

PROPOSAL 259

5 AAC 58.022. Waters: seasons: bag, possession, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet-Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area.

Modify the razor clam bag and possession limit, as follows:

(14)(B) on the remaining beaches of Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Area: **the bag and possession limit is the first 10 gallons taken or possessed** [NO BAG, POSSESSION, OR SIZE LIMITS]; all clams taken or possessed must be retained;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is no bag and possession limit for the razor clam sport or personal use fisheries, except for the fisheries on beaches from the mouth of the Kenai River to the tip of the Homer Spit (east Cook Inlet beaches). In the Cook Inlet-Resurrection Bay area, razor clams primarily occur in east and west Cook Inlet. The east Cook Inlet sport and personal use fisheries have been closed since 2015 due to low abundance of adult clams. Participation in the West Cook Inlet sport and personal use fisheries has limited access, requiring large boats or small wheel planes from the Kenai Peninsula.

Currently, west Cook Inlet razor clam stock and fisheries assessments are limited to harvest data. In west Cook Inlet approximately 95% of the razor clam harvest occurs in the commercial fishery. From 2017 through 2019, the commercial fishery annual harvest averaged approximately 171,00 lb and has not reached the guideline harvest level since 2013. The 2016–2018 average west Cook Inlet sport razor clam harvest (37,177) and days fished (1,320) were similar from their historical (1986–2015) harvest (38,324) and days fished (1,397) averages. However, some declines in size and age of the harvest have been observed in both the sport and commercial fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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