

## **Bruce Watkins' efforts**

Late last year, Bruce Watkins submitted a proposal to the Fish and Game Commission to remove licensing, bag limits, and "wanton waste" restrictions on the take of purple sea urchins. The proposal would also allow purple sea urchins to be taken in some Marine Protected Areas.

The proposal involves 4 changes applicable to purple sea urchins:

- 1) removal of the "wanton waste" rule
- 2) removal of the 35 urchin bag limit
- 3) removal of the requirement to have a fishing license
- 4) allow the take of urchins in specified Marine Protected Areas (mostly along the Monterey Peninsula and in Sonoma county).

This path was arrived at after lengthy discussions with marine biologists, reading a large number of technical publications, sifting through California law, and the success of the Bay Foundation's effort to restore a portion of a Southern Californian reef. (for more on this see <http://www.dailybreeze.com/2014/08/13/divers-hammer-thousands-of-urchins-to-save-palos-verdes-peninsula-kelp-forests/>)

Bruce says that we will never be able to remediate all of the urchin barrens in the state; but, we might be able to keep a few kelp beds healthy and function as "islands of diversity" to repopulate the rest of California when conditions improve.

These regulation changes would permit dive clubs and other organizations to sponsor "urchin removal days," similar to current "beach cleanup days." There is no hope to remove the majority of purple sea urchins from the entire state, but an organized removal effort could maintain "pockets of diversity" that could expand when sea conditions improve in the future.

More information may be found

at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3pvijf57j3w61tq/AADbi1QctGZVG9B7QuE-nLf4a?dl=0>