

PROPOSAL 50

5 AAC 64.070. Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan and 5 AAC 64.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for the Kodiak Area.

Modify provisions of the management plan for rockfish in the Kodiak Area as follows:

5 AAC 64.070 is amended to read:

...

(a) The purpose of the management plan under this section is to meet the Board of Fisheries' goal of stabilizing the sport harvest of black rockfish in the waters of the Kodiak Area particularly in the areas of Chiniak and Marmot bays. Black rockfish will be managed for harvest levels within the established guideline harvest range until a time when survey abundance estimates suggest an increase in harvest is appropriate. **Management will also attempt to prevent unintentional overharvest of other rockfish species.** In recognition that commercial and sport users harvest the same populations of black rockfish, a management plan is also in place for commercial fisheries to maintain harvest within the guideline harvest range specified in 5 AAC 28.466(h).

(b) In the Kodiak Area rockfish sport fishery:

(1) the guideline harvest range is 0 – 26,000 black rockfish;

(2) the sport harvest will be estimated annually by the department using saltwater guide logbooks, statewide harvest survey data, and dockside sampling data;

[(3) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR ROCKFISH IS FIVE FISH, ONLY TWO OF WHICH MAY BE NONPELAGIC AND ONLY ONE OF WHICH MAY BE A YELLOWEYE, EXCEPT THAT, IN THE WATERS OF CHINIAK BAY AND MARMOT BAY, WEST OF A LINE FROM CAPE CHINIAK AT 57° 37.10' N. LAT., 152° 09.28' W. LONG., TO PILLAR CAPE AT 58° 08.91' N. LAT., 152° 06.78' W. LONG., AND EAST OF A LINE FROM HEAD POINT ON AFOGNAK ISLAND AT 57° 59.67' N. LAT., 152° 46.75' W. LONG., TO DOLPHIN POINT AT 57° 59.15' N. LAT., 152° 43.40' W. LONG., ON WHALE ISLAND AND FROM BIRD POINT AT 57° 55.30' N. LAT., 152° 47.50' W. LONG., ON WHALE ISLAND TO INNER POINT ON KODIAK ISLAND AT 57° 54.05' N. LAT., 152° 47.75' W. LONG.,

(A) THE BAG LIMIT FOR ROCKFISH IS THREE FISH PER DAY AND SIX IN POSSESSION, OF WHICH ONLY TWO FISH PER DAY AND FOUR IN POSSESSION MAY BE NONPELAGIC ROCKFISH, AND ONLY ONE FISH PER DAY AND TWO IN POSSESSION MAY BE YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH; NO SIZE LIMIT;

(B) CHARTER VESSEL OPERATORS AND CREWMEMBERS MAY NOT RETAIN ROCKFISH WHILE CLIENTS ARE ON BOARD THE VESSEL.]

(c) If the harvest increases and it is anticipated that the upper bound of the guideline harvest range will be exceeded or has been exceeded, the commissioner may implement restrictions that may be necessary to restrict the increase of harvest in the sport fishery. When the commissioner finds that restrictions are necessary, the commissioner shall adopt one or more of the following restrictions:

(1) implement an annual limit for nonresidents for rockfish;

(2) reduce nonresident bag and possession limit for rockfish;

(3) reduce the rockfish bag limit by area as specified by the department;

(4) implement a rockfish season;

(5) reduce the resident bag and possession limit for rockfish.

5 AAC 64.022(b) is amended to read:

(11) in the waters of Chiniak Bay and Marmot Bay, west of a line from Cape Chiniak at 57° 37.10' N. lat., 152° 9.28' W. long., to Pillar Cape at 58° 8.91' N. lat., 152° 6.78' W. long., and east of a line from Head Point on Afognak Island at 57° 59.67' N. lat., 152° 46.75' W. long., to Dolphin Point at 57° 59.15' N. lat., 152° 43.40' W. long., on Whale Island and from Bird Point at 57° 55.30' N. lat., 152° 47.50' W. long., on Whale Island to Inner Point at 57° 54.05' N. lat., 152° 47.75' W. long., on Kodiak Island

(A) the bag limit for rockfish is three fish per day and six in possession, of which only two fish per day and four in possession may be nonpelagic rockfish, and only one fish per day and two in possession may be yelloweye rockfish; no size limit;

(B) charter vessel operators and crewmembers may not retain rockfish while clients are on board the vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Kodiak Area Rockfish Management Plan was adopted at the 2020 Kodiak Area board meeting. This proposal would add or modify some of the text and the provisions of the management plan to accommodate new information available since its adoption in 2020. This proposal would also correct an inconsistency in the text of the management plan discovered since it was adopted. The bag and possession limits for rockfish listed were incorrectly as equal for the Kodiak Area when in fact the possession limit is double the bag limit. This is in conflict with areawide rockfish bag limits previously establish but is also unnecessarily duplicated in the management plan and should be removed. Modification of the stated purpose of the management plan would reflect new information available since the adoption of the plan in 2020. The department has issued EOs restricting nonresident harvest of rockfish on the eastside of Kodiak and Afognak islands to attempt to curb growth in the sport harvest in particular areas of concern to keep the sport harvest within the guideline harvest range as well as at sustainable levels. Additionally, a method was developed of tracking harvest of rockfish inseason to allow for timely estimation of harvest in both guided and unguided fisheries as well as by rockfish species and species assemblage since formal estimates often take a year or more to finalize after the fishery has occurred. This proposal would add language to recognize the potential to affect other rockfish species through management actions directed at black rockfish taken in accordance with this plan. Recognition that other species may be impacted by management actions directed at black rockfish would allow the department more flexibility to curb additional growth in the sport fishery for black rockfish while still maintaining angler opportunity for other rockfish species and preventing incidental overharvest of these populations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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