

PROPOSAL 211

5 AAC 28.171. Rockfish possession and landing requirements for Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area.

Clarify regulations regarding fish ticket documentation of rockfish overages in the groundfish and halibut fisheries. Also, add a demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) overage reporting requirement for the Eastern Gulf of Alaska salmon troll fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 28.171 (a) is amended to read:

(a) In the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area, a CFEC permit holder fishing for groundfish or halibut must retain, weigh, and report all rockfish and thornyhead rockfish caught. Except as provided in (b) of this section, all demersal shelf rockfish in excess of 10 percent, round weight, of all target species on board the vessel must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket. All rockfish and thornyhead rockfish in excess of allowable bycatch limits shall be reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket. **Rockfish and thornyhead rockfish exceeding bycatch limits may be retained for personal use or donation and must be documented as overage on the fish ticket.** All proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish and thornyhead rockfish bycatch shall be surrendered to the state. Based on harvest data, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close a fishing season or a bycatch season and immediately reopen a fishing season or a bycatch season during which a different rockfish or thornyhead rockfish bycatch level is allowed.

5 AAC 28.171 (i) is added to read:

(i) In the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area, a CFEC salmon troll permit holder operating hand or power troll gear during an open commercial salmon fishing period is not required to retain incidental rockfish caught while fishing for salmon but must weigh and report, on an ADF&G fish ticket, all demersal shelf rockfish retained in excess of bycatch limits established by emergency order, based on the round weight of all salmon on board the vessel, and must report it as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket. Rockfish bycatch taken in excess of allowable limits may be retained by the permit holder for personal use or donation and must be documented as overage on the fish ticket. All proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish bycatch shall be surrendered to the state. Based on harvest data, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close a fishing season or a bycatch season and immediately reopen a fishing season or a bycatch season during which a different rockfish bycatch level is allowed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This clarifies that rockfish, including thornyhead rockfish, bycatch overages may be retained for personal use or donation by CFEC permit holders fishing for groundfish or halibut. Current regulations only specify that rockfish overages may be sold but they do not explicitly state that overages may be retained for personal use or donation which has been standard practice. This would clarify regulations for processors, permit holders, managers, and enforcement. Also, this proposal would establish that rockfish must be reported on a fish ticket and clarify the regulations regarding overages in the salmon troll fishery. At present, the salmon troll fishery does not have full retention requirements for any groundfish species and DSR are the only rockfish restricted to a bycatch allowance. However, because there are bycatch allowances for DSR species but no full retention requirements, regulations do not support that DSR bycatch overage may be retained for personal use or donation and therefore must be discarded at sea

or subject to law enforcement action if landed. This would improve consistency on how DSR bycatch overages are managed across the region and among fisheries and would assist groundfish staff in accounting for DSR bycatch in the salmon troll fishery by reducing DSR discards at sea.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F24-146)
