

PROPOSAL 3

5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

Modify and align bag and possession limits for rockfish in the Prince William Sound Area, as follows:

5 AAC 55.022(9) is amended to read:

(9) rockfish:

(A) may be taken from **January 1 – December 31** [MAY 1 – SEPTEMBER 15]; bag limit of four fish; possession limit of eight fish, of which only **one** [TWO] per day and in possession may be nonpelagic rockfish **as defined in 5 AAC 75.995**; the first [TWO] nonpelagic rockfish caught must be retained and become part of the bag limit of the person originally hooking the fish; no size limit;

(B) **Repealed / /2018**; [MAY BE TAKEN FROM SEPTEMBER 16 – APRIL 30; BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT OF EIGHT FISH, OF WHICH ONLY TWO PER DAY AND IN POSSESSION MAY BE NONPELAGIC ROCKFISH; THE FIRST TWO NONPELAGIC ROCKFISH CAUGHT MUST BE RETAINED AND BECOME PART OF THE BAG LIMIT OF THE PERSON ORIGINALLY HOOKING THE FISH; NO SIZE LIMIT.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In Prince William Sound there are two separate bag and possession limits for rockfish depending on the time of the year. From May 1 through September 15 the bag limit is four fish, with a possession limit of eight fish, of which only two in possession may be nonpelagic. The remainder of the year (September 16 through April 30) the bag and possession limit is eight fish, of which only two per day and in possession may be nonpelagic rockfish. Available information indicates few people take advantage of the higher winter bag limit. The seasonal difference in bag limits creates unnecessary complexity in the regulations. The two fish bag limit for nonpelagic rockfish was implemented in 2006 to reduce waste of nonpelagic rockfish caught incidentally. A one fish bag limit is needed for sustainable management of long-lived nonpelagic species, and mandatory retention of the first nonpelagic rockfish is necessary to prevent anglers from high-grading to retain yelloweye rockfish.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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