

PROPOSAL 29

5 AAC 55.xxx. Yelloweye rockfish delegation of authority and provisions for management for the Prince William Sound Area.

Create additional provisions for yelloweye rockfish management, as follows:

5 AAC 55.xxx is to create new language to read:

...

(a) The purpose of this delegation of authority is to stabilize the harvest of yelloweye rockfish in the waters of the Prince William Sound Area. Yelloweye rockfish will be managed for long-term sustainability of the stock. If the commissioner determines that the yelloweye rockfish sport fishing regulations must be modified to keep the sport fishery within a sustainable harvest level, the commissioner may, by emergency order, require one or more of the following management measures:

- (1) modify bag and possession limits for nonresident anglers;**
- (2) implement an annual limit for nonresidents;**
- (3) charter vessel operators and crewmembers may not retain rockfish while clients are on board the vessel;**
- (4) implement an annual limit for resident anglers;**
- (5) implement a size restriction.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Statewide Rockfish Initiative was established in September 2017 with a goal of developing strategies that will support long-term adaptive management for rockfish. Work towards stock assessments that include data from all fisheries have been ongoing, most recently for yelloweye rockfish in Prince William Sound Inside waters (PWSI). Department staff are working towards determining sustainable harvest levels and the Division of Sport Fish will need additional tools to manage yelloweye rockfish at a sustainable level and prioritize harvest opportunity for Alaska residents.

There are limited provisions for management of the yelloweye rockfish sport fishery in Prince William Sound, outside of existing emergency order authority. With the increases in the harvest of yelloweye rockfish and stock assessment data for PWSI yelloweye rockfish indicating that current harvest levels are not sustainable in the long-term, additional tools are needed to allow harvest opportunity while managing for sustainability in the sport fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F24-166)
