

**PROPOSAL 86**

**5 AAC 38.140. Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan.**

Open fishing areas deemed to have stable sea cucumber populations to commercial harvest of sea cucumbers without a pre-fishery stock assessment survey, as follows:

(c)(1) On an annual basis the department may identify certain areas to open that do not require a pre-fishery survey.

These areas are to be identified prior to the season’s assessment surveys. The Guideline Harvest Level would be based on the previous survey. No area can go more than one rotation cycle without an assessment survey. The department may identify these areas based a long term assessments and in areas of stable populations.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA) would like to modify the *Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan* to allow ADF&G to open areas for the commercial harvest of sea cucumbers without a pre-fishery stock assessment survey. Stock assessment survey are very expensive both for SARDFA and ADF&G. Sea cucumber stock assessment surveys have been done for approximately 30 years in SE AK. SARDFA would like to have some areas with long term stable populations be open to harvest without a pre-fishery survey. Any area that would be identified could only miss one pre-fishery assessment. ADF&G, in cooperation with SARDFA, would identify the areas prior to the department conducting assessment surveys.

This proposal is intended to lower the annual costs of surveys for both SARDFA and ADF&G.

*What would happen if nothing is changed?* Status quo. ADF&G would continue to do expensive dive assessment on all sea cucumber beds scheduled to be open that year.

*What are other solutions you considered? Why did you reject them?* It is possible to continue with the current system, but continuing high costs of surveys may limit the department’s ability to survey all open areas which would cost SARDFA sea cucumber divers GHL.

**PROPOSED BY:** Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (HQ-F17-066)

\*\*\*\*\*