

Division of Sport Fish

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Advisory Announcement

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COPPER RIVER PERSONAL USE DIP NET SALMON FISHING SCHEDULE:

WEEK OF JUNE 15 THROUGH JUNE 21

The Chitina Subdistrict will open for 120 hours during the week of June 15 – 21, a 24-hour period from 12:01 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Monday, June 15 and a 96-hour period from 12 a.m. Thursday, June 18 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 21.

The 2020 Copper River sockeye salmon run appears to be much weaker than expected and is currently 62% of the sonar objective for this date. Daily sonar counts continue to lag behind projected daily passage. The department is modifying management strategies to compensate for the late and weak sockeye salmon wild stock abundance in order to provide harvest opportunity and still achieve the wild sockeye salmon sustainable escapement goal. The personal use fishery will continue to be managed weekly through the end of August with any potential fishing opportunity dependent upon sonar passage and further adjustments needed to ensure wild sockeye salmon escapement.

As a reminder, the *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* and the Statewide Personal Use Fishing Regulations state that:

- The annual limit is 25 salmon for the head of household and 10 salmon for each dependent of the permit holder.
- Only one king salmon may be kept as part of the total household annual limit.
- Personal use fishers must possess **both** their Chitina Personal Use fishery permit and a valid resident sport fishing license when fishing. **Steelhead cannot be kept**, and must be returned to the water unharmed.
- You must record your harvest on the permit **immediately**.
- The tips of the tail of personal use caught fish must be clipped **immediately** upon landing a fish.
- **Immediately** is defined as before concealing the salmon from plain view or transporting the salmon from the fishing site. **Fishing site** means the location where the fish was removed from the water and became part of the permit holder's bag limit.

The Copper River personal use fishery is managed under direction of the *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* (5 AAC 77.591). The plan establishes the season from June 7 through September 30 and directs the department to establish weekly periods based on Miles Lake sonar counts. Copper River District commercial harvest of sockeye salmon through June 8 totals 71,370 fish compared to the most recent 5-year average harvest of 307,680 sockeye salmon. Salmon passage by the Miles Lake sonar is 62% of the objective for this date

and passage continues to be below the daily objectives and is trending downward. As of June 8, a total of 166,158 salmon were counted past the Miles Lake sonar. The preseason projection for this date was 268,366 salmon, which results in a deficit of 102,208 salmon. Additionally, during June 1 – 7, there were 90,608 salmon counted past the Miles Lake sonar. The preseason projection for this period was 109,823 salmon, which results in a weekly deficit of 19,215 salmon. Copper River sockeye salmon migratory timing and the previous five-year average harvest and participation rates indicate sufficient numbers of salmon available to allow 155 hours of fishing time during the week of June 15 – 21, a decrease of 13 hours from the preseason schedule. Due to overall low sockeye salmon passage and concerns of achieving the sockeye salmon escapement goal, an additional reduction of 35 hours from the normally calculated fishing time based on weekly sonar passage is warranted. This additional reduction in fishing time is intended to spread harvest and provide fishing opportunity throughout the run while taking a conservative management approach.

Additionally, ADF&G is notifying fishery users that all 2020 Chitina Personal Use Salmon Fishery participation and harvest reporting must be completed online through the [ADF&G Harvest Reporting website](#). Online reporting will be required regardless if you purchased the permit through the ADF&G online store or through a vendor. Returning permits by mail or hand-delivery will no longer be an acceptable means to report. Also, the penalty for failure to report Chitina Personal Use Salmon Fishery harvest online by the October 15 reporting deadline will be the loss of future personal use fishing privileges, and **permit holders who fail to report will be denied a permit for the fishery the next calendar year.**

All residents of Alaska qualify to participate in this personal use fishery. You must have a Chitina Personal Use Salmon Fishery Permit and a resident Alaska sport fishing license when dipnetting. Both dip net permits and fishing licenses can be obtained online at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/Store/>. A \$15 fee is charged for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use salmon fishery permit. Revenue from the fee supports the sanitation services at the fishery and trail maintenance from O'Brien Creek to Haley Creek.

The department urges dipnetters to respect the rights of private landowners in the area and familiarize themselves with the land ownership in the area before fishing. For information on access across private lands contact Chitina Native Corporation at (907) 823-2223 (<https://chitananative.com/obrien-creek-permit-program>) or Ahtna, Inc at (907) 822-3476 (<https://www.ahtna-inc.com/lands/>).

Information regarding the fishery can be found at the ADF&G web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=PersonalUsebyAreaInteriorChitina.main>. This site provides information regarding the Upper Copper River fisheries including: fishery descriptions and summaries, maps of the subdistricts, a listing of vendors that carry the permits, and links to the sonar numbers and fishing schedule emergency orders.

The current fishing schedule will be announced on the Chitina Fishery information line at 822-5224 (Glennallen), 459-7382 (Fairbanks), and 267-2511 (Anchorage). Please contact an information phone line prior to planning your trip to Chitina to ensure that the fishery will be open when you arrive. If you have any questions regarding the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishery, please contact the ADF&G office in Glennallen at (907) 822-3309.

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