

Copper River steelhead harvest monitoring project

Abstract: The objective of the project was to estimate rainbow/steelhead trout incidental catch by fish wheels that occurs in the Glennallen Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River Subsistence fishery in response to the lengthened season, May 15 to May 31, enacted by the Federal Subsistence Board beginning in 2001.

Two fish wheels were placed in the Copper River in the Tazlina area, approximately Mile 110 of the Richardson Highway during the last half of May 2001, 2002 and 2003 to function as test wheels. Local rural residents experienced in using fish wheels to harvest salmon operated fish wheels. Operating conditions were recorded; these conditions included changes in water flow, debris levels, ice conditions and other circumstances that affected successful operation of the fish wheel. All harvested fish were identified by species and enumerated.

Two over flights of the Glennallen Subdistrict were conducted each year between May 17 and May 31 to determine how many fish wheels were either fishing in the river (determined by the wheel in the water spinning) or preparing to fish (determined by the wheel's placement in the water, but not spinning).

Citation: Veach, E. R. and T. Jackson. 2003 Copper River steelhead harvest monitoring project. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, Final Report (Study No. 01-035).