

Exhibit E

Recreational Abalone Fishery

Supplemental
Public Correspondence received as of
December 14, 2023



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE, Salem, OR 97302

Dear Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissioners,

My name is Tom Calvanese and I lead the Oregon Kelp Alliance. The Oregon Kelp Alliance works for the restoration, enhancement, and protection of kelp forest ecosystems in Oregon in partnership with scientists, fishermen, Tribal members, resource managers, chefs, coastal residents, and many others. I write today in support of the Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is presenting to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission this December 2023.

Red abalone are a charismatic icon of Oregon's kelp forest ecosystems. Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples on the Oregon Coast have valued their pearlescent shells and still use those shells today in creating traditional regalia. While the fishery for red abalone has always been relatively small and artisanal in southern Oregon, recreational diving for abalone shells and meat have historically been a unique cultural aspect of the region. Driving through southern Oregon today, you can often spot the shells displayed in people's homes as treasured symbols of hours spent combing rocky coastline and diving icy waters. They are one of the unique animals that make Oregon's southern coast so special.

Unfortunately, red abalone as a species are Critically Endangered according to the IUCN Red List. In addition to the effects of historical overfishing, today the species is declining at the southern end of their range due to increased occurrence of a deadly disease, withering syndrome, that is promoted by warming waters. Thus, southern Oregon, the northern end of red abalones' range is a cold-water refuge for the species. As its range in California shrinks with climate change, Oregon will become increasingly important to the viability of the species. But their populations are declining in Oregon, likely in part because of declines in kelp forest habitat and competition from large purple sea urchin populations. Given red abalone's cultural importance and their threatened status, removing fishing pressure for the species until their populations begin to rebound in Oregon is a crucial step in preserving the species.

In addition to support for an indefinite closure of the red abalone fishery, we support ODFW's call for increased monitoring for the species. We are pleased ODFW has highlighted that local partners on the South Coast should be leveraged in this monitoring work. In recent years, the Oregon Kelp Alliance, along with our partners at Reef Check, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, Oregon State University, and the University of Oregon, have substantially increased ecological monitoring of kelp forest habitat in southern Oregon. With all these eager eyes in the water, we look forward to continuing to partner with ODFW to increase the capacity for regularly monitoring the status of red abalone in the area.

In summary, we urge the Commission to adopt the proposed Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan to protect the unique cultural and ecological legacy of Oregon's southern coast for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Calvanese", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Calvanese
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