

Sport fishing Alaska

rivers and lakes
in the
*Upper Copper/
Upper Susitna River
basin*



Alaska Department of Fish and Game



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Cover photo: Gulkana River, Alaska

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*produced by
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Sport fishing Alaska lakes and rivers in

the upper Copper/upper Susitna basin

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Sport Fish Division Offices:



Fairbanks Regional Office
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Glennallen Area Office
P.O. Box 47
Glennallen, AK 99588
(907) 822-3309

State Headquarters
Division of Sport Fish
1255 W. 8th St.
P.O. Box 3-2000
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-4180

Recorded fishing information
for Interior Alaska and the
Upper Copper/Upper Susitna
area:

(907) 459-7385 (Fairbanks) or
(907) 267-2218 (Anchorage)

Recorded information for the
Copper River personal use
(dip net) fishery:

(907) 822-5224 (Glennallen)
(907) 459-7382 (Fairbanks)
(907) 267-2511 (Anchorage)

Questions about the ADF&G Trophy Fish Program should be directed to
the Headquarters office.

Other ADF&G publications are available through the Public Communications
Section.

ADF&G Public Communications Section: (907) 465-4112

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Roadside fishing opportunities in the

Upper Copper/Upper Susitna River Basin



The varied fishing resources of the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna River Basin (UCUS) offer something for nearly every angler. The UCUS is noted for excellent Arctic grayling, chinook and sockeye salmon fishing. UCUS waters have produced the state record lake trout and burbot. The Basin holds great opportunity for anglers who seek good fishing away from the more congested fishing spots in the state.

Two major salmon sport fisheries take place in the Gulkana and Klutina rivers. Chinook salmon first arrive in the Gulkana in early June—that run peaks in the lower river downstream of the pipeline crossing around the 4th of July. Access is available by roads and trails off the Richardson Highway, which parallels much of the river. The Gulkana drainage supports the single largest recreational fishery in the Glennallen area.

The lower Klutina River chinook salmon fishery starts in mid to late June and peaks the second or third week of July. Please refer to the current sport fishing regulations for chinook salmon fishery closures in the UCUS. There is easy access to the Klutina where it crosses the Richardson Hwy. at Milepost 100.

There are concurrent runs of sockeye salmon in both of these rivers, as well as resident populations of grayling and Dolly Varden.

Dip net and fishwheel subsistence/personal use fisheries (*for Alaska residents only*) take place near the community of Chitina. Dip net and fishwheel seasons run from around June 1 to September 30.

Many lakes and streams in the area contain stocked rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, or coho salmon as well as resident species.

The following pages list fishing sites along the highway system,

starting from the Glenn Hwy. and traveling east to the Richardson Hwy., Edgerton Hwy., and Slana-Tok Cutoff, then north to the Denali Hwy. Like most major routes in Alaska, highways in the area are posted with numbered mileposts. Locations in this guide refer to highway markings, not odometer readings, and are listed starting from the lowest milepost to the highest on each highway.







Some land within the basin is owned by native corporations and other private landowners. ADF&G requests users to respect private property and to leave shorelines and trails cleaner than you found them.

Special regulations apply to specific rivers and lakes, and to fish species

in the UCUS area, as well as special permit requirements for the Copper River personal use fishery at Chitina. ADF&G issues annual regulation summary booklets which contain this information. Do not forget to pick up a current regulation booklet from your local sporting goods store when you buy your license.

ADF&G offices also give away current regulation booklets, along with up-to-the-minute fishing reports and recent emergency orders which affect bag limits, gear restrictions, and fishery closures. Call us, stop by our nearest ADF&G office, or visit our website (see addresses inside the front cover) before you go fishing!

ANGLER ETHICS

-  **Don't pollute.** Haul trash out of the field, and dispose of it properly. Remember, that discarded fishing line can be lethal to birds and wildlife.
-  **Obey fishing regulations.**
-  **Respect private property.** Native allotments and other private land holdings are common along Alaska's waterways. Seek permission before using private land.
-  **Minimize stream bank erosion.**
-  **Think about your needs: take only the fish you require.** Preserve your fish appropriately.
-  **If you plan to release fish, handle them gently** and do not remove them from the water. If you plan to kill fish, do so quickly and humanely.



Where the fish are . . . and how to get there

Glenn Highway

WATER	SPECIES	MILE	LOCATION/ACCESS
Leila Lake	GR, BB, WF	121	Gravel pit parking, short hike to outlet
Tahneta Lake	GR	123	Good spring fishery
Little Nelchina R.	GR	137.5	DNR campground
Cache Creek	GR	142.2	Pull-off present—good spring and fall fishing
Ryan Lake	GR, RT	149	Pull-off 200 yards from highway
Mendeltna Creek	GR	153	Pull-off, accommodations available
Gergie Lake	GR, RT	155	Pull-off
Arizona Lake	GR	155	Pull-off shared with Gergie Lake
Buffalo Lake	RT	156	Pull-off
DJ Lake	RT	157.5	South side of highway, 1/4-mile trail
Little Junction Lake	GR	159.9	South side of highway, 1/4-mile trail
Lake Louise Road		160	see listing below
Tex Smith Lake	RT	162	North side of highway, parking area
Lost Cabin Lake	GR, BB	166	Across from Atlasta House, 3/4-mile trail
Tolsona Lake	GR, BB	170	Turn N at sign, parking area, unimproved boat launch, accommodations available
Tolsona Creek	GR	173	Adjacent to highway—private campground present
Moose Creek	GR	186	Adjacent to highway

Lake Louise Road

Junction Lake	GR	0.5	East side of road
Crater Lake	RT	1.5	West side of road, 200 yards
Little Crater Lake	RT	1.5	Just beyond Crater Lake
Old Road Lake	RT	5.2	Follow old road east 1/4 mile, lake west of road
Round Lake	RT	5.2	Follow old road east 1/4 mile, lake east of road
Tiny Lake	GR	6.5	Take road west 1 1/2 miles, then 1/4 mile south by trail
40-Foot Lake	GR	6.5	West on road 2 miles, then 1/4 mile south by trail (lake on east of trail)
Peanut Lake	RT	6.5	East of 40-Foot Lake (above)
Mendeltna Creek	GR	6.5	West on road, 5 miles
Forgotten Lake	GR	7	Pull-off, lake east of road
Elbow Lake	GR	11.5	Lake east of road
Caribou Lake	GR	11.5	Lake west of road, 1/4 mile north on old road
Conner Lake	GR	16.2	West side, 300 yards
Lake Louise	LT,GR,BB,WF	16.5	Public campground—accommodations available
Susitna Lake	LT,GR,BB,WF		Access by boat across Lake Louise

cont'd . . .

BB = burbot

GR = grayling

LT = lake trout

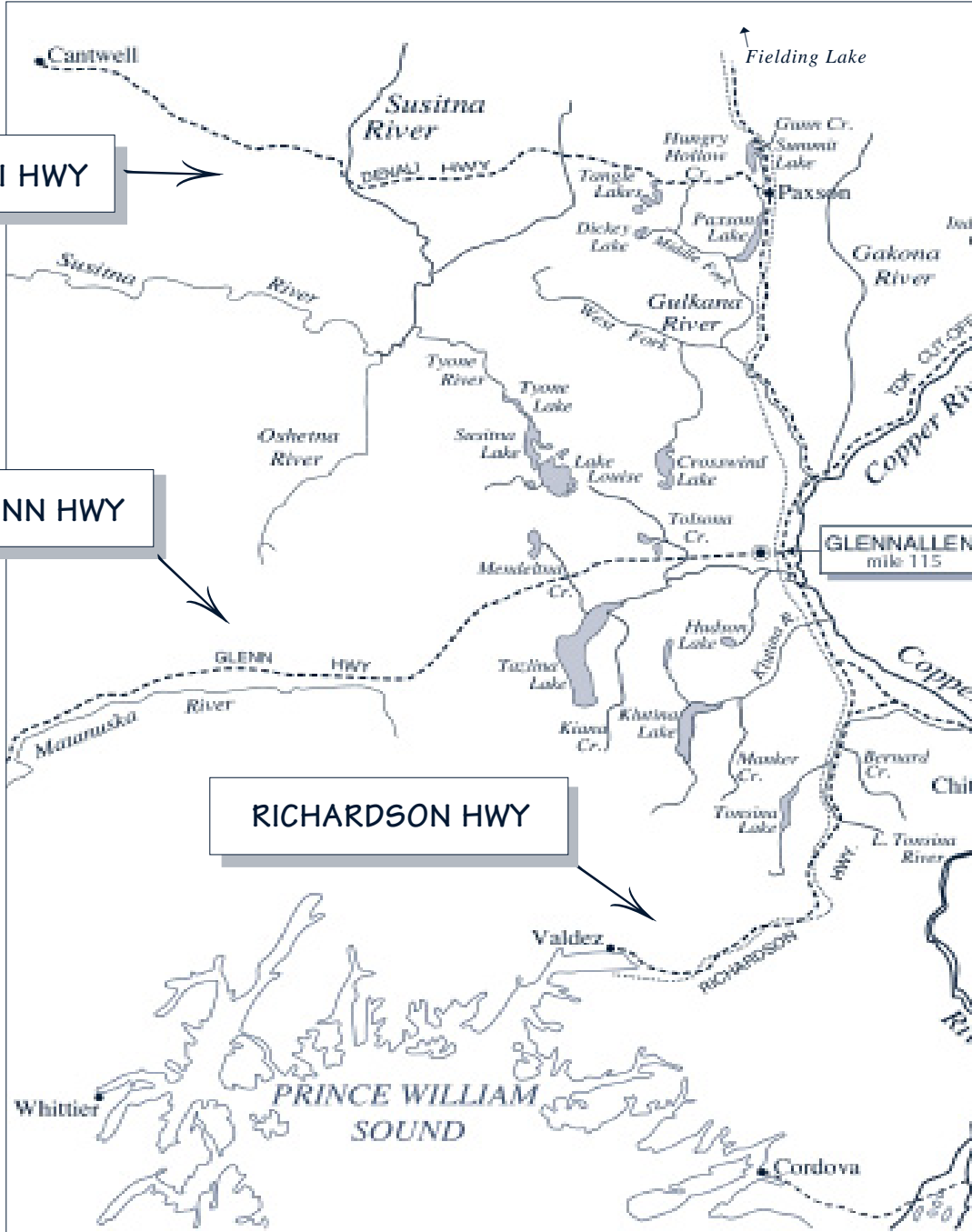
RT = rainbow trout

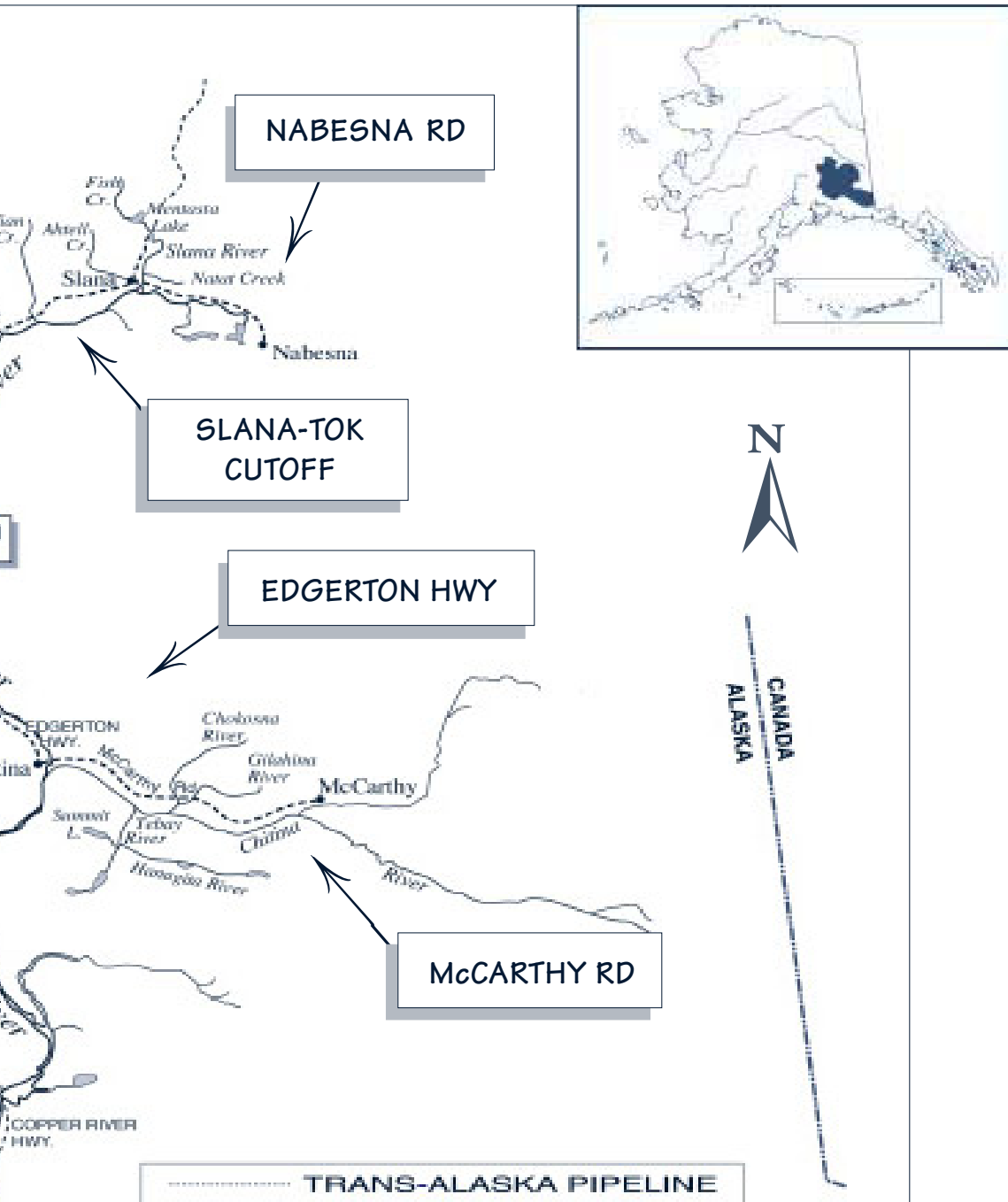
WF = whitefish

DENALI HWY

GLENN HWY

RICHARDSON HWY





Richardson Highway

WATER	SPECIES	MILE	LOCATION/ACCESS
Port Valdez	SS,PS,CS,DV,BF		Boat rentals at dock
Robe R. Lake	DV	2.5	Highway crosses river—pull-off present at Mile 3.1
Thompson Lake	GR	23.1	Lake west and downhill from highway; visible from road
Blueberry Lake	RT	24.1	Use site present—DNR campground
Worthington Lake	RT	27	Parking area available, east side of highway
Tiegel River	DV	43–50	River parallels highway; fish small in size
Little Tonsina River	DV	64, 74	Parking area available
Tonsina River	KS,RS,DV,GR	79	Limited access at bridge
Squirrel Cr. Pit	GR,RT	80	Pull-offs present—DNR campground
Edgerton Highway		83	<i>see listing below</i>
Pippin Lake	RT	83.3	Pull-off present, unimproved boat launch
Klutina River	DV,GR,KS,RS	100	Private campgrounds available
Bear Creek	GR	125.9	Pull-off present; spring and fall fishery
Gulkana River	RT,GR,KS,RS	126.9	Fishing trails at Mile 129.3, 136.4, 141.4; use site at Mile 147.5
Slana-Tok Cutoff		128.7	<i>see listing on next page</i>
Poplar Grove	GR	136.4	Spring fishery
Sourdough Creek	GR	147.5	Spring fishery—BLM campground
Haggard Creek	GR	161	Spring fishery
June & Nita lakes	WF,GR	166.5	1/4 mile west
Gillespie Creek	GR	168	Spring fishery
Gillespie Lake	GR	168.2	Pull-off present, 1/4-mile trail
Meiers Lake	GR	171	Pull-offs present, best fishing at inlet
Dick Lake	GR	173.2	East side of road
Paxon Lake	LT,GR,BB,WF	175–182	BLM campground, numerous accommodations available
Denali Highway		185	<i>see listing on next page</i>
Fish Cr. Lake(s)	GR	192	Pull-off present—trail parallels creek 2 miles to lake
Summit Lake	LT,GR,BB	194	Parking areas and accommodations available
Fielding Lake	LT,GR,BB	200.5	Turn south on side road 2 miles, DNR campground

Edgerton Highway

Tonsina River	KS,RS,DV,GR	19.4	Limited access at bridge
Liberty Falls Creek	GR	25	(from Richardson Hwy)—DNR campground
3-Mile Lake	RT,GR	30	(from Richardson Hwy)—lake adjacent to road
2-Mile Lake	RT,GR	31	(from Richardson Hwy)—lake adjacent to road
Chitina (Town) Lake	GR	33	Lake bordered by town, various pull-offs present
McCarthy Road		33	<i>see listing on next page</i>

BB = burbot

CS = chum salmon

DV = Dolly Varden

GR = grayling

KS = king salmon

LT = lake trout

PS = pink salmon

RS = red salmon

RT = rainbow trout

SS = silver salmon

WF = whitefish

BF = bottomfish

McCarthy Road

WATER	SPECIES	MILE	LOCATION/ACCESS
Copper River	RS,KS	1.1	Public campground present
Strelna Lake	RT,SS	10.6	Trail—lake ³ / ₄ mile north
Van/Silver Lake	RT	11.1	Trail—lake ¹ / ₄ mile south, private campground, walk-in access
Sculpin Lake	RT	12.6	¹ / ₄ mile south, walk-in access
Strelna Creek	DV	15.4	
Lou's Lake	SS,GR	25.7	³ / ₄ mile north
Long Lake	RS,GR,BB,LT,SS,DV	45	

Slana-Tok Cutoff Highway

Tulsona Creek	GR	15–18	Creek parallels highway, numerous pull-offs
Gravel Pit Lake	GR	30	North side of highway
Sinona Creek	GR,DV	34	
Nabesna Road		160	<i>see listing below</i>
Ahtell Creek	GR	61	Wayside/pull-off present
Carlson Lake	GR,DV	68	2 ¹ / ₂ miles west up Carlson Creek
Mable Creek	GR	76	
Mentasta Lake	GR,WF	81.5	North on old Slana-Tok bypass

Nabesna Road

Rufus Creek	DV	9	Spring fishery
Long Lake	GR,BB	25	Pull-off present
Little Twin Lake	GR,LT,BB	29.5	¹ / ₃ mile south
Big Twin Lake	GR,BB	30	
Jack Lake	GR,WF,LT,BB	31	1 mile south of road by old cat trail
Jack Creek	GR	38	Pull-off present

Denali Highway

Mud Lake	GR	.3	1 mile SW of hwy by rough road; good early fishing
Seven-Mile Lake	LT	6.8	Gravel road ³ / ₄ mile to lake; excellent summer fishing
Ten-Mile Lake	LT,GR,BB	10	Small pull-off—short hike down to outlet; summer fishery
Teardrop Lake	LT,GR,BB	10.4	Short hike down steep hill to south; good summer fishery
Octopus Lake	LT,GR,WF	11	³ / ₄ mile south of road
Fourteenmile Lake	RT	13.8	1 ¹ / ₄ -mile trail north of road
Little Swede Lake	LT	16.8	2 miles south of road—pull-off present
Big Swede Lake	LT,GR,BB,WF	16.8	2 mi south of Little Swede; excellent fishing
16.8 Mile Lake	LT,GR	16.8	Walk north 200 yards to lake
Rusty Lake	LT,GR	16.8	Walk ¹ / ₂ mile NW of 16.8 Mile Lake
17-Mile Lake	LT,GR	17	Small lake with fair to good summer fishing
Denali-Clearwater Cr.	GR	18.1	Use site present; spring and summer fishery
Tangle Lakes	LT,GR,BB	22.5	Road crosses Tangle River, use-site present—BLM campground; excellent summer fishery

...cont'd

Denali Highway (cont'd)

WATER	SPECIES	MILE	LOCATION/ACCESS
Rock Creek	GR	25.3	Parking area present; fair summer fishery
Landmark Gap L.	LT,GR	26	3 miles north of highway—follow cat trail; good trout fishing
Glacier Lake	LT,GR	31	Parking area on north side of highway—follow cat trail 2 miles to lake; excellent summer fishing
36-Mile Lake	LT,GR	36	¹ / ₂ mile north of road
46.9-Mile Lake	GR	46.9	N side of road; lake and outlet excellent for large grayling
Crooked Creek	GR	46.9–50	Creek parallels highway; excellent fishing
50-Mile Lake	GR	50	North side of road; fair fishing
Denali-Clearwater Cr.	GR	59	Use site present; summer fishing

BB = burbot

LT = lake trout

GR = grayling

Be safe, not sorry

A RIVERBOAT SAFETY CHECKLIST

If you are planning to travel these rivers by boat, make sure that:

- All aboard wear personal flotation devices.
- The motor is adequate and running well. Inspect fuel lines, transom mounting, prop nut.
- There is a spare propeller and prop nut (or impeller and impeller nut for outboard jets) and other spare parts likely to need replacement. Carry the tools to install the parts.
- The anchor system is safe for river use and that the anchor line can be cut loose in an emergency. Carry 30–100 ft of strong spare rope.
- There are at least two oars on board, and a bilge pump or bailing can.
- The boat is not overloaded, and that emergency maneuvers such as sharp turns can be done without taking on water.
- The boat hull has adequate flotation.
- You have survival gear, clothing, first aid, and comfort supplies appropriate for the trip.
- All gear is stowed out of the way and there is clear access from the stern to the bow.
- There's more than enough gas for a round trip.
- The boat operator knows the river, or is experienced with rivers like the one you are about to travel on, and is not impaired by alcohol.

When you are traveling:

- Stay on the right side of the channel where possible.
- The boat coming downriver has the right-of-way.
- Approach blind corners with great caution. A big, fast boat may be coming the other way. Don't come to a stop with your boat blocking the channel.
- Turn around before you use half of your gas.
- Don't get fatigued. Take breaks. Enjoy your trip!

Always start your trip with a boat equipped in compliance with Coast Guard safety regulations—which may be obtained from the 17th Coast Guard District, Federal Bldg., P. O. Box 25527, Juneau, AK 99802-5517 or U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office, 510 L. Street, Suite 100, Anchorage, AK 99501-1946.

The ADF&G

Trophy Fish program



Trophy fish certificates are issued by the department to give special recognition to anglers who take fish that meet minimum weight qualifications for each species.

Trophy fish entries must be:

- ◆ legally caught in waters open to the general public,
- ◆ hooked and played by only one person (assistance is permissible to land or boat the fish),
- ◆ weighed on a currently certified scale in front of at least one witness and a Trophy Fish Official and must meet minimum weight qualifications (listed on next page),
- ◆ measured by straight-line measure—not following the curve of the fish—from tip of snout to tip of tail.

Affidavit (form printed on inside back cover) must be:

- ◆ signed by the entrant in front of a Trophy Fish Official. (Contact your local ADF&G office for the one nearest you; Division of Sport Fish biologists may also serve as Trophy Fish Officials.)
- ◆ accompanied by a clear photograph of the fish, with a size-reference object in the picture.

Affidavits must be submitted by January 31 of the year following the catch to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P.O. Box 25526, Juneau, AK 99802. Affidavit forms are available at all ADF&G offices. A separate affidavit form must be completed for each entry. **INCOMPLETE FORMS MAY DISQUALIFY ENTRANTS.** ADF&G reserves the right to check fish identification or to refuse any questionable affidavits. Decisions of the department are final. Photographs become the property of ADF&G for its use on the award certificate and in public information releases. ☒

CATCH-and-RELEASE HONORARY CERTIFICATES

ADF&G issues honorary trophy fish certificates and a patch to entrants who catch and release fish of minimum length qualifications (listed on p. 10) for each species—Arctic char/Dolly Varden, Arctic grayling, brook trout, cutthroat trout, lake trout, northern pike, rainbow trout, or sheefish.

To limit handling of the fish, estimate its length instead of actually measuring it. Send a clear photograph showing a closeup side view of the fish (preferably in the water) with each entry. Any sign of improper handling or injury in the photo will disqualify the entry. At least one witness is mandatory.

ALASKA STATE TROPHY FISH RECORDHOLDERS

Species	Min. wt.	Lbs/oz	Year	Location	Angler
Arctic char/ Dolly Varden	10 lb	27/6	2002	Wulik River	Mike Curtiss
Brook trout	3 lb <i>(This species was added in 1995—there have been no entries to date.)</i>				
Burbot	8 lb	24/12	1976	Lake Louise	George R. Howard
King salmon	see below	97/4	1985	Kenai River	Lester Anderson
Chum salmon	15 lb	32/0	1985	Caamano Point	Fredrick Thynes
Coho salmon	20 lb	26/0	1976	Icy Strait	Andrew Robbins
Cutthroat trout	3 lb	8/6	1977	Wilson Lake	Robert Denison
Grayling	3 lb	4/13	1981	Ugashik Narrows	Paul F. Kanitz
Halibut	250 lb	459/0	1996	Unalaska Bay	Jack Tragis
Lake trout	20 lb	47/0	1970	Clarence Lake	Daniel Thorsness
Lingcod	55 lb	81/6	2002	Monty Island	Charles Curny
Northern pike	15 lb	38/8	1991	Innoko River	Jack Wagner
Pink salmon	8 lb	12/9	1974	Moose River	Steven A. Lee
Rainbow/ steelhead trout	15 lb	42/3	1970	Bell Island	David White
Rockfish	18 lb	38/11	2001	Pr. William Sound	Rosemary Roberts
Sheefish	30 lb	53/0	1986	Pah River	Lawrence E. Hudnall
Sockeye salmon	12 lb	16/0	1974	Kenai River	Chuck Leach
Whitefish	4 lb	9/0	1989	Tozitna River	Al Mathews

☛ King salmon minimum weight for the Kenai River is **75 lb.** For the rest of the state, it is **50 lb.**

Minimum length requirements for Catch-and-release Certificates



Arctic char/Dolly Varden	30 inches
Arctic grayling	18 inches
brook trout	20 inches
cutthroat trout	20 inches
lake trout	36 inches
northern pike	40 inches
rainbow/steelhead	32 inches
sheefish	45 inches

