

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-TC-7-37-14

Issued at: Homer, Monday, July 7, 2014

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, July 15, 2014

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, March 15, 2015, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order closes the Tanner crab season in Cook Inlet and North Gulf Coast waters effective 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, July 15, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, March 15, 2015.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area. (a)(11), (b)(1)(B), and (b)(2)(D) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective, beginning 12:01 a.m., Monday, July 15, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., Sunday, March 15, 2015:

5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area.

- (a)(11) Tanner Crab: no open season; may not be retained or possessed;
- (b)(1)(B) Tanner Crab: in Kachemak Bay, east of a line from Point Pogibshi to Anchor point, no open season; may not be retained or possessed;
- (b)(2)(D) Tanner Crab: in Kachemak Bay, east of a line from Point Pogibshi to Anchor point, no open season; may not be retained or possessed;

Cora Campbell,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Carol Kerkvliet
Fisheries Biologist II

JUSTIFICATION:

5 AAC 35.408 *Registration Area H Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy* establishes threshold abundance levels of legal male Tanner crab above which noncommercial (personal use, subsistence, and sport) fisheries may open. To open noncommercial fisheries, the plan requires the recent three-year average of legal male Tanner crab estimated from department surveys to be greater than 100,000 crab and 50,000 crab in Kachemak and Kamishak Bays, respectively. Additionally, the harvest strategy also closes that waters east of a line from Point Pogibshi to

Anchor Point (Kachemak Bay) if the Kachemak Bay survey estimate of legal male Tanner crab abundance is less than 50,000 crab in any given year, and closes waters west of a line from Point Pogibshi to Anchor Point if the Kamishak Bay survey estimate of legal male Tanner crab abundance is less than 40,000 in any given year. If noncommercial fisheries are closed west of a line from Point Pogibshi to Anchor Point, 5 AAC 35.410 also closes noncommercial fisheries in the North Gulf Coast and Resurrection Bay.

From the June 2013 survey in Kachemak Bay, the department estimated 38,053 legal male Tanner crab, which is below the required threshold for a single year estimate of 50,000. In order for this noncommercial fishery to open this season, the legal male Tanner crab estimate from the survey would have to be more than 242,000 crab; the estimate has not reached that level since 1995. The department will not be conducting a survey in Kachemak Bay during 2014, therefore, the Kachemak Bay noncommercial Tanner crab fisheries will remain closed for the 2014–2015 season.

In 2012, the department completed the most recent Tanner crab abundance survey in Kamishak Bay and measured no legal-sized Tanner crab resulting in an estimate of zero legal male Tanner crab, which closed the fishery based on regulations stating that a single year estimate of less than 40,000 closes the fishery. With no new survey information in 2014, the noncommercial fisheries west of the a line from Point Pogibshi to Anchor Point, the North Gulf Coast and Resurrection Bay will remain closed for the 2014–2015 season.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 2 Office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.