

PROPOSAL 43 – 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Chitina Dipnetters Association and Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would establish an allocation of 3,000 king salmon to the Chitina personal use fishery.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The maximum harvest level for the Chitina personal use fishery is 100,000–150,000 salmon, not including any salmon in excess of the inriver goal or salmon taken after August 31. This maximum harvest level applies to all salmon species combined.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would require the department to develop a new management strategy for the Chitina personal use fishery that would ensure achievement of a specific king salmon allocation. The department would need to reduce sport and commercial fishing opportunity to ensure that an additional 3,000 king salmon are available for harvest inriver while managing for the Copper River king salmon SEG.

BACKGROUND: Inseason management actions restricting or prohibiting the harvest of king salmon have been implemented in the Copper River commercial, personal use, and sport fisheries each year since 2009 (Table 43-1). These three fisheries have all experienced reductions in harvest opportunity due to lower than average king salmon returns and resultant regulatory actions to ensure achievement of the Copper River king salmon SEG (Table 43-2). From 2008 to 2013, average CRD commercial king salmon harvest was approximately 68% below the 2003–2007 harvest average, and average combined sport and personal use harvests were 62% below the 2003–2007 harvest average (Table 43-2). Glennallen Subdistrict and CRD subsistence fisheries have not been restricted; subsistence harvests have declined over this period as well. In spite of low king salmon abundance, department management restrictions in commercial, personal use, and sport fisheries resulted in spawning escapement remaining above the escapement goal threshold in 5 out of 6 of these years.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 43-2.—Summary of king salmon harvests and upriver escapement in the Copper River, 1994–2013.

Year	Commercial harvest ^a	CRD subsistence harvest ^b	Sport harvest ^c	Glennallen subsistence harvest ^d	Chitina personal use harvest ^d	Total harvest	Upriver return estimate ^e	Estimated total run	Estimated spawning escapement
1994	47,812	164	6,431	1,989	3,743	60,139	33,258	81,234	ND
1995	67,363	154	6,709	1,892	4,707	80,825	51,700	119,217	ND
1996	57,815	276	9,116	1,482	3,584	72,273	54,114	112,205	ND
1997	52,516	200	8,346	2,583	5,447	69,092	40,923	93,639	ND
1998	70,238	295	8,245	1,842	6,723	87,343	46,403	116,936	ND
1999	63,508	353	6,742	3,278	5,913	79,794	32,090	95,951	16,157
2000	32,018	689	5,531	4,856	3,168	46,262	38,047	70,754	24,492
2001	40,551	826	4,904	3,553	3,113	52,947	39,778	81,155	28,208
2002	39,552	549	5,098	4,217	2,056	51,472	32,873	72,974	21,502
2003	49,031	710	5,717	3,092	1,921	60,471	44,764	94,505	34,034
2004	38,889	1,106	3,435	3,982	2,502	49,914	40,564	80,559	30,645
2005	35,764	260	4,093	2,618	2,094	44,829	30,333	66,357	21,528
2006	31,309	779	3,425	3,229	2,681	41,423	67,789	99,877	58,454
2007	40,276	1,145	5,113	3,939	2,722	53,195	46,349	87,770	34,575
2008	12,067	470	3,616	3,218	2,022	21,393	41,343	53,880	32,487
2009	10,394	212	1,355	3,036	223	15,220	32,401	43,007	27,787
2010	10,582	276	2,416	2,425	718	16,417	22,323	33,181	16,764
2011	19,788	212	1,753	3,062	1,080	25,895	33,889	53,889	27,994
2012	12,623	237	535	2,510	572	16,477	31,452	44,312	27,835
2013	9,445	854	285	2,522	762	13,868	32,581	42,880	29,012
Average 2009–2013	12,566	358	1,269	2,711	671	17,575	30,529	43,454	25,878
Average 2004–2013	22,114	555	2,603	3,054	1,538	29,863	37,902	60,571	30,708

Note: ND indicates no data.

^a Includes commercial harvest plus homepack, donated and educational harvests.

^b Includes state and federal subsistence harvests in the CRD.

^c Includes sport harvest in the Copper River Delta and the Upper Copper River upstream of Haley Creek.

^d These data are expanded to reflect unreported state harvest and include reported federal harvest (2002–2004) and expanded federal harvest beginning in 2005.

^e Prior to 1999 upriver returns were calculated by applying the percentage of king salmon in the Glennallen subsistence and Chitina personal use fisheries to the sonar count. Starting in 1999, upriver king salmon returns are estimated through a mark-recapture method.