

**Division of Sport Fish**

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## **Division of Sport Fish**

### ***News Release***

***For Immediate Release***

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### **COPPER RIVER PERSONAL USE DIP NET SALMON FISHING SCHEDULE: JULY 31 – AUGUST 6**

The Chitina Subdistrict will open for a 103-hour period from 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 2 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 6. Personal use dipnetting in the Chitina Subdistrict will BE CLOSED from 12:01 a.m. July 31 through 4:59 p.m. August 2. **The retention of king salmon is allowed for the remainder of the season, unless restricted by a future emergency order.**

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.
- Of the total limit only one king salmon may be retained per household.
- 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.
- Harvest must be recorded 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 outlined in 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 July 10 – July 16, there were 47,547 salmon counted past the Miles Lake sonar. The preseason projection for this period was 52,938 salmon, which results in a deficit of 5,391 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 103 hours of fishing time during the week of July 31 – August 6, a decrease of 11 hours from the preseason schedule.

Dipnetters should be aware that grizzly bears have been spotted in the O'Brien Creek area. The bears have not been getting into trash or camps, but have likely been drawn to the area by fish waste left in the shallows and along the banks of O'Brien Creek. The department has the following suggestions to prevent food-conditioning bears and avoid human-bear conflicts:

Dipnetters who clean fish on site are encouraged to chop fish carcasses into numerous pieces and throw them into the fast-moving Copper River, not O'Brien Creek.

Avoid camping close to the creek; streambanks are natural travel corridors for bears.

Keep a clean camp. Do not leave trash out or food in tents where bears can access.

Be bear aware. For more information on living with bears, see <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.main>.

O'Brien Creek campers and dipnetters are asked to report aggressive bear behavior immediately to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Glennallen at (907) 822-3461, or to Alaska Wildlife Troopers (907) 822-3263.

All residents of Alaska qualify to participate in this personal use fishery. A Chitina Subdistrict Personal Use Fishing permit and a resident sport fishing license are required. There is \$15.00 fee for the Chitina Subdistrict personal use fishing permit.

The department urges dipnetters to respect the rights of private landowners in the area and know the regulations before fishing. For information on access across private lands contact Chitina Native Corporation at (907) 823-2223.

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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