

YOUR SKILL CAN SAVE ABALONE

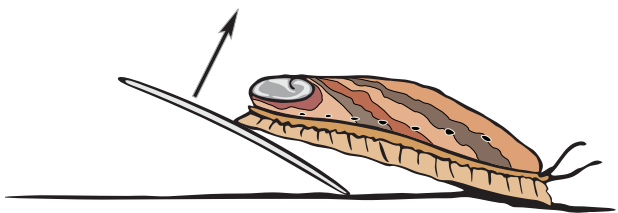
By learning to skillfully "pop" an abalone, divers and rock-pickers can increase a sub-legal abalone's chances of survival.

- First, sneak up on them. An abalone's thick shell is its defense against predators. When an abalone perceives a threat, human or otherwise, it clamps tightly to substrate. An abalone will be easier to remove and less likely to sustain injury if you use an element of surprise.
- Next, slide the abalone iron between the foot and rock surface. Insert the iron toward the back end of the foot, away from sensitive areas of the head.
Do not push the iron into the foot.
- Lift the handle so the end of the iron acts as a fulcrum. Try using leverage, not brute force or a scraping motion, to "pop" it.

HOW TO "POP" ONE



Slide iron under abalone's foot, away from its head.



Lift handle of iron using end as a fulcrum.



Alternate communication formats of this document are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed, call DFG at (916) 322-8911. The California Relay Service for the deaf or hearing-impaired can be utilized from TDD phones at (800) 735-2929.

ABALONE REGULATIONS

Every abalone diver or rock-picker age 16 and older must have a fishing license. **Abalone report cards are required for all abalone hunters regardless of age, even on free fishing days.**

Species: Only red abalone may be taken.

Minimum size limit: 7 inches. An undersized abalone must be reattached to the rock surface from which it was removed.

Daily bag limit: 3 **Annual bag limit:** 24

Season, area and time of day: April 1 to June 30; Aug. 1 to Nov. 30. July closed. Red abalone may be taken only north of San Francisco Bay and only from a half-hour before sunrise to a half-hour after sunset.

Irons: Irons must be smooth with no sharp edges, less than 36" long, and at least 3/4" wide and 1/16" thick.

Measuring devices: You must have a fixed-arm measuring gauge, capable of spanning an abalone's shell. It is a violation to take an abalone when not in possession of a gauge, even if the abalone is legal sized.

New tagging requirement: Each abalone report card now includes 24 detachable tags, one for each abalone that may be taken toward a cardholder's annual bag limit. The date, time and location of each abalone taken must be recorded on both the tag and card. Every abalone must be tagged immediately after exiting the water, except for divers coming aboard non-motorized vessels such as kayaks. Each tag must be securely fastened to the abalone's shell by passing a "zip tie" string or other suitable material through a siphon hole in the shell. A video demonstration of how to fulfill abalone tagging and reporting requirements is available at: www.dfg.ca.gov/education/video/AbaloneRegulations.html.

No SCUBA: Abalone may not be possessed aboard any boat, kayak or other floating device in which SCUBA gear is present.

No high grading: It is illegal to remove a legal-sized abalone and then discard or replace it for a bigger one. All detached, legal abalone must be kept and included in your limit.

No dry sacking: You cannot take abalone for another person's bag limit.

All pertinent abalone regulations are contained in the annual Ocean Sport Fishing regulations booklet, available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations or wherever fishing licenses are sold.



Sea Grant



D. Denton

YOU HOLD
their future
IN YOUR HANDS

A guide for understanding the essentials of abalone biology and their relation to recreational red abalone regulations

ABALONE HAVE A UNIQUE BIOLOGY AND REGULATIONS REFLECT IT

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) uses the best available science to set rules for red abalone diving and rock-picking. DFG would like abalone hunters to understand some fundamentals of abalone biology that have shaped regulations. By adhering to regulations and further developing your abalone hunting skills, divers and rock-pickers can greatly assist in conserving this unusual marine snail.

Perhaps the most central fact of abalone physiology as it relates to the sport fishery is that abalone have no blood-clotting mechanism. Abalone are essentially hemophiliacs and as such are incredibly vulnerable to seemingly minor cuts – hence the strict rules on the types of allowable abalone irons. DFG’s regulations attempt to minimize the chances that an undersized abalone, which must be released, will be lethally injured.



Abalone have a very poor blood-clotting mechanism. Bar cuts like the one shown above are lethal to these animals.

DFG file photo



Beginning in 2008, red abalone must be tagged.

DFG file photo

THE SCIENCE OF SIZE LIMITS: PROTECTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ABALONE

DFG has a strict 7-inch size limit on harvestable red abalone. Only abalone that measure at least 7 inches along the longest shell diameter may be taken. Why? Research, including a recent California Sea Grant modeling study, has repeatedly shown that abalone only a bit smaller than 7 inches (between 6 and 7 inches) contribute most to spawning the next generation.

As a diver or rock-picker, this means that mistakenly popping and cutting large sub-legal abalone may destroy the animals most needed to replenish the fishery and maintain a healthy, functioning coastal ecosystem. DFG has set the size limit where the science suggests it does the most good for the resource.



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ARE YOU LEGAL? LEARN WHAT 7 INCHES LOOKS LIKE!

Because abalone are so vulnerable to cuts, it is important that divers and rock-pickers learn to identify legal-sized animals. This is the best way to protect reproductively important sub-legal abalone. If in doubt about an abalone’s size, leave it and move on.

To take the guesswork out of judging an abalone’s size, all abalone gauges must have opposing measuring arms that allow an abalone to be measured by placing the gauge over its shell. The arms must be fixed at 7 inches.

But again, the key is to avoid removing highly reproductive sub-legal abalone in the first place. This will prevent having to release an injured abalone that could bleed to death.

If you do accidentally remove a sub-legal abalone, regulations require you to return it to the rock surface from which it was detached. Why? An abalone dropped on sand or seaweed-covered rocks cannot clamp down effectively enough to protect itself from predators.



DFG file photo



TURN IN POACHERS AND POLLUTERS.

Cheaters ruin the resource and your sport. To bust them, make an anonymous call to CalTIP: **1.888 DFG-CalTIP (1.888.334.2258)**

NOTE: DO NOT USE FOR MEASURING ABALONE

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