

**PROPOSAL 270**

**5 AAC 58.040. East Cook Inlet Razor Clam Sport Fishery Management Plan. and 5 AAC 77.519. East Cook Inlet Razor Clam Personal Use Fishery Management Plan.**

Modify the East Cook Inlet Razor Clam Sport and Personal Use Fishery Management Plan, as follows:

5 AAC 58.040(b)(2) is amended to read:

...

(2) if the estimated adult clam abundance is greater than or equal to 50 percent of the average 1989 – 2012 abundance but the population does not meet the criteria outlined in (1) of this subsection, then razor clams may be taken from **either July 1 through July 31 or August 1 through August 31** [MAY 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30] and the bag and possession limits are the first **15** [30] clams taken or possessed; the combined harvest rate of the sport and personal use fisheries is not expected to exceed 10 percent of the adult clam abundance.

5 AAC 77.519(b)(2) is amended to read:

...

(2) if the estimated adult clam abundance is greater than or equal to 50 percent of the average 1989 – 2012 abundance but the population does not meet the criteria outlined in (b)(1) of this subsection, then razor clams may be taken from **either July 1 through July 31 or August 1 through August 31** [MAY 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30] and the bag and possession limits are the first **15** [30] clams taken or possessed; the combined harvest rate of the sport and personal use fisheries is not expected to exceed 10 percent of the adult clam abundance.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The East Cook Inlet razor clam management plans were adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries at the March 2022 Miscellaneous Shellfish meeting. Razor clam abundance surveys in 2023 estimated adult clam abundances met the threshold to open the limited fisheries outlined in 5 AAC 58.020(b)(2) and 5 AAC 77.519(b)(2). This opening provided an opportunity to assess harvest and effort for the first time in nearly a decade. The department issued a preseason emergency order to ensure a conservative harvest as expected effort was unknown. Resulting harvest estimates from extensive creel surveys during the fishery indicate the current regulations would result in harvest of over 10 percent of the adult clam abundance. These proposed modifications provide a harvest opportunity that is better aligned with a harvest of less than 10 percent of adult razor clam abundance and gives the public and board the opportunity to decide a preference for season.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F24-182)

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