

PROPOSAL 206

5 AAC 47.020. General provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Reopen yelloweye sport fishery for residents, as follows:

5 AAC 47.020-General provisions for season, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and method and means for the salt waters of SE Alaska Area.

(8) rockfish may be taken from January 1-December 31 as follows:...

C) demersal shelf rockfish, as defined in [5 AAC 39.975](#):

i.[EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN (D) OF THIS PARAGRAPH,] resident: bag limit of one fish; possession limit of two fish; no annual limit; no size limit;

ii.nonresident; no open season; may not be taken or possessed;

D) yelloweye rockfish: [NO OPEN SEASON; MAY NOT BE TAKEN OR POSSESSED]

i.resident: bag limit of one fish; possession limit of two fish; no annual limit; no size limit;

ii. nonresident; no open season; may not be taken or possessed

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Starting in 2020, the department closed all directed harvest of yelloweye rockfish in Southeast, citing a sharp decline that had occurred twenty years prior. This closure occurred despite the population having been stable for several years prior to the closure. Since 2015 yelloweye abundance has been increasing, yet all directed harvest remains closed. The increasing biomass combined with the recent closures have combined to leave the majority of the already highly-conservative TAC unharvested in several of the past years

It is time to reopen the resident sport yelloweye fishery which (prior to the closure) was a long-established fishery with a small and consistent harvest for locals to enjoy an occasional fresh yelloweye. The resident sportfishery has historically accounted for only about 2% of the TAC. With over 25-50% of the TAC consistently going unharvested, it is fully appropriate for resident sportfishermen to again be given access to this under-utilized resource.

Contrary to sensationalized accounts, the December 2022 NOAA *Assessment of the DSR Stock Complex in SE Outside Subdistrict of the GOA* shows that SE yelloweye population was healthy prior to the 2020 closure and continue to be healthy. Specifically:

- All three NOAA models show a consistent upward trend in yelloweye biomass since at least 2013 (See Table 14.8)
- Average length of both male and female yelloweye has been increasing in all SE subdistricts (East Yakutat, Northern SE Outside, Central SE Outside and Southern SE Outside) since at least 2010 (See figures 14.13 -14.16)
- The yelloweye catch has been consistently managed to a level well below the Over Fishing Limit for about 2 decades, with a typical year's catch being only about 50% of this threshold. (See Fig 14.5)
- The Yelloweye CPUE in the 2021 IPHC longline survey was up in all SE subdistricts (East Yakutat, Northern SE Outside, Central SE Outside and Southern SE Outside) compared to 2016. (See Table 14.3)

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. The Sitka AC supported proposal 230 in 2022 which was very similar.

PROPOSED BY: Tad Fujioka

(EF-F24-020)
