

PERSONAL USE

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 3-RS-I-03-21

Issued at: Glennallen, Wednesday,
June 16, 2021

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 21, 2021

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. August 31,
2021, unless superseded by subsequent
emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order amends the schedule for the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River District for the week of June 21, 2021.

In addition, this emergency order closes the Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery to the retention of king salmon. King salmon incidentally taken may not be retained and must be released immediately and returned to the water unharmed.

REGULATION:

Consistent with 5 AAC 77.001(b) and 5 AAC 77.591 *Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan* and 5 AAC 24.361 *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* the personal use dip net salmon fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River District will be open from 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 21 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 27. In addition, the provisions of 5 AAC 77.591(e) are superseded by this emergency order effective 12:01 a.m. Monday, June 21, 2021:

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

(e) The total annual limit for each personal use salmon fishing permit is 25 salmon for the head of household and 10 salmon for each dependent of the permit holder, except that king salmon may not be retained or possessed; king salmon caught must be released immediately; a person may not remove a king salmon from the water before releasing the fish.

Douglas Vincent-Lang
Commissioner



By delegation to: _____

Mark Somerville
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

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. During June 7 – June 13, there were 147,560 salmon counted past the Miles Lake sonar. The preseason projection for this period was 74,327 salmon, which results in a surplus of 73,233 salmon. Copper River sockeye salmon migratory timing and the previous five-year average harvest and participation rates indicate sufficient numbers of salmon available to justify an increase of 24 hours above the preseason schedule to 168 hours of fishing time during the week of June 21 – 27.

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 upper Copper River of 24,000 or more king salmon. The 2021 king salmon run to the Copper River appears to be substantially weaker than the preseason forecast of 37,000 king salmon. The cumulative commercial harvest, as of June 15, is approximately 6,100 king salmon and is half the most recent five-year average for this date. Only 18 king salmon have passed the Gulkana River salmon counting tower through June 15, which is the fourth lowest count on record for this date. Catch rates of king salmon in the Native Village of Eyak research fish wheels through June 14 are the third lowest on record since 2003. Additionally, recapture rates of king salmon at Canyon Creek indicate a potential inriver return near the escapement goal of 24,000 king salmon for the Copper River drainage, providing little to no surplus for harvest. Therefore, prohibiting the retention of king salmon in the Chitina Subdistrict personal use dip net fishery is justified to ensure the sustainable escapement goal is achieved.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region III Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (907) 459-7357, and the Glennallen Area Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, PO Box 47, Glennallen, AK 99588, (907) 822-3309.