

PROPOSAL 6

5 AAC 01.630. Subsistence fishing permits; 5 AAC 77.591. Copper River Personal Use Dip Net Salmon Fishery Management Plan; and 5 AAC 52.XXX. New section.

Require inseason reporting of subsistence, sport fish, and personal use harvest and effort, as follows:

Daily harvest reporting is already required on the Copper River for all fisheries except sport. In-season reporting would be relatively simple and could be done using an online app.

Participants in this fishery are required to report their recorded daily harvests to the department within three (3) days of when those harvests occur. Participants must report harvest attempts for any days during which their fishing gear was in the water, even if these harvest attempts are unsuccessful.

Harvest reports can be made using an online app or a call-in number.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Copper River fisheries managers currently rely on an abundance-based management model that does not collect in-season harvest data and has very little empirical data about actual escapement onto the spawning grounds. This model assumes that escapement can be accurately estimated using on abundance at the Miles Lake sonar and harvests from previous years.

However, recent events suggest that the in-river harvest exceeds what can be biologically sustained and is not detected by our current harvest reporting system. The Gulkana hatchery has not been able to obtain its brood stock since 2015, while the 2018 sockeye run failure caught managers by surprise.

Obtaining accurate in-season harvest information would help to protect against the possibility of over harvest due to variable harvest levels and under reporting post-season.

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(EF-F20-117, EF-F20-119, EF-F20-120)
