



March 9, 2018

NEW COMMERCIAL SEA URCHIN FISHING REGULATIONS FOR THE 2018 SEASON

Dear commercial sea urchin divers, processors, and prospective permittees:

This letter is to inform you about the upcoming changes to the sea urchin fishery regarding permit capacity, a new Modified-Preference Point permit drawing system, and the addition of fishing days in the southern part of the fishery.

The Department has been working collaboratively with the California Sea Urchin Commission (CSUC) for many years to develop a proposal that will benefit both the resource and all industry participants, allowing for a more sustainable and responsible fishery. In December of 2017, the Fish and Game Commission unanimously adopted new regulations that will go into effect for the 2018-2019 commercial fishing season.

Summary of New Regulations:

- **Reduce the capacity level of sea urchin diving permits from the current level of 300 to 150**

Permit capacity will be reduced by changing the way new sea urchin permits are issued. Instead of issuing one new permit for each one that is retired, one new permit will be issued for every eleven that are retired until the permit level drops to below 150. At that point, one new permit will be issued for each one that is retired.

Both the CSUC and the Department have been considering revisiting the 300-permit capacity level for this fishery for many years. This fishery has a high latent harvest potential from non-active sea urchin permit holders and typically less than half of the permit holders make landings. This fishery has been subject to increasing effort compression due to shrinking harvestable fishing areas and changing environmental conditions that have significantly reduced the statewide abundance of bull and giant kelp, the main food sources for red sea urchin.

- **Institute Modified-Preference Point Permit drawing system**

The previous drawing system will be replaced by a new system that will distribute available sea urchin permits based on the total preference points attained since 2006. This system will favor applicants that have been attempting to obtain a sea urchin permit the longest. The first four permits will be available to the applicants with the greatest number of points and the fifth will be available through on a random draw that includes

every applicant regardless of points. *We will provide potential applicants with more details on how to apply for the lottery with this letter.*

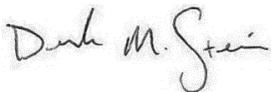
Red Sea Urchin Fishery Modified-Preference Point Drawing System															
Permit Count*	289	279	269	259	249	239	229	219	209	199	189	179	169	159	149 or less
Preference Group	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	One new permit issued when one retired
Random Group	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
New permits issued to <i>Preference</i> or <i>Random</i> groups when the permit count at March 31 renewal deadline is at or below the listed permit count. This group ratio of four Preference Group to one Random Group continues even when the permit count is 149 or less. *This permit count number may change due to unforeseen circumstances and only acts a guideline.															

- **Add fishing days in southern California**

Red sea urchin can now be harvested Monday-Friday from June 1 through October 31 south of the Monterey-San Luis Obispo county line. After lengthy discussions with statewide divers and processors, the CSUC proposed to add Fridays back for the southern portion of the fishery during the summer and fall months to allow divers to take advantage of weekend markets and demand needs.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at (805) 594-6177 or derek.stein@wildlife.ca.gov. As always, please consult with the 2018-2019 Commercial Digest and Title 14, §120.7 of the California Code of Regulations for specifics on these new regulations.

Sincerely,



Derek Stein, Environmental Scientist