

Southeast Alaska Dive Fisheries Stock Assessment Program



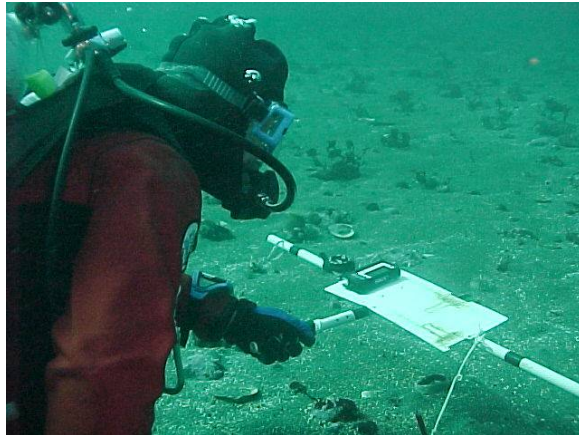
The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has developed a SCUBA-based stock assessment program for sea cucumbers, red sea urchins and geoducks in Southeast Alaska, which began in 1991. Twenty ADF&G divers participate in dive surveys logging close to 2,000 dives and 20,000 minutes underwater a year. The average survey dive varies with the species but ranges from 13 (sea cucumbers) to 24 minutes (geoducks).



The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Research Vessel Kestrel is the base of operations for dive fisheries stock assessment surveys from May-September.



Research divers operate out of two skiffs that have been fitted with racks, tank holders, depth finders, and a GPS to aid in navigation and diving.



A majority of survey transects (exceptions include some geoduck surveys) are conducted from shallow to deep water perpendicular to shore. Target species under the transect rod are counted. Survey results are used to calculate guideline harvest levels.



Survey divers take samples of red sea urchin and sea cucumbers to determine size and weight.



Generally, six divers participate in each survey that is conducted.