



Federal Subsistence Board News Release



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Forest Service

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Frequently Asked Questions About a New Federal Salmon Fishing Opportunity in the Lower Copper River

In April 2022, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted Fisheries Proposal FP21-10 to expand the Federal subsistence fishery for salmon into the lower Copper River. On May 19, 2022, the Board adopted Temporary Special Action FSA22-05 which allows the new fishery to open on June 1 for the 2022 season. This fact sheet addresses common questions and concerns about the new fishing opportunity.

1. Why did the Board establish this fishery?

Cordova residents have limited opportunity to harvest Sockeye and Chinook salmon under Federal subsistence regulations. The Federal Subsistence Board adopted Fisheries Proposal FP21-10 at its April 2022 meeting to provide meaningful access and subsistence opportunity for the rural residents of Cordova, citing the rural preference stated in Title VIII of ANILCA and the limited number of fish predicted to be harvested by this fishery.

2. Why did the Board enact this Temporary Special Action?

A Temporary Special Action is necessary because the newly adopted regulation will not be published in the *Federal Register* in time for the June 1 start date of this year's fishery. This Special Action enacts temporary regulations to open the fishery and delegates management authority to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Superintendent for the 2022 season.

3. How long will this Temporary Special Action be in effect?

The Temporary Special Action and delegation letter will expire upon publication of the regulations for the new Federal subsistence fishery in the Lower Copper River in the *Federal Register*. The regulations are expected to be published later this season.

4. Exactly where does this new Federal fishery take place?

This fishery will take place within the **Lower Copper River Area**, defined as the area ½ mile above and ½ mile below the Copper River Highway, from the west bank near Mile 27 of the highway to the east bank of the Copper River near Mile 38 (see Figure 1).

5. Why does the new fishery not begin until June 1?

Given the concern for Chinook Salmon expressed by members of both affected Regional Advisory Councils and from public comments, the start date was delayed until June 1 to allow some escapement of Chinook Salmon before the fishery begins each season.

6. How many salmon can be harvested in the Federal Subsistence fishery in the Lower Copper River Area?

For a household with 1 person, 15 salmon (other than Pink Salmon) may be taken. For a household of 2 persons, 30 salmon (other than Pink Salmon) may be taken, plus an additional 10 salmon for

each additional person in the household over 2 persons. No more than 5 Chinook Salmon may be taken per household.

In the Prince William Sound Area within Chugach National Forest and in the Copper River drainage downstream of Haley Creek, you may accumulate Federal subsistence fishing harvest limits with harvest limits under State of Alaska sport fishing regulations provided that accumulation of fishing harvest limits does not occur during the same day. Harvest must be reported within 48 hours.

7. What gear is allowed to dip net salmon in the Lower Copper River Area?

Salmon may be harvested by dip net and rod and reel only. No dip-netting is allowed from boats.

A dip net is defined as a bag-shaped net supported on all sides by a rigid frame; the maximum straight-line distance between any two points on the net frame, as measured through the net opening, may not exceed 5 feet; the depth of the bag must be at least ½ of the greatest straight-line distance, as measured through the net opening. No portion of the bag may be constructed of webbing that exceeds a stretched measurement of 4.5 inches. The frame must be attached to a rigid handle and be operated by hand.

8. Who is eligible to fish within the Lower Copper River Area?

Rural residents of the Prince William Sound Area may participate in the Federal fishery, including residents of Cordova, Tatitlek, Chenega, and Whittier, and the rural communities within the Copper River watershed. A map of the Prince William Sound Area as defined in Federal regulations can be found at this location:

<https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/migrated/subsistence/library/maps/upload/pw.pdf>

9. Can non-Federally qualified users take salmon in the Lower Copper River Area?

Non-Federally qualified users may take salmon in the Lower Copper River Area under State regulations.

10. Where can I get a permit for this new fishery?

Permits may be obtained from the Cordova Ranger District Office, 612 Second Street, Cordova, Alaska, Monday through Friday from 8AM to 4PM. Note that this is a separate Federal subsistence permit from FFPW01, which is for the fresh waters of the Copper River Delta, excluding the Copper River.

Subsistence users may be issued more than one Federal subsistence fishing permit for the Copper River/Prince William Sound area; however, anyone issued more than one permit must carry with them all permits they have been issued when fishing.

11. Who should I contact if I have further questions about this new fishery?

You can contact the US Forest Service Cordova District office by calling 907-424-7661 or Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve staff -- Dave Sarafin at 907-822-7281 or Barbara Cellarius at 907-822-7236. Updates regarding changes affecting the Federal subsistence fisheries in the Copper River are available by calling the Wrangell-St. Elias Fisheries Information Line at 907-822-7256.



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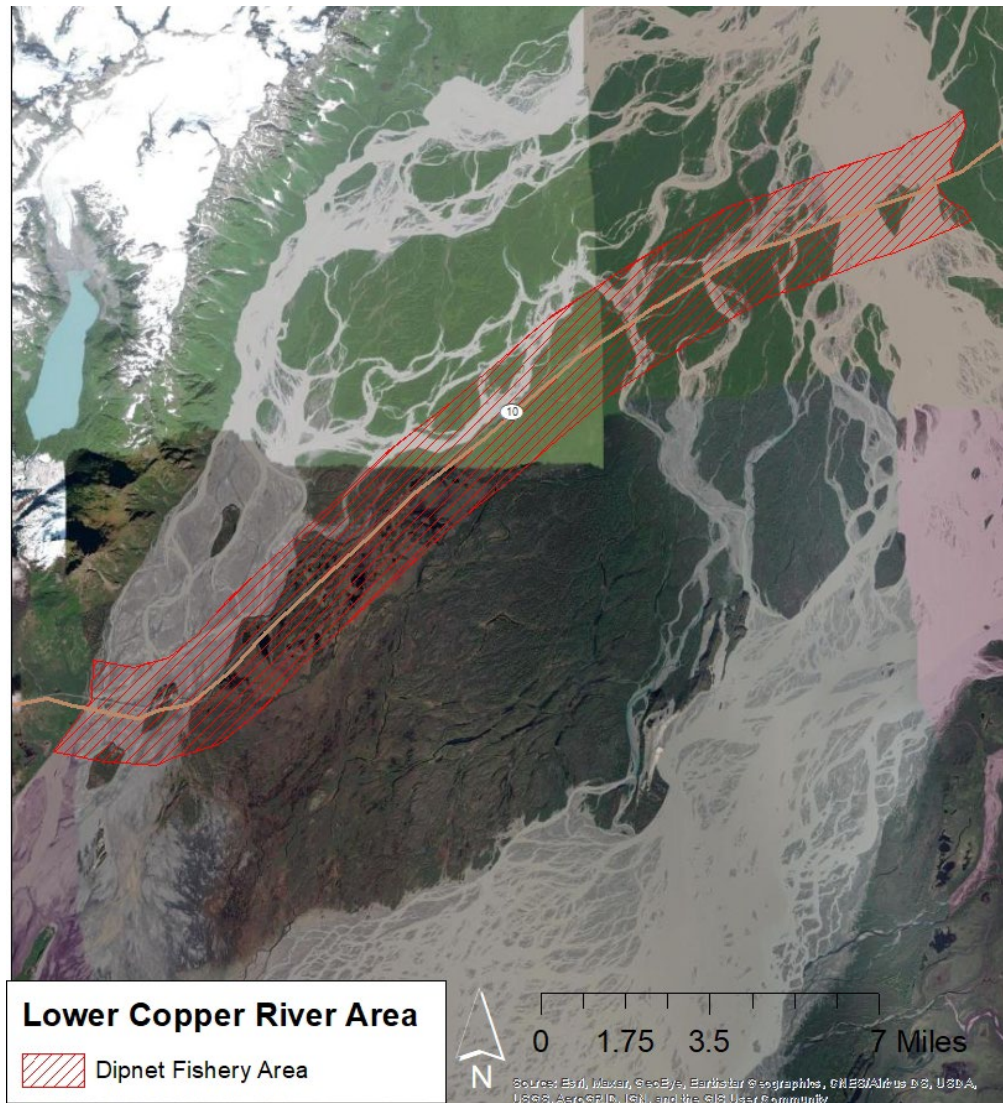


Figure 1. Map of the Lower Copper River Federal subsistence salmon fishing corridor, defined as the area from a boundary one-half mile upstream of the Copper River Highway to a boundary extending one-half mile downstream of the Copper River Highway, from the West bank of the Copper River at approximately 27-mile to the East bank at approximately 38-mile. This map is provided for graphical purposes only. It does not represent a legal survey. While every effort has been made to ensure it is accurate and reliable, the Office of Subsistence Management – USFWS makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor does the fact of distribution constitute such a warranty.

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