



[Fish and Game Commission Adopts Emergency Regulations to Increase Purple Sea Urchin Bag Limit in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties](#)

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At its April 2018 meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted emergency regulations to increase the daily bag limit for purple sea urchins taken while skin or SCUBA diving off Mendocino and Sonoma counties only. Purple sea urchins fall under the general invertebrate bag limit of 35 per day, but the emergency regulations now in effect will allow a daily bag limit of 20 gallons with no limit on possession. The emergency regulation will remain in effect for 180 days (until Nov. 6, 2018) unless extended by the Commission. Upon expiration, the bag limit will return to 35. A recent explosion in purple sea urchin populations off northern California has prompted requests for increased daily bag limits as an option to reduce purple urchin numbers. The increase in purple urchin populations is one of several extreme environmental conditions contributing to a [widespread collapse of northern California kelp forests](#).

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is collaborating with commercial divers, academic researchers and stakeholders to clear purple sea urchins in select test plots in order to study the effectiveness of clearing on restoring the bull kelp ecosystem. CDFW and its partners are working on permits and procedures to conduct controlled experiments to evaluate smashing compared to collecting purple sea urchins in these test plots. CDFW reminds recreational participants that the new recreational limit allows urchin collection while skin or SCUBA diving by hand, and that there are regulations against waste of fish. Recreational harvesters of urchin must put harvested urchins to use. Smashing and disposing of sea urchins in the trash is still illegal.

Besides collecting purple urchins to extract gonads for eating, the urchins can make a good addition to compost material.

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