

PROPOSAL 212

5 AAC 38.4XX. Registration Area J Sea Cucumber Management Plan and 5 AAC 38.411. Fishing seasons for sea cucumbers in Registration Area J.

Establish sea cucumber management plan in the Kodiak District of Registration Area J, as follows:

5 AAC 38.4XX. Kodiak District Sea Cucumber Management Plan. (a) This management plan governs the harvest of sea cucumbers in the Kodiak District of Registration Area J.

(b) Before harvesting sea cucumbers, a person shall:

(1) obtain a valid CFEC interim use permit to harvest sea cucumbers with diving gear;

(2) validly register with the department.

(c) Sea cucumbers may be taken from October 1 through April 30 during fishing periods established by emergency order.

(d) Sea cucumbers may only be taken with diving gear operated in accordance with 5 AAC 38.054.

(f) In the Kodiak District, a person harvesting sea cucumbers shall maintain an accurate logbook of all diving operations.

(1) A logbook described in (f) of this section must

(A) include the date, the specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude, the number of individual sea cucumbers harvested, the number of pounds of sea cucumbers harvested, the minimum and maximum depth of each dive, the bottom time duration of each dive, and any other information deemed reasonable by the department;

(B) be delivered to a local representative of the department within 48 hours following the closure of a fishing period unless the permit holder has been delayed due to extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, and the permit holder has contacted a local representative of the department within 48 hours following the closure of a fishing period and the representative has granted additional time.

(2) A person may not make a false entry in the logbook described in (f) of this section.

(g) Opening of a sea cucumber fishing period will be delayed for 24 hours if the National Weather Service marine forecast for Shelikof Strait (PKZ138) or for Shuyak Island to Sitkinak Island (PKZ132) issued at 4:00 a.m. on the day before the scheduled

opening date contains gale warnings for that day. If, after the initial delay, the following day's 4:00 a.m. forecast contains a gale warning for that day, the fishing period will be delayed for an additional 24 hours. The period opening delays may continue on a rolling 24-hour basis until gale warnings are not forecasted.

(h) Notwithstanding (g) of this section

(1) if a fishing period is not scheduled for the Westside Section of Kodiak District, gale warnings for Shelikof Strait (PKZ138) will not delay the fishing period; or

(2) if fishing periods are not scheduled for the Eastside or Southeast sections of Kodiak District, gale warnings for Shuyak Island to Sitkinak Island (PKZ132) will not delay the fishing period.

5 AAC 38.411. Fishing seasons for sea cucumbers in the Chignik, South Peninsula, Eastern Aleutian, Western Aleutian, and Bering Sea districts of Registration Area J. In the Chignik, South Peninsula, Eastern Aleutian, Western Aleutian, and Bering Sea districts of Registration Area J, a person may take sea cucumbers only under the authority of a permit issued by the commissioner under 5 AAC 38.062 and only from October 1 through April 30 during fishing periods established by emergency order, except that in the Chignik District, a person may take sea cucumbers only under the authority of a permit issued by the commissioner and only from September 15 through April 30 during fishing periods established by emergency order.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Sea cucumber fisheries in Registration Area J are prosecuted under guidelines established by the department in a commissioner permit. Commissioner permits are largely used to guide exploratory and developing fisheries. Since 1993, participation in the Kodiak District sea cucumber fishery has been relatively steady, and in recent years the fishery is becoming increasingly competitive.

The proposed management plan for the Kodiak District will summarize and consolidate current management tools and regulations, and allow fishery stakeholders better opportunity to address Kodiak District specific management measures such as weather delay provisions or harvest allocations. Exploratory sea cucumber fisheries in the remainder of Registration Area J will continue to be prosecuted under the authority of a commissioner permit.

In past years fishery participants have organized informal, voluntary weather delays to address concerns about safely traveling to the fishing grounds during inclement weather. Formalizing a weather delay provision in regulation would clarify the weather delay procedure for both fishery participants and fishery managers.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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