

**PROPOSAL 214**

**5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area; and 5 AAC 02.310. Subsistence miscellaneous shellfish fishery.**

Modify sport and subsistence razor clam regulations in the Cook Inlet Area, as follows:

5 AAC 58.022(14) is amended to read:

(14) razor clams: may be taken from January 1 – December 31 as follows:

(A) from the mouth of the Kenai River to the southernmost tip of the Homer Spit: the bag limit is the first 60 clams **dug** [HARVESTED]; the possession limit is 120 clams;

(B) on the remaining beaches of Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Area: no bag, possession, or size limits; **all clams dug must be retained**

5 AAC 02.310(b) is amended to read:

(b) In the subsistence taking of clams,

(1) clams may be taken only under the authority of a subsistence permit;

(2) There are no bag, possession or size limits for clams except that for littleneck and butter clams the bag and possession limit is 80 clams of either species or in combination and the minimum legal size is as follows:

(A) for littleneck clams, the minimum legal size is one and one-half inches across the widest width of the shell;

(B) for butter clams, the minimum legal size is two and one-half inches across the widest width for the shell;[.]

**(C) for razor clams, all clams dug must be retained.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** There is no bag and possession limit for the razor clam sport or subsistence fisheries except for the fisheries on beaches from the mouth of the Kenai River to the tip of the Homer Spit (Eastside Cook Inlet beaches). Bag and possession limits were established for the Eastside Cook Inlet fisheries due to high effort and to reduce wastage because razor clams have fragile shells which are frequently damaged when dug and susceptible to high mortality if reburied.

Under current regulations, diggers are allowed to rebury razor clams that are dug on most Cook Inlet beaches. This proposal would require that all razor clams dug be harvested for the purpose of reducing wastage. Current regulatory language does not align with the intent of this purpose as it sets a bag limit for the first 60 clams harvested not the first 60 clams dug for the eastside Cook Inlet beaches. This proposal seeks to clarify and explicitly use dug instead of harvest in regulatory language for sport and subsistence clam fisheries on all Cook Inlet beaches. This proposal would also make this provision applicable to all Cook Inlet beaches for consistency.

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

(HQ-F17-120)

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