

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Cora Campbell, Commissioner



DIVISION OF SPORT FISH

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For Immediate Release

**Razor Clam Bag and Possession Limit
Decreased to First 25 Clams Dug**

The bag and possession limit for razor clams harvested from the eastside Cook Inlet beaches extending from the mouth of the Kenai River to the southernmost tip of the Homer Spit is reduced to the first 25 clams dug per day and only 25 clams may be in possession. This bag and possession limit reduction is effective beginning 12:01 a.m., Thursday, May 23, 2013, through 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, December 31, 2013.

Diggers are reminded that a possession limit is the maximum number of unpreserved fish or shellfish a person may have in possession. Preserved fish or shellfish are fish prepared in such a manner, and in an existing state of preservation, as to be fit for human consumption after a 15-day period, and does not include unfrozen fish temporarily stored in coolers that contain ice, dry ice, or fish that are lightly salted.

Assessment of razor clam abundance on the Ninilchik Beach has shown a substantial decline in abundance of exploitable clams (clams greater than 80 millimeters; 3.14 inches). Abundance of exploitable razor clams decreased from approximately 1,500,000 clams in 2011 to about 79,000 clams in 2013. The 2013 abundance is the lowest on record for the Ninilchik Beach based on periodic surveys of razor clams conducted since 1990. The cause of the decline is unknown but is thought to have resulted from poor spawning and/or settling success.

Razor clams on Ninilchik Beach reach sexual maturity at age-2 and older. Most clams age-3 and older are of exploitable size. Razor clams are broadcast spawners and primarily spawn in July and August. Spawning success will likely improve with increased abundance of exploitable size razor clams. Since the abundance of sexually mature clams is at a record low on the Ninilchik Beach, it is justifiable to reduce the bag and possession limit to reduce the harvest of razor clams.

To date there is no indication of a substantial decline in razor clam abundance at other eastside Cook Inlet beaches. At the current harvest and digger effort, the eastside beaches outside Ninilchik Beach are considered sustainable. However, to minimize the shifting of effort and harvest between beaches, it is warranted to restrict the bag and possession limits for all eastside Cook Inlet beaches.

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