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## **Division of Sport Fish**

### ***News Release***

***For Immediate Release***

Issued: June 2, 2017

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#### **2017 UPPER COPPER RIVER KING SALMON FISHERIES RESTRICTIONS RELAXED**

Effective June 3, in the Glennallen Subdistrict subsistence fishery **the annual limit for king salmon taken by fish wheel is rescinded and the annual limit for king salmon taken by dip net is reinstated to 5 fish. Fish wheels do not need to be closely attended, but must be checked and all fish caught by the fish wheel removed at least once every 10 hours.**

Effective June 5, all king salmon sport fisheries in the Upper Copper River drainage will **reopen with an annual limit for king salmon over 20 inches of two fish, with no more than one king salmon of the two fish annual limit retained from any individual tributary or the mainstem of the Copper River. The use of bait is allowed in the Copper River mainstem and portions of the Gulkana, Klutina, and Tonsina rivers as described in the 2017 Northern Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary on pages 28–35.**

The *Copper River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* directs the department to manage the Copper River fisheries to achieve a sustainable escapement goal in the Copper River of 24,000 or more king salmon. On March 6, 2017 the department closed the king salmon sport and personal use fisheries of the Copper River drainage and imposed and reduced the annual limit of king salmon in the subsistence fishery in response to a preseason run forecast of only 29,000 fish and generally poor return strength since 2009. However, greater than expected commercial harvest of king salmon during extremely limited fishing time and restricted area indicates the 2017 run of king salmon may be greater than forecast, providing potential for a harvestable surplus of king salmon above the escapement goal in the Copper River drainage. It is therefore justified to relax the preseason restrictions and provide additional harvest opportunity.

The department will continue to monitor the 2017 Copper River king salmon run as it develops. If indicators of abundance suggest the 2017 run is weaker than current indicators suggest, the department may again take further restrictive action.

**END**