

## **PROPOSAL 222**

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

Require CFEC permit holders fishing for groundfish or halibut using hook-and-line, pot, or jig gear in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area to retain and land all rockfish, including thornyhead rockfish, as follows:

5 AAC 28.171 (a), (b), (f), and (g) are amended to read:

- (a) In the **Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area** [SOUTHEAST DISTRICT], a CFEC permit holder fishing for groundfish or halibut must retain, weigh, and report all **rockfish and thornyhead rockfish caught** [DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH TAKEN]. 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.** All proceeds from the sale of excess [DEMERSAL SHELF] 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 [DEMERSAL SHELF] rockfish **or thornyhead rockfish** bycatch level is allowed.
- (b) In the **Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area** [SOUTHEAST DISTRICT], a person operating a trawl vessel shall retain, weigh, and report all [DEMERSAL SHELF] rockfish **and thornyhead rockfish caught** [TAKEN]. All demersal shelf rockfish in excess of one 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.** All proceeds from the sale of excess [DEMERSAL SHELF] rockfish **and thornyhead rockfish** bycatch shall be surrendered to the state.
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- (f) [IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF (A) OF THIS SECTION, IN THE NORTHERN SOUTHEAST INSIDE AND SOUTHERN SOUTHEAST INSIDE SUBDISTRICTS, A CFEC PERMIT HOLDER FISHING FOR GROUND FISH OR HALIBUT MUST RETAIN, WEIGH, AND REPORT ALL ROCKFISH TAKEN. ALL ROCKFISH IN EXCESS OF ALLOWABLE BYCATCH LIMITS SHALL BE REPORTED AS BYCATCH OVERAGE ON AN ADF&G FISH TICKET. ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF EXCESS ROCKFISH BYCATCH SHALL BE SURRENDERED TO THE STATE.] **Repealed.**
- (g) [IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF (A) OF THIS SECTION, IN THE EASTERN GULF OF ALASKA AREA, A CFEC PERMIT HOLDER FISHING FOR GROUND FISH OR HALIBUT MUST RETAIN, WEIGH, AND REPORT ALL BLACK ROCKFISH TAKEN. ALL BLACK ROCKFISH IN EXCESS OF ALLOWABLE BYCATCH LIMITS SHALL BE REPORTED AS BYCATCH OVERAGE ON AN ADF&G FISH TICKET. ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF EXCESS ROCKFISH BYCATCH SHALL BE SURRENDERED TO THE STATE.] **Repealed.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal mirrors federal rockfish retention requirements to provide better estimates of rockfish catch, reduce waste and incentives to discard, and maintain consistency between state and federal fisheries management. Rockfish have a closed swim bladder and suffer embolism mortality when caught. Many rockfish are discarded at sea. The department does not have true accounting of total mortality without full retention requirements in place. Because most hook and line, pot, and jig vessels are unobserved, full retention and reporting are necessary to account for total mortality of rockfish and to improve management of rockfish. Black, dark, and blue rockfish and demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) are managed by the State of Alaska in both state and federal waters, and current regulations require full retention of these rockfish only. Requiring full retention of all rockfish in all state waters, as specified above, will provide the department with better catch information; reduce wastage, which occurs when rockfish are discarded at sea; and will mirror new federal rockfish retention regulations, which also include full retention requirements for thornyhead rockfish.

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

(HQ-F20-157)

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