

PROPOSAL 232

5 AAC 38.090 (d). Unlawful Possession of Miscellaneous Shellfish Aboard a Vessel.

Allow for the concurrent possession of red and green urchin aboard.

The commissioner may allow the retention of red and green sea urchins concurrently on the same vessel to explore the possibility of a viable combined sea urchin fishery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 5 AAC 38.090 (d) prohibits a person on a vessel registered to fish for miscellaneous shellfish to possess more than one species of miscellaneous shellfish at any one time. There is interested in red sea urchin harvesters to be able to retain green sea urchins while they are fishing for red sea urchins. The rationale for this is red sea urchin prices are low, red sea urchin populations are declining due to increased sea otter populations and declines in kelp abundance. Due to sky rocketing fuel and supply costs in the past few years, it is becoming cost-prohibitive to fish solely for red sea urchins. If divers were allowed to harvest red and green sea urchins concurrently, it may make the fishery viable again. Green sea urchins are highly valuable species in other areas (Maine and Japan for example) and allowing retention of green urchins along with reds would allow dive harvesters to see if a green urchin fishery is viable in SE Alaska.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes, the SE Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association Sea Urchin committee and Ketchikan ADFG management biologists.

PROPOSED BY: Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (HQ-F24-093)
