

Giant Pacific Octopus



Photo by Janna Nichols

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Presentation

- **Objective: Present management options, process and a schedule to address protection of the Giant Pacific Octopus in waters of the Puget Sound**
- **Biology**
- **Harvest Management**
- **Status**
- **Seacrest Cove incident**
- **Process and Schedule**
- **Management Options**
- **Commission Discussion and Guidance**

Biology

Giant Pacific Octopus (*Enteroctopus doflenini*)

- **Range: California to Alaska and south to Japan**
- **Depth: intertidal to 750 m**
- **Size: weight range 40 – 100 lbs., average maximum length 15 ft.**
- **Lifespan: 3-5 years**
- **Life history: Females lay 20-100k eggs**
- **Up to 230 day incubation**
- **Females die after eggs hatch**
- **Juvenile planktonic stage up to 90 days**
- **Sexual maturity during second year**

Source: Alaska Pacific University, School of Marine Biology

Harvest Management

- **Puget Sound Recreational Harvest**
 - **Year-round, daily limit 1**
 - **Closed in Hood Canal (MA 12)**
 - **Harvest by hand or instrument which will not penetrate the body**
 - **Lawful to retain octopus taken while angling with hook and line gear**
- **Lack full accounting of recreational harvest**
- **2007-2011 Boat based estimate:**
 - **Total 25 Octopuses harvested**
 - **Total 76 Octopuses released**
 - **300 divers surveyed 1 Octopus harvested**

Harvest Management

- **Puget Sound Commercial Harvest**
 - **1998-2000 direct harvest of octopuses by shellfish pot averaged about 100 lbs. annually**
 - **2001 pot fishery closed -- only incidental catch allowed**
 - **2007-2011 on average less than 50 lbs. landed annually**

Status

- **Lack a formal status assessment**
- **Biology and harvest management suggests that Giant Pacific Octopuses are healthy in Puget Sound**
 - **Fast growth, short lived and high fecundity**
 - **Low harvest rates**

Seacrest Cove Incident

- October 31: Giant Pacific Octopus legally harvested at Seacrest Cove 2 in Alki
- November 8: Director briefed Commission and heard public testimony
- December 21: Commission briefing on three petitions to protect Giant Pacific Octopus
- January 11: Commission briefing on management options, process and schedule

Process and Schedule

- January 2013: Solicit nominations for ad-hoc Puget Sound GPO advisory group.
- February 2013: Convene GPO advisory group and develop draft options for consideration.
- February and March 2013: Public workshops on draft options for protection of GPO.
- April 2013: Commission briefing on draft options and recommendations for protection of GPO in Puget Sound.
- June 2013: Commission meeting and public testimony on draft options and recommendations.
- August 2013: Commission action on draft options for protection of GPO in Puget Sound.

Management Options

- Option 1: Status quo
- Option 2: Puget Sound wide closure of recreational harvest of Giant Pacific Octopus
- Option 3: Closure to recreational harvest of Giant Pacific Octopus at popular dive sites in Puget Sound
- Option 4: Closure of recreational harvest of all species (no take) at popular dive sites in Puget Sound

Questions



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