

Proposal to Increase the Maximum Bid Price for Commercial Sea Cucumber and Sea Urchin Licenses



Rich Childers; Puget Sound Shellfish Manager, Fish Program

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Common Elements of Red Urchin, Green Urchin and Sea Cucumber fisheries in Washington

“Hand-pick” or hand-tool-assisted harvest is done by divers from small vessels (30-45 ft. length)

Harvests occur within inland marine waters of Puget Sound under individual area (district) quotas

These fisheries are limited entry (implemented 1989)

A license “buy-back” program has been in effect since 1999

Most “product” is shipped to overseas markets in Asian countries



Red Sea Urchin *Strongylocentrotus franciscanus*

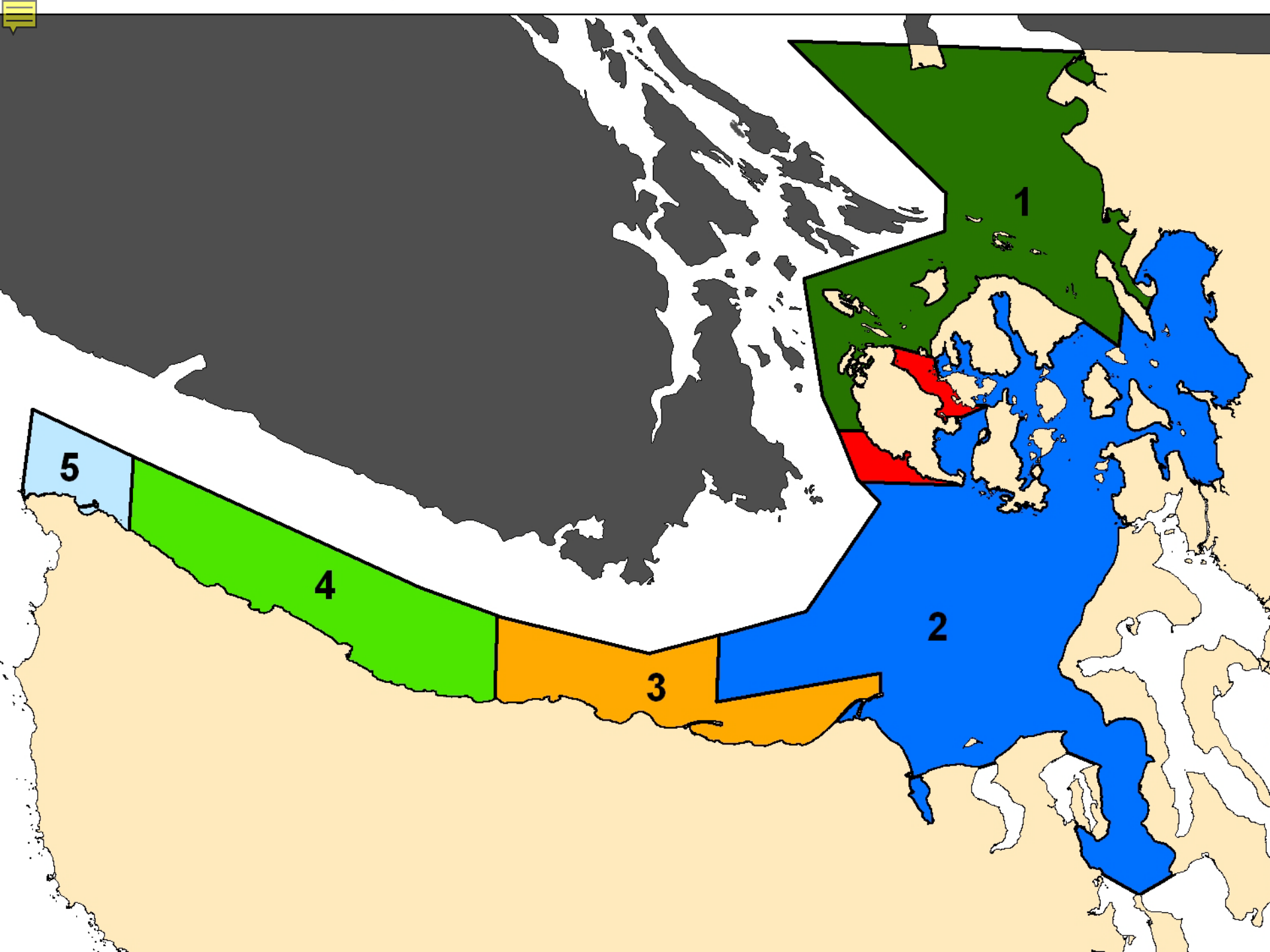
Harvest slot size limit set for reproductive success (3.25 to 5.0 inches diameter)

4-16 years to reach minimum harvest size of 3.25 inches diameter

Quotas are not fully utilized due to reduced market demand

Market is primarily in Japan





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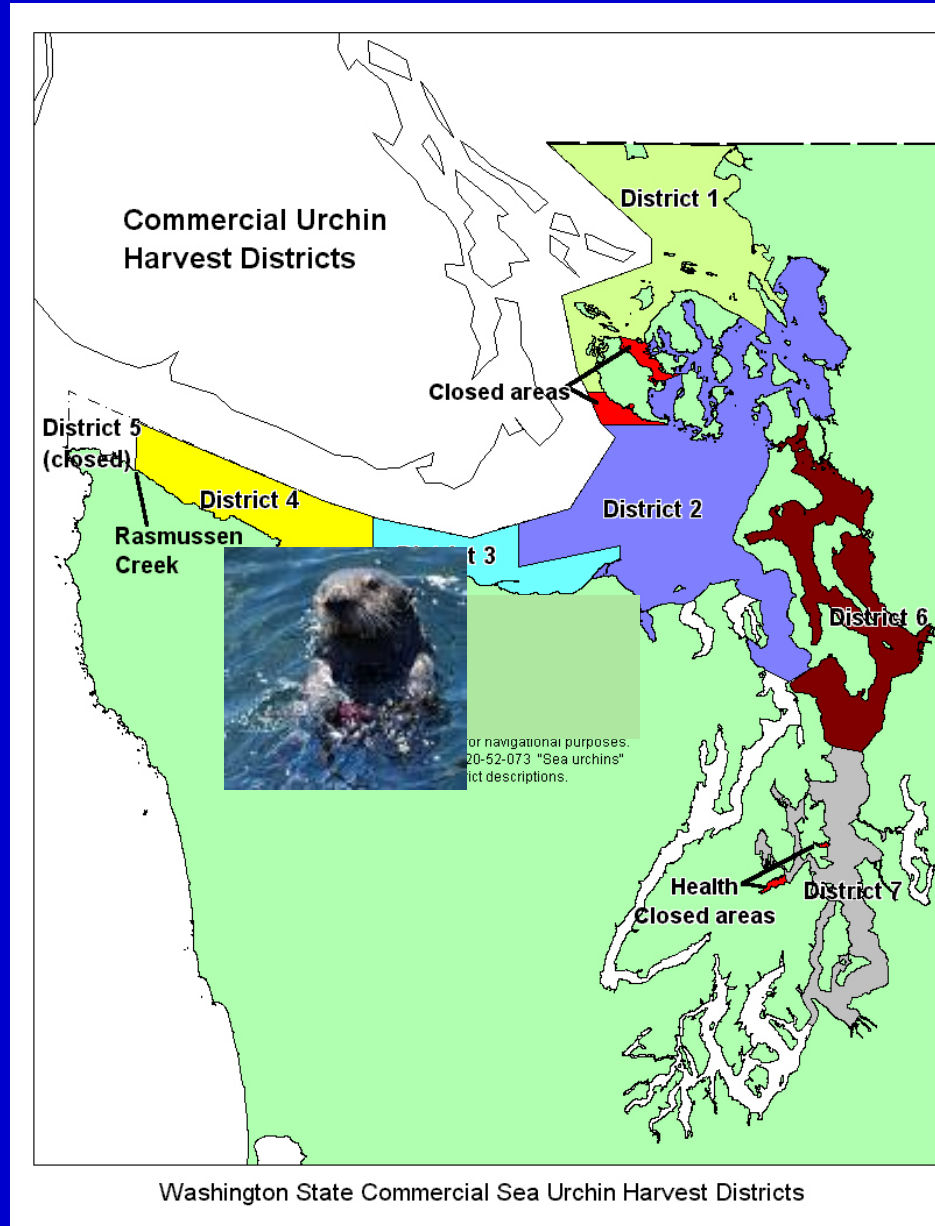
Red Sea Urchin *Strongylocentrotus franciscanus*

Districts established for co-management with treaty tribes.

1995 Sea otter incursions to vicinity District 5. District 5 closed in 1995

District 3 closed in 2004 as a precautionary response to re-build stocks

No harvest zones (in red) in vicinity of San Juan Island provide research/refugia areas



Green Sea Urchin *Strongylocentrotus drobachiensis*

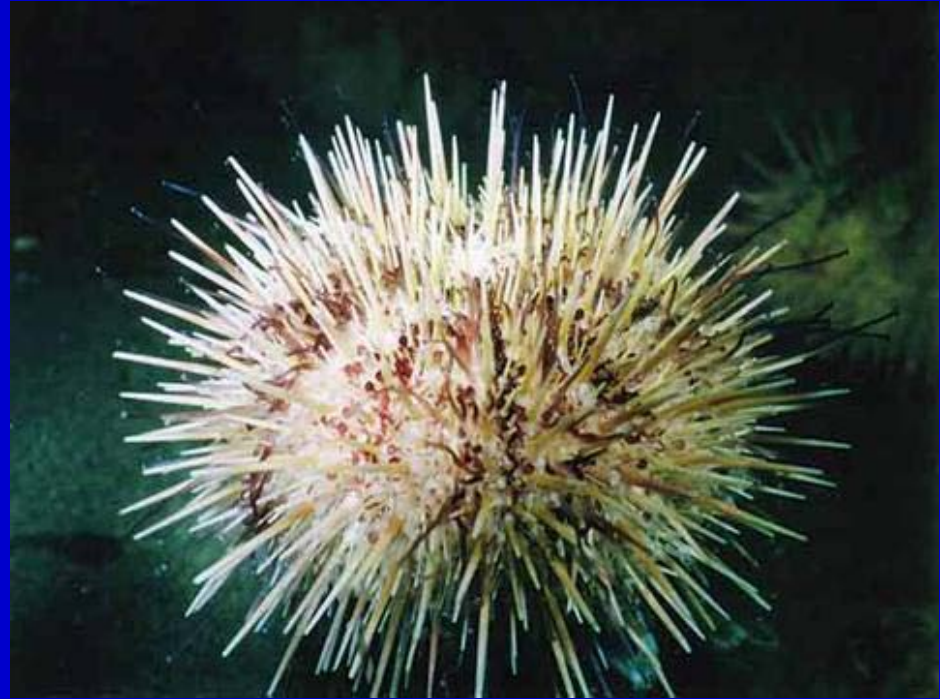
Size limit set to allow for reproduction
(2.25 inch diameter)

3+ years to reach harvest size

Green urchin stocks appear to be
stable

Quotas are not fully utilized due to
reduced market demand

Market is whole live animals primarily
to Japan



California Sea Cucumber *Parastichopus californicus*

Found throughout Puget Sound to water depths of 300 feet

Sea cucumbers are detritivores, “mopping” silt on the sea floor

Whole animal is utilized and wall muscle is prized product

Worldwide stocks are over-fished and values are on the rise (2011 ex-vessel in Washington \$5 per pound)



Sea Cucumber Management

Cucumber harvest management districts reflect the wide distribution of the population

No harvest zones (in red) in vicinity of San Juan Island provide research/refugia areas.

Precautionary conservation closure in Hood Canal since 2002

A surplus production model using historic catch is used to advise harvest quotas in each district.

San Juan Island district quota is now fully utilized

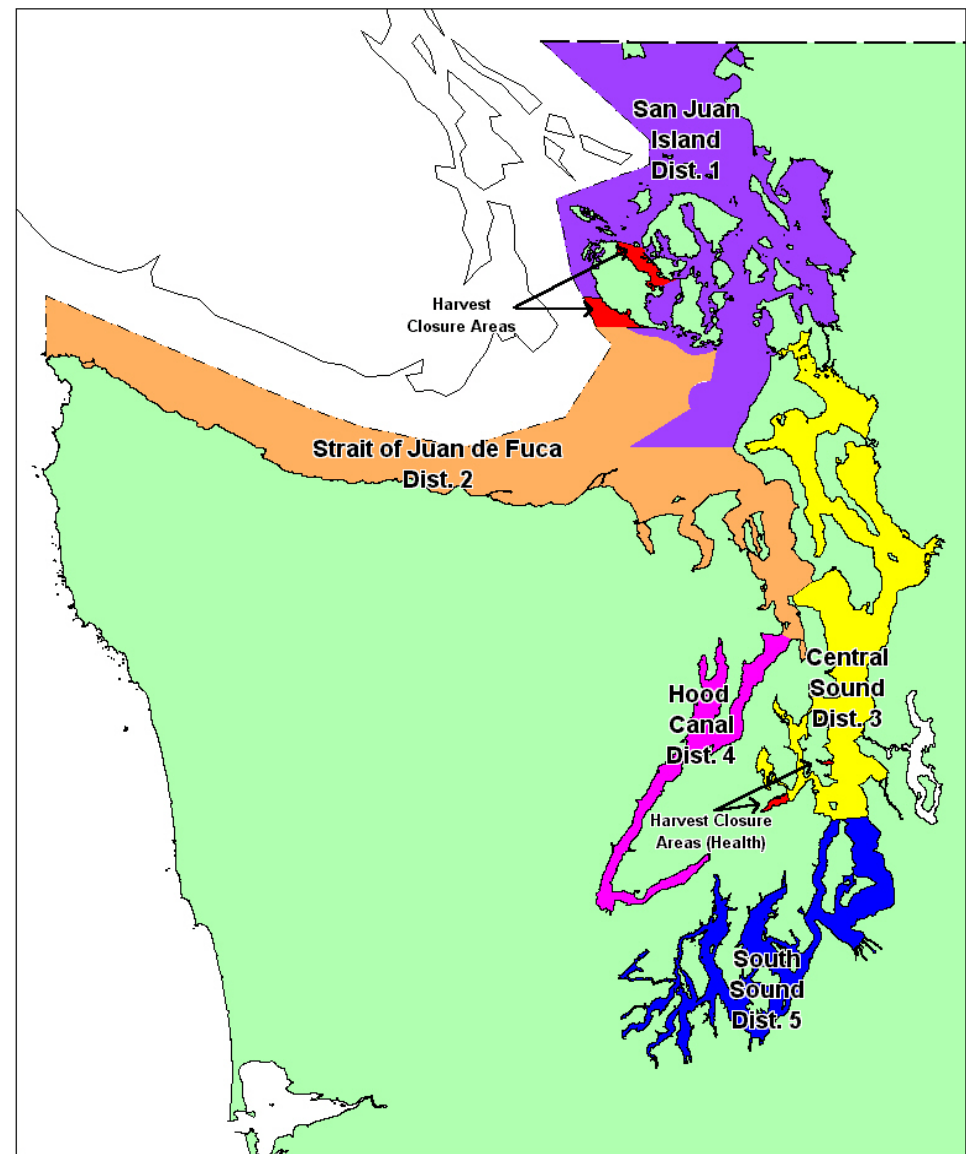


Figure 1. Sea Cucumber Management Areas and Districts

Limiting Harvest Effort and Promoting Fishery Stability Through Commercial License Buy-Back

A license “buy-back” program was initiated in 1999

Program funded through license renewal surcharges and landing tax

License holders can offer to sell their licenses to the Department up to the maximum amount in a competitive bid process, with lowest offers purchased first



Limiting Harvest Effort and Promoting Fishery Stability Through Commercial License Buy-Back

Number of licenses in 1999: 49 cucumber, 42 urchin

Buy back program goal: 20 cucumber, 20 urchin

Current number of licenses : 27 cucumber, 26 urchin

Program terminates in 2013

Two bid secessions remaining: August 2012 and August 2013

Last license purchased: cucumber 2010, urchin 2009



History of the License Buy-Back Program Maximum Bid Price

Sea Cucumber License Max Bid Price	
1999-2002	\$5,000
2002-2004	\$8,000
2005-2006	\$12,000
2007-2011	\$15,000
2012 Proposed	\$60,000

Sea Urchin License Max Bid Price	
1999-2002	\$6,000
2002-2006	\$8,000
2007-2011	\$11,000
2012 Proposed	\$20,000

Proposed Rule Changes for Commercial Sea Cucumber and Sea Urchin License Buy-Back Program

Increase the maximum bid price for a commercial sea urchin license in WAC 220-95-100 from \$11,000 to \$20,000

Increase the maximum bid price for a commercial sea cucumber license in WAC 220-95-100 from \$15,000 to \$60,000

Stakeholders support the proposed bid price increase



Questions?