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon that are caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately.

Doug Vincent-Lang,  
Commissioner

By delegation to:

  
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Mike Booz  
Lower Cook Inlet Sport Fish Area Manager

### JUSTIFICATION:

King salmon harvest in the Upper Cook Inlet summer saltwater fishery north of the latitude of Bluff Point is composed of a mixture of returning early-run and late-run king salmon and feeder king salmon stocks from outside of Cook Inlet. Given the uncertainty of run strength in 2024 for all Cook Inlet

king salmon stocks, including Kenai Peninsula and Northern Cook Inlet, it is justified to begin the season conservatively. Many of the inriver sport fisheries for these Cook Inlet stocks are starting with preseason emergency order closures or restrictions. Despite the preseason and inseason restrictions in 2022 and 2023, the sustainable escapement goals for most Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, including the Anchor River, Kenai River early-run and late-run, and Deshka River were not met. Based on genetic analysis from 2014–2018, on average 16% of the harvest north of Bluff Point originated from Cook Inlet streams.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries recently adopted a stock of concern management plan to rebuild Kenai River late-run king salmon which includes a closure to sport fishing for king salmon north of Bluff Point. This restriction will be in place annually until the Kenai River late-run king salmon meets the criteria to be removed from stock of concern status outlined in the action plan.

**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.