

Attachment 1 29.06 FSOR Sea Urchin Bag Limit Exemption

Responses to unique Comments received during September 29- December 10, 2020.

Comments are paraphrased from the commenters for succinctness.

#	Commenter Name, Format, Date	Comment	Response
1	Leann McCallum Mail dated 9/21/2020	a. Commenter acknowledges the ecological conditions in the north coast and approves of the temporary unlimited urchin take as proposed.	a. Support noted
1	Leann McCallum, con't.	b. Commenter is concerned over the long-term impact of unlimited sea urchin take and incidental impact from potentially increased access, and requests further information on future monitoring plan.	<p>b. Recommendations for a robust monitoring plan are currently being collaboratively developed by staff from the Department, the Ocean Protection Council, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, California Sea Grant, and the recreational dive community. Monitoring will compare differences between treatments (in-water culling) and control (no culling) areas before and after the treatment application and will focus on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can recreational divers operating under sea urchin sport harvest regulations reduce sea urchin densities to levels expected to facilitate kelp regrowth (<2 urchins/m²) via in-water urchin culling? • Does reduction of sea urchin grazing pressure via in-water urchin culling facilitate natural kelp regrowth? • Can monitoring detect negative impacts associated with in-water urchin culling (e.g. bycatch, damage to underlying reef structure, disturbance to marine mammal populations)?
2	John Holcomb Email dated 10/11/2020	Commenter argues that not exempting red sea urchin take in Caspar Cove from recreational bag limit is a mistake. There is a huge number of malnourished red sea urchins in Caspar Cove that are preventing kelp from growing back, and their malnourished state makes them unharvestable. There is no active commercial red sea urchin fishery at the moment, and complaints against a red sea urchin bag limit exemption in Caspar Cove are absurd.	The state recognizes the risk of not subjecting red sea urchin take to the bag limit exemption. However, in the case of Caspar Cove, the nature of the ecological emergency is in conflict with the socioeconomic emergency of a fishery that is currently undergoing a federally recognized disaster. Over 20,000lbs of red sea urchins have been taken from block 262 (which contains Caspar Cove) so far this year. While this is not a high number, especially in the context of historical landings, it does show that the red sea urchins in that area are still being targeted by fishery participants in this difficult time.

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			In addition, part of the advantage of applying different treatments to Caspar Cove and Tanker Reef is to help facilitate a limited adaptive-management process. If diver participation can materialize, and disparities between the two efforts can be accounted for, the difference in red sea urchin treatment can help guide future management effort as the state grapples with maintaining healthy kelp forests and supporting a robust urchin fishery.
3	Downie Grant Email dated 10/11/2020	Commenter supports not exempting red sea urchin take in Caspar Cove. Commenter attests that he has taken 400lbs of red sea urchin from Caspar Cove earlier in September.	Comment noted
4	Nancy Caruso Email dated 10/12/2020	Commenter argues that not exempting red sea urchin take in Caspar Cove is not logical. Commenter's past experience restoring kelp forests in Orange County included removal of both purple sea urchin and red sea urchin.	See Response to Comment 2 above.
5	Dave Rudy Commission Meeting 10/14/2020	Commenter is concerned over the take of red sea urchin. State should consider moving red sea urchin or feed them in place.	The State is cognizant of the commercial importance of red sea urchin. The proposal allowing unlimited red sea urchin take at Tanker Reef is primarily experimental, and is being contemplated explicitly because no commercial red sea urchin has occurred in the area historically.
6	Keith Rootsart Commission Meeting 10/14/2020	Commenter updates the Commission on the recent development of the monitoring plan. Also provides general support for the proposed regulation.	Comment and support noted
7	Paul Michelle Commission Meeting	Commenter speaks to the collaborative nature of the planning process.	Comment noted

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	10/14/2020		
8	Dennis Lynch Commission Meeting 10/14/2020	General support for the proposal	Support noted
9	Marc Shargel Commission Meeting 12/09/2020	General support for the proposal	Support noted
10	Hannah Resetartis Commission Meeting 12/09/2020	General support for the proposal	Support noted
11	Melanie Moreno Commission Meeting 12/09/2020	General support for the proposal	Support noted