RC2

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

STAFF COMMENTS ON COMMERCIAL, SPORT, SUBSISTENCE, AND PERSONAL USE REGULATORY PROPOSALS FOR DUNGENESS CRAB, KING CRAB, TANNER CRAB, SHRIMP AND MISCELLANEOUS SHELLFISH REGULATORY PROPOSALS, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE GROUPS 1–4

FOR SOUTHEAST ALASKA AND YAKUTAT MANAGEMENT AREAS

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES MEETING WRANGELL, ALASKA
JANUARY 21–27, 2015

Regional Information Report No. 1J14–09

The following staff comments were prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for use at the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) meeting, January 21–27, 2015 in Wrangell, Alaska. The comments are forwarded to assist the public and board. The comments contained herein should be considered preliminary and subject to change, as new information becomes available. Final department positions will be formulated after review of written and oral public testimony presented to the board.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used without definition in this report by the divisions of Commercial Fisheries, Sport Fish, and Subsistence. All others, including deviations from definitions listed below, are noted in the text at first mention, as well as in the titles or footnotes of tables, and in figures or figure captions.

Alaska Board of Fisheries	board
Alaska Department of Fish and Game	department
Alaska Department of Law	DOL
Amount Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence	ANS
Alaska Wildlife Troopers	AWT
Blue King Crab	BKC
Catch per unit of effort	CPUE
Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission	CFEC
Division of Motor Vehicles	DMV
Global Positioning System	GPS
Golden King Crab	GKC
Guideline Harvest Level	GHL
Guideline Harvest Range	GHR
No data	ND
Red King Crab	RKC
Southeast Alaska	SEAK
Sitka Sound Special Use Area	SSSUA
Statewide Harvest Survey	SWHS
Whale Pass	WP
Yakutat	YAK

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ABSTRACT

This document contains Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) staff comments on commercial, sport, subsistence, and personal use shellfish regulatory proposals for the Southeast Alaska and Yakutat Management Areas. These comments were prepared by the department for use at the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) meeting, January 21–27 in Wrangell, Alaska. The comments are forwarded to assist the public and board. The comments contained herein should be considered preliminary and subject to change as new information becomes available. Final department positions will be formulated after review of written and oral public testimony presented to the board.

Key words: Alaska Board of Fisheries Meeting, shellfish, king crab, Dungeness crab, shrimp, miscellaneous shellfish.

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(9 Proposals: Chair—Huntington)

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(14 Proposals: Chair—Johnson

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – GROUP 4: MISCELLANEOUS SHELLFISH / SPORT / SUBSISTENCE / PERSONAL USE

(11 Proposals): Chair— Morisky)

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENT POSITIONS

SEAK and YAK Board of Fisheries Meeting, January, 2014 as they relate to proposals 58–113

Proposal Number	Department Position	Issue
58	O	Repeal the Dungeness crab management plan.
59	O	Repeal the Dungeness crab management plan.
60	O	Repeal the Dungeness crab management plan.
61	O	Establish protocol for measuring soft-shell ratios in surveys prior to opening commercial Dungeness crab fishery.
62	O	Create a new Dungeness crab management plan for Southeast Alaska.
63	O	Modify the commercial Dungeness crab management plan.
64	O	Repeal regulation allowing for fall commercial Dungeness crab fishery if soft-shell crab prevent full summer season.
65	O	Extend Dungeness crab commercial season through February.
66	N	Develop new Dungeness crab fishery management plan for Lynn Canal.
67	NP	Oppose proposal 66.
68	NP	Oppose proposal 66.
69	N	Repeal commercial closed waters for Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery.
70	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery near Hydaburg.
71	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Whale Pass.
72	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery near Petersburg.
73	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery near Petersburg.
74	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Big Bear/Baby Bear Cove near Sitka.
75	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery near Angoon.

N = Neutral; S = Support; O = Oppose; NP = No position; W = Withdrawn support

–Continued–

Summary of Department Positions–continued (page 2 of 3) SEAK and YAK Board of Fisheries Meeting, January, 2014 as they relate to proposals 58–113.

Proposal Number	Department Position	Issue
76	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery around Horse and Colt Islands near Juneau.
77	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery around Portland Island and Point Lena near Juneau.
78	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery near Hoonah.
79	N	Close commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Chilkat Inlet near Haines.
80	N/O	Modify ecotourism Dungeness crab regulations.
81	N	Modify ecotourism Dungeness crab regulations.
82	N	Increase personal use Tanner crab pot limit from 4 to 10 pots.
83	O	Eliminate two–week closure for personal use Tanner crab fishery.
84	S	Create GKC commissioner's permit commercial fishery in Area D.
85	S	Create logbook requirements for king crab fishery in Area D.
86	N	Allow side loading (square) pots in Yakutat area king crab fisheries.
87	S	Reduce pot limit from 100 to 40 for Yakutat area king crab fishery.
88	O	Clarify operation of pot gear for groundfish relative to shellfish commercial fisheries.
89	O	Create new fishing area for GKC.
90	N/S	Reduce pot limit from 100 to 40 for Yakutat area Tanner crab fishery.
91	S	Correct area boundary error for commercial blue king crab fishery.
92	S	Increase legal size for blue king crab.
93	S	Require a harvest reporting permit for Juneau area personal use and sport pot shrimp fisheries.
94	O	Establish a spawner–index management system for commercial pot shrimp fishery.
95	O	Specify what data is evaluated to modify GHLs in the commercial pot shrimp fishery.

N = Neutral; S = Support; O = Oppose; NP = No position; W = Withdrawn support

–continued–

Summary of Department Positions—continued (page 3 of 3) SEAK and YAK Board of Fisheries Meeting, January, 2014 as they relate to proposals 58–113.

Proposal Number	Department Position	Issue
96	O	Allow the department to exempt areas engaged in experimental management strategies from the region wide pot shrimp management plan.
97	O	Create new commercial pot shrimp management areas in District 1.
98	S/O	Add a reporting requirement by size for commercial pot shrimp fishery.
99	N	Reduce pot limits in commercial pot shrimp fishery.
100	S	Clarify how many shrimp pots may be used during commercial pot shrimp fishery for personal use and sport fishing.
101	O	Revise commercial pot shrimp management plan season dates for species other than Spot shrimp.
102	O	Recreate commercial beam trawl shrimp fishery in Area D.
103	N	Establish vessel length restrictions in Area A commercial beam trawl shrimp fishery.
104	N	Revise commercial beam trawl shrimp gear specifications.
105	S	Clarify which department office commercial beam trawl shrimp permit holders report inseason information to.
106	NP	Establish beam trawl shrimp task force.
107	N	Close commercial pot shrimp fishery near Petersburg.
108	S	Clarify weekly fishing periods for commercial sea cucumber fishery.
109	N	Modify weekly fishing periods for commercial sea cucumber fishery.
110	N	Create permit stacking provision for commercial sea cucumber fishery.
111	N	Allow department to establish trip limits for commercial geoduck clam fishery based on market conditions.
112	N	Set trip limits on commercial geoduck clam commercial fishery.
113	O	Establish marine reserve in waters surrounding Cache Island.

N = Neutral; S = Support; O = Oppose; NP = No position; W = Withdrawn support

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – GROUP 1: DUNGENESS CRAB

(22 Proposals)

MANAGEMENT PLAN (11)

PROPOSALS 58, 59, and 60 – 5AAC 32.146. Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Max Worhatch IV (Proposal 58), Peter Roddy (Proposal 59), and Stephen N. Farler (Proposal 60).

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSALS DO? Proposals 58 and 59 seek to repeal the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan*. Proposal 60 seeks to remove threshold harvest limits from the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan*.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The commercial Dungeness crab season is as follows:

(1) in District 2 and Section 13–B, except the waters of the Sitka Sound Special Use Area, and beginning February 29, 2012, in District 1, from October 1 through February 28;

(2) in the waters of Section 13–B that are in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area, and in the waters of Whale Passage north and west of a line extending from 56º 05.65' N. lat., 133º 07.30' W. long. to 56º 05.85' N. lat., 133º 06.40' W. long., from October 1 through November 30;

(3) in all other waters of Registration Area A, including District 15, from June 15 through August 15 and from October 1 through November 30.

The department shall establish a projection of harvest no later than 14 days after the start of the summer Dungeness crab fishing season. If the department projects that the entire season's catch of legal Dungeness crab will be 1.5 million pounds or less, the department will close the summer Dungeness crab fishing season no sooner than 21 days after the season opened, and the fall Dungeness crab fishing season will not open. If the harvest projection is more than 1.5 million pounds, but less than 2.25 million pounds, the department will close the summer Dungeness crab fishing season no sooner than 28 days after the season opened, and the fall Dungeness crab fishing season will be open for 30 days. If the harvest projection is more than 2.25 million pounds, the summer and fall Dungeness crab fishing seasons will occur as specified in 5 AAC 32.110.

If the department determines that harvest projections fail to meet the 2.25 million pound threshold due to soft-shelled crabs early in the summer Dungeness crab fishing season, the department may open the fishery for the full fall Dungeness crab fishing season.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSALS WERE ADOPTED?
The department would no longer be obliged to conduct a full season harvest estimate fourteen days after the start of the summer Dungeness crab fishing season, and the two full season harvest thresholds which describe prescriptions by which the fishery is shortened would no longer exist. The commercial Dungeness crab fishery would remain open for the full seasons described in regulation regardless of what the commercial harvest is. Commercial harvest would increase by an unknown amount during some years. The department would retain the time and area authority to close fisheries should conservation concerns be documented.

BACKGROUND: At the 2000 board meeting, the department submitted a proposal to reduce the intensity of the summer commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Southeast Alaska by altering the summer opening date, reducing pot limits, defining separate management areas, and defining guideline harvest ranges. The proposal was in response to intensification of commercial effort in the summer season with 244 permits fished in the 1998/1999 season (Figure 58–1); recent declines in catches with 2.33 million pounds harvested in the 1998/1999 season (Figure 58–1); high sorting rate of soft-shelled crabs, female crabs, and sublegal male crabs; and increasing loss of fishing grounds due to sea otter predation on crabs.

At that time the department was concerned that the majority of the harvest was comprised of recruit class crabs and that most of the legal males were being harvested prior to mating. In addition, timing of the fishing season, which partially overlapped the male molting period, led to increased sorting of sublegal, female, and soft-shelled crabs as the season progressed.

Out of this 2000 board proposal, the current *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* was created. The *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* uses estimated full season harvest as a proxy for stock health, and assumes a relatively constant level of effort, processing capacity, and area available for harvest. Since the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* went into effect, effort and harvest have been relatively stable, with two record high harvests occurring in the 2002/2003 and 2007/2008 seasons (Figure 58–1). The 2014/2015 summer season was the largest summer harvest since the 2002/2003 season. Though the 2014/2015 season is ongoing, approximately 5.0 million pounds of Dungeness crab have already been harvested to date (Figure 58–1). Overall the full season harvest estimate produced by the department has proven to be accurate since its inception (Figure 58–2). Only once since the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* went into effect has the season been shortened due to the estimate falling below thresholds in the management plan. In 2013, the estimated full season harvest was 2.17 million pounds. The department determined that shortening the 2013/2014 commercial Dungeness crab summer fishing season in Southeastern Alaska one week was commensurate with the estimate falling near the upper end of the 1.5

million pounds to 2.25 million pounds range in 5 AAC 32.146(2)(B). Based on data from port sampling and fish tickets, the department determined that soft-shelled crab not retained during the first week of the season were a contributing factor in failing to meet threshold, and therefore, per 5 AAC 32.146(3), the commercial Dungeness crab fall fishing season was prosecuted for the standard duration as described in 5 AAC 32.110.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSE**S these proposals. In addition to limited entry and the associated tiered pot limits, size-sex-season management, and emergency order authority, the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* is a useful tool that allows the department to assess early in the season whether recruitment failure has potentially occurred and to take appropriate management action if necessary. Except for a couple of seasons, the current method used by the department to estimate full season harvest has proven to be relatively accurate over the last 30 years (Figure 58-2). Also, the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* allows the department the flexibility to determine an appropriate reduction in the number of days the summer season is shortened when the estimate produced is between 1.5 and 2.25 million pounds, and allows the department further flexibility to conduct a full fall season if it is determined that falling between the 1.5 and 2.25 million pounds range is due to non-retained, soft-shelled crab early in the summer season. The department is **NEUTRAL** on allocative aspects of these proposals.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of these proposals is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

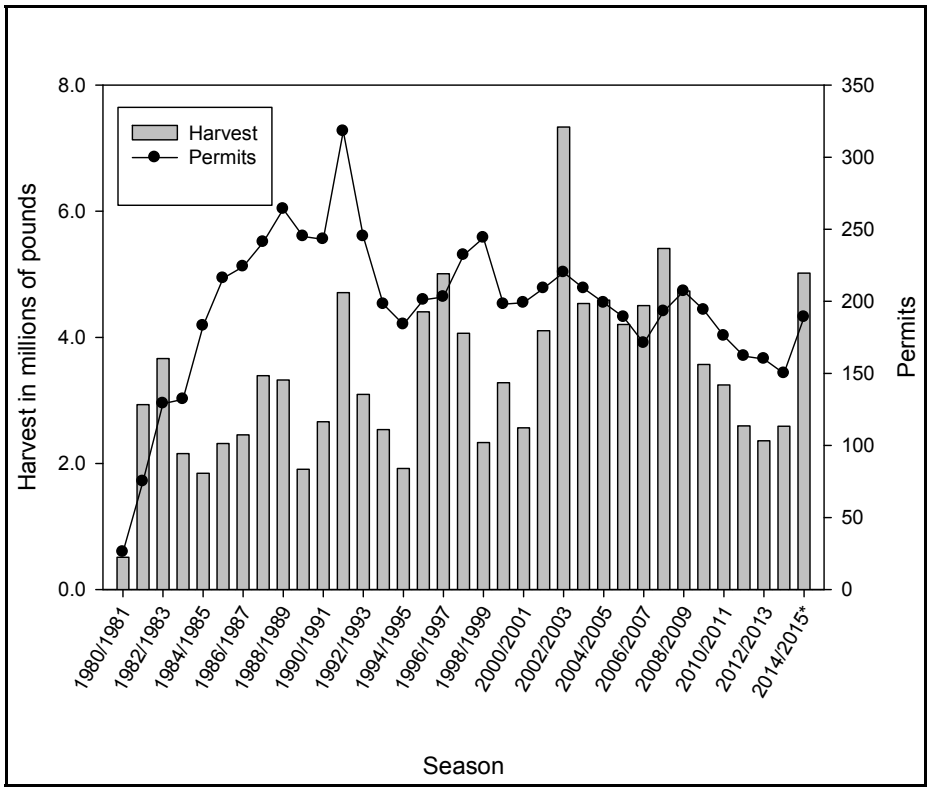

Figure 58-1.–Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab harvest and permits fished, 1980/1981 season to present. *Preliminary harvest, season ongoing. Harvest and permits fished through 11/30/14.

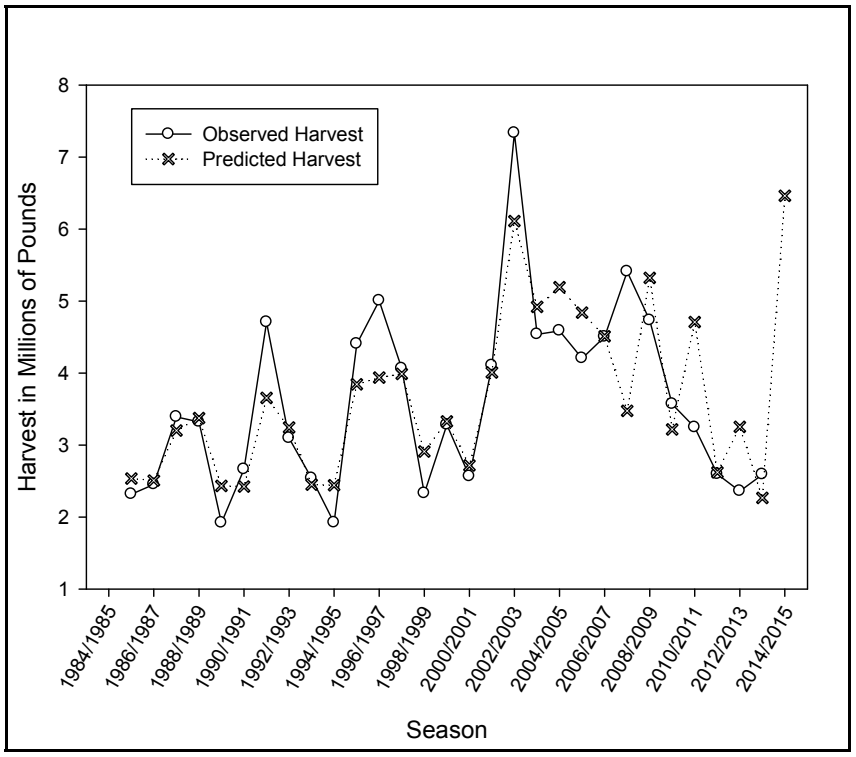

Figure 58-2.–Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab actual and estimated harvest, 1985/1986 season to present.

PROPOSAL 61 – 5AAC 32.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: John Norton.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal seeks to implement a new Dungeness crab management plan for Southeast Alaska in which the commercial fishery season opening dates would be predicated on the proportions of soft-shell male and female crab prior to summer and fall seasons. If samples collected in advance of the fishery openings showed that soft-shell crab accounted for more than 20% of the catch then the season opening date(s) would be delayed.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery is managed on a size-sex-season basis. Season length is based on projected harvest in relation to regulatory thresholds. If regulatory thresholds are not met season length will be reduced. The department may consider discards of soft-shell crab in making the harvest projection.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would likely cause the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery to be delayed, particularly the summer fishery which currently begins on June 15 in most of Southeast Alaska.

The proposal states that "the season/area shall remain closed by emergency order when the above ratio exceeds 20% of the ratio found in non-molting periods". This suggests that inseason, as well as preseason, sampling will be required. This sampling would result in substantial cost to the department.

Since handling mortality of soft-shelled crabs has been estimated as high as 50%, yield could be increased by reducing handling-induced deadloss.

BACKGROUND: Until the late 1950s, a summer soft-shell closure for the Southeast Dungeness crab fishery was in effect from May 1 through September 1. That closure was subsequently revoked and from 1960 to 1969 there was no closed season for the Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab fishery. The first seasonal closures after statehood were adopted in 1970 when portions of districts 5 and 6 were closed from April 1 to June 30. In 1975 the first regionwide season was adopted and Dungeness crab could be taken from May 16 to March 31 and the District 5 and 6 closures remained in effect. In 1976 the regional open season was changed to June 1–February 28. That regional season remained in effect through 1982 (however, the districts 5 and 6 specific closures were repealed in 1978). In 1983 and 1984 the regional open season was July 1–February 28 and a shortened season was adopted for part of Sitka Sound. Beginning in 1985, the commercial fishery was open from June 15 to August 15 and October 1–February 28 because field studies indicated that the major period when females molted and were mated was late August through September. Conclusions of research done later in Southeast Alaska supported those field studies and other research indicated that peak timing of the female molt and mating is late summer through early fall. The first split season for districts 1 and 2 was adopted in 1986. In that year the season for districts 1

and 2 was changed to October 1–February 28. The season for the northern and central portions of the region remained June 15–August 15 and October 1– February 28. In 1989, in response to increasingly high effort levels and high harvest rates, the season in the northern and central portions of the region was further shortened by three months and the fall/winter season was limited to October 1 through November 30. Districts 1 and 2 and Section 13–B remained open from October 1 through February 28. In 2000 the board adopted a separate 2–month season of October 1 through November 30 for waters of Section 13–B in the Sitka Sound Special Use area to provide additional harvest opportunity for the Sitka subsistence fishery.

The season remained October 1 through February 28 in districts 1 and 2 and in portions of Section 13–B until 2009 when the board adopted a proposal that made the commercial Dungeness crab season in districts 1 and 2 the same as the northern and central portions of the region. That regulation change had a sunset clause which stipulated both districts 1 and 2 would revert back to a fall/winter season beginning February 29, 2012 unless other action was taken. In 2010, the board considered an agenda change request from the Organized Village of Kasaan and revised the season description for District 2, changing it back to a fall/winter only season. No action was taken on the sunset clause that remained in place for District 1 so the season in that area reverted back to the fall/winter only season in 2012.

The current summer season of June 15 through August 15 in much of Southeast Alaska overlaps a portion of the primary male molt period from March through July. Handling of crab in the soft-shell condition can cause death, leg loss, decreases in growth and interruptions of molt timing by changing the molt frequency.

The current late summer closed period (August 16–September 30) was designed to protect females during molting and mating and the winter and spring closed period (March 1–June 14) to protect males during molting. However, the closed seasons only partially protect vulnerable crab life history stages. Male Dungeness crab molt from February through July, and females from May through September, while peak mating timing is in late summer and early fall. This results in significant handling of soft-shell males at the beginning of the summer season in some areas and seasons. While the current seasons provide for a closure (August 15 through October 1) which encompasses the majority of the late summer female molt and mating period, the current summer season begins on June 15 in most of the region, before the male molt is typically completed. Consequently there is sometimes a high prevalence of soft-shelled crab during the first few weeks of the summer fishery (Table 61-1).

Preseason department pot surveys conducted between approximately June 1 and 10 in 2000–2002 documented legal male soft-shell prevalence ranging from 14% to 59% in Duncan Canal and 6%–18% in Stikine Flats. These two areas, Duncan Canal in District 7 and Stikine Flats in District 8, account for an average approximately 25% of the commercial Dungeness crab harvest in Southeast Alaska. It takes approximately 4–6 weeks after molting for a male Dungeness crab to reach hard-shell condition. Although timing of molting is somewhat variable and small numbers of soft-shelled male Dungeness crab may be observed throughout the year it is apparent that the fishery currently overlaps a portion of the major male molt period of March–July. The molting season for males and a majority of the female molt and mating is generally completed by October 1.

The problem of soft-shell crab during Dungeness crab fisheries is not unique to Alaska. Washington State, Oregon, and California commercial Dungeness crab fisheries open December 1 but pre-season sampling is conducted to ensure optimal meat recovery (that is, the majority of the male crab have completed molting process and are of high quality). If meat recovery standards are not met during preseason sampling the scheduled December 1 opening of the fisheries may be, and has been, delayed.

British Columbia has adopted a soft-shell sampling program that varies by fishing area. For Area A (Queen Charlotte Islands), where the majority of the British Columbia commercial harvest has been taken historically, there is a seasonal closure from March 1 to July 31. The opening or closing dates of this seasonal closure may be, and have been, adjusted based on results from the soft-shell sampling program. If funding is not provided by industry to implement the soft-shell crab sampling program the Area A commercial fishery opens on August 1. Other Dungeness crab management areas in British Columbia have different seasons and soft-shell sampling programs.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. While the intent of the proposal is to reduce handling associated mortality of soft-shell Dungeness crab, something the department has long advocated in recommending a fall/winter season be adopted for the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery, if this proposal were adopted there would be substantial costs to the department and there are no known conservation or sustainability issues with Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab at this time.

While there is soft-shell crab handling mortality in the commercial fishery, particularly during the early part of the summer season, commercial harvests have fluctuated widely since the current season dates were adopted with harvests ranging from approximately 2.4 to 7.3 million pounds since the 1989/1990 season (Figure 61-1). The commercial harvest for the current season is the third highest on record and may end up being the second highest on record as the fishery is still open in the southern part of the region. There appears to be a cyclical pattern to the commercial Dungeness crab harvests in Southeast Alaska. Commercial Dungeness crab harvests in Washington, Oregon, and California also exhibit a cyclical pattern and harvests peak approximately every ten years.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

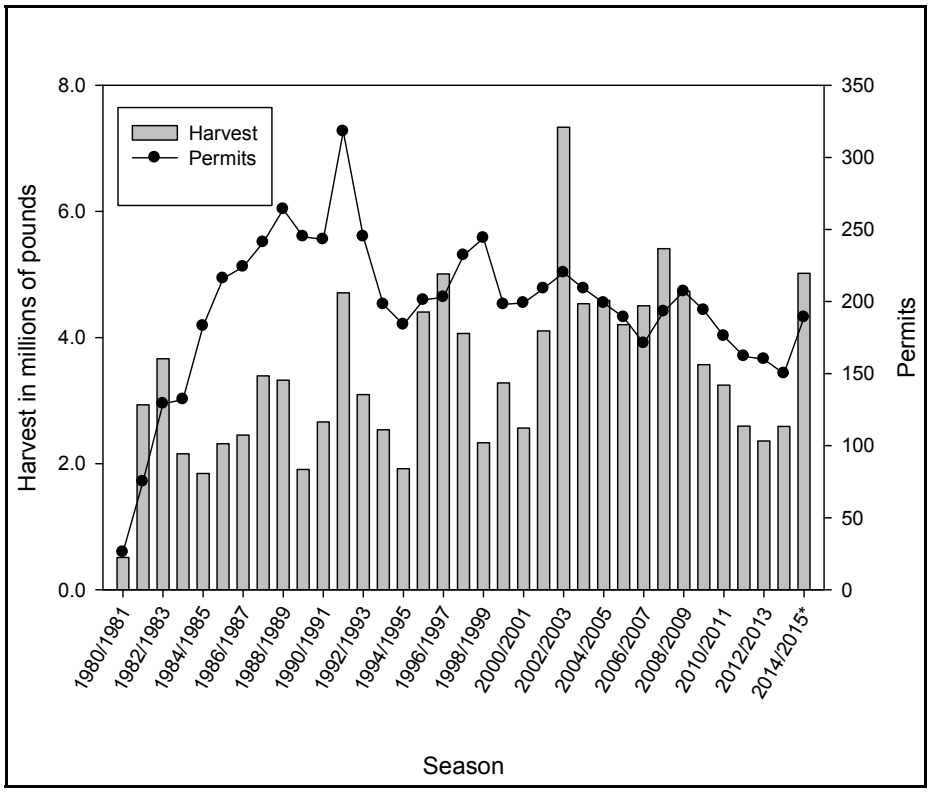

Figure 61-1.–Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab harvest and permits fished, 1980/1981 season to present. *Preliminary harvest, season ongoing. Harvest and permits fished through 11/30/14.

Table 61-1.–Commercial fishing seasons for Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab and major molting/mating periods.

District/Section	January–February	March–May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1 2 13-B non-Special Use Area	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open	Open	Open
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Closed	Closed	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Open	Open	Closed
SSSUA/WP	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open	Open	Closed

Male Molt Period — **Female Molt/Mating Period**

Closed Season

Open Season

PROPOSAL 62 – 5 AAC 32.146. Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: John Norton.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal seeks to implement a new Dungeness crab management plan for Southeast Alaska. The commercial fishery would be managed on a district- and section-specific level and harvest levels would be based on historical fishery performance data from the prior 10-year period.

The proposal also would require an independent stock assessment program to be initiated beginning in the 2015–2016 season.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery is managed on a size-sex-season basis. Season length is based on projected harvest in relation to regulatory thresholds. If regulatory thresholds are not met season length will be reduced. The department may consider discards of soft-shell crab in making the harvest projection.

Only male Dungeness crab six and one-half inches or greater in shoulder width may be taken or possessed in all Dungeness crab fisheries in Southeast Alaska. The commercial pot fishery became a limited entry fishery in 1997 with a four tiered pot limit system ranging from 75 to 300 pots per permit. The maximum number of pots that can be fished is approximately 44,300 and the number of pots actually fished in 2013 was approximately 27,000 pots.

The commercial Dungeness crab season is as follows:

(1) in District 2 and Section 13–B, except the waters of the Sitka Sound Special Use Area, and beginning February 29, 2012, in District 1, from October 1 through February 28;

(2) in the waters of Section 13–B that are in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area, and in the waters of Whale Passage north and west of a line extending from 56º 05.65' N. lat., 133º 07.30' W. long. to 56º 05.85' N. lat., 133º 06.40' W. long., from October 1 through November 30;

(3) in all other waters of Registration Area A, including District 15, from June 15 through August 15 and from October 1 through November 30.

Fourteen areas are closed year-round by regulation to commercial Dungeness crab fishing.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would substantively change the way the commercial Dungeness crab fishery is managed in Southeast Alaska. Rather than the regional approach currently in regulation, Dungeness crab commercial fisheries would be opened and closed on a much smaller spatial scale. Should districts or sections be opened and closed on a smaller spatial scale, effort could substantially increase in localized areas rather than being somewhat

dispersed under the current regional fishing seasons. This could lead to increased conflict between users and potentially higher harvest rates on localized Dungeness crab populations. Implementing an independent stock assessment program would result in substantial cost to the department.

BACKGROUND: The commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Southeast Alaska, and all other Dungeness crab fisheries throughout North America, is predicated on a "3-S" (size, sex, and season) management approach. In Southeast Alaska, only males six and one-half inches or greater in shoulder width may be taken or possessed and there are seasonal closures designed to provide some protection during sensitive molting and mating periods.

Data from the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab commercial fishery are collected from mandatory fish tickets. Information contained on fish tickets includes harvest location, numbers and pounds of crab, and effort (pot lifts), in addition to information specific to individual permit holders and processors. Fish tickets must be submitted to the department within seven days of delivery. Fish ticket data provide the department detailed commercial harvest data on a statistical, section, or district level for legal, retained Dungeness crab.

The department does not have detailed information on molt timing, population size, age, and sex composition on an annual basis for any area of Southeast Alaska.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The commercial Dungeness crab fishery has been successfully managed on a regionwide scale. The department does have the authority to address area-specific conservation concerns via time and area emergency orders. The level of detail suggested in the proposal is unnecessarily burdensome. The department also does not support turning stock assessment activities over to an independent entity. The department is **NEUTRAL** on allocative aspects of this proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 63 – 5AAC 32.146. Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal has two different aspects. The first would modify one existing Dungeness crab commercial fishery harvest threshold range and add a new harvest threshold range to the Dungeness crab fisheries management plan. The upper range of the second harvest tier would be reduced from 2.25 million pounds to 1.75 million pounds. A new harvest threshold range of more than 1.75 million pounds but less than 2.25 million pounds would be added. If the department projected the regionwide commercial Dungeness crab harvest fell within the new range the summer fishery would be closed no sooner than 53 days after opening and the fall fishery would be open a minimum of 53 days.

The second aspect of this proposal seeks to add a provision allowing the department to adjust season length if the uppermost threshold of 2.25 million pounds is not met due to two additional factors: reduced fishing effort and available fishing area. Currently the department only considers the effects that soft-shell crab have on the harvest projection.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The department shall establish a projection of harvest no later than 14 days after the start of the summer Dungeness crab fishing season. If the department projects that the entire season's catch of legal Dungeness crab will be 1.5 million pounds or less, the department will close the summer Dungeness crab fishing season no sooner than 21 days after the season opened, and the fall Dungeness crab fishing season will not open. If the harvest projection is more than 1.5 million pounds, but less than 2.25 million pounds, the department will close the summer Dungeness crab fishing season no sooner than 28 days after the season opened, and the fall Dungeness crab fishing season will be open for 30 days. If the harvest projection is more than 2.25 million pounds, the summer and fall Dungeness crab fishing seasons will occur as specified in 5 AAC 32.110.

If the department determines that harvest projections fail to meet the 2.25 million pound threshold due to soft-shelled crabs early in the summer Dungeness crab fishing season, the department may open the fishery for the full fall Dungeness crab fishing season.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would significantly alter the Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan. The department would have less management flexibility to reduce season length when fisheries data suggest poor recruitment. In addition to assessing whether nonretained, soft-shelled crab early in the summer season have contributed to a harvest estimate falling below 2.25 million pounds, and using that assessment to potentially provide for a full fall season, this proposal would also oblige the department to consider whether reduced effort or fishing area has contributed to a

harvest estimate falling below 2.25 million pounds. If it was determined that reduced effort and fishing area has contributed to a harvest estimate falling below 2.25 million pounds, the department would be obliged to consider altering the prescriptions of the management plan for both summer and fall seasons.

If the department had the authority by regulation to consider the effects of participation and loss of fishing grounds on harvest projections it is unclear how that might impact decisions on adjusting season length should harvest projections be below the 2.25 million pound threshold. Because the harvest projection has to be made within 14 days of the beginning of the summer season it is not likely that the department would have time to fully consider these factors and how they may be affecting the harvest projection.

BACKGROUND: At the 2000 board meeting, the department submitted a proposal to reduce the intensity of the summer commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Southeast Alaska by altering the summer opening date, reducing pot limits, defining separate management areas, and defining guideline harvest ranges. The proposal was in response to intensification of commercial effort in the summer season with 244 permits fished in the 1998/1999 season (Figure 63-1); recent declines in catches with 2.33 million pounds harvested in the 1998/1999 season (Figure 63-1); high sorting rate of soft-shelled crabs, female crabs, and sublegal male crabs; and increasing loss of fishing grounds due to sea otter predation on crabs.

At that time the department was concerned that the majority of the harvest was comprised of recruit class crabs and most of the legal males were being harvested prior to mating. In addition, timing of the fishing season, which partially overlapped the male molting period, led to increased sorting of sublegal, female, and soft-shelled crabs as the season progressed.

Out of this 2000 board proposal, the current *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* was created. The *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* uses estimated full season harvest as a proxy for stock health, and assumes a relatively constant level of effort, processing capacity, and area available for harvest. Since the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* went into effect, effort and harvest have been relatively stable, with two record high harvests occurring in the 2002/2003 and 2007/2008 seasons (Figure 63-1). The 2014/2015 summer season was the largest summer harvest since the 2002/2003 season. Though the 2014/2015 season is ongoing, approximately 5.0 million pounds of Dungeness crab have already been harvested to date (Figure 63-1). Overall the full season harvest estimate produced by the department has proven to be accurate since its inception (Figure 63-2). Only once since the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* went into effect has the season been shortened due to the estimate falling below thresholds in the management plan. In 2013, the estimated full season harvest was 2.17 million pounds. The department determined that shortening the 2013/2014 commercial Dungeness crab summer fishing season in Southeastern Alaska by one week was commensurate with the estimate falling near the upper end of the 1.5 million pounds to 2.25 million pounds range in 5 AAC 32.146(2)(B). Based on data from port sampling and fish tickets, the department determined that soft-shelled crab not

retained during the first week of the season were a contributing factor in failing to meet threshold, and therefore, per 5 AAC 32.146(3), the commercial Dungeness crab fall fishing season was prosecuted for the standard duration as described in 5 AAC 32.110.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. Except for a couple of seasons, the current method used by the department to estimate full season harvest has proven to be relatively accurate over the last 30 years (Figure 63-2). The *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* allows the department the flexibility to determine an appropriate reduction in the number of days the summer season is shortened, for stock conservation purposes, when the estimate produced is between 1.5 and 2.25 million pounds. The management plan also allows the department further flexibility to conduct a full fall season if it is determined that falling between 1.5 and 2.25 million pounds range is due to nonretention of soft-shelled crab early in the summer season. The proposed alterations to the existing management plan would be less precautionary than the management plan as currently structured. The department is **NEUTRAL** on allocative aspects of this proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

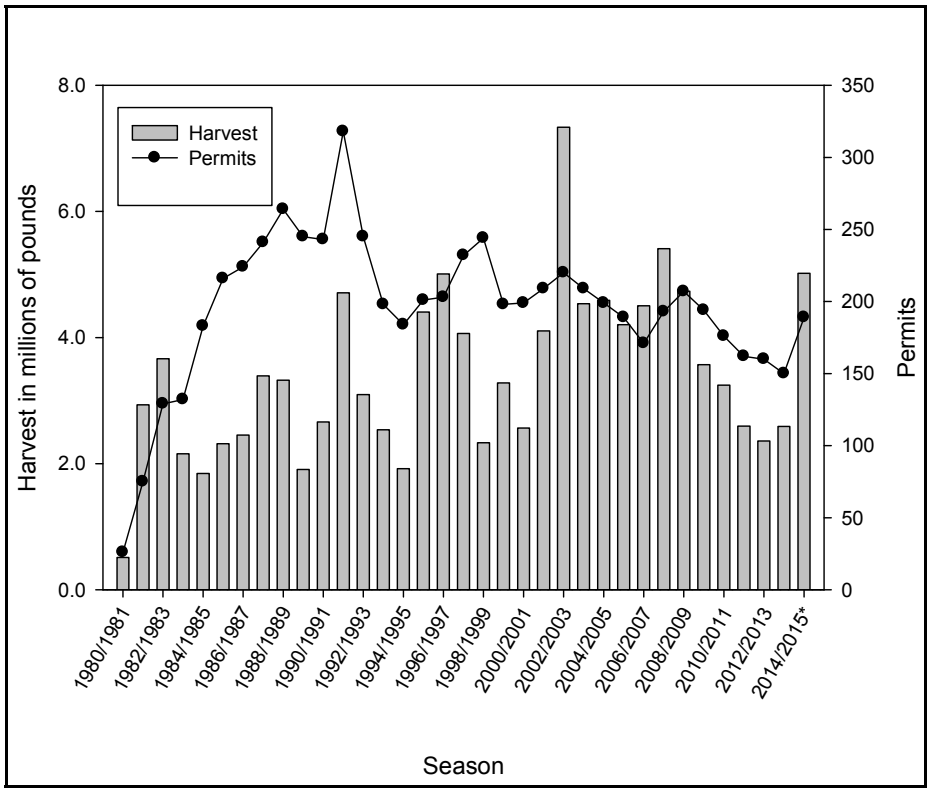

Figure 63-1.–Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab harvest and permits fished, 1980/1981 season to present. *Preliminary harvest, season ongoing. Harvest and permits fished through 11/30/14.

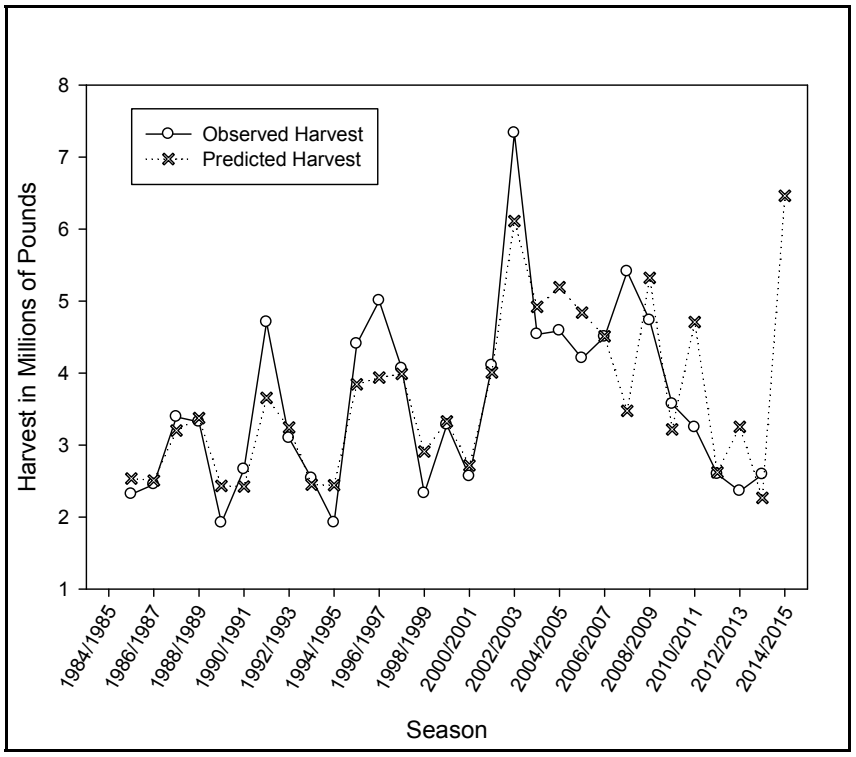

Figure 63-2.–Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab actual and estimated harvest, 1985/1986 season to present.

PROPOSAL 64 – 5AAC 32.146. Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: John Norton.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal seeks to repeal 5 AAC 32.146(3) which gives the department the authority to open the fall fishing season for the full duration if the department determines the harvest estimate produced is below 2.25 million pounds due to legal sized, soft-shell crabs not retained early in the summer Dungeness crab fishing season.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery is managed on a size-sex-season basis. Season length is based on projected harvest in relation to regulatory thresholds. If regulatory thresholds are not met season length will be reduced. The department may consider discards of soft-shell crab in making the harvest projection.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If the harvest estimate produced by the department is less than 2.25 million pounds, the fall season would be curtailed according to proscriptions in the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan*, when catch is determined to be low due to a high incidence of non-retained, soft-shelled crab early in the summer season. Not opening the fall season would reduce harvest. There may be a perceived incentive for fishermen to retain crabs of marginal hardness for sale early in the summer season in order to land more poundage to bolster the estimate, especially if the possibility of a full fall season is in question. Higher rates of deadloss would likely occur due to holding of soft-shell crab which would cause less accurate harvest estimates if deadloss is not accurately reported. Approximately 25% of the total commercial Dungeness crab harvest is taken in the fall/winter fishery (Table 64-1). Of the 25% fall/winter season average harvest percentage approximately 18% is in October and 7% in November–February.

BACKGROUND: Only once since the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* has been in place has the estimate fallen below 2.25 million pounds. In 2013, the estimate was 2.17 million pounds. The department determined that shortening the 2013/2014 commercial Dungeness crab summer fishing season in Southeastern Alaska by one week was commensurate with the estimate falling near the upper end of the 1.5 million pounds to 2.25 million pounds range.

During the first week of the 2013/2014 commercial Dungeness crab summer fishing season in Southeast Alaska (landings made 6/15/13 through 6/22/13), dockside interviews from port sampling noted 18% average per landing of soft-shelled legal crab not retained. However, some amount of soft-shelled crab is normally caught in the first week. In an effort to determine an average amount of soft-shelled crab caught in the first

week, the previous three year average of 8% was used as a proxy for a "normal" amount of soft-shelled crab. Since the 18% soft-shelled crab from the 2013/2014 season exceeded the three year average of 8%, the difference of 10% was applied to the first week's harvest to estimate what amount of poundage, in excess of the norm, was not retained. Based on the regression model used to produce the full season harvest estimate, adding this poundage to the total for the week was enough to produce a harvest estimate of 2.45 million pounds, meeting threshold in regulation. The department also examined the total amount of harvest from the first week, given a soft-shell delivery code by the buyers. In the first week of the 2013/2014 season, 3,716 pounds were graded as soft, regionwide. This amount was above the recent three year average of 1,254 pounds. While market considerations do play into grading from year to year, the significant increase in the total amount of harvest from the first week, given a soft-shell delivery code by the buyers, did suggest an above average amount of soft-shelled crab encountered by the fleet in the first week of the 2013/2014 fishery.

Based on these data from port sampling and fish tickets, the department determined that soft-shelled crab not retained during the first week of the season were a contributing factor in failing to meet threshold, and therefore the commercial Dungeness crab fall fishing season was opened for the standard duration. The overall harvest for the full season was 2,590,022 pounds taken by 150 permit holders. Summer season landings totaled 1,580,646 pounds, which was 61% of the total harvest (Table 64-1). The fall/winter season landings totaled 1,009,376 pounds, or 39% of the total harvest (Table 64-1), which in terms of percentage of total harvest was the largest fall harvest in the last ten years, exceeding the 10-year average fall harvest percentage of 25%.

In 2007, there was a high incidence of soft-shelled crabs during the first few weeks of the summer season. Based on landings from the first week, total harvest for the season was predicted to be 3.5 million pounds, well over the 2.25 million pound threshold for a normal season length. Total harvest for the 2007/2008 season was 5.4 million pounds which exceeded the prediction by almost 2 million pounds (Figure 64-1). This discrepancy between predicted and observed harvest during the 2007/2008 season was attributed to non-retained, soft-shelled crab early in the summer season that were captured and retained after the harvest projection was made, when the crab were no longer in a soft-shell condition (Table 64-1). Although the full season harvest estimate produced for the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* had worked well up until that time, the 2007/2008 season showed that the potential for under-predicting harvest due to soft-shelled crab early in the season was real. In 2009, the board adopted a proposal submitted by the department that made some allowances to the *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* for the soft-shell component early in the season, when harvest projections are calculated, to avoid reduced fall seasons.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSE**S this proposal. The current method used by the department to estimate full season harvest has proven to be relatively accurate, with the one exception being seasons when non-retained, soft-shelled crab are caught early in the summer season. The *Southeastern Alaska Area Dungeness Crab Fisheries Management Plan* allows the department the flexibility to determine an

appropriate reduction in the number of days the summer season is shortened when the estimate produced is between 1.5 and 2.25 million pounds, and allows the department further flexibility to conduct a full fall season if it is determined that falling between the 1.5 and 2.25 million pounds range is due to non-retained, soft-shelled crab early in the summer season. In years, for example 2013, when male Dungeness crab remain in a soft-shell condition longer than normal the management plan provides for a shortened summer season and flexibility in the subsequent fall season. This allows for the crab that were not in a marketable condition during the summer season to be harvested in the fall season, as was the case in the 2013/2014 season.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

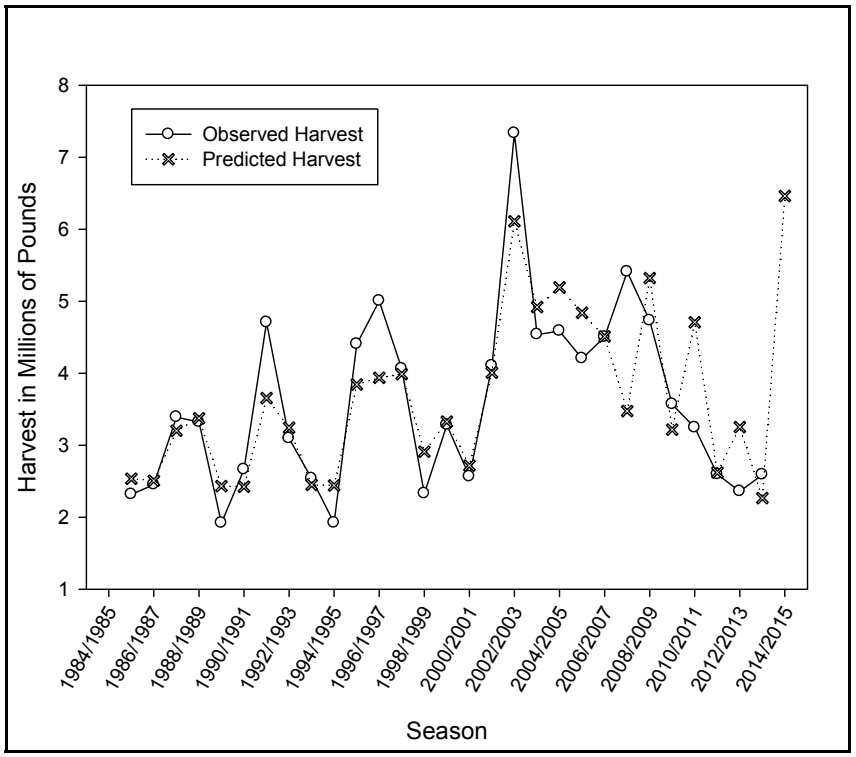

Figure 64-1.–Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab actual and estimated harvest, 1985/1986 season to present.

Table 64-1.–Dungeness crab harvest by season, total harvest, and percentage of total harvest taken by season in Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska), 2004/2005 through 2013/2014 seasons.

Season	Summer Season Harvest	Fall/Winter Season Harvest	Total Harvest	% of Total Harvest Taken in Summer Season	% of Total Harvest Taken in Fall/Winter Season
2004/2005	3,690,534	899,097	4,589,631	80%	20%
2005/2006	3,205,190	1,000,290	4,205,480	76%	24%
2006/2007	3,496,951	1,007,019	4,503,970	78%	22%
2007/2008	3,597,048	1,811,307	5,408,355	67%	33%
2008/2009	3,755,556	976,112	4,731,668	79%	21%
2009/2010	2,620,083	949,614	3,569,697	73%	27%
2010/2011	2,672,837	572,428	3,245,265	82%	18%
2011/2012	2,033,440	561,457	2,594,897	78%	22%
2012/2013	1,844,332	514,977	2,359,309	78%	22%
2013/2014	1,580,646	1,009,376	2,590,022	61%	39%
10-year average	2,849,662	930,168	3,779,829	75%	25%

PROPOSAL 65 – 5AAC 32.110. Fishing seasons for Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Peter Roddy.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO?

This proposal would delete 5 AAC 32.110(1) which provides a fall/winter season (October 1–February 28) in districts 1 and 2, and that portion of Section 13–B outside of the Sitka Sound Special Use Area. This proposal would also delete 5 AAC 32.110(2) which provides a fall only season (October 1–November 30) in that portion of Section 13–B in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area and a portion of Whale Passage. This proposal would also amend 5 AAC 32.110(3) to provide summer (June 15–August 15) and fall/winter (October 1–February 28) seasons for all of Southeast Alaska, and would change the start times for these seasons from 12:00 noon to 8:00 a.m.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

The existing commercial Dungeness crab season is as follows:

(1) in District 2 and Section 13–B, except the waters of the Sitka Sound Special Use Area described in 5 AAC 32.150(10) , and beginning February 29, 2012, in District 1, from 12:00 noon October 1 through 11:59 p.m. February 28;

(2) in the waters of Section 13–B that are in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area described in 5 AAC 32.150(10) , and in the waters of Whale Passage north and west of a line extending from 56° 05.65' N. lat., 133° 07.30' W. long. to 56° 05.85' N. lat., 133° 06.40' W. long., from 12:00 noon October 1 through 11:59 p.m. November 30;

(3) in all other waters of Registration Area A, from 12:00 noon June 15 through 11:59 p.m. August 15 and from 12:00 noon October 1 through 11:59 p.m. November 30.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?

If this proposal were adopted there would be one season description for all of Southeast Alaska. Districts 1 and 2, and that portion of Section 13–B outside of the Sitka Sound Special Use Area described in 5 AAC 32.110(1) would have two months (June 15–August 15) of summer fishing added. The portion of Section 13–B in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area and a portion of Whale Passage described in 5 AAC 32.110(2) would have two months (June 15–August 15) of summer fishing added and three months (December 1–February 28) of winter fishing added. The majority of Southeast Alaska described in 5 AAC 32.110(3) would have three months (December 1–February 28) of winter fishing added.

This would likely increase the exploitation rate and harvest in the Dungeness crab commercial fishery and reduce the number of crab available in the subsistence, personal use, and sport fisheries.

BACKGROUND: From 1960 to 1969 there was no closed season for the Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab fishery. The first seasonal closures after statehood were adopted in 1970 when portions of districts 5 and 6 were closed from April 1 to June 30. In 1975 the first regionwide season was adopted and Dungeness crab could be taken from May 16 to March 31 and the districts 5 and 6 closures remained in effect. In 1976 the regional open season was changed to June 1–February 28. That regional season remained in effect through 1982 (however, the districts 5 and 6 specific closures were repealed in 1978). In 1983 and 1984 the regional open season was July 1–February 28 and a shortened season was adopted for part of Sitka Sound. Beginning in 1985, the commercial fishery was open from June 15 to August 15 and October 1–February 28 because field studies indicated that the major period when females molted and were mated was late August through September. Conclusions of research done later in Southeast Alaska supported those field studies and other research indicated that peak timing of the female molt and mating is late summer through early fall. The first split season for districts 1 and 2 was adopted in 1986. In that year the season for districts 1 and 2 was changed to October 1–February 28. The season for the northern and central portions of the region remained June 15–August 15 and October 1–February 28. In 1989, in response to increasingly high effort levels and high harvest rates, the season in the northern and central portions of the region was further shortened by three months and the fall/winter season was limited to October 1 through November 30. Districts 1 and 2 and Section 13–B remained open from October 1 through February 28. In 2000 the board adopted a separate 2-month season of October 1 through November 30 for waters of Section 13–B in the Sitka Sound Special Use area to provide additional harvest opportunity for the Sitka subsistence fishery.

The season remained October 1 through February 28 in districts 1 and 2, and a portion of Section 13–B until 2009 when the board adopted a proposal that made the commercial Dungeness crab season in districts 1 and 2 the same as the northern and central portions of the region. That regulation change had a sunset clause which stipulated both districts 1 and 2 would revert back to a fall/winter season beginning February 29, 2012 unless other action was taken. In 2010, the board considered an agenda change request from the Organized Village of Kasaan and revised the season description for District 2, changing it back to a fall/winter only season. No action was taken on the sunset clause that remained in place for District 1 so the season in that area reverted back to the fall/winter only season in 2012.

The current late summer closed period (August 16–September 30) was designed to protect females during molting and mating and the winter and spring closed period (December 1–June 14) to protect males during molting. However, the closed seasons only partially protect vulnerable crab life history stages. Male Dungeness crab molt from February through July, and females from May through September, while peak mating timing is in late summer and early fall. This results in significant handling of soft-shell males at the beginning of the summer season in some areas and seasons. While the current seasons provide for a closure (August 15 through October 1) which encompasses the majority of the late summer female molt and mating period, the current summer season begins on June 15 in most of the region, before the male molt is typically completed. Consequently there is sometimes a high prevalence of soft-shelled crab during the first few weeks of the summer fishery.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative aspects of this proposal and **OPPOSES** extending regionwide season length as described for conservation reasons. The Southeast Alaska commercial Dungeness crab fishery has historically been dependent on annual recruitment, with post-recruit crabs making up a smaller percentage of the harvest since 2000 (Table 65-1). The resulting harvest could lead to sustainability concerns. The percentage of recruits in the commercial harvest could increase, causing more concern that in a low recruitment year the population would have difficulties rebounding.

The current Dungeness crab summer season of June 15 through August 15 in much of Southeast Alaska overlaps a portion of the male Dungeness crab molt period from February through July. As a result, catch and handling of soft-shelled crabs can be high during the first few weeks of the summer fishery in some years. The incidence of soft-shelled crab also varies by area during any given season. The percentage of legal males that are soft-shelled can be very high in some periods and areas. In Dungeness crab surveys of Duncan Canal during early June, 59% of legal males were in shell condition 1 (soft) or 2 (light) in both 2001 and 2002 surveys. Dungeness crabs reach a marketable shell condition 3 (new) about 2 months after molting. Since handling mortality of soft-shelled crabs has been estimated as high as 50%, commercial yield is reduced by handling-induced deadloss. For this reason, the department has long advocated a fall/winter season be adopted for the entire Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery, because avoiding the soft-shell period would increase yielded poundage and reduce handling mortality on discarded crabs.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 65-1.–Dungeness crab recruit and post-recruit composition of dockside sampled commercial catches, 1983/1984–2013/2014 seasons.

Season	Number sampled		Carapace width (mm)		Recruitment	
	Boats	Crab	Mean	Range	% Recruit[a]	% Postrecruit[b]
1983/1984	11	1,205	185.7	159–225	61.7	38.3
1984/1985	3	303	175.9	164–205	89.0	11.0
1985/1986	26	2,650	177.7	157–228	88.2	11.8
1986/1987	29	2,872	177.3	156–228	77.6	22.4
1987/1988	63	6,226	178.5	160–213	74.4	25.6
1988/1989	81	7,595	182.1	157–225	64.2	35.8
1989/1990	75	7,123	181.0	157–220	59.3	40.7
1990/1991	166	16,399	174.9	156–223	86.8	13.2
1991/1992	172	16,897	178.6	153–230	87.2	12.8
1992/1993	146	14,262	180.2	157–215	77.8	22.2
1993/1994	81	7,628	181.8	155–226	77.8	22.2
1994/1995	79	7,832	176.2	160–222	86.3	13.7
1995/1996	136	13,621	175.6	158–228	90.4	9.6
1996/1997	222	11,196	178.5	154–215	82.2	17.8
1997/1998	200	10,263	179.2	156–220	81.0	19.0
1998/1999	196	10,145	176.9	101–216	75.4	24.6
1999/2000	262	13,257	176.2	110–212	68.1	31.9
2000/2001	338	16,913	176.9	87–213	82.5	17.5
2001/2002	494	24,704	174.7	153–219	92.9	7.1
2002/2003	424	21,331	178.9	140–225	90.9	9.1
2003/2004	425	21,590	178.5	93–224	87.8	12.2
2004/2005	433	21,876	178.0	140–215	91.1	8.9
2005/2006	397	19,910	177.8	90–233	92.7	7.3
2006/2007	455	22,771	176.8	157–230	95.7	4.3
2007/2008	400	20,948	177.4	123–229	91.4	8.6
2008/2009	354	18,926	177.7	160–225	91.8	8.2
2009/2010	376	20,214	177.1	140–223	91.2	8.8
2010/2011	354	18,912	178.8	159–216	91.4	8.6
2011/2012	366	20,012	178.4	157–219	89.4	10.6
2012/2013	346	18,614	177.9	154–219	90.2	9.8
2013/2014	292	16,133	175.4	157–219	92.0	8.0

[a] Recruit = all new and soft shell crab ≥165 mm and ≤194 mm carapace width excluding spines.
[b] Postrecruit = all new and soft shell crab >194 mm and old and very old shell crab ≥165 mm carapace width.

PROPOSAL 66 – 5AAC 32.035. Closure of Dungeness crab registration areas and appeal procedures.

PROPOSED BY: Upper Lynn Canal Advisory Committee.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal seeks to implement a management threshold for District 15 (Lynn Canal) Dungeness crab fisheries based on commercial fishery performance data. If commercial fishery catch per unit of effort (CPUE) is two legal crab per pot or fewer, the commercial, sport, and personal use fisheries in District 15 would be closed until such time that the CPUE was at 2.1 legal crab per pot or higher. If commercial CPUE remain above two legal crab per pot the fishery would be managed as it currently is.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery is managed on a size-sex-season basis. Season length is based on projected harvest in relation to regulatory thresholds. If regulatory thresholds are not met season length will be reduced. The department may consider discards of soft-shell crab in making the harvest projection. The commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Lynn Canal runs from June 15 through August 15 and from October 1 through November 30 unless the harvest thresholds specified in regulation are not met.

Fourteen areas are closed year-round by regulation to commercial Dungeness crab fishing including Mud (Flat) Bay which is located in northern District 15 near Haines (5 AAC 32.150, Figure 66-1).

The sport and personal use fisheries for Dungeness crab are open year-round throughout Southeast Alaska; there are no closed areas. The personal use bag and possession limit for Dungeness crab is 20 male crab. The sport bag and possession limit for Dungeness and Tanner crab, in combination, is three with no annual limit.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for Dungeness crab in Section 15–A (northern portion of Lynn Canal). The subsistence fishery for Dungeness crab in areas with positive customary and traditional use findings is open year-round throughout Southeast Alaska; there are no closed areas. The subsistence daily bag and possession limit for Dungeness crab is 20 male crab (with size limits), except in the waters of Thorne Bay where the daily bag and possession limit is five male crab, also with size limits, but with no annual limit (5 AAC 02.115). The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence for any shellfish in the Southeast Alaska-Yakutat Area.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Dungeness crab harvests and fishing opportunity in District 15 fisheries would be reduced or precluded during some years.

There would likely be effects on the regionwide Dungeness crab commercial fishery depending upon whether or not historical commercial harvests from District 15 continue to be included in the harvest thresholds specified in regulation. If the existing harvest thresholds are maintained and District 15 is closed then early season commercial closures as specified in the management plan could be more common. If District 15 did close due to poor fishery performance, and the other waters remained open to commercial fishing, commercial pot gear would be further concentrated which could increase the exploitation of crab and user group conflict in those areas.

Two options are presented for reopening the fisheries should they be closed. The first, a fixed 24-month closure following CPUE below the trigger point, would be straightforward to implement. The second option, a limited test fishery, would result in a cost to the department. The proposal suggests costs of such a test fishery could be covered by the sale of crab harvested in the fishery. Such an approach would be problematic due to budgetary complexity and state budget requirements.

BACKGROUND: The commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Southeast Alaska, and all other jurisdictions throughout North America, is predicated on a "3-S" (size, sex, and season) management approach. In Southeast Alaska, only males six and one-half inches or greater in shoulder width may be taken or possessed and there are seasonal closures designed to provide some protection during sensitive molting and mating periods.

The Southeast Alaska commercial pot fishery became a limited entry fishery in 1997 with a four tiered pot limit system ranging from 75 to 300 pots per permit. The maximum number of pots that can be fished is approximately 44,300 and the number of pots actually fished in 2013 was approximately 27,000 pots.

Data from the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab commercial fishery are collected from mandatory fish tickets. Information contained on fish tickets includes harvest location, numbers and pounds of crab, and effort (pot lifts), in addition to information specific to individual permit holders and processors. The effort data are much more reliable and complete beginning in about the 1999/2000 season. Commercial Dungeness crab fishery effort in District 15 averaged approximately 8,900 pot lifts during the 1999/2000–2006/2007 seasons and approximately 25,000 pot lifts during the 2007/2008–2013/2014 seasons. Commercial fishery CPUE has ranged from a low of 1.8 legal crab-per-pot in the 1999/2000 season to a high of 6.9 legal crab per pot in the 2007/2008 season (Figure 66-2). District 15 commercial Dungeness crab harvests have averaged 4.4% of the regional total (range 0.6% to 9.3%) during the 1999/2000–2013/2014 seasons. Commercial fishery CPUE was below the 2.1 crab per pot threshold specified in the proposal in one season, 1999/2000. Over the last several years, the commercial Dungeness crab fleet has become increasingly concentrated on the fishing grounds, leading to increased gear congestion and conflict with other user groups in some areas.

Harvest estimates of Dungeness crab for the sport and personal use/subsistence fisheries are derived from the Statewide Harvest Survey each year. The sport and personal use/subsistence harvest of Dungeness crab in District 15 averages 2,900 crab, (2009–2013).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. If management triggers are predicated on inseason fishery performance data, which the department would not advise, it is likely that commercial logbooks may be required. Implementing a logbook program for the Dungeness crab commercial fishery would be difficult for the department to implement. The reason implementing a Dungeness crab logbook program would be difficult to implement is due to the sheer volume of fish tickets associated with the commercial Dungeness crab fishery. For reference, the average number of Dungeness crab fish tickets is approximately 5,000 per season. This compares to approximately 700 and 600 fish tickets for the golden king and Tanner crab fisheries respectively. Given each fish ticket in the Tanner and golden king crab fishery must have a logbook associated with the ticket and the logbooks (and fish tickets) are hand entered by department staff, a logbook program for Dungeness crab would be extremely labor intensive and would require significant additional data entry staff. Basing fishery management actions on inseason CPUE could lead to "false" conclusions. This is because fishery performance data often changes over the course of a season, ie starts out higher and drops over time. This is why the department would suggest basing management decisions on post season fishery performance data for an entire season.

Commercial fishery CPUE for the 1999/2000 season was 1.8 legal crab per pot. That would have triggered fishery closures had this management plan been in effect at that time. Such action would have unnecessarily precluded the harvests (commercial, personal use, and sport) that took place in subsequent years, when commercial CPUE and harvest rebounded fairly rapidly until peaking in the 2008/2009 season.

Should the board choose to adopt this proposal it may be more appropriate to modify the existing Dungeness crab management plan for Southeast Alaska [5 AAC 32.146] rather than the statewide regulation referenced in the proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

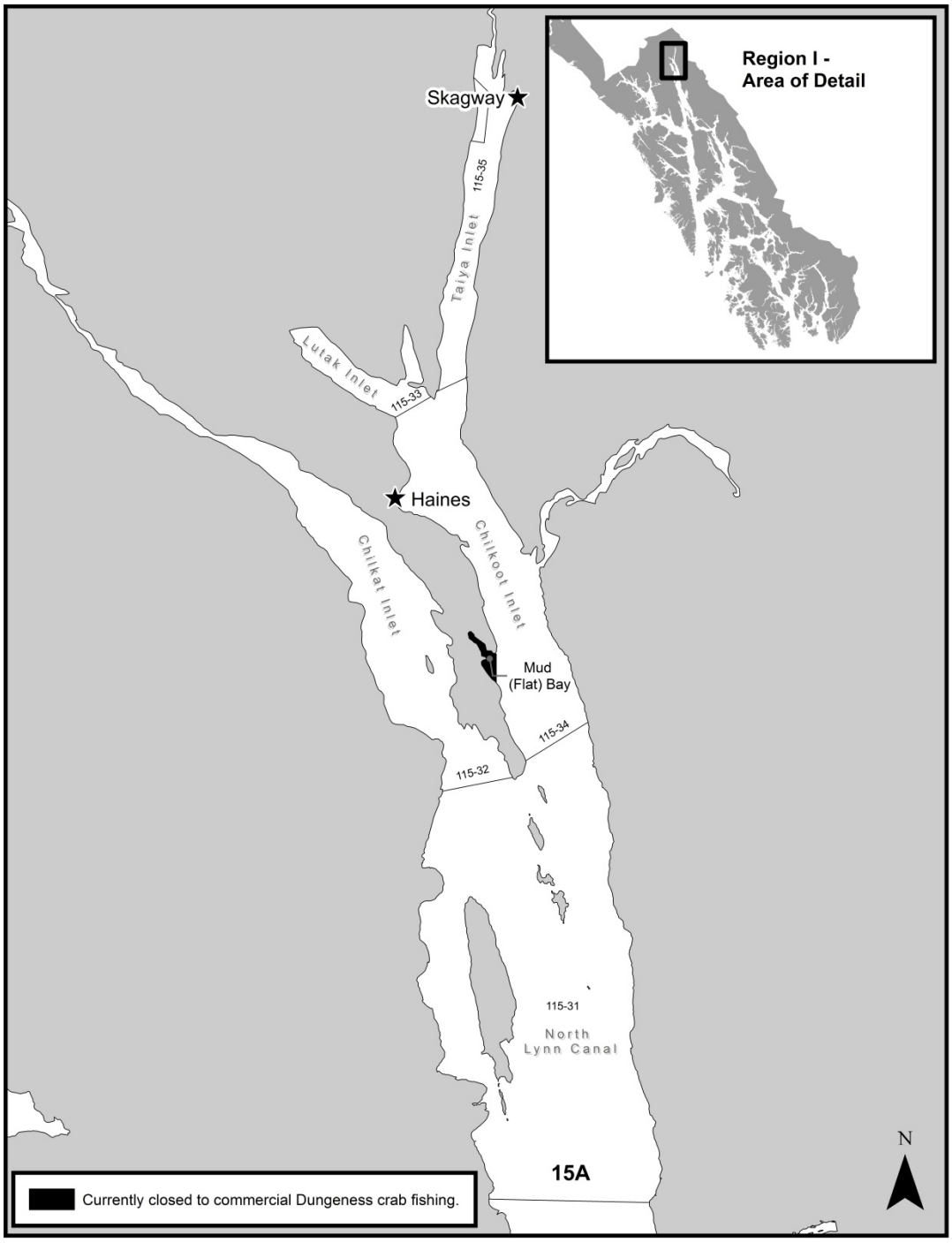

Figure 66-1.–Waters of District 15 that are closed to commercial Dungeness crab fishing.

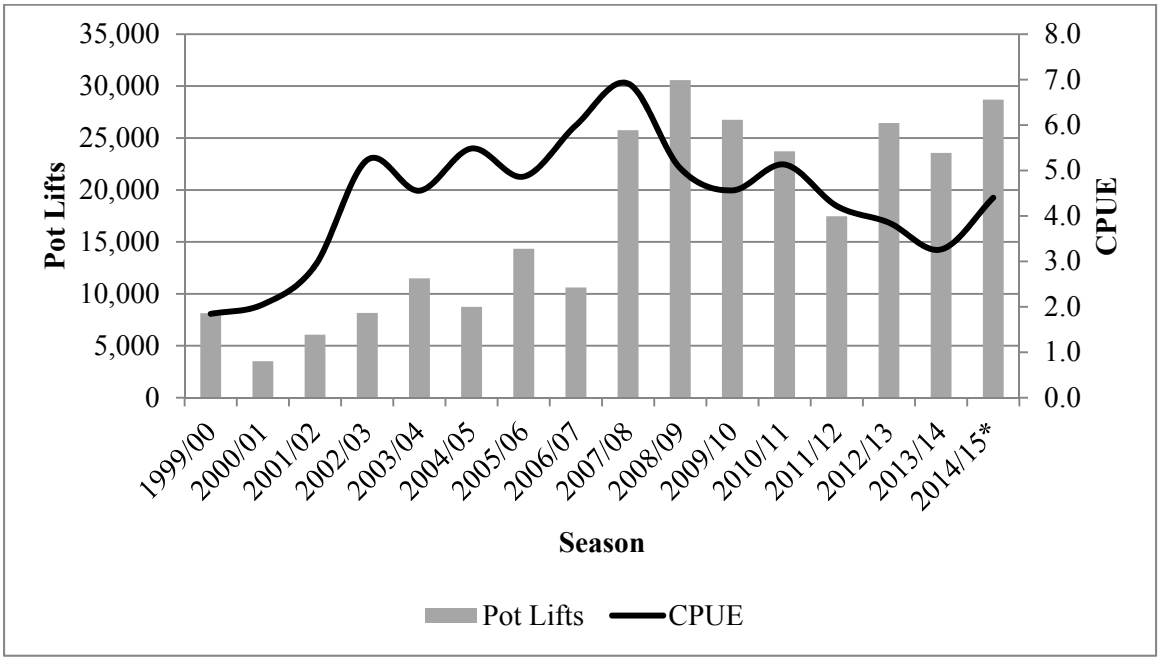

Figure 66-2.–Commercial Dungeness crab fishery pot lift and CPUE data, 1999/2000 through 2013/2014 seasons. *Preliminary harvest, season ongoing. Harvest and permits fished through 11/30/14.

PROPOSALS 67 and 68 – 5AAC XX.XXX.

PROPOSED BY: Proposal 67 by Jim Szymanski and Proposal 68 by Randa Szymanski.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSALS DO? The proposals are statements of opposition to Proposal 66, which was submitted by the Upper Lynn Canal Advisory Committee.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Not applicable.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSALS WERE ADOPTED? Not applicable.

BACKGROUND: Not applicable.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department has no position on these proposals.

COST ANALYSIS: Not applicable.

CLOSED WATERS (11)

PROPOSAL 69 – 5AAC 32.150 Closed waters in Registration Area A (2)(3)(10).

PROPOSED BY: Peter Roddy.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? A portion of the current area closed to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Tenakee Inlet would be reopened. Port Althorp would be reopened to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery. That portion of Section 13–B within the SSSUA with a fall only season described in 5 AAC 32.110(2) would have a new season description matching the remainder of Section 13–B described in 5 AAC 32.110(1).

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There are currently fourteen areas in Southeast Alaska that are closed year round to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery. The closed waters specifically referenced in this proposal include the waters of Tenakee Inlet west of Corner Bay Point at 135° 06.50' W. longitude and east of the Crab Bay log transfer facility at 135° 18.18' W. longitude and the waters of Port Althorp enclosed by a line from Point Lucan to 58° 09.71' N. lat., 136° 19.67' W. long. There is also a seasonal commercial closure from December 1 through September 30 in the waters of District 13–B that are in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area, which is that area of Sitka Sound enclosed on the north by lines from Kruzof Island at 57° 20.50' N. lat., 135° 45.17' W. long. to Chichagof Island at 57° 22.05' N. lat., 135° 43' W. long., and from Chichagof Island at 57° 22.58' N. lat., 135° 41.30' W. long. to Baranof Island at 57° 22.28' N. lat., 135° 40.95' W. long., and on the south and west by a line running from the southernmost tip of Sitka Point at 56° 59.38' N. lat., 135° 49.57' W. long. to Hanus Point at 56° 51.92' N. lat., 135° 30.50' W. long. to the green day marker in Dorothy Narrows to Baranof Island at 56° 49.28' N. lat., 135° 22.60' W. long.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The commercial harvest of Dungeness crab in these areas would likely increase while subsistence, sport, and personal use Dungeness crab harvest could decrease.

BACKGROUND: Current regulations specify 14 areas closed to commercial harvest of Dungeness crab in Southeast Alaska (Figure 69-1). The proposed areas to be reopened to commercial Dungeness are part of Tenakee Inlet (statistical areas 112–42, 112–45), Port Althorp (Statistical Area 114–50) and the SSSUA (statistical areas 113–31, 113–35, 113–36, 113–38, 113–40, 113–41, 113–42, 113–43, 113–44, 113–62, 113–63, 113–66) (Figure 69-2).

The portions of Tenakee Inlet and Port Althorp that are currently closed to commercial Dungeness crab fishing were open from July 1 to February 28 prior to the 1984 board meeting. After 1984, these areas were closed year round to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

Prior to the 1984/1985 season, the combined average harvest in statistical areas 112–42 and 112–45 within Tenakee Inlet from 1974/1975 to 1983/1984 was 43,930 pounds by 16 permit holders (Table 69-1). From 1984/1985 to 2014/2015, the combined average harvest was 42,439 pounds by 17 permit holders.

Prior to the 1984/1985 season, the average harvest in Statistical Area 114–50, Port Althorp, from 1974/1975 to 1983/1984 was 12,877 pounds. The number of permit holders cannot be reported due to fewer than three participating in the fishery during this time span.

There are no customary and traditional use findings for Dungeness crab within the closed areas of Tenakee Inlet and Port Althorp. The SWHS for the Tenakee Area (including the proposed area) indicates that over the last 5 years, there have been on average 1,023 Dungeness crab harvested by residents and 395 crab harvested by nonresidents annually. An estimate for Port Althorp was not available, but for the entire Glacier Bay Management Area an average over the most recent 5 years indicates that 863 crab were harvested under sport regulations and 435 crab under personal use.

The most recent information from the department's last household survey for Port Althorp's nearby community of Elfin Cove was from 1987. The results from this survey estimated that the total personal use harvest of Dungeness crab from that year was 299 pounds, approximately 5 pounds per capita. The estimated community population during this time was roughly 60 residents, with 41 of those people being interviewed. The most recent information from the department's last household survey of Tenakee Inlet's nearby community of Tenakee Springs was also from 1987. The results from this survey estimated that the total personal use harvest of Dungeness crab from that year was 1,470 pounds, approximately 15 pounds per capita. The estimated community population during this time was roughly 95 residents, with 66 people being interviewed.

From 1985 until the 2000 board meeting, all of District 13-B was only open from October 1 until February 28 to commercial Dungeness crab fishing. It was decided at this 2000 meeting that the SSSUA would only be open to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery from October 1 to November 30 and the rest of District 13-B would remain open from October 1 to February 28. This regulation has remained unchanged since the 2000/2001 season. For the statistical areas within the SSSUA, the overall average harvest from the 1984/1985 to 1999/2000 seasons was 2,865 pounds by seven permit holders (Table 69-2). The average harvest for the statistical areas within the SSSUA after the current regulation regarding season length and closures went into effect in 2000, from the 2000/2001 to 2014/2015 seasons, was 1,687 pounds by six permit holders (Table 69-2).

The SWHS for the Sitka Sound Area indicates that over the last 5 years, there have been on average 1,602 Dungeness crab harvested by residents and 1,035 crab harvested by nonresidents annually.

There is a customary and traditional use finding for Dungeness crab in the SSSUA. The most recent information on the department's last household survey of the nearby community of Sitka was from 1996. The results from this survey estimated that the total personal use harvest of Dungeness crab from that year was 36,571 pounds, approximately 4 pounds per capita.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal.

The department manages the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery on a regionwide basis and does not perform Dungeness crab stock assessment work, nor does it have stock status information specific to the areas addressed by this proposal. Fishery performance data indicate that, regionwide, the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab stock is healthy.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

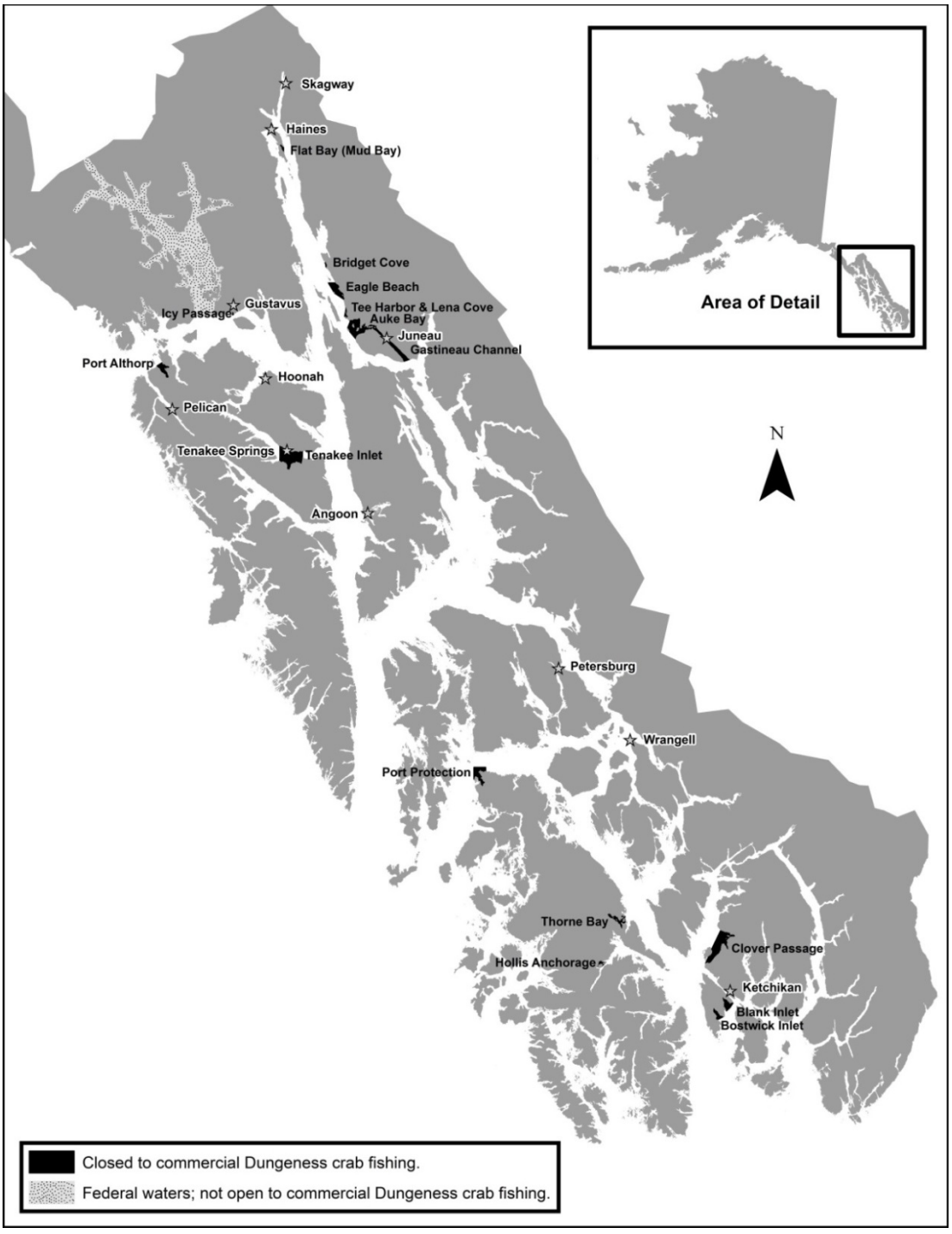

Figure 69-1.–Areas currently closed to commercial Dungeness crab fishing in Southeast Alaska.

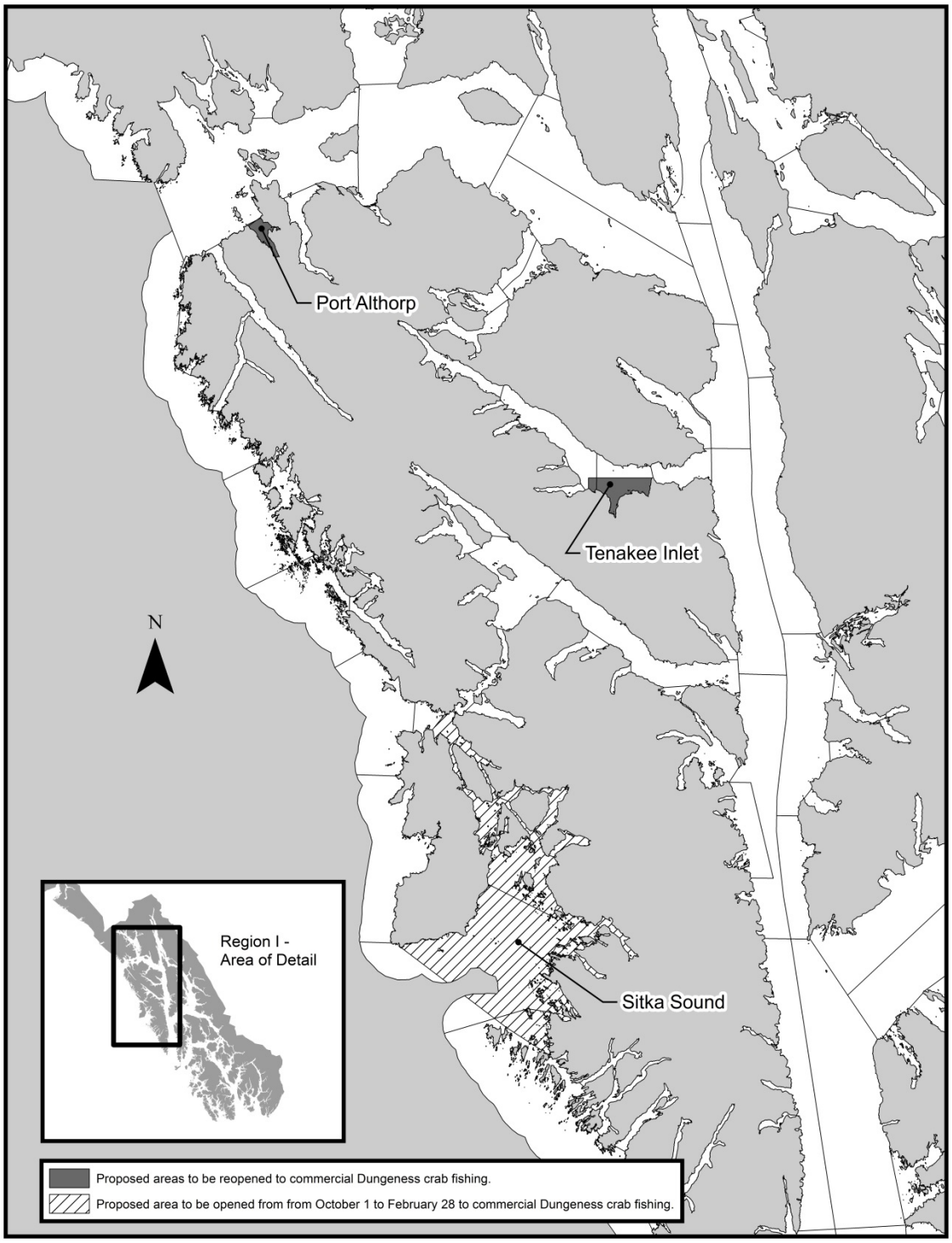

Figure 69-2.–Areas proposed to be reopened to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

Table 69-1.–Combined commercial Dungeness crab harvest (pounds) and effort in Tenakee Springs, statistical areas 112–42 and 112–45; 1969/1970 to present.

Season	Harvest	Permits	Landings
1969/1970	*	*	*
1970/1971	*	*	*
1971/1972	*	*	*
1972/1973	*	*	*
1973/1974	*	*	*
1974/1975	7,960	3	11
1975/1976	11,565	3	5
1976/1977	21,696	3	6
1977/1978	*	*	*
1978/1979	*	*	*
1979/1980	53,047	4	15
1980/1981	61,181	3	11
1981/1982	*	*	*
1982/1983	167,680	3	18
1983/1984	*	*	*
1984/1985[a]	43,313	5	21
1985/1986	79,017	7	27
1986/1987	98,836	6	29
1987/1988	75,833	5	19
1988/1989	15,339	6	6
1989/1990	19,320	3	10
1990/1991	9,529	3	6
1991/1992	27,268	3	7
1992/1993	*	*	*
1993/1994	28,855	3	4
1994/1995	*	*	*
1995/1996	22,117	4	11
1996/1997	*	*	*
1997/1998	21,899	5	20

-continued-

Table 69-1.–continued (page 2 of 2).

Season	Harvest	Permits	Landings
1998/1999	18,291	7	20
1999/2000	20,171	5	12
2000/2001	30,579	4	14
2001/2002	35,876	4	14
2002/2003	50,229	4	18
2003/2004	115,636	8	41
2004/2005	74,929	9	25
2005/2006	105,051	7	27
2006/2007	72,536	4	22
2007/2008	68,030	9	30
2008/2009	62,720	8	21
2009/2010	35,280	9	24
2010/2011	14,257	5	28
2011/2012	56,957	4	23
2012/2013	*	*	*
2013/2014	*	*	*
2014/2015[b]	*	*	*
Average	42,944	*	17

*Fewer than three permit holders; information is confidential.

[a] Proposed areas within these statistical areas have been closed to the commercial Dungeness crab fishery since the 1984/1985 season.

[b] Most recent data are preliminary and from the summer season only.

Table 69-2.–Combined commercial Dungeness crab harvest (pounds) and effort within the Sitka Sound Special Use Area, statistical areas 113–31, 113–35, 113–36, 113–38, 113–40, 113–41, 113–42, 113–43, 113–44, 113–62, 113–63, 113–66; 1970/1971 to present.

Season	Harvest	Permits	Landings
1970/1971	*	*	*
1971/1972	2,746	3	3
1972/1973	1,623	3	5
1973/1974	*	*	*
1974/1975	820	3	5
1975/1976	7,297	3	6
1976/1977	*	*	*
1977/1978	0	0	0
1978/1979	*	*	*
1979/1980	0	0	0
1980/1981	0	0	0
1981/1982	17,338	4	6
1982/1983	7764	4	16
1983/1984	*	*	*
1984/1985	*	*	*
1985/1986	3,234	3	6
1986/1987	782	3	3
1987/1988	*	*	*
1988/1989	*	*	*
1989/1990	0	0	0
1990/1991	*	*	*
1991/1992	4,372	3	4
1992/1993	*	*	*
1993/1994	*	*	*
1994/1995	*	*	*
1995/1996	7,284	3	14
1996/1997	5,283	4	5
1997/1998	2,554	6	9
1998/1999	2,916	4	14

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Table 69-2.–continued (page 2 of 2).

Season	Harvest	Permits	Landings
1999/2000	3,840	5	15
2000/2001[a]	*	*	*
2001/2002	*	*	*
2002/2003	*	*	*
2003/2004	*	*	*
2004/2005	0	0	0
2005/2006	0	0	0
2006/2007	1,712	3	5
2007/2008	*	*	*
2008/2009	*	*	*
2009/2010	519	4	7
2010/2011	*	*	*
2011/2012	*	*	*
2012/2013	*	*	*
2013/2014	*	*	*
2014/2015[b]	9,521	4	32
Average	3,648	*	6

*Fewer than three permit holders; information is confidential.

[a] Proposed statistical areas within the Sitka Sound Special Use Area were closed to the commercial Dungeness fishery from January 1 to September 30 and December 1 to December 31 from the 2000/2001 to current season.

[b] Most recent data are preliminary and from the summer season only.

PROPOSALS 70–79 – 5AAC 32.150 CLOSED WATERS IN REGISTRATION AREA A.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSALS DO? These proposals would close the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in specific areas as follows:
Proposal 70: portions of Hetta Inlet and Sukkwan Strait,
Proposal 71: a portion of Whale Pass,
Proposals 72 and 73: portions of Frederick Sound and Wrangell Narrows,
Proposal 74: portions of or the entire Big Bear/Baby Bear Marine Park,
Proposal 75: near Angoon,
Proposal 76: near Horse and Colt Islands,
Proposal 77: near Portland Island/Lena Point,
Proposal 78: near Hoonah, and
Proposal 79: in portions of Chilkat and Chilkoot Inlets until harvest levels rebound.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

The commercial Dungeness crab season is as follows:

(1) in District 2 and Section 13–B, except the waters of the Sitka Sound Special Use Area described in 5 AAC 32.150(10) , and beginning February 29, 2012, in District 1, from 12:00 noon October 1 through 11:59 p.m. February 28;

(2) in the waters of Section 13–B that are in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area described in 5 AAC 32.150(10) , and in the waters of Whale Passage north and west of a line extending from 56° 05.65' N. lat., 133 ° 07.30' W. long. to 56° 05.85' N. lat., 133° 06.40' W. long., from 12:00 noon October 1 through 11:59 p.m. November 30;

(3) in all other waters of Registration Area A, from 12:00 noon June 15 through 11:59 p.m. August 15 and from 12:00 noon October 1 through 11:59 p.m. November 30.

There are 14 areas closed to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in Southeast Alaska. These areas are primarily located near communities (Figure 70-1).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSALS WERE ADOPTED? The commercial harvest of Dungeness crab in these areas would decrease in some areas. Subsistence, sport, and personal use Dungeness crab harvest may increase in some areas.

BACKGROUND:

Proposal 70 – proposed by Anthony Christianson, Hydaburg LAC Chairman.

For Proposal 70, the proposed closed area is part of statistical areas 103–25 and 103–40 (Figure 70-2). The average commercial harvest over the past 10 full seasons is 2,618 pounds with a CPUE of 4.1 (Table 70-1). Due to fewer than three permit holders fishing in this area during this time span, the number of permit holders cannot be reported.

The SWHS cannot provide an estimate of Dungeness crab harvest specific to the proposed area of closure but can provide sport and personal use harvests for a larger geographical area. This area includes responses from anglers reporting Dungeness crab harvest from Hetta Inlet, Natzuhini Bay, and the less descriptive "West side of Prince of Wales island". The most recent 5 year average of Dungeness crab harvest within this area is 644 crab in the sport fishery and 1,479 crab in the personal use fishery.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, the proposed areas are within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. The department conducted a comprehensive wild resource household harvest survey of the nearby community of Hydaburg in 2013. The results from this survey estimated that residents of Hydaburg harvested a total of 5,045 pounds of Dungeness crab in 2012 (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catches), approximately 15 pounds per capita. The household harvest survey also documented the locations of Dungeness crab sport, personal use, and subsistence harvesting by Hydaburg residents (Figure 70-3). These results show that in 2012, Hydaburg residents relied heavily on part of the areas proposed for closure for their Dungeness crab harvest.

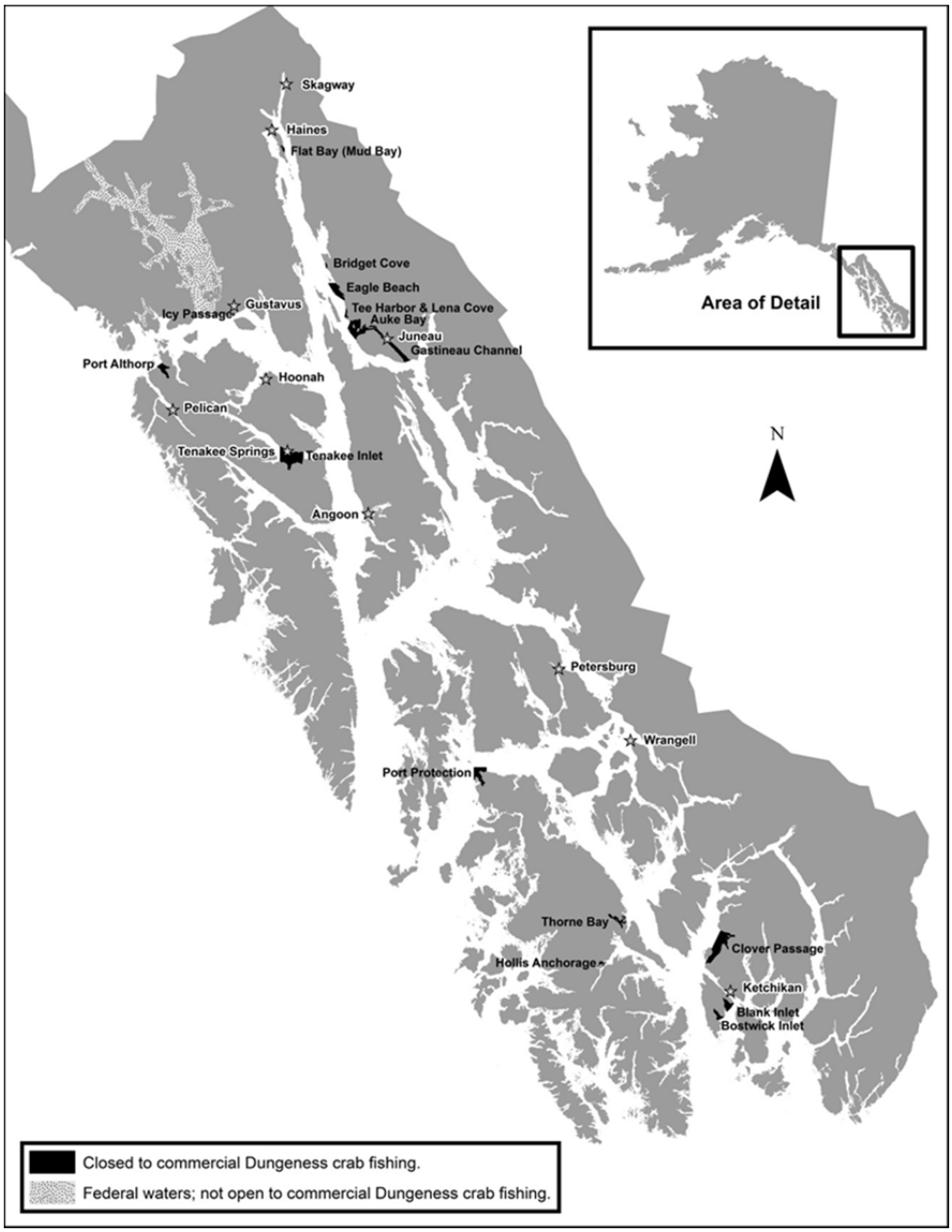

Figure 70-1.–Areas currently closed to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in Southeast Alaska.

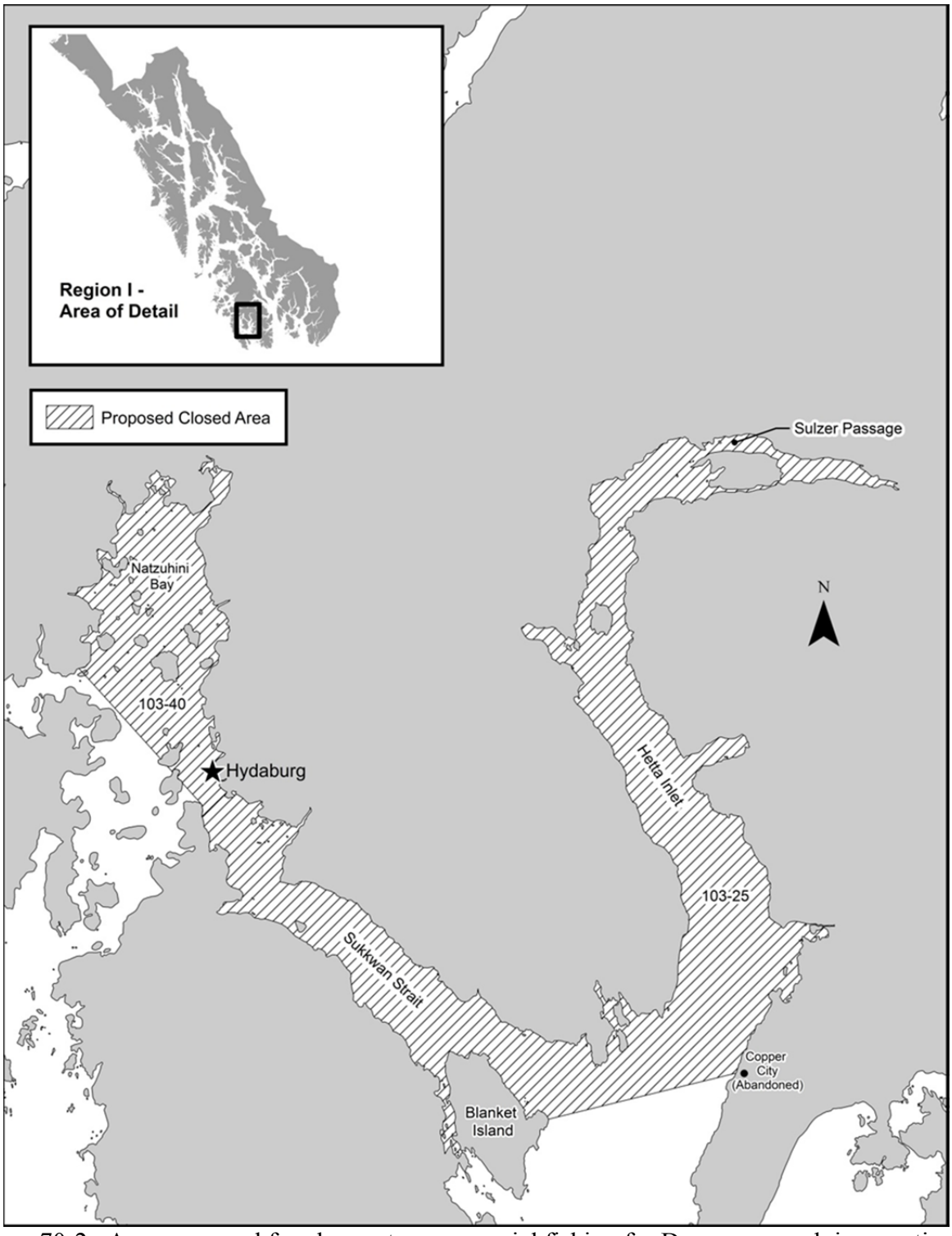

Figure 70-2.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in a portion of Hetta Inlet, Sukkwan Strait, and near the community of Hydaburg (Proposal 70).

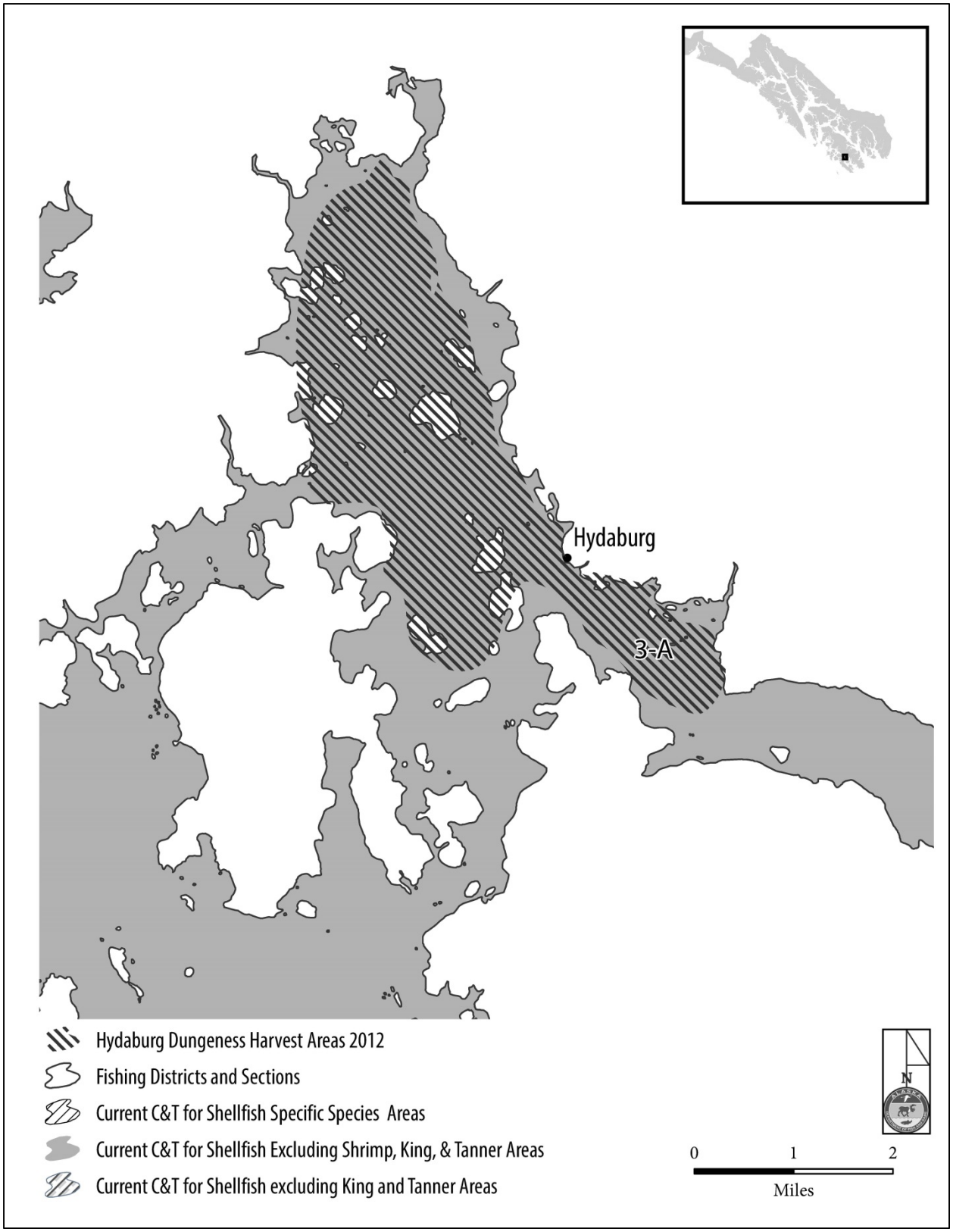

Figure 70-3.–Sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest areas for Dungeness crab (household surveys), Hydaburg, 2012 (Proposal 70).

Proposal 71– proposed by Whale Pass Community Association.

For Proposal 71, the proposed closed area is part of Statistical Area 106–30 and all of Statistical Area 106–35 (Figure 70-4). The average commercial harvest over the past ten full seasons is 51,759 pounds by 6 permit holders with a CPUE of 5.0 (Table 70-1).

The Dungeness crab sport and personal use harvest in Whale Pass from 2011 to 2013 averaged 239 crab in the sport fishery and 368 crab in the personal use fishery, as estimated by the SWHS.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, the proposed areas are within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. The department conducted a comprehensive wild resource household harvest survey of the nearby community of Whale Pass in 2013. The results from this survey estimated that residents of Whale Pass harvested a total of 784 pounds of Dungeness crab in 2012 (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catch), approximately 14 pounds per capita. The household harvest survey also documented the locations of Dungeness crab harvesting by Whale Pass residents (Figure 70-5). These results show that Whale Pass residents utilize the proposed closure area almost exclusively for their sport, personal use, and subsistence Dungeness crab harvest.

Prior to the 2003 board meeting, Statistical Area 106–35 [5 AAC 32.150 (15)] was open to the harvest of commercial Dungeness crab for both summer and fall seasons. In 2003, the board adopted a regulation to close this area to commercial Dungeness crab harvest; however, at the 2009 board meeting, this regulation was repealed as a closed area and amended to remain open to commercial efforts during the fall season only [5 AAC 32.110 (2)].

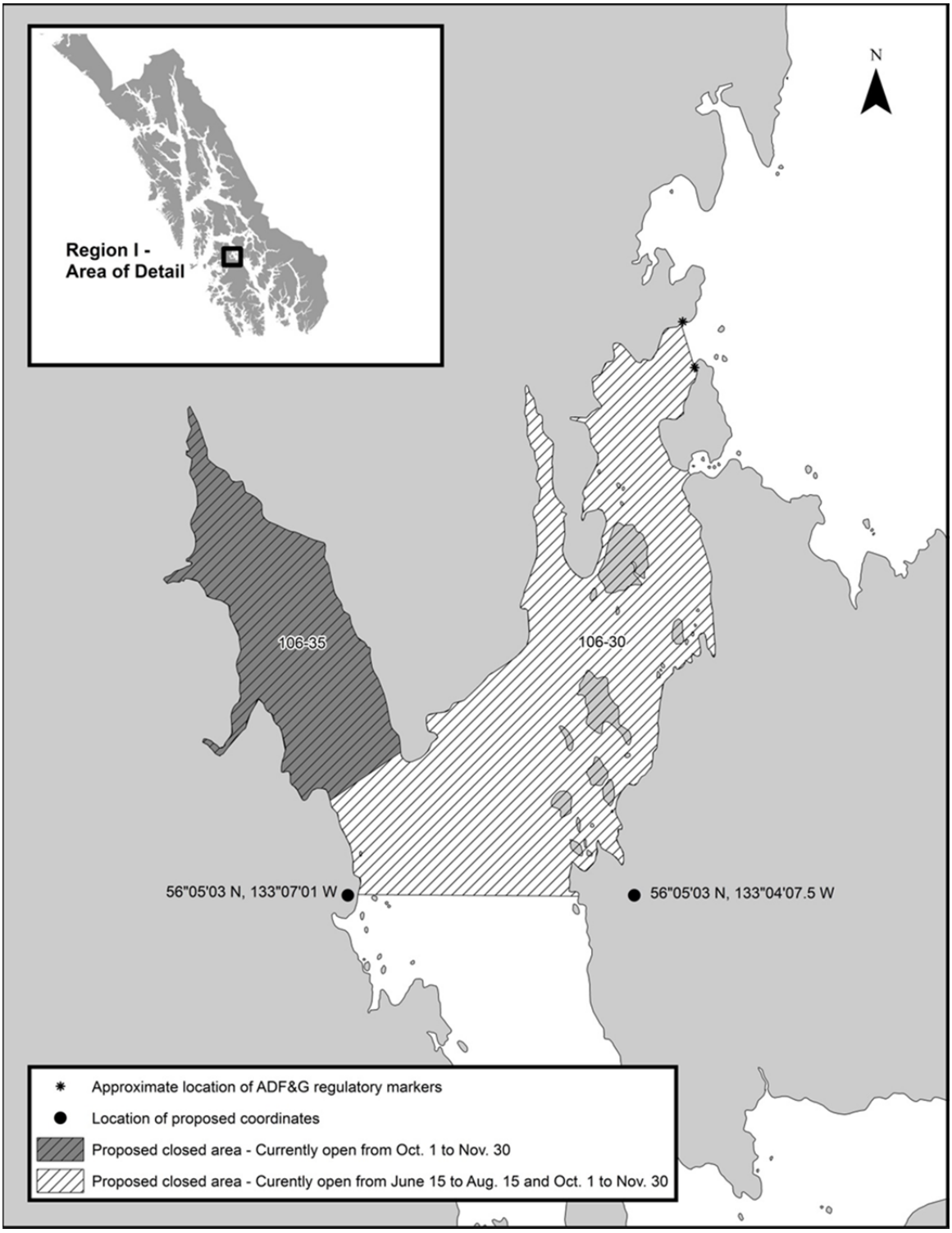

Figure 70-4.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in a portion of Whale Pass (Proposal 71).

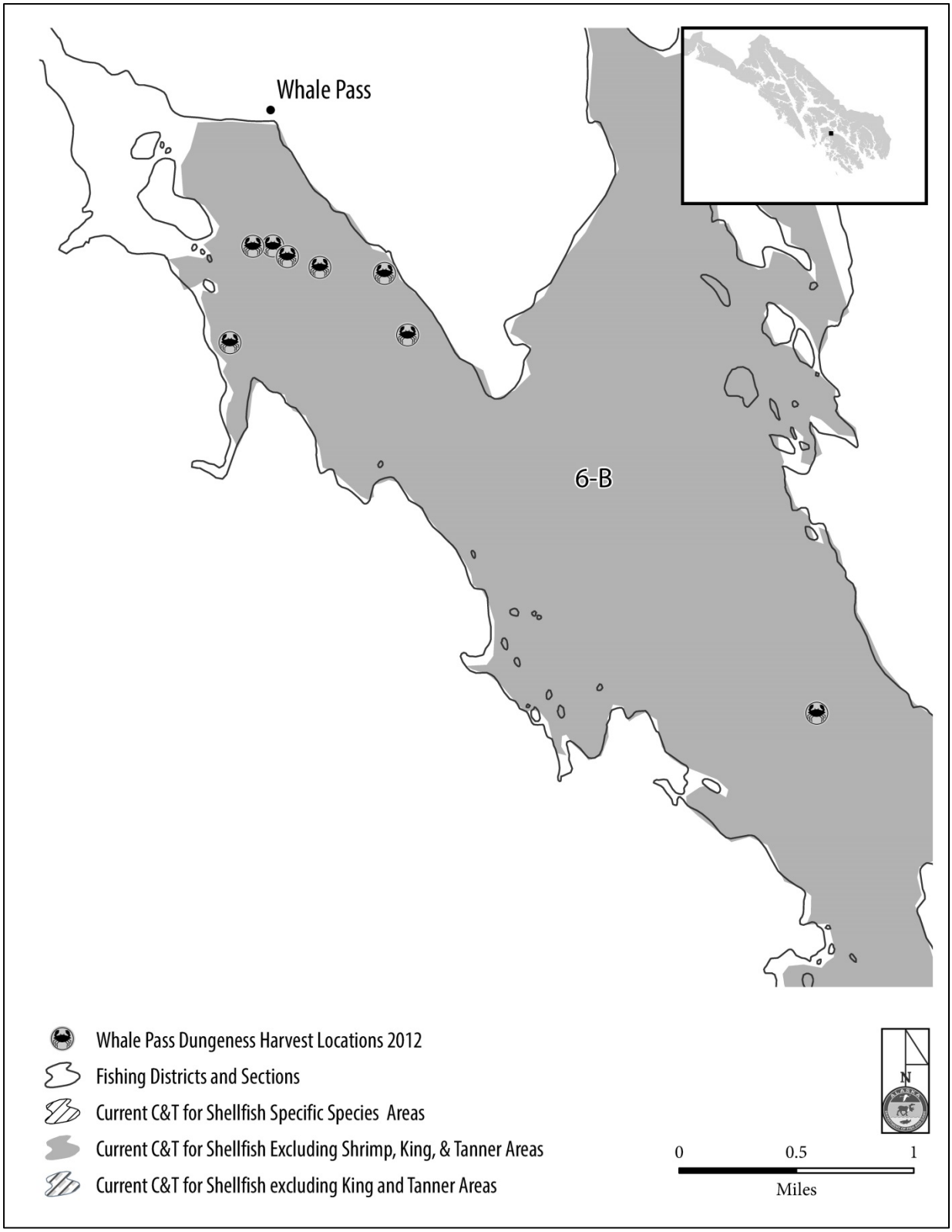

Figure 70-5.–Sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest locations for Dungeness crab (household surveys), Whale Pass, 2012 (Proposal 71).

Proposals 72 and 73 – proposed by Steve Burrell.

For proposals 72 and 73, the proposed closed area is part of statistical areas 106–44 and 108–60 (Figure 70-6 and Figure 70-7). The average commercial harvest information for 106–44 over the past ten full seasons is 52,549 pounds by 15 permit holders and with a CPUE of 2.6 (Table 70-1). The average commercial harvest information for 108–60 over the past ten full seasons is 76,014 pounds by 16 permit holders with a CPUE of 3.1 (Table 70-1).

The SWHS cannot provide an estimate of Dungeness crab harvest specific to the proposed area of closure but can provide sport and personal use harvests for a larger geographical area for reference. This area includes responses from anglers reporting Dungeness crab harvest from Wrangell Narrows, Frederick Sound near Petersburg, and the terminal harvest area in Wrangell Narrows. The most recent 5 year average of Dungeness crab harvest within this area is 2,009 crab in the sport fishery and 1,013 crab in the personal use fishery.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, a portion of the proposed areas found within Statistical Area 108–60 is within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. Proposed areas within Statistical Area 106–44 are not within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The most recent information from the department's household survey of the nearby community of Petersburg is from 2000. The results from this survey estimated that the total noncommercial harvest (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catch) of Dungeness crab by Petersburg residents from that year was 18,669 pounds, approximately 6 pounds per capita. Harvests in 2000 were mapped at the species category level. Figure 70-8 shows the sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest of all marine invertebrates in 2000, which includes Dungeness crab. The crab harvests occurred within the proposed closed areas for proposals 72 and 73.

A proposal to close similar areas to commercial Dungeness fishing was not adopted at the 2009 board meeting.

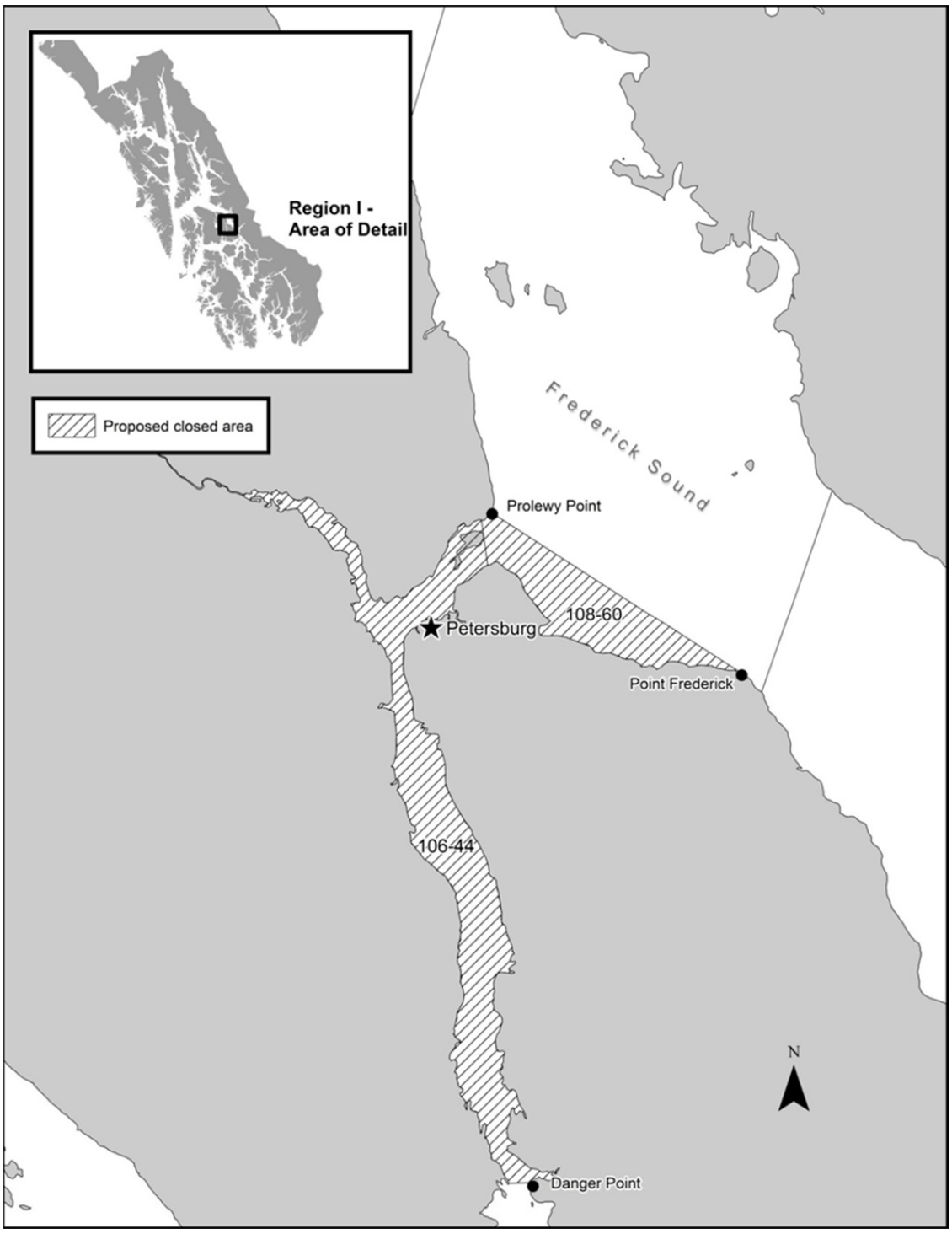

Figure 70-6.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in a portion of Wrangell Narrows, Frederick Sound and near the community of Petersburg (Proposal 72).

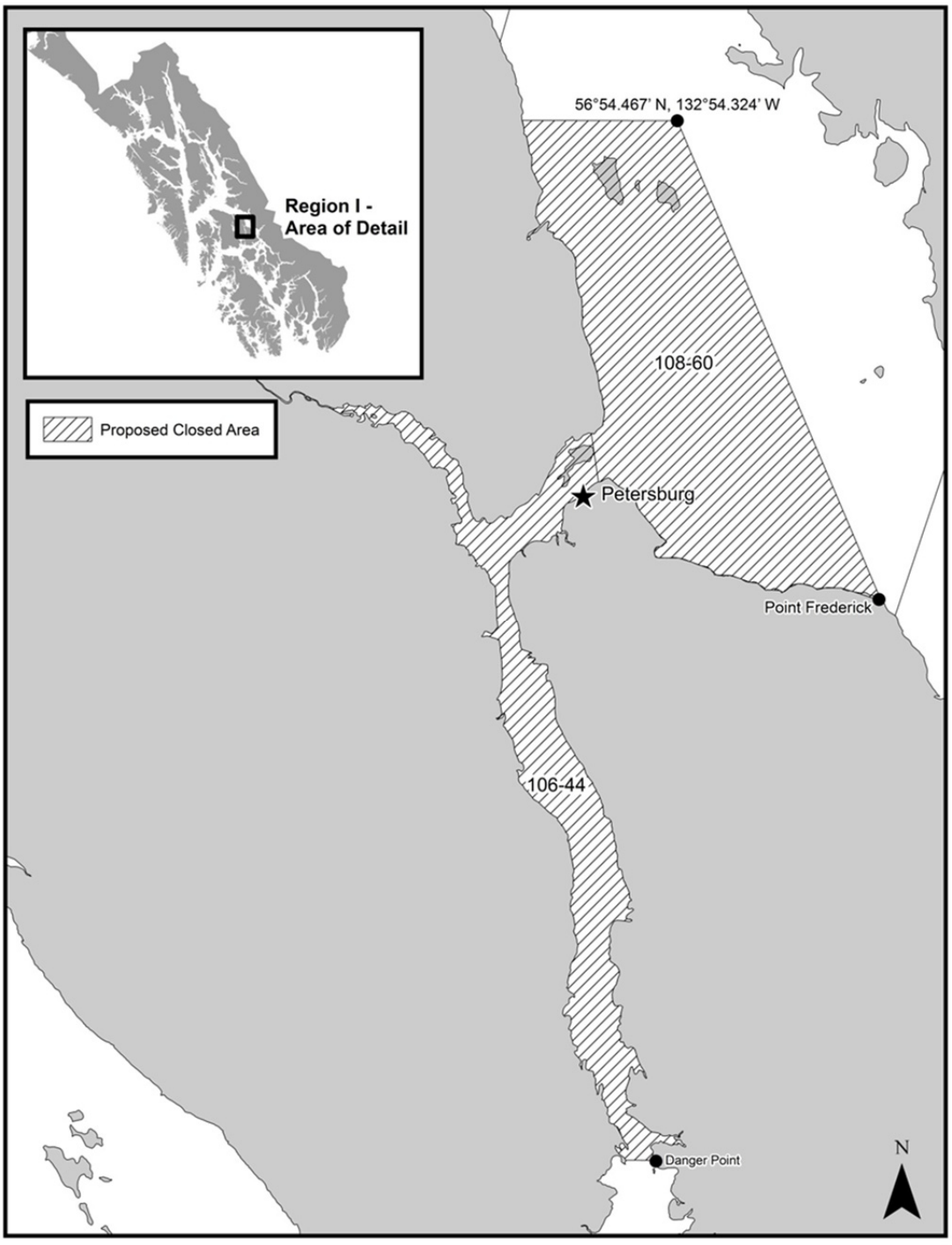

Figure 70-7.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in a portion of Wrangell Narrows, Frederick Sound and near the community of Petersburg (Proposal 73) .

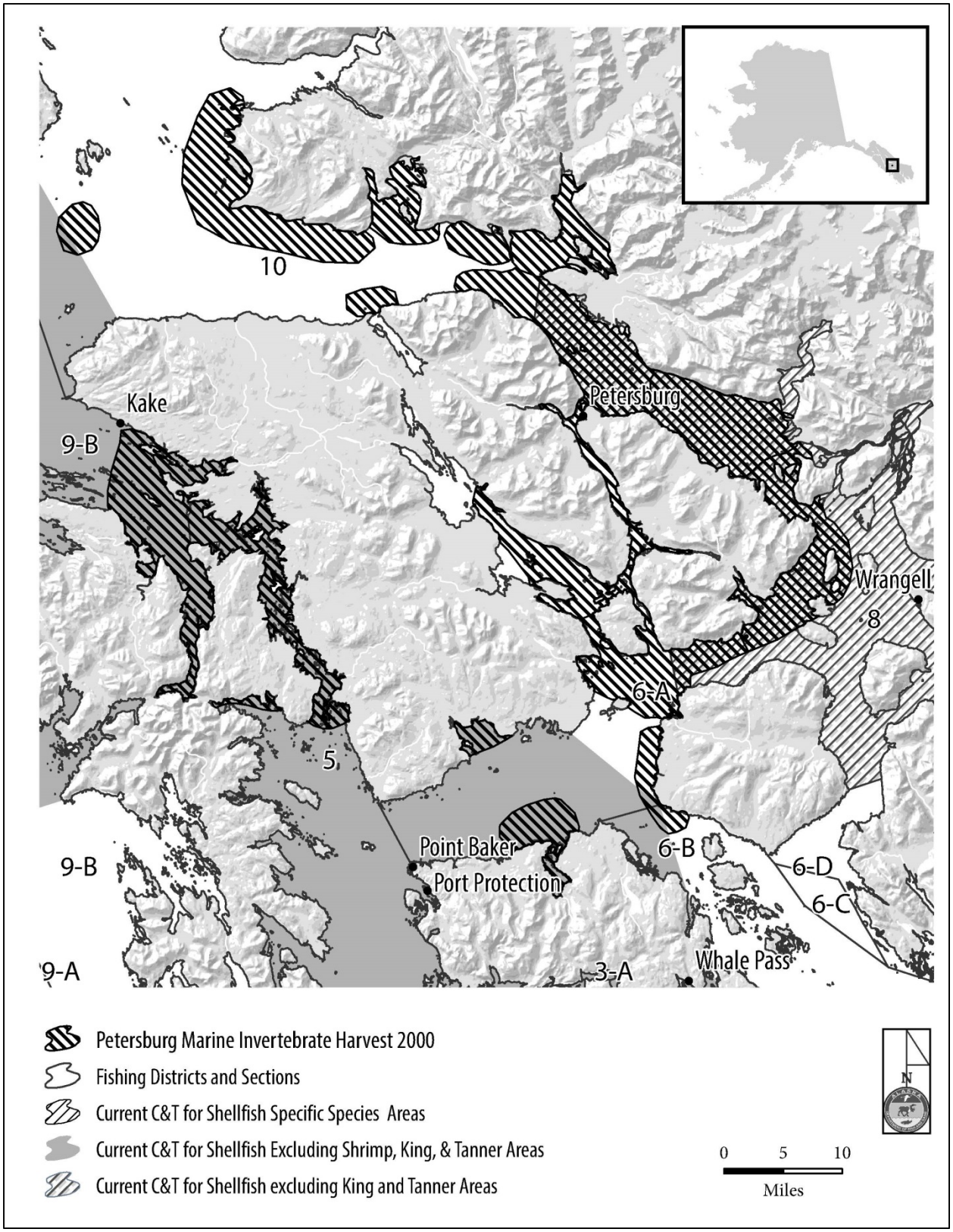

Figure 70-8.–Sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest areas for marine invertebrates (household surveys), Petersburg, 2000 (proposals 72 and 73).

Proposal 74 – proposed by Larry Edgerton and Charlene Foley.

For Proposal 74, the proposed area is part of Statistical Area 113–63 (Figure 70-9). The average commercial harvest information for 113–63 over the past ten full seasons is 2,222 pounds with a CPUE of 4.4 (Table 70-1). The number of permit holders is confidential due to fewer than three participating in the fishery during this time span.

The SWHS cannot provide an estimate of Dungeness crab harvest specific to the proposed area of closure but can provide sport and personal use harvests for a larger geographical area. This area includes responses from anglers reporting Dungeness crab harvest from all Peril Strait, which includes Hoonah Sound. The most recent 5 year average of Dungeness crab harvest within this area is 200 crab in the sport fishery and 516 crab in the personal use fishery.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, the proposed areas are within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. The most recent information from the department's household survey of the nearby community of Sitka is from 1996. The results from this survey estimated that the total noncommercial harvest (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catch) of Dungeness crab by Sitka residents from that year was 36,571 pounds, approximately 4.28 pounds per capita. No map data are available from this survey.

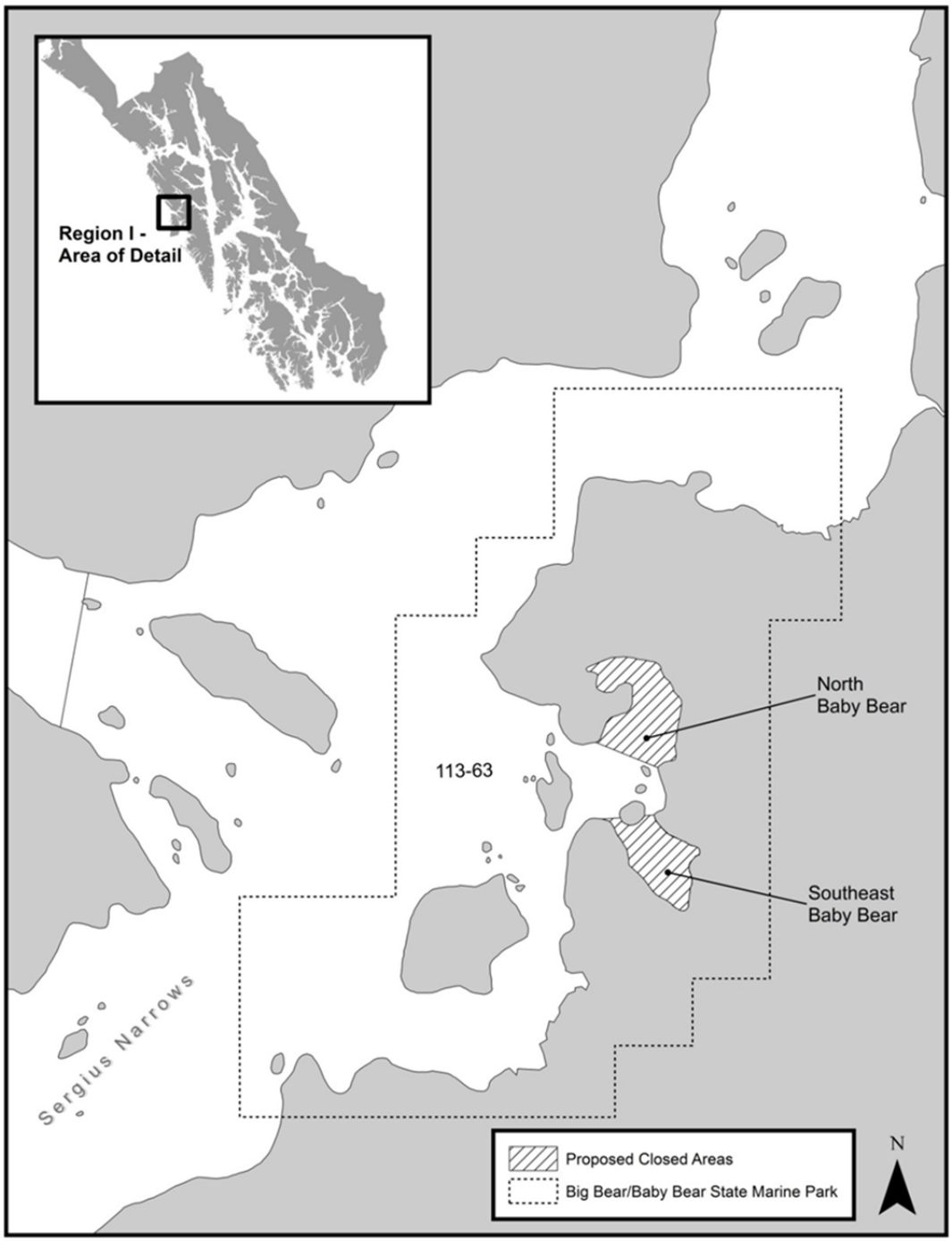

Figure 70-9.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in Big Bear/Baby Bear State Marine Park (Proposal 74).

Proposal 75 – proposed by City of Angoon.

For Proposal 75, the proposed closed area encompasses all of Statistical Area 112–67 (Figure 70-10). The average commercial harvest over the past 10 seasons for 112–67 is 2,133 pounds with a CPUE of 5.6. The number of permit holders is confidential due to fewer than three participating in the fishery during this time span.

The SWHS for the Angoon Area indicates that over the last 5 years, there have been on average 78 Dungeness crab harvested in the personal use fishery and 173 Dungeness crab harvested in the sport fishery.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, the proposed areas are within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. The department administered a comprehensive wild resource household harvest survey in the nearby community of Angoon in 2013. The results from this survey estimated that residents of Angoon harvested a total of 1,113 pounds of Dungeness crab (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catch), approximately 3 pounds per capita. The household harvest survey also documented harvest areas for Dungeness crab (Figure 70-11). The mapped data show that Angoon residents utilized portions of the proposed closed area for the entirety of the 2012 Dungeness crab sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest.

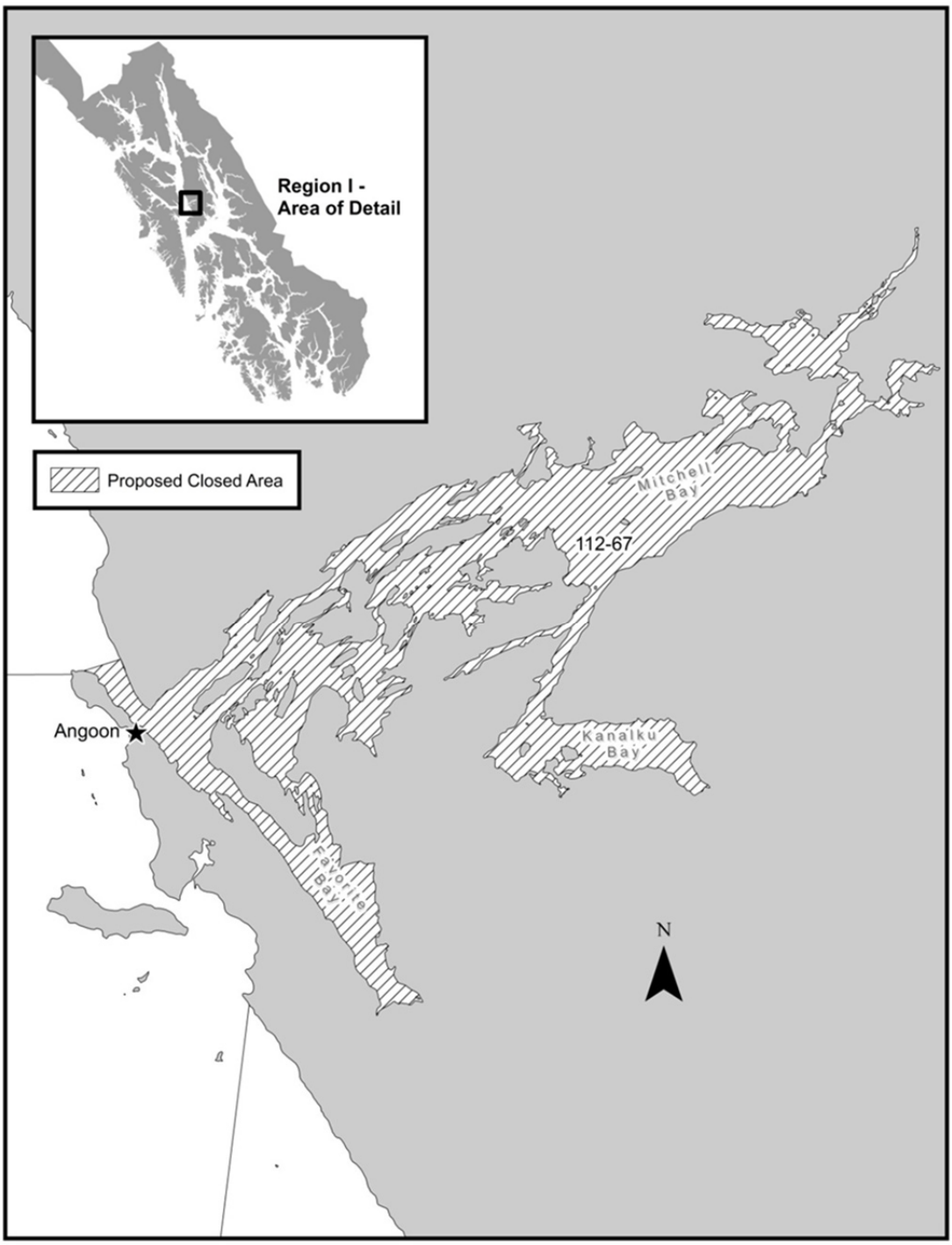

Figure 70-10.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in an area surrounding the community of Angoon (Proposal 75).

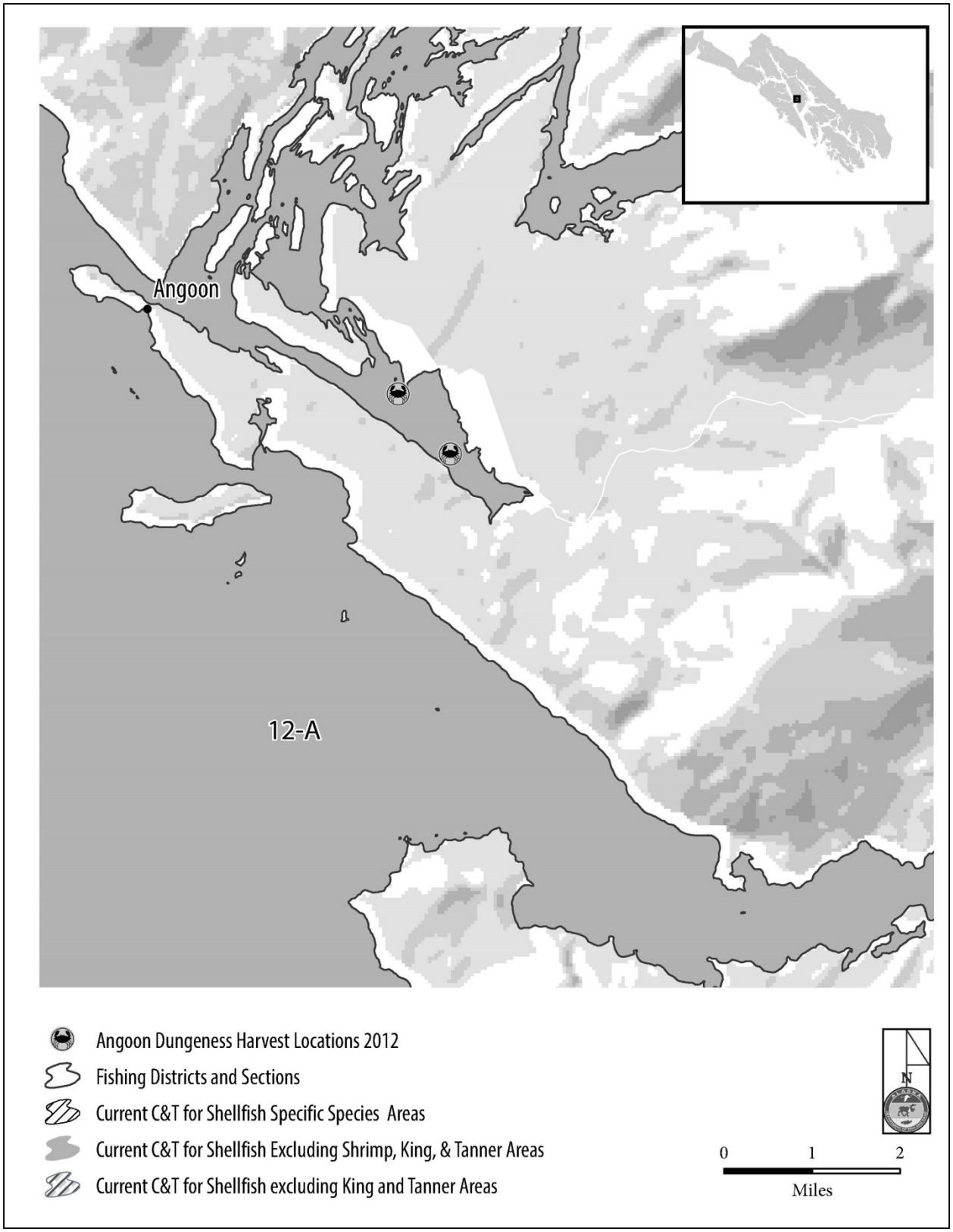

Figure 70-11.–Sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest locations for Dungeness crab (household surveys), Angoon, 2012 (Proposal 75).

Proposal 76 – proposed by Ron and Nan Schonenbach.

For Proposal 76, this proposed closed area is part of Statistical Area 111–40 (Figure 70-12). The average commercial harvest information for 111–40 over the past 10 full seasons is 36,708 pounds by seven permit holders with a CPUE of 4.4 (Table 70-1).

The SWHS cannot provide an estimate of Dungeness crab harvest specific to the proposed area of closure but can provide sport and personal use harvests for a larger geographical area for reference. This area includes responses from anglers reporting Dungeness crab harvested from Horse Island and the less descriptive "Juneau area saltwater". The most recent 5 year average of Dungeness crab harvest within this area is 3,447 crab in the sport fishery and 677 crab in personal use fishery. The actual sport and personal use harvest that occurs in the proposed closure area is likely a fraction of the actual harvest.

According to 5 AAC 99.015 (a)(2), the area proposed for closure lies within the Juneau Nonsubsistence Use Area and therefore there can be no customary and traditional use determinations and no subsistence harvests.

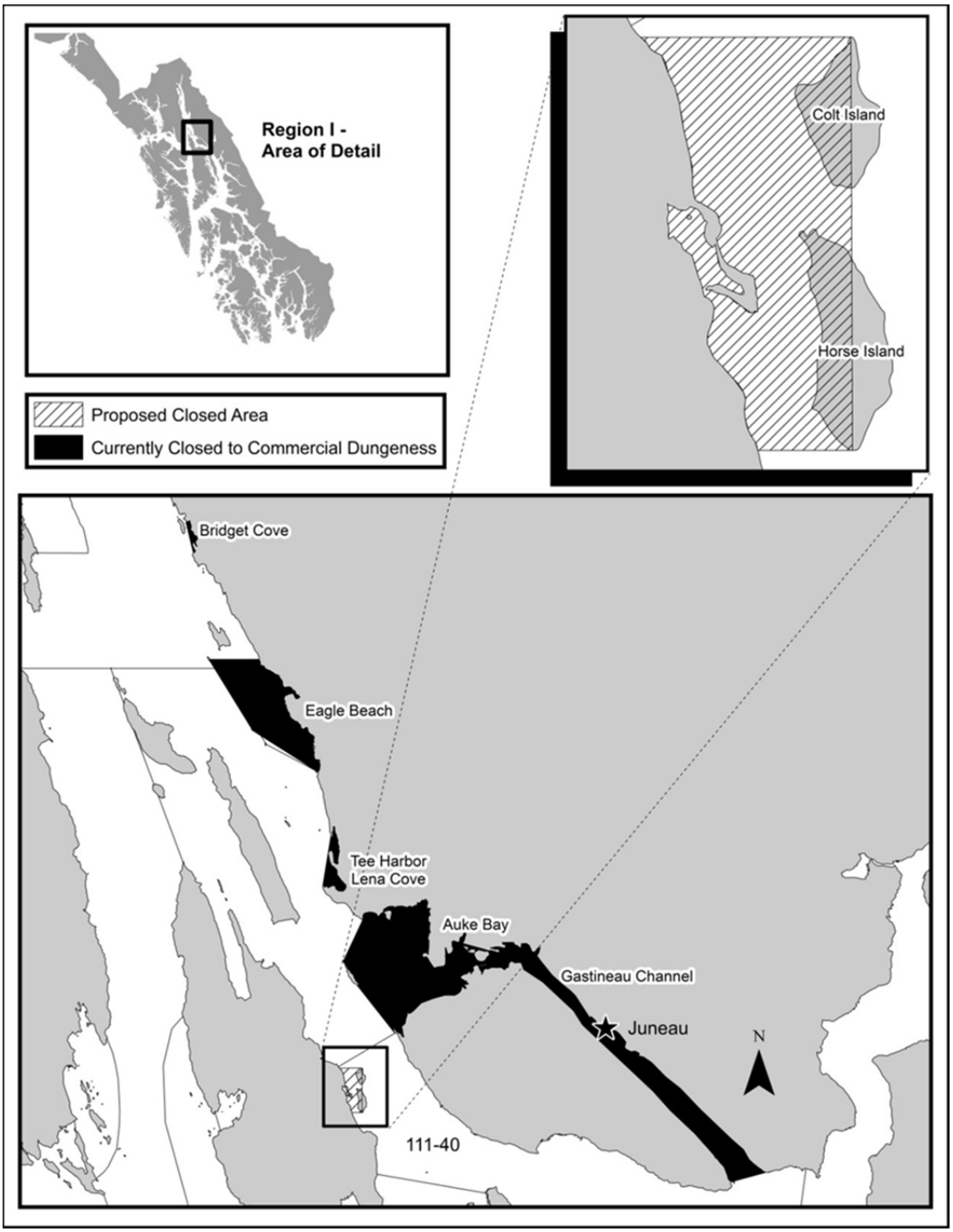

Figure 70-12.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab near Horse and Colt islands (Proposal 76).

Proposal 77 – proposed by Ron and Nan Schonenbach.

For Proposal 77, this proposed closed area is part of Statistical Area 111–50 (Figure 70-13), and would increase the size of an area currently closed to commercial Dungeness crab fishing that currently includes all of Auke Bay and Gastineau Channel. The average commercial harvest information over the past 10 full seasons for these areas is 1,949 pounds with a CPUE of 5.8 (Table 70-1). The number of permit holders is confidential due to fewer than three participating in the fishery during this time span.

The SWHS cannot provide an estimate of Dungeness crab harvest specific to the proposed area of closure but can provide the sport and personal use harvest for a larger geographical area for reference. This area includes responses from anglers reporting Dungeness crab harvested from "saltwater near Juneau". The most recent 5 year average of Dungeness crab harvest within this area is 677 crab in the sport fishery and 3,446 crab in the personal use fishery. The actual sport and personal use harvest that occurs in the proposed closure area is likely a small fraction of the actual harvest.

According to 5 AAC 99.015 (a)(2), the area proposed for closure lies within the Juneau Nonsubsistence Use Area and therefore there can be no customary and traditional use determinations and no subsistence harvests.

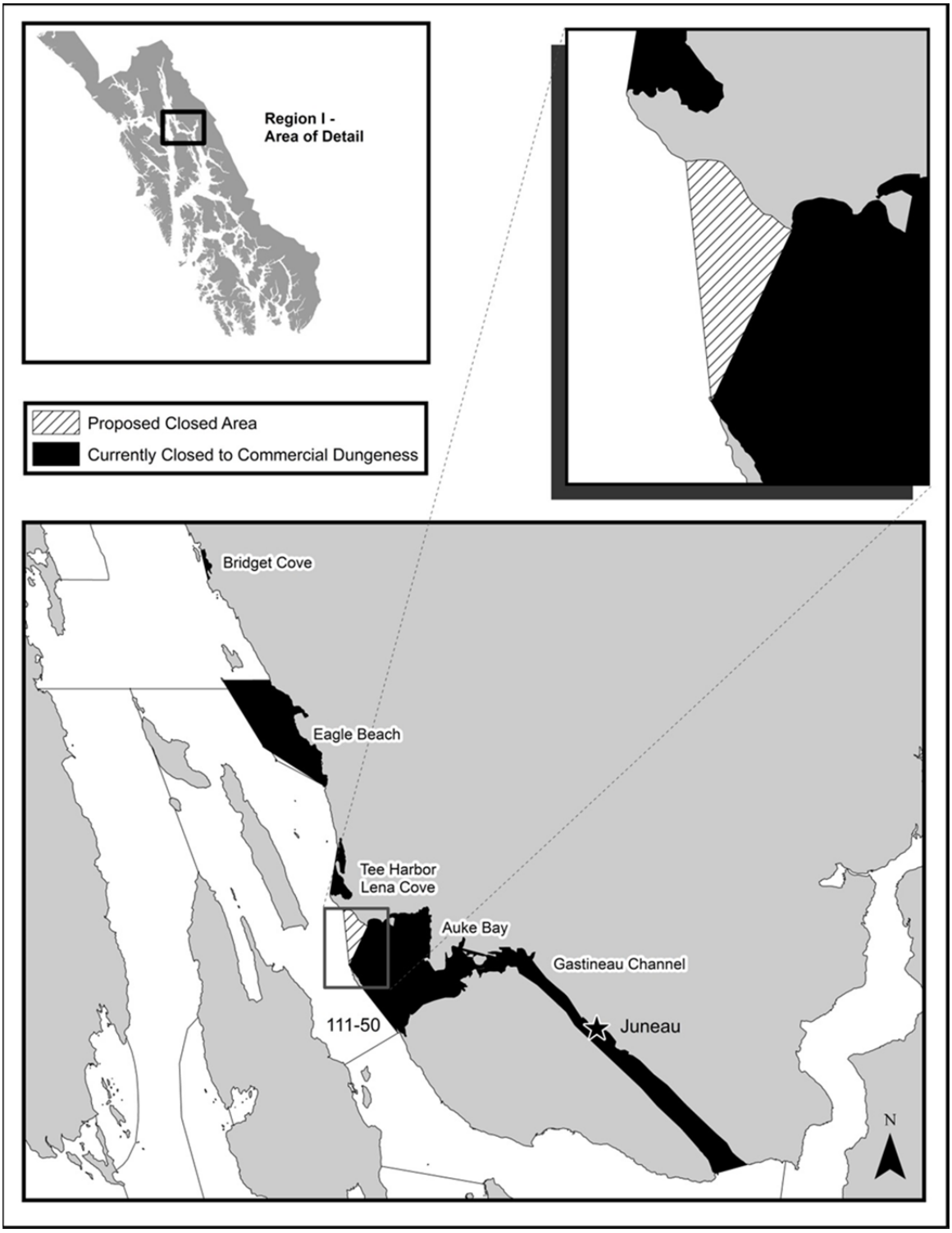

Figure 70-13.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab near Point Louisa and Portland Island (Proposal 77).

Proposal 78 – proposed by Hoonah Indian Association.

For Proposal 78, this proposed closed area is part of Statistical Area 114–31 (Figure 70-14). The average commercial harvest information for 114–31 over the past ten full seasons is 19,960 pounds by five permit holders with a CPUE of 4.9 (Table 70-1).

The SWHS cannot provide an estimate of Dungeness crab harvest specific to the proposed area of closure but can provide sport and personal use harvests for a larger geographical area. This area includes responses from anglers reporting Dungeness crab harvest from the entire Hoonah area. The most recent 5 year average of Dungeness harvest within this area is 415 crab in the sport fishery and 322 crab in the personal use fishery.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, the proposed areas are within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. The most recent information from the department's household survey of the nearby community of Hoonah is from 2012. The results from this survey estimated the total noncommercial harvest (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catch) of Dungeness crab by Hoonah residents from that year was 5,483 pounds, approximately 8 pounds per capita. The household harvest survey also documented areas used by Hoonah residents for Dungeness crab sport, personal use, and subsistence harvesting (Figure 70-15). The mapped data show that Hoonah residents use part of the areas proposed for closure for their Dungeness crab harvest.

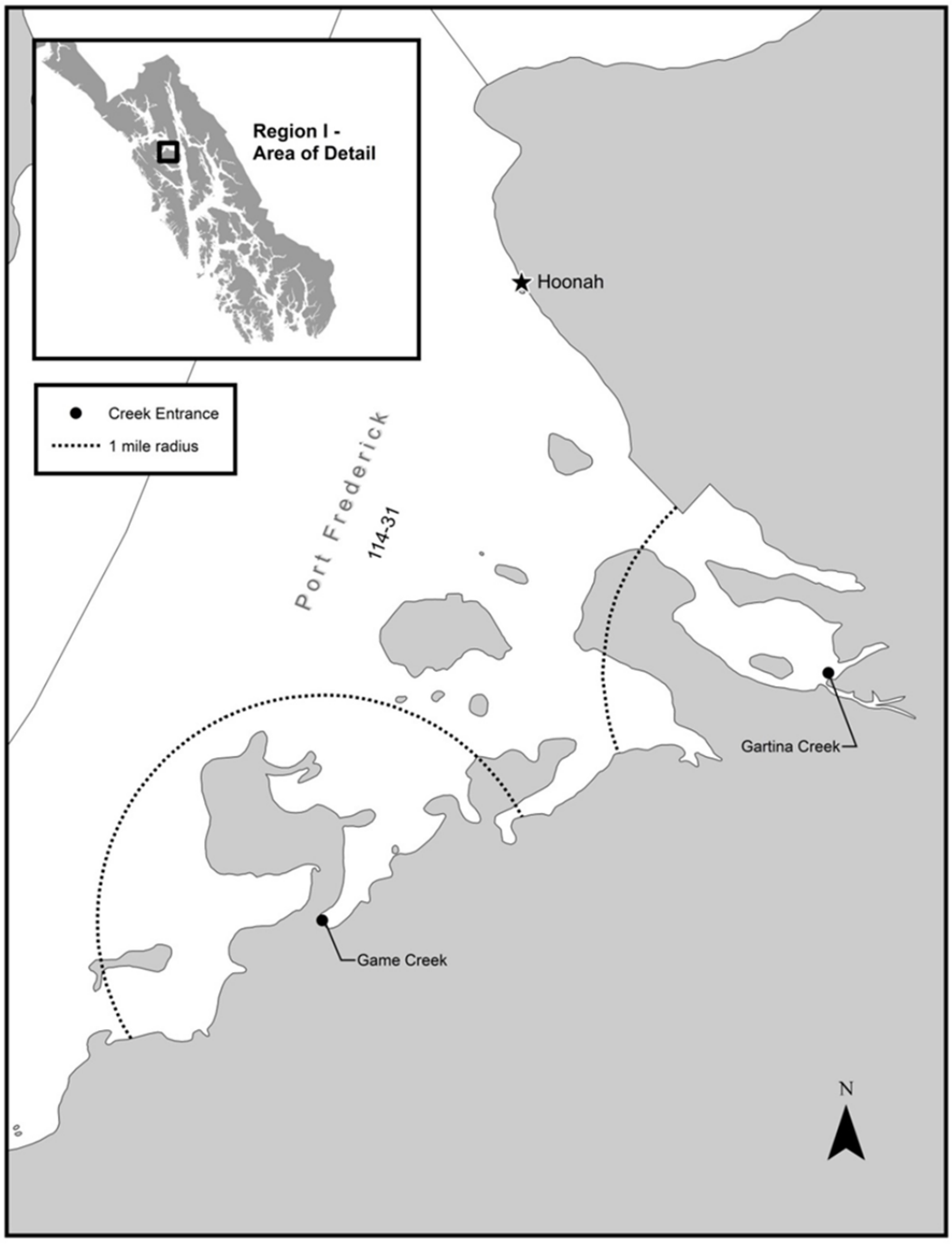

Figure 70-14.–Areas proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab near the community of Hoonah (Proposal 78).

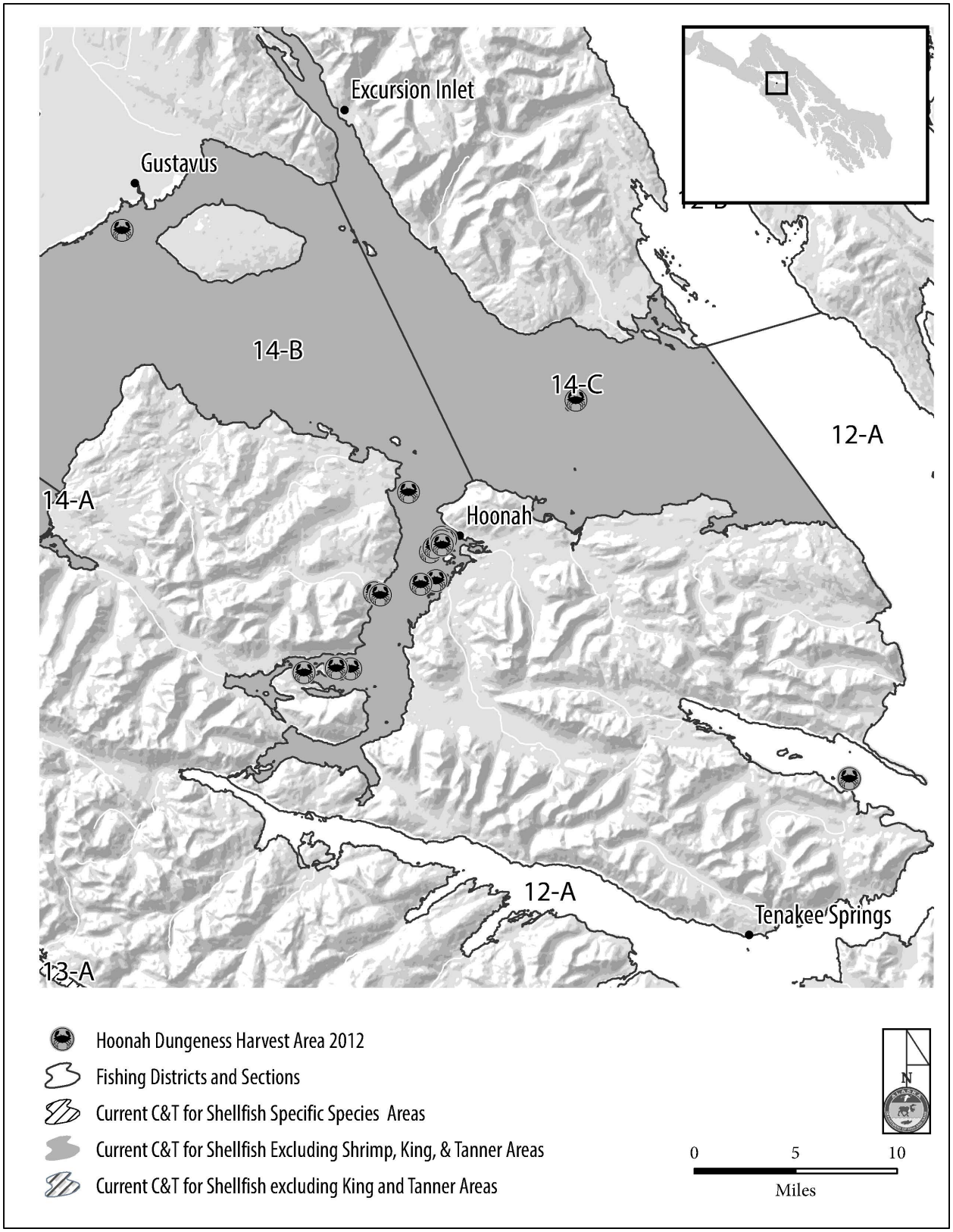

Figure 70-15.–Sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest locations for Dungeness crab (household surveys), Hoonah, 2012 (Proposal 78).

Proposal 79 – proposed by John Norton.

For Proposal 79, these proposed closed areas include portions of statistical areas 115–32 and 115–34, and all of Statistical Area 115–33 (Figure 70-16). The average commercial harvest information over the past ten full seasons for these areas is 61,080 pounds by six permit holders with a CPUE of 5.5 (Table 70-1).

The SWHS for the Angoon Area indicates that over the last 5 years, there have been, on average, 1,031 Dungeness crab harvested in the sport fishery and 937 crab harvested in the personal use fishery.

According to 5 AAC 02.108, the proposed areas are within defined shellfish customary and traditional use areas for Dungeness crab. The board has not made a finding of amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. The department administered a comprehensive wild resource household harvest survey in the nearby community of Haines in 2013. The results from this survey estimated that Haines residents harvested a total of 10,871 pounds of Dungeness crab in 2012 (sport, personal use, subsistence, and removal from commercial catch), approximately 6 pounds per capita. The household harvest survey also documented the locations of Dungeness crab sport, personal use, and subsistence harvests by Haines households (Figure 70-17). Figure 70-17 shows that residents fish a considerable distance from the community to harvest Dungeness crab.

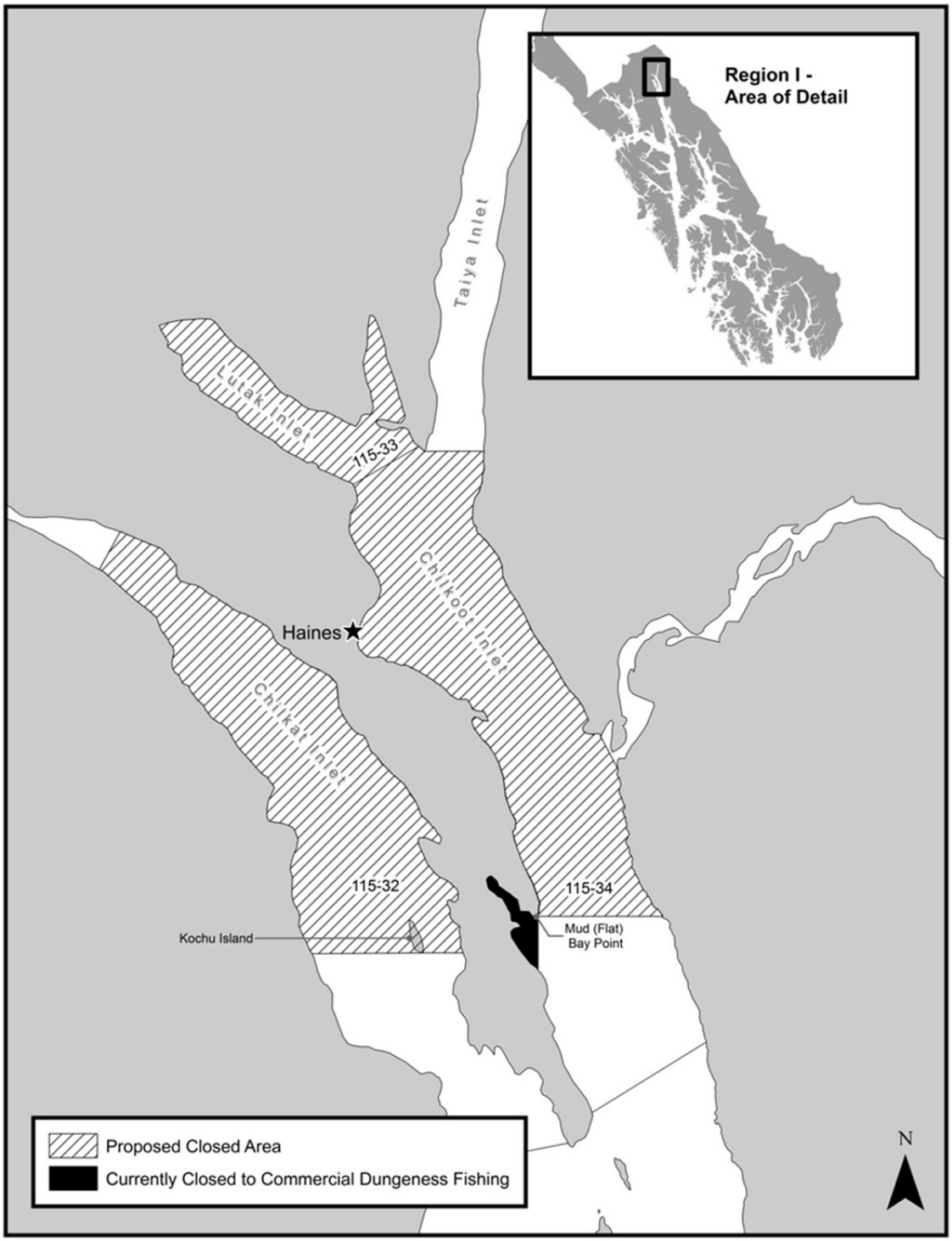

Figure 70-16.–Area proposed for closure to commercial fishing for Dungeness crab in portions of Chilkat Inlet, Chilkoot Inlet and near the community of Haines (Proposal 79).

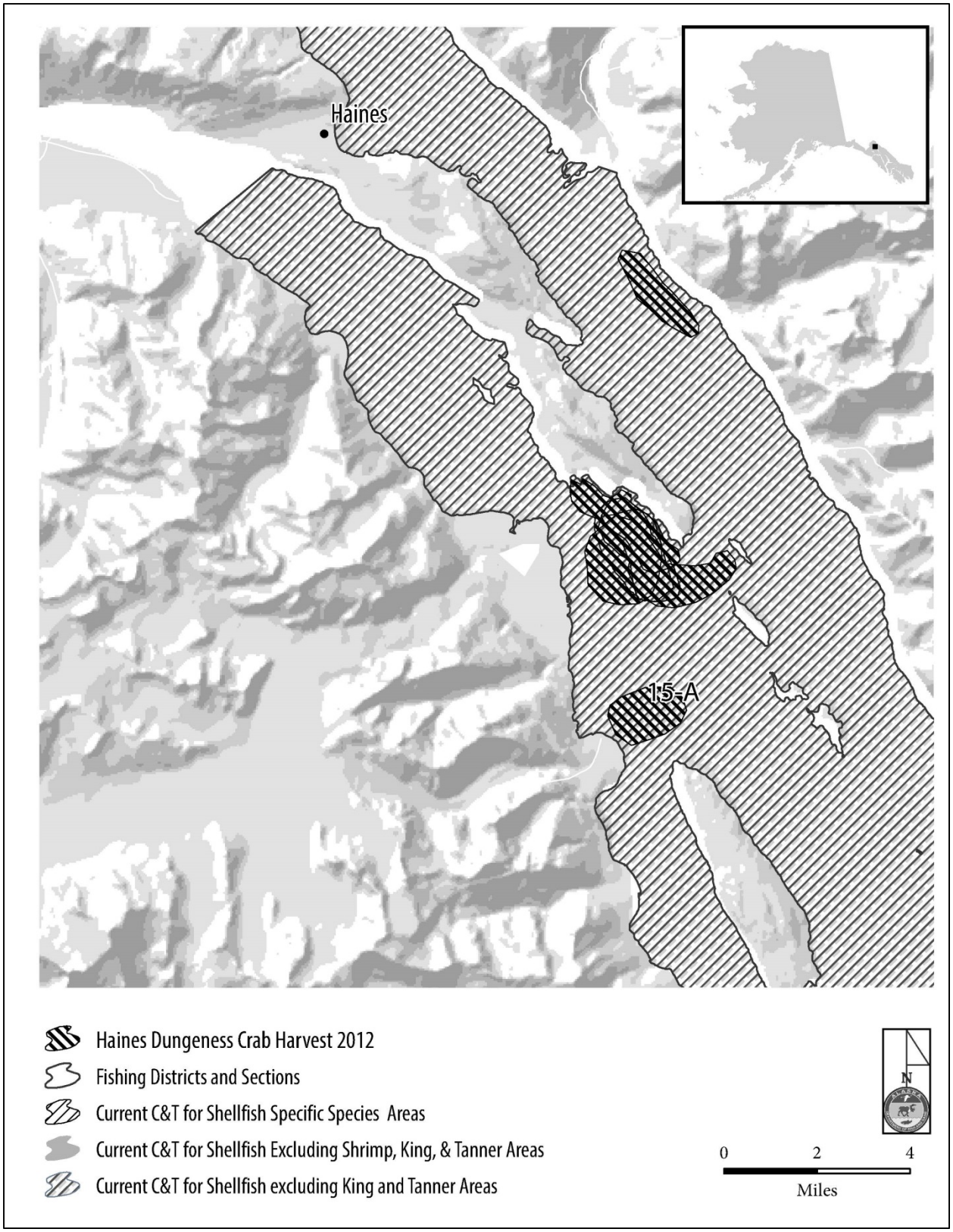

Figure 70-17.–Sport, personal use, and subsistence harvest areas for Dungeness crab (household surveys), Haines, 2012 (Proposal 79).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on these allocative proposals.

The department manages the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab fishery on a regionwide basis and does not perform Dungeness crab stock assessment work, nor does it have stock status information specific to the areas addressed by this proposal. Fishery performance data indicate that, regionwide, the Southeast Alaska Dungeness crab stock is healthy.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of these proposals is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 70-1.–Average (2005/2006–2014/2015) commercial Dungeness crab harvest (pounds) and effort in statistical areas specified in proposals 70–79.

Statistical Area	Harvest	Permits	Landings	# Crab	Pot Lifts	CPUE
103–25/40	2,618	*	*	1,365	497	4.1
106–30/35	51,759	6	26	26,127	5,272	5.0
106–44	52,549	15	182	25,962	10,054	2.6
108–60	76,014	16	158	38,583	11,994	3.1
113–63	2,222	*	8	1,113	186	4.4
112–67	2,133	*	7	1,021	152	5.6
111–40	36,708	7	34	17,812	4,092	4.4
111–50	1,949	*	5	903	159	5.8
114–31	19,960	5	32	9,539	2,048	4.9
115–32/33/34	61,080	6	51	28,831	6,294	5.5

*Fewer than three permit holders; information is confidential.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – GROUP 2: KING AND TANNER CRAB

(9 PROPOSALS)

COMMERCIAL FISHERY (8)

PROPOSAL 84 – 5AAC 34.170. Fishing seasons for Registration Area D.

PROPOSED BY: Jared Bright.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would eliminate a GKC fishery opened by the department through emergency order in Registration Area D (Yakutat), and instead would open a fishery under the conditions of a permit issued by the commissioner.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Male GKC may be taken only during periods established by emergency order. When opened, only GKC seven inches or greater shell width may be retained, there is a 100 pot maximum limit for the waters of Yakutat Bay, and there are pot marking, storage, and operation of other pot gear regulations in affect.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would change from opening a commercial golden king crab fishery in Registration Area D by emergency order to opening the fishery under the conditions of a permit issued by the commissioner. This would allow for a more tightly controlled fishery which would reduce the likelihood of overharvest of golden king crab in the area.

BACKGROUND: The commercial GKC fishery began in 1970 as a bycatch fishery to the red and blue king crab fisheries with a quota of 1.5 million pounds. In 1971, GKC fisheries were recognized with the adoption of distinct seasons, and a quota of 600,000 pounds was established and managed regionwide under Registration Area A, which included Southeast Alaska and Yakutat until 1987. During the 1986 board meeting Southeast Alaska and Yakutat were separated as shellfish registration areas – areas A and D respectively. Prior to that split, commercial fishing for GKC in Yakutat was allowed under an exploratory fishery opened by emergency order with other exploratory areas in Southeast Alaska.

Yakutat has remained an area open to commercial GKC fishing since 1987 only through an emergency order issued by the department. To date little to no commercial GKC fishing effort has occurred in Yakutat, resulting in no historic information on GKC population and stock structure in this area. Documented harvest of GKC in Yakutat is extremely limited. Until now, there has been little to no interest from the commercial fleet in targeting GKC in Yakutat. Due to the lack of knowledge on GKC population structure in Yakutat, the department has not opened commercial GKC fishing by emergency order in Yakutat since 1987.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal. This proposal, to allow harvest through a commissioner's permit rather than by emergency order, is the preferred approach in allowing fishermen to harvest GKC in Registration Area D. Under a commissioner's permit the department could impose management measures that are currently not in regulation in a more flexible manner. Such restrictions could include a conservative GHL, restrictive pot limits, reporting requirements, potential observer coverage, and a limited fishing season due to the lack of knowledge and fishing history on GKC stocks in Registration Area D.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 85 – **5AAC 34.1XX. Logbooks** and **5AAC 34.1XX. Reporting requirements for king crab in Registration Area D.**

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would establish a logbook requirement for commercial king crab fisheries in Registration Area D (Yakutat). This proposal would also allow the department to establish inseason reporting requirements for commercial king crab fisheries in Yakutat to provide for orderly fisheries.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There are currently no logbook requirements for Registration Area D king crab fisheries.

Logbooks and inseason reporting requirements are required for Registration Area A. The reporting requirements include providing the number of king crab onboard a vessel and the number of pot lifts conducted during a fishing period by fishery area and other information the department feels is necessary for the management of the resource.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The department would have regulatory authority to require logbooks and inseason harvest reports daily or as needed to target specific guideline harvest levels (GHLs). This would be an effective management tool to prevent overharvest in Yakutat where a small guideline harvest level within the 0–20,000 pound guideline harvest range has been established. The quality of harvest data would improve with logbooks available to edit effort, harvest, and fishing location data on fish tickets.

BACKGROUND: A proposal from the department to require mandatory logbooks for the Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) RKC fishery was first introduced in the 1995/1996 board cycle. The requirement for logbooks in Southeast Alaska was refined in 1999 to include all species of king crab. Inseason reporting requirements for king crab fisheries were addressed by the board in 2002, and appeared in regulation thereafter. Mandatory reporting of logbook data has become an integral part of inseason management for all species of king crab in Southeast Alaska.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal could result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in king crab fisheries in Yakutat if communication capability would need to be upgraded (e.g., satellite phones) to fulfill reporting requirements.

PROPOSAL 86 – **5AAC 34.185. Lawful gear for Registration Area D.**

PROPOSED BY: Jared Bright.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would repeal 5 AAC 34.185 which states that king crab may not be taken in Registration Area D (Yakutat) with pots that have tunnel eye openings located on the vertical plane of the pot.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? In Registration Area D, king crab may not be taken with pots that have tunnel eye openings located on the vertical plane of the pots. This precludes the use of "square" pots in that area.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? It is unclear how fishery performance would change if fishermen choose to utilize square pots.

BACKGROUND: Harvest and effort in the commercial red and blue king crab fishery in Yakutat has been relatively low and intermittent (Table 86-1). Since 1972, there have been reported harvests during 21 seasons with a maximum of four participating vessels; resulting harvest have averaged 3,000 pounds. The highest seasonal harvest on record totals less than 20,000 pounds during the 1980/1981 season. The harvest peak in the 1980s was primarily RKC; more recent season harvests peaked in the early 1990s and have consisted of a larger proportion of blue king crabs. Little to no harvest has occurred for GKC in Yakutat.

Beginning in 1962, only pots could be used in the Yakutat king crab fishery. Side-loading pots were prohibited in Yakutat waters beginning in January 1, 1983, to help reduce incidental catch of halibut in crab pots. This requirement was based on data from an experiment conducted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission on Tanner crab grounds near Yakutat and Dry Bay. That study indicated that side-entry, square pots captured more halibut (Mean=1.4 halibut per pot lift, SE=0.11) than top-entry pots (Mean=0.04 halibut per pot lift, SE=0.02) and the halibut size was larger for side-entry (Mean= 16.1 pounds) than top-entry (Mean= 6.0 pounds) pots.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. Adoption of this proposal would not impact the department's ability to manage this fishery.

COST ANALYSIS: Because this proposal does not seek to require the use of square pots the approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery (unless they choose to use this type of gear).

Table 86-1.–Red/blue king crab commercial harvests in Registration Area D.

Season	Permits	Harvest
Sep1972–Aug73	*	*
Sep1974–Aug75	*	*
Sep1977–Aug78	*	*
Sep1978–Aug79	*	*
Sep1979–Aug80	4	13,915
Sep1980–Aug81	3	18,652
Sep1981–Aug82	*	*
Sep1982–Aug83	4	4,118
Sep1983–Aug84	4	1,248
Sep1985–Aug86	*	*
Sep1990–Aug91	*	*
Sep1991–Aug92	3	1,216
Sep1992 –Aug93	*	*
Sep1993–Aug94	3	7,378
Sep1994–Aug95	3	2,174
Sep1995–Aug96	3	4,276
Sep1996–Aug97	3	4,467
Sep1997–Aug98	3	4,208
Sep1998–Aug99	4	2,053
Sep1999–Aug00	*	*
Sep2000–Aug01	3	391

* Fewer than three permits, confidential.

PROPOSAL 87 – **5AAC 34.185. Lawful gear for Registration Area D.**

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would lower the pot limit in waters north and east of a line from Point Manby to Ocean Cape (which includes the waters of Yakutat Bay and Russell Fjord) from 100 pots to 40 pots per vessel for commercial king crab fisheries in Registration Area D (Yakutat).

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? During an open commercial king crab season in those waters north and east of a line from Point Manby to Ocean Cape, no more than 100 king crab pots may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for king crab. When the commercial king crab and Tanner crab seasons are open in Registration Area D at the same time, an aggregate of no more than 100 king and Tanner crab pots may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for king crab.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would improve the department's ability to prevent overharvest in Yakutat Bay and Russell Fjord when a small guideline harvest level (GHL) within the 0–20,000 pound guideline harvest range (GHR) has been established.

Though this proposal would lower the pot limits for all species of king crab in Yakutat Bay and Russell Fjord, it is likely that, due to the area's bathymetry, all GKC harvest would occur outside of Yakutat Bay and Russell Fjord.

BACKGROUND: Starting in 1962, only pots could be used in the Yakutat king crab fishery. In 1971 a limit of 40 pots per vessel was established for Yakutat waters. The maximum number of pots per vessel that could be set in Yakutat Bay was increased to 60 in 1974 and to 100 in 1976. Side-loading pots were prohibited in Yakutat waters beginning January 1, 1983.

Stock assessment surveys are not conducted in the Yakutat area. The average harvest in the 1990s was approximately 3,000 pounds. There are some seasons when no harvests were reported (Table 87-1). The last season with reported harvest was 2000/2001 when 391 pounds were harvested by 3 permit holders. One vessel registered for the 2013/2014 season. A GHL of 5,000 pounds (within the 0–20,000 pound GHR) of combined red and blue king crab was established, but that vessel never fished. Commercial harvest of GKC in Registration Area D is virtually non-existent.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. The board will deliberate on another proposal (Proposal 84) which seeks to eliminate a GKC fishery opened by the department through emergency order in Yakutat, and instead would open a

fishery under conditions of a permit issued by the commissioner. If proposal 87 were to be adopted, it would be the department's intent to set future GKC pot limits through the conditions of the commissioner's permit.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 87-1.–Red and blue king crab harvest (combined), number of permits, and number of landings by season in Registration Area D, 1972/1973 to present.

Season	Harvest (pounds)	Permits	Landings
1972/1973	*	1	*
1973/1974		No Harvest	
1974/1975	*	1	*
1975/1976		No Harvest	
1976/1977		No Harvest	
1977/1978	*	2	*
1978/1979	*	1	*
1979/1980	13,915	4	17
1980/1981	18,652	3	5
1981/1982	*	2	*
1982/1983	4,118	4	14
1983/1984	1,248	4	4
1984/1985		No Harvest	
1985/1986	*	2	*
1986–1990		No Harvest	
1990/1991	*	2	*
1991/1992	1,216	3	*
1992/1993	*	2	*
1993/1994	7,378	3	8
1994/1995	2,174	3	7
1995/1996	4,276	3	18
1996/1997	4,467	3	17
1997/1998	4,208	3	13
1998/1999	2,053	4	10
1999/2000	*	1	*
2000/2001	391	3	4
2001/2002–2013/2014		No Harvest	

* Fewer than 3 permits were fished; information is confidential.

PROPOSAL 88 – 5AAC 34.128. Operation of other gear in Registration Area A; and 5AAC 35.128. Operation of other gear in Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Peter Roddy.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would prohibit the use of commercial, subsistence, personal use, or sport pots or ring nets, other than commercial shrimp pots or Dungeness crab pots, during the 14 days immediately before the scheduled opening date of the commercial king crab or Tanner crab season in Registration Area A, instead of the 30 days immediately before the scheduled opening date currently in regulation, and would allow the use of groundfish pots designed to take Pacific cod to be used within the proposed new14-day stand down period. King crab and Tanner crab permit holders would also be allowed to use Pacific cod pots during king crab and Tanner crab fisheries within Registration Area A.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5 AAC 34.128. and 5 AAC 35.128. Operation of other gear in Registration Area A. (a) A person or vessel that operates commercial, subsistence, personal use, or sport pots or ring nets, other than commercial shrimp pots or Dungeness crab pots, during the 30 days immediately before the scheduled opening date of the commercial king crab/Tanner crab season in Registration Area A may not participate in that king/Tanner crab fishery.

5 AAC 34.053. and 5 AAC 35.053. Operation of other pot gear.

During a commercial king/Tanner crab fishery, a person or vessel validly registered for that fishery may not operate commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use pots other than commercial king/Tanner crab pots, except that a person or vessel may stop participating in the commercial king/Tanner crab fishery and instead operate commercial pots other than king/Tanner crab pots.

5 AAC 28.090. Limitations while fishing for shellfish. (a) A validly registered king crab fishing vessel may not be used to take groundfish with pots in an area closed to taking of king crab.

(c) A validly registered Tanner crab fishing vessel may not be used to take groundfish with pots in an area closed to the taking of Tanner crab.

Current groundfish regulations allow for a validly registered RKC vessel to bait fish using gear other than pots during the fishery, so long as they record the weight and species of the bait taken on a fish ticket using the gear card (king or Tanner crab) for the species for which the bait was intended.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal could facilitate permit holders prospecting for king crab two weeks prior to the opening of commercial king crab fisheries, and, although the legal gear definitions of crab pots and

groundfish pots differ, crab would be caught in groundfish pots during open crab seasons if permit holders were participating in both fisheries.

This proposal would allow king and Tanner crab fishermen to use an unlimited amount of cod pots immediately before and during the season. This would make it very difficult to enforce open and closed fishing periods for king crab. This change would also make it extremely challenging for enforcement to enforce king crab pot limits.

BACKGROUND: At the 1995 meeting the board implemented 5 AAC 34.128 with a 14-day stand down on commercial, subsistence, personal use, or sport pots or ring nets, other than commercial shrimp pots or Dungeness crab pots, immediately before the scheduled opening date of the commercial king crab season. At the 1997 board meeting the department summited a proposal to extend the stand down period from 14 days to 30 days to help reduce the concentration of high fishing effort in areas of local abundance. High initial effort concentrated in the most productive areas could result in a disproportionate harvest. In 1998 the board lengthened the stand down period to 30 days.

The department has documented GKC bycatch during the Chatham Strait sablefish pot survey since 2001. Out of 16,073 pots sampled, 1,627 GKC were recorded. Current Southeast Alaska groundfish regulations do not limit the number of pots that can be used to fish for Pacific Cod but there are pot limits for golden king and Tanner crab fisheries in the region (100 for GKC and 80 for Tanner crab).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSE**S this proposal.

This proposal would allow king and Tanner crab fishermen to use an unlimited amount of cod pots immediately before and during the season. This would make it very difficult to enforce open and closed fishing periods for king crab. This change would also make it extremely challenging for enforcement to enforce king crab pot limits.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 89 – 5AAC 34.107. DESCRIPTION OF BROWN KING CRAB FISHING AREAS WITHIN REGISTRATION AREA A.

PROPOSED BY: Peter Roddy.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would add a new commercial fishing area to Registration Area A for GKC as follows:

Cross Sound area: all waters of Registration Area A west of District 14 and north of Imperial Passage (Figure 89.1). This area basically encompasses all of District 16 and most of Section 13–A.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There are currently seven GKC fishing areas defined in regulation. Those areas are the Northern Area, the Icy Strait Area, the North Stephen's Passage Area, the East Central Area, the Mid-Chatham Area, the Lower Chatham Area, and the Southern Area.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? A new GHR and GHL would be set for Cross Sound and an unknown amount of additional harvest opportunity for GKC would be available. Fishing effort from existing GKC fishing areas could potentially be dispersed into the new area.

BACKGROUND: The commercial GKC fishery began in 1970 as a bycatch fishery to the red and blue king crab fisheries with a quota of 1.5 million pounds. In 1971, GKC fisheries were recognized with the adoption of distinct seasons, and a quota of 600,000 pounds was established and managed regionwide. After 1977, GHRs replaced quotas and the fishery was managed regionwide until 1987. In 1987, due to the propensity of the fleet to concentrate fishing effort only in the most productive fishing grounds, and in order to prevent overexploitation on any single fishing ground, separate GHRs were established. Initially only 3 areas (Frederick Sound, Icy Strait, and Chatham Strait) were assigned GHRs. The following five defined fishing areas and GHRs existed in regulation until 2005:

Frederick Sound Area:	0 to 250,000 pounds
Icy Strait Area:	0 to 200,000 pounds
Chatham Strait Area:	0 to 150,000 pounds
Cape Ommaney Area:	0 to 50,000 pounds
Clarence Strait Area:	0 to 25,000 pounds

From the 2001/2002 season through the 2004/2005 season the original 5 management were managed as 7; Frederick Sound and Icy Strait areas were split and managed as two subareas each with their own GHRs as follows:

Frederick Sound Area (all waters of Section 11–D (Seymour Canal), all waters of District 10, all waters of District 9 east of a line from Kingsmill Point to Point Gardner, all waters of District 8 north of the latitude of Blaquiere Point, all waters of Section 6–A, and all waters of District 5 north of the latitude of Point Baker). GHR is: 0 to 225,000 pounds.

North Frederick Sound Sub area
(all waters of Sections 11–B and 11–C). GHR is: 0 to 25,000 pounds.

Icy Strait Area (all waters of Sections 11–A, 13–C, and 13–A in Peril Straits east of Point Kakul,

and Districts 12 and 15). GHR is: 0 to 110,000 pounds.

West Icy Strait Subarea (all waters of District 14). GHR is: 0 to 90,000 pounds.

Chatham Strait Area: GHR is: 0 to 150,000 pounds.

Cape Ommaney Area: GHR is: 0 to 50,000 pounds.

Clarence Strait Area: GHR is: 0 to 25,000 pounds.

At the 2005 board meeting, the two subareas that had been unofficially managed separately were officially added as distinct management areas. Secondly, the areas formerly managed as the Icy Strait Area and West Icy Strait Subarea had their GHRs altered to more accurately represent historical harvests. Lastly, all seven areas were renamed. Since the 2005/2006 season the area names (Figures 89-1 and 89-2) and associated GHRs are as follows (GHRs since 2009 for each area):

East Central Area:	0 to 300,000 pounds
North Stephens Passage Area:	0 to 25,000 pounds
Northern Area:	0 to 175,000 pounds
Icy Strait Area:	0 to 75,000 pounds
Mid Chatham Strait Area:	0 to 150,000 pounds
Lower Chatham Strait Area:	0 to 50,000 pounds
Southern Area	0 to 25,000 pounds

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSE**S this proposal. Limited GKC harvest in the 1970s and 1980s occurred in a portion of Section 13–A by fewer than three permit holders. Other than this very limited effort, the department has no information available by which to establish a new fishing area, and any associated GHR and seasonal GHLs. In addition, fishery performance has declined in the major fishing areas in the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 seasons, suggesting that new fishery areas and expanded harvest at this time is unwarranted. If new, exploratory harvest opportunity outside of the seven established fishery areas were to occur, the department would prefer this be done under strict, tightly controlled conditions of a

permit issued by the commissioner rather than creation of a new fishing area and associated GHR and GHL in regulation.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

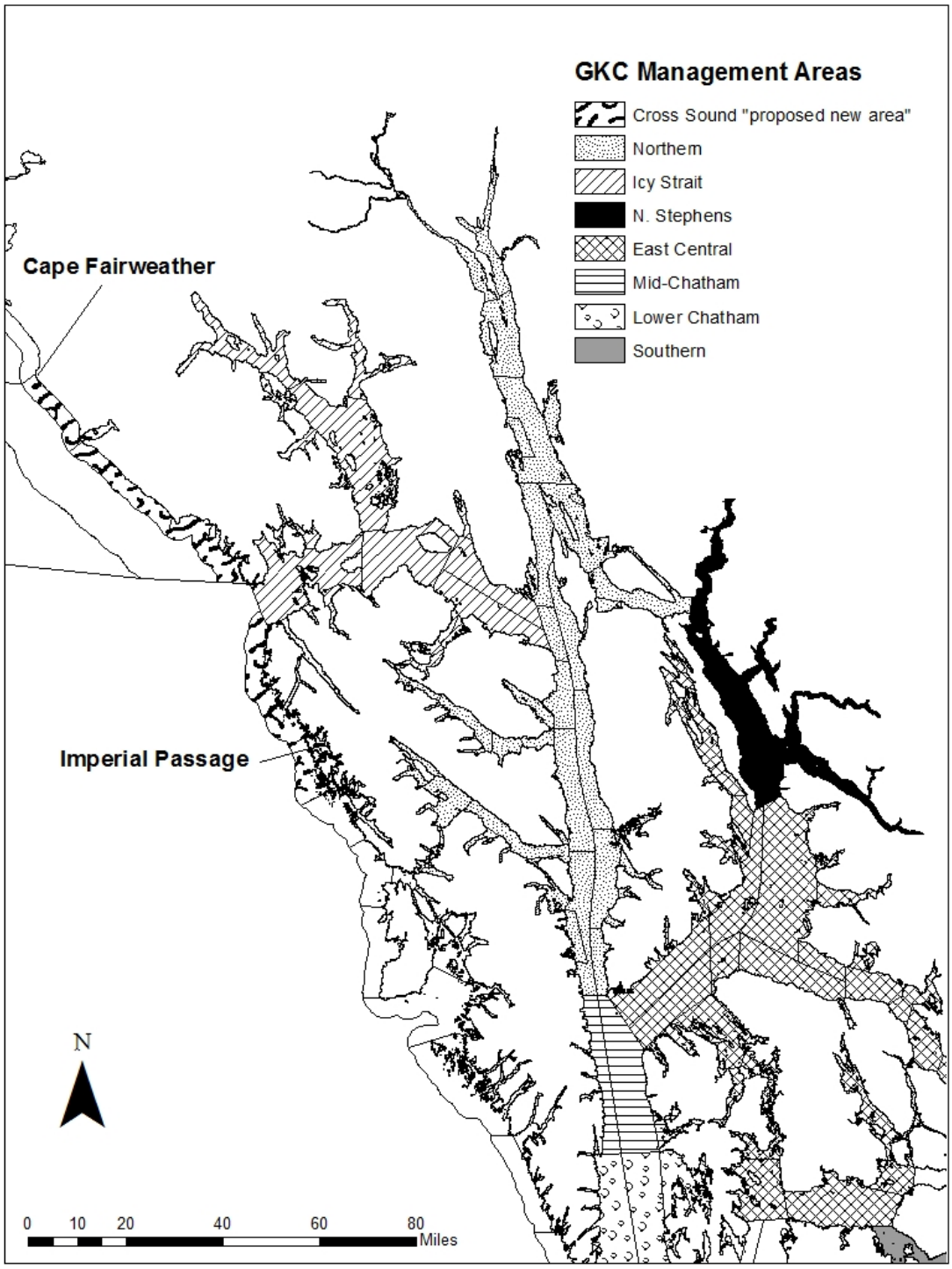

Figure 89-1.–Northern Southeast Alaska commercial GKC fishing management areas with the proposed additional area in Cross Sound.

PROPOSAL 90 – 5 AAC 35.180. Lawful gear for Registration Area D.

PROPOSED BY: Yakutat Advisory Committee.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would reduce the number of pots allowed, from 100 to 40, to be used by a vessel during an open *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab fishery in Registration area D (Yakutat).

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? An aggregate of no more than 100 Tanner crab pots and ring nets may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for Tanner crab; or when both the commercial king and Tanner crab seasons are open in Yakutat at the same time, an aggregate of no more than 100 king or Tanner crab pots and ring nets may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for both king and Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.180 (b)(1)(2)).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If this proposal were adopted it is much more likely that the department would consider opening the commercial Tanner crab fishery in Yakutat when fishery independent survey data show stock recovery. It is also likely that a pot limit at this lower level would discourage non-local participants from participating in the fishery should it be opened. Catch rates during the commercial fishery would likely be reduced by an unknown amount.

BACKGROUND: The first documented *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab harvests in Area D were in 1972/1973 season. Harvest peaked in 1979/1980 season at just over one million pounds (Table 90-1). The fishery has been closed since the 1999/2000 season and was designated as 'collapsed and recovering' at the January 2000 board meeting. The fishery was re-opened for a 14-day fishing period within the waters of Yakutat Bay and 30-day period elsewhere during the 2003/2004 season. Participation was limited, no crab were landed, and there was no evidence of stock recovery. There have never been stock assessment surveys for the Yakutat Tanner crab stock and dockside sampling effort has been extremely limited. The only sources of information at present are the Statewide Harvest Survey, the bycatch of juvenile Tanner crab from the Yakutat scallop observer program, and anecdotal information from crabbers passing by Yakutat who set personal use pots. None of these data sources suggest a significant recovery.

There has only one recorded landing in 1995 with a total of 10,739 pounds of *Chionoecetes tanneri* landed. Permits for this fishery must be issued by the commissioner. The department would consider issuing such a permit with existing stipulations detailed in 5 AAC 35.171 Permits for *Chionoecetes tanneri* and *Chionoecetes anglatus* Tanner crab in Area D.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative aspects of this proposal but **SUPPORTS** a pot reduction in the *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab fishery in Registration Area D. Reduced pot limits in the registration area would provide for a more orderly, and perhaps sustainable, fishery in Yakutat when fishery independent survey data show stock recovery.

The department would also support mandatory logbooks for the Area D Tanner crab fishery so as to be consistent with Proposal 85 (which is a department proposal that seeks mandatory logbooks for Yakutat red/blue king crab fishery).

Should the board choose to adopt this proposal it may wish to also amend 5 AAC 35.180 (b)(1) and (2) to reduce the number of pots allowed during the *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab fishery within Registration Area D. The department believes regulation 5 AAC 35.171 was referenced in the proposal in error and the Yakutat Advisory Committee intended to reduce pot limits in the *Chionoecetes bairdi* fishery, which is the traditional Tanner crab fishery in Yakutat.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 90-1.–Commercial Tanner crab harvests (all species) in pounds, number of vessels, pounds per permit, number of landings and pounds per landing in Registration Area D, 1972/1973 season to present.

Year/Season	Number			Pounds per permit	Average weight
	Permits	Crabs	Pounds		
1972/1973	7	74,636	222,441	31,777	3.0
1973/1974	11	934,100	1,872,357	170,214	2.0
1974/1975	13	876,889	1,972,752	151,750	2.2
1975/1976	5	861,569	1,762,589	352,518	2.0
1976/1977	7	433,994	966,650	138,093	2.2
1977/1978	8	437,542	1,003,116	125,390	2.3
1978/1979	15	753,248	1,691,941	112,796	2.2
1979/1980	23	1,089,820	2,435,123	105,875	2.2
1980/1981	14	289,880	642,608	45,901	2.2
1981/1982	7	32,521	71,302	10,186	2.2
1982/1983	10	72,784	151,621	15,162	2.1
1983/1984	4	4,958	11,142	2,786	2.2
1984/1985	5	1,728	3,665	733	2.1
1985/1986	5	1,185	2,379	476	2.0
1986/1987	3	23,575	48,877	16,292	2.1
1987/1988	*	*	*	*	
1988/1989	5	73,179	155,528	31,106	2.1
1989/1990	5	35,135	76,816	15,363	2.2
1990/1991	7	19,260	41,749	5,964	2.2
1991/1992	4	18,493	39,495	9,874	2.1
1992/1993	5	53,167	116,718	23,344	2.2
1993/1994	11	154,921	364,365	33,124	2.4
1994/1995	14	45,749	107,010	7,644	2.3
1995/1996	7	12,352	27,828	3,975	2.3
1996/1997	8	7,686	16,733	2,092	2.2
1997/1998	4	4,330	9,559	2,390	2.2
1998/1999	5	3,742	8,528	1,706	2.3
1999/2000	*	*	*	*	*
2000–2003	Seasons Closed				
2003/2004	*	0	0	0	
2004–2014	Seasons Closed				

* Fewer than three permits were fished; information is confidential.

PROPOSAL 91 – **5AAC Description of blue king crab fishing areas within Registration Area A**.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would provide consistent language on the description of Holkham Bay with regard to the bay being a blue king crab fishing area.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5 AAC 34.108. Description of blue king crab fishing areas in Registration Area A. (a) The waters of District 10 in Holkham Bay east of a line from Point Coke to Point Ashley.

(b) The waters of District 11

(1) in Taku Inlet north of the latitude of Point Bishop;

(2) in Port Snettisham east of a line from Point Styleman to Point Anmer.

(c) The waters of District 14 in Glacier Bay north of the latitude of Point Gustavus.

(d) The waters of District 15 in Lynn Canal north of the latitude of Point Sherman Light.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Commercial fishermen, department staff and Alaska Wildlife Troopers will benefit by having clearer regulatory language regarding what district Holkham Bay resides in, and the line that defines Holkham Bay will be free of spelling errors.

BACKGROUND: Qualifying permit holders with current registration in GKC and Tanner crab fisheries are allowed to retain blue king crab in the GKC and Tanner crab fisheries (5 AAC 34.110(e)) from areas described as blue king crab fishing areas (5 AAC 34.108).

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Current regulations defining blue king crab fishing areas in Registration Area A reference Holkham Bay as part of District 10. Holkham Bay is actually part of District 11. This proposal corrects that district reference, and corrects a misspelling for Point Astley.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

LEGAL SIZE – BLUE KING CRAB (1 PROPOSAL): 92

PROPOSAL 92 – 5 AAC 02.120. Subsistence king crab fishery; 5 AAC 34.120. Size limits for Registration Area A; 5 AAC 77.164. Personal use king crab fishery; 5 AAC 77.664. Personal use king crab fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would increase the legal size limit of blue king crab from six and one-half inches to seven inches or greater in width of shell in the subsistence, commercial, and personal use blue king crab fisheries in the Southeast Alaska and Yakutat Areas.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Currently, male blue king crab six and one-half inches or greater in width of shell may be taken in commercial, personal use, and subsistence fisheries in Southeast Alaska and Yakutat. Male blue king crab may be taken commercially only during open commercial seasons for red, GKC, and Tanner crab.

Only male blue crab 5.9 inches or greater in width of shell may be taken in Prince William Sound. In Cook Inlet, only male king crab (species is not specified) seven inches or greater may be taken. In Kodiak, only male blue crab seven inches or greater may be taken. Blue king crab minimum size limits for the Pribilof Islands, Kotzebue/ St. Matthew Island, and Norton Sound are 6.5", 5.5", and 5.0" respectively.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would make size limits consistent for all king crab species within the Southeast and Yakutat areas and allow for better recruitment into the fisheries because male crab would have additional opportunity to mate before becoming legal size.

The minimum legal size for blue king crab would also be consistent with the size limit for blue king crab in the Cook Inlet and Kodiak management areas.

BACKGROUND: Commercial blue king crab harvests are very low, averaging 193 pounds per year during the recent 10-year period in Southeast Alaska. Blue king crab harvest data is not available for the personal use and subsistence fisheries. Other king crab species, such as RKC and GKC, have a current legal size of seven inches carapace width and there is biological information to support these legal sizes. With the exception of Prince William Sound, size limits for blue king crab have been based on the economic justifications presented for red king crab. Most management areas lack size limits for blue king crab that are based on biological data.

Blue king crab are a long-lived species that reach sexual maturity at approximately 8 years of age. Blue king crabs have a 24-month reproductive cycle, the longest of any other king crab species in Alaska (GKC 20-months and RKC 12-months). Blue king crab females molt, mate, extrude eggs, and carry fertilized eggs for approximately a year; the eggs hatch the following year. The department has no BKC size at maturity estimates or growth increments specific to Southeast Alaska. In Southeast Alaska blue king crab are highly susceptible to the

Rhizocephalan barnacle parasite *Briarosaccus callosus*, which causes crab to become castrated and sterile, reduces growth, and males become feminized. Infection rates of approximately 76% have been documented in blue king crab populations within Glacier Bay. Little is known on the distribution of blue king crab in Southeast Alaska; however, small populations exist in Glacier Bay, northern Lynn Canal, and Holkham Bay and tend to overlap RKC and Tanner crab habitat.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Size limits are an important management tool used to allow harvest on the portion of a crab population that has reached sexual maturity and has been allowed time to contribute reproductively to the population to allow for future recruitment. The proposed regulations will better provide that opportunity under commercial, subsistence, and personal use regulations. A more conservative approach to blue king crab in Southeast Alaska is also consistent with the board's policy on king and Tanner crab resource management (90-04-FB).

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

SUBSISTENCE REGULATION REVIEW:

1. Is this stock in a nonsubsistence area? No.
2. Is this stock customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence? The board has determined under 5 AAC 02.108 (a)(1), that all shellfish within the waters of Yakutat Bay are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence. The board has not made a finding for waters outside Yakutat Bay; however, the board has provided for a subsistence king crab fishery through 5 AAC 02.120 in the districts outside Yakutat Bay.
3. Can a portion of the stock be harvested consistent with sustained yield? Yes.
4. What amount is reasonably necessary for subsistence uses? The board has not established an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses for king crab in the Yakutat Area. However, in the Yakutat Area, the daily bag and possession limit for king crab (all species combined), is two crab per person, male crab only.
5. Do the regulations provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses? This is a board determination.
6. Is it necessary to reduce or eliminate other uses to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses? This is a board determination.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – GROUP 3: COMMERCIAL SHRIMP (14 PROPOSALS)

POT SHRIMP FISHERY (8)

PROPOSAL 94 – 5 AAC 31.145. Southeastern Alaska Area Pot Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Fisk.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would eliminate current Guideline Harvest Range (GHR) based management and replace it with an intensive inseason management system. This system would use a catch rate of females (spawner index system) in the commercial catch to determine if the fishery in a given area should remain open or be closed.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations define 20 separate guideline harvest ranges assigned throughout southeast Alaska with a total GHR of 0–1,010,000 pounds (5 AAC 31.115 (a)). Additionally the management plan requires that the department maintain a number of age classes of shrimp, maintain an adequate broodstock for the rebuilding of stocks, and reduce the mortality of small shrimp of any species (5 AAC 31.145 (b) (2)).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would change the management system of the pot shrimp fishery from a GHR system to a spawner index system of management in the Registration Area A pot shrimp fishery. This system would utilize inseason catch rates to manage and close the fishery in lieu of GHLs set preseason. If the spawner index system currently practiced in British Columbia were implemented in Southeastern Alaska the result would likely be a greater amount of harvest and longer seasons, which may result in unsustainable harvests of stocks. This is due to differential life history parameters between British Columbia and southeastern Alaska stocks.

BACKGROUND: The underlying principle of the spawner index system, as practiced in the British Columbia fishery, is that a fishery will close when the number of females caught per pot reaches a minimum monthly spawner threshold. The spawner index system is implemented through an intensive inseason monitoring program on the grounds. Sampling examines the sex and assumed year class of the shrimp on a per pot basis. Multiple pots are sampled per string, and multiple strings are sampled over each management area. Once a minimum monthly spawner index is reached the management area is closed until the next season's opening date.

The current regulations established 20 area GHRs in Registration Area A, each covering either an entire district, or a portion thereof thought to be a separate population, or an area of high potential fishery impact. The department currently determines GHLs preseason by reviewing stock assessment survey, inseason sampling, and fishery performance data. Through review of this information it is determined if adjustments to the GHL are warranted. When necessary, adjustments are made in increments of 20 to 40 percent of either GHL, or current catch, and are kept in effect for at least three seasons, except in extreme cases, to examine the effects of harvest level changes. Data collected include trends in size composition, and trends in shrimp catch

rates. Size composition data are collected during sampling dockside, on the grounds, and during fishery-independent stock assessment surveys. Catch rate data are available from fish tickets, and fishery-independent stock assessment surveys.

After the 2012 board meeting a feasibility study was implemented to examine the utility of the spawner index system of management in southeast Alaska. The legislature appropriated funding to support this study. Two years of field and lab work followed. This included conducting extensive sampling in the field, as well as laboratory studies.

The central key of the spawner index system of management is the spot shrimp lifecycle. In the British Columbia system of management it is assumed that spot shrimp have a four year lifecycle, and spawn only once as females. There is no evidence to support this life history model in Alaska. Multiple studies in Prince William Sound found maximum longevities closer to 8–10 years. The department has recently begun two laboratory studies to better understand the life cycle in southeast Alaska. First the department, in conjunction with the University of Alaska Southeast has been holding collected egged shrimp through the spawning period and examining ovogenesis after the release of eggs. Although this study is not complete preliminary results show that the assumption that females spawn only once is incorrect in southeast Alaska waters. The second project is a new, experimental, process for directly aging spot shrimp, as is commonly done with the otoliths of fish. For this project the department partnered with the University of New Brunswick where the originator of this system is a professor. This project is also not complete, but early results corroborate the previous work done in Prince William Sound showing that spot shrimp in southeast Alaska waters have a longer lifespan than that used in the Canadian spawner index model.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. Results of department studies of the spawner index system of management conducted since the 2012 board meeting indicate the spawner recruit model created by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is not appropriate for Alaska stocks. The Canadian approach assumes a four year lifespan for spot shrimp, which is approximately half that found in studies in Prince William Sound. It also assumes that spot shrimp spawn only once as females. That assumption is in clear contradiction to the preliminary results of a joint department and UAS study that was conducted in the spring of 2014. Due to these violations of the base assumption of the DFO spawner recruit model it would likely be an unsustainable management model in southeast Alaska.

If a southeast Alaska-appropriate spawner index management model were created in the future, implementation would require substantial additional funding. In order to use this method of management the governing bodies in British Columbia have either charged all participants in the fishery a substantial research and management fee to help defray the costs of intensive inseason management, or required fishery participants to secure third-party services to provide biological sampling. The department notes that the B.C. industry currently provides the government with approximately $600,000 for 12 industry-funded and industry-hired samplers to effect inseason management. This cost is in addition to a substantial stock research and assessment budget. Due to this requirement of capital and staff, the department could not adopt this system of management regionwide without substantial additional funding or budget reprioritization.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal may result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery if the fleet-funded model used in British Columbia were adopted.

PROPOSAL 95 – 5 AAC 31.145. Southeastern Alaska Area Pot Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would require the department to change pot shrimp harvest levels in relation to indicators of the population size, including CPUE, size data, geographic distribution of shrimp, and survey data.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The pot shrimp fishery management plan requires that the department maintain a number of age classes of shrimp to ensure long-term viability of the stocks and reduce dependence on annual recruitment; reduce fishing pressure during biologically sensitive periods; reduce mortality of small shrimp; and maintain an adequate broodstock for the rebuilding of stocks (5 AAC 31.145 (b)(2)). There are no other stipulations on how the department sets harvest levels.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would require harvest levels to be changed at an unspecified interval in relation to indicators of population size.

BACKGROUND: The board adopted the Southeastern Alaska Pot Shrimp Management Plan in 2000 to give guidance to the department on the general and long term population management goals for the pot shrimp stocks. The management plan gives general direction but does not explicitly specify how the department is to set harvest levels for each fishing area. This provides for management flexibility in establishing and modifying GHLs as appropriate.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The requirements of this proposal unnecessarily restrict the department's flexibility in setting shrimp GHLs. The department already adjusts harvest using indicators of population size based on the best available science. Biological metrics currently used include total commercial CPUE (from fish tickets); commercial size class CPUE (from logbooks); fishery-independent size class-based CPUE (from surveys); harvest rate information (from logbooks); mean carapace length (from surveys, as well as on-the-grounds and dockside sampling); size at sexual transition trends (from surveys, as well as on-the-grounds and dockside sampling); and effort and catch distribution (from fish tickets). These metrics currently include all those mentioned in the proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 96 – 5AAC 31.115. Shrimp pot guideline harvest ranges for Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would exempt areas in which the department utilizes experimental inseason management from the guideline harvest ranges (GHR) in regulation and potentially allow for harvest above the upper end of the GHR.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? *Southeastern Alaska Area Pot Shrimp Fishery Management Plan* (5AAC 31.145) provides the department direction for managing the spot and coonstripe shrimp pot fisheries for sustained yield. 5AAC 31.115(a) provides the framework with which the department sets the annual GHL for spot and coonstripe shrimp pot fisheries in Southeast Alaska. The GHRs are from zero pounds to a maximum harvest for shrimp in 20 areas coinciding with districts or portions of districts in Registration Area A.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Harvesting above the upper end of the GHR may be unsustainable.

BACKGROUND: The use of GHLs to manage commercial pot fisheries for shrimp began in the 1984 season. In most areas, GHRs are based on historical harvest levels (5 AAC 31.145 (e)(g)). Specific GHLs for individual fishing areas underwent a number of revisions from 1984 through 1996. In 1997, GHRs were established in regulation for 16 fishing areas. Since that time, fishing areas have been reconfigured and some GHRs have been revised. In 2000, the *Southeastern Alaska Area Pot Shrimp Fishery Management Plan* was implemented.

In 2004 the department began using shrimp stock status to determine GHLs within the existing GHRs. Every year, analysis of each shrimp stock occurs before the season and a GHL is determined for the upcoming season. In 2012, the department implemented two different experimental inseason management strategies. The first was based on a two-year spawner index method feasibility study of the Seymour Canal section of District 11. The second strategy used indicators from preseason surveys, current season fishery performance data, and current season biological data to make adjustments to the GHL inseason. Adjustments are designed so that they will fall within the current GHR range. This method of experimental management was used in districts 6 and 7 and will continue through the 2014/2015 season.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. GHLs are set within the GHRs and evaluated annually for sustainability based on survey and fishery data. GHLs are increased when increases in harvestable surplus are detected. The experimental inseason management that has been used for three seasons is based on a number of assumptions,

the most important being that CPUE of large size classes of shrimp, in the first week of the fishery, is indicative of the overall stock health in the area. This assumption is not based on any studies done in the past, but rather on a logical assumption. So far this assumption has seemed to work based on the very limited sample size of three seasons. The long term effect of this management system is, at this time, unknown. The experimental inseason management practices need additional years of experimentation and a thorough evaluation before testing the boundaries of the current GHRs.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 97 – 5AAC 31.145 (xx). Southeastern Alaska Area Pot Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Brennon Eagle.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would divide District 1 into three management units. Each unit would close after 25,000 pot lifts.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations specify a GHR of 0–164,000 pounds of spot shrimp in District 1 (5 AAC 31.115 (a) (1)). District 1 is managed as a single unit and the 2014/15 GHL is 50,000 pounds.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would increase harvest in District 1. Allowing 75,000 pot lifts would be nearly double the 10–year pot lift average, and 5 times the pot lifts in 2013/14, and would threaten the sustainability of the shrimp resource in District 1. The proposed 75,000 pot lifts has the potential to exceed the present GHL of 50,000 pounds.

BACKGROUND: Pot fishing for spot shrimp in District 1 began around 1962 and by 1975 catches averaged 10,000–20,000 pounds each season. For the 1995/96 season the GHR was 0–145,000 pounds and was raised to 0–164,000 pounds in the 2000/01 season. Reductions began when the GHL was lowered by 40% to 98,400 pounds for the 2006/07 season due to declining harvest rates and increasing season length observed during the previous five seasons. The GHL was reduced for the 2008/2009 season and again in the 2009/10 season when the GHL decreased to 50,000 pounds coupled with a planned 21-day closure in Back Behm and West Behm Canal and a November 7 closure for the rest of District 1.

District 1 shrimp populations are difficult to assess due to diverse habitat, low number of catcher-processors, inconsistent harvest in core areas, and limited on the grounds sampling. The department recognizes the large number of distinct areas within the district and has split the district into 7 separate areas for analysis.

CPUEs in some portions of District 1 have increased based on the recent 4-year average, including West Behm Canal and Back Behm Canal. The planned closures implemented in the 2009/10 season may have helped stabilize some populations. District 1 CPUE has increased from 2.2 pounds per pot in 2010–11 to 3.9 pounds per pot in 2013. Some portions of District 1 continue to show no increase in CPUE or have inconsistent harvest, making assessments difficult.

Harvest per pot in District 1 has averaged 2.3 pounds and the number of pot lifts has averaged 36,000 for the last 10 years with a high of 79,000 and a low of 15,700. Most of the effort in District 1 is concentrated in West Behm and Back Behm Canal in recent years. The remainder of the district experiences inconsistent effort by District 1 shrimp fishermen leaving some areas unharvested each year. Large inlets like Boca de Quadra and Thorne Arm may be more

productive during some seasons because they are not fished consistently. These areas may not produce sustained harvests if they are fished every year with a set GHL.

To improve assessment information for District 1, a preseason pot shrimp survey was implemented in 2011. The survey included analysis areas of Back Behm Canal, West Behm Canal, and Carroll and George inlets. The department has completed the fourth consecutive preseason survey in District 1 and plans to integrate the results into management decisions by the 2015/16 season.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSE**S this proposal. The management of pot shrimp in District 1 based solely on pot lifts would likely result in harvests that would nearly double the current GHL and would not be sustainable. If District 1 were split into three management units, department managers would need a guideline harvest range for each area so that management units or portions of units could be closed if overharvest occurs. Some areas that are not currently fished on an annual basis would need the flexibility to fish alternate years or have small GHLs to allow sustained annual harvest.

The department acknowledges that managing an area as large as District 1 with one GHR may not be ideal. However, increased fishing intensity resulting from adoption of this proposal would require the department to survey more intensively to monitor fishing effects on the stock. The department does not currently have the funding to survey, assess, and manage three separate fishing areas within District 1.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 97-1.–District 1, pot pulls and harvest for proposed pot shrimp fishing areas.

	Proposed Pot Pulls	10 yr. avg. Pot Pulls	10 yr. avg. Pounds	2013–14 Pot Pulls	2013–14 Pounds
West/East Behm	25,000	15,432	35,383	8,183	33,842
Boca/George	25,000	10,618	20,726	3,527	13,592
Portland Canal	25,000	10,504	22,700	4,067	8,443
	75,000	36,554	98,783	15,957	55,877

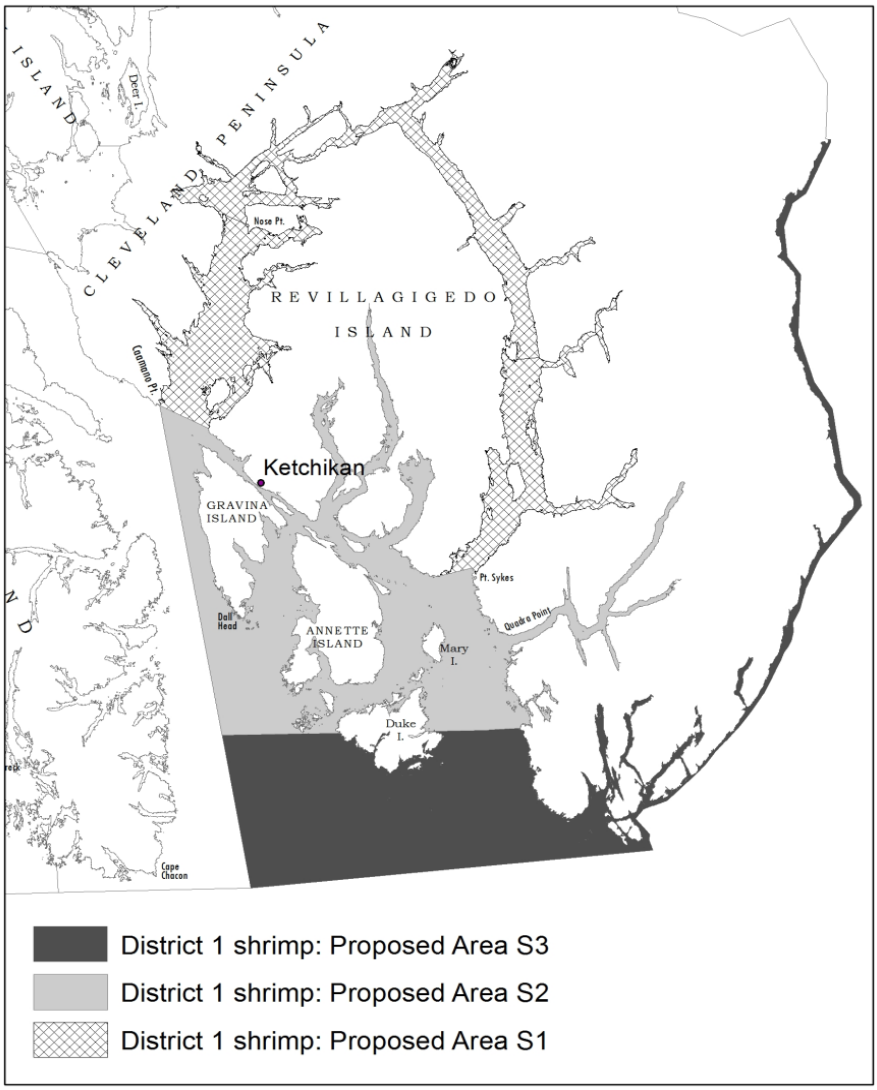

Figure 97-1.–District 1 proposed pot shrimp fishing areas.

PROPOSAL 98 – **5AAC 31.143. Reporting requirements for commercial shrimp vessels in Registration Area A.**

PROPOSED BY: Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Catcher-processors and catcher-sellers would be required to track and report size class information of their harvest weekly during the call in period.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Unless otherwise directed, catcher-processors and catcher-sellers are required to report, before 12:00 noon on Wednesday of each week, that the fishermen operates pot shrimp gear in Registration Area A, to the local department office which manages the area being fished. Information required includes: permit holder's name, vessel name and ADF&G number, detailed daily fish ticket information since the last report, date of last delivery, and other information the department deems necessary for the conservation and management of the fishery.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Detailed daily catch information reported on a weekly basis would be gained on shrimp stocks that may assist in management and in developing inseason management strategies that are more responsive to fluctuations in stock health and abundance. Catcher-sellers who typically do not sort and quantify their harvest by size class on a daily basis would be required to do so.

BACKGROUND: In cooperation with the Southeast Alaska Pot Shrimp Task Force, the department implemented a voluntary logbook program in the 2005/2006 season to obtain additional information on shrimp catch size distribution from catcher-processors. This information is used by the department when evaluating population trends and in setting appropriate GHLs to better manage the fisheries. The task force supported and encouraged the implementation of this program.

At the 2012 Miscellaneous Shellfish board meeting, the department met with representatives of the pot shrimp industry in a quasi-task force meeting. Industry expressed a desire for the department to experiment with inseason management. As a result of those discussions the department developed an inseason experimental management approach for the districts 6 and 7 pot shrimp fisheries during the 2012/2013 through 2014/2015 seasons. A key component of the inseason management program was the size category data of harvest from catcher-processors. Catcher-processors were required to record their harvest of shrimp by size category on fish tickets by regulation and report their harvest by size category on a weekly basis. This information allows fishery managers to have a record of the size of shrimp that are being harvested for comparison to historical levels to help determine stock health for inseason GHL adjustments.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **SUPPORTS** mandatory weekly reporting of size categories by pot shrimp catcher-processors. Tailing of shrimp is not prevalent among catcher-processors and they already record the size classes of their shrimp for market purposes. Requiring catcher-processors to report daily size categories would provide additional information about stock health and allow for more precise management. A separate catcher-processor logbook regulation to augment the call-in requirement would be needed. Without a mandatory logbook regulation, catcher-processors would not be required to record the size breakdown and turn in that information to the department. They would only be required to call in that information. There could be instances when communications are hampered by poor reception or when errors are made in relaying the harvest numbers. Hard copies of the size breakdown information would be needed to verify the call-in information. Mandatory logbooks have proven useful in the management and evaluation of stock health and distribution in other fisheries (geoduck clams–5AAC 38.142(m), Tanner crab–5AAC 35.130, red king crab–5AAC 34.130, golden king crab–5AAC 34.143, and sablefish–5AAC 28.175).

The department **OPPOSES** requiring catcher-sellers to report size categories of shrimp. The department does not utilize size breakdowns of tailed shrimp. The sorting done for tailed product is not precise enough and not consistent enough between boats and years to allow for meaningful analysis. Catcher-sellers typically tail their catch and do not typically sort by size category or at best, not to the same degree as catcher-processors. Requiring catcher-sellers to sort their catch and report size information on a weekly basis may be an undue burden.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 99 – **5AAC 31.124. Lawful shrimp pot gear for Registration Area A.**

PROPOSED BY: Don Westlund.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would reduce the number of pots in the commercial fishery by setting a lower vessel pot limit. It would restrict the number of pots on a string, depending on pot size, and provide requirements for spacing of pots in a set. Finally, it would limit the number of pot pulls per day to one.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Pot fishermen can fish with either large or small pots and are limited to 100 large or 140 small pots. Only one size class of gear can be fished from a vessel. The fishery is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. There are no restrictions on the number of times a pot may be pulled, number of pots, or the spacing of pots per set.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would result in less shrimp being harvested per day and may slow the overall pace of the fishery. The number of small shrimp being harvested would likely decrease by limiting the number of times pots may be hauled per day to one. The proposal may alter competitive advantages in the fishery between small-boat and large-boat operations.

BACKGROUND: Commercial harvest of shrimp in Southeast Alaska utilizing pot gear began in the late 1960s and continued sporadically with low effort until the mid-1980s, peaking in the mid-1990s. In 1995, the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission was petitioned to include pot gear for shrimp in the limited entry program. The pot shrimp fishery is now limited entry and there are currently 206 active permits. In 1997, a number of regulations were adopted that significantly affected the Southeast Alaska pot shrimp fishery. The regulations included the current daily fishing periods, pot sizes, and pot limits. These restrictions had several effects: 1) decreased the efficiency of the fleet, producing a slower-paced and more orderly fishery; 2) reduced the harvest of small shrimp by limiting fishing hours, creating longer soak times, and allowing the mesh size to passively sort out smaller shrimp; and 3) provided for gear standardization, allowing fishery performance data to be utilized.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. There may be benefits in slowing the pace of some fisheries in the region. However, the department has been able to effectively manage the faster-paced fisheries, generally achieving a harvest level within 15% of the GHL. Limiting the number of times pots can be hauled in a day may result in longer soak times, allowing the mesh size to passively sort out smaller shrimp. However, this limitation may be difficult to enforce.

Fishery performance data (CPUE) are one of the most important data sources used to evaluate GHLs. Because there is a relatively long time series of CPUE data collected under existing gear

type and hauling regulations, current year data can be evaluated against historical averages and appropriate changes can be, and have routinely been, made prior to each season opening. If this proposal were adopted, the CPUE data would not be comparable to historical data which would temporarily reduce the department's ability to analyze pot shrimp stock status, set GHLs, and manage inseason until a new time series of information was collected. This could lead to a more conservative approach to establishing GHLs by fishing area.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal may result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery. Fishermen may have to buy more buoy line and buoys since the number of pot shrimp strings would likely increase due to restrictions on the number of pots on a string.

PROPOSAL 100 – 5 AAC 31.128. Operation of other gear in Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal seeks to add personal use and sport fishing pot gear to the regulation defining how many pots a commercial pot shrimp fisherman may use.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Subsistence shrimp pots onboard and/or used on a commercial vessel count towards the commercial pot shrimp limit of 140 small shrimp pots or 100 large shrimp pots while sport and personal use pots are not.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Adoption of this proposal would clarify how many pots a commercial pot shrimp fishing operation may use. This would benefit commercial fishermen, department staff, and enforcement personnel.

BACKGROUND: In 1997, a number of commercial shrimp fishery regulations were adopted to ensure the sustainability of Southeast Alaska shrimp stocks. One of these regulations reduced effort by limiting the number of pots fished from a commercial vessel. These regulations specifically addressed the use of subsistence shrimp pots on a commercial pot shrimp vessel but not the concurrent use of sport or personal use pots, causing some confusion and enforcement difficulties.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Commercial pot shrimp fishermen may use sport, personal use or subsistence pots depending on area regulations. The exclusion of personal use and sport pots from this regulation makes it difficult to enforce commercial pot limits.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 101 – 5 AAC 31.145. Southeastern Alaska Area Pot Shrimp Fishery Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Stephen N. Farler.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would establish a separate pot shrimp fishery from April to October for shrimp species other than spot shrimp (*Pandalus paltyceros*).

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations stipulate that the pot shrimp season opens October 1 and closes February 28 (5 AAC 31.110). If the GHL in a district is not reached the department may reopen the fishery from May 15 through July 31 (5 AAC 31.145 (d)). Regulations also stipulate that the department manage based on the harvest of spot shrimp, except that District 11 must be based on spot and coonstripe shrimp, and districts 15 and 16 must be managed based on the harvest of coonstripe shrimp only (5 AAC 31.145 (b)(1)).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would create new commercial fisheries for shrimp species other than spot shrimp. The proposal specifically references coonstripe, humpy, and pink shrimp. Exploitation rates on those species would significantly increase. There could also be significant bycatch, and resulting unsustainable harvest, of spot shrimp.

BACKGROUND: The southeastern Alaska pot shrimp fishery began in the early 1970s, but saw little participation until the 1981/82 season when over 150,000 pounds were harvested. The fishery was prosecuted year round until the 1999/2000 season when the board created the current winter season to protect the stock during the spawning period (March–April), and the clutching season (August–September). During the year-round period the majority of the harvest occurred during the October–February time period. The fishery peaked during the 2000/2001–2004/2005 seasons with a mean harvest of 1.1 million pounds, 80% of which was harvested in October. Over the past five seasons harvest has averaged 591,000 pounds, 90% of which is harvested in October.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. A non-spot shrimp pot shrimp fishery would also require a new management plan because gear restrictions such as mesh size would need to be adjusted. A major issue would be the bycatch mortality of adult and particularly juvenile spot shrimp in the reduced mesh sized pots that would be required to prosecute the fishery. The pot shrimp management plan stipulates that the department reduce mortality of small shrimp of any species (5 AAC 31.145 (b) (2) (C)). All available spot shrimp are fully allocated to the current fishery, thus any additional harvest would necessitate cuts to current harvest. In addition, during the April to October time frame managers of the pot shrimp fishery are fully engaged in managing the herring and salmon gillnet and seine fisheries, thus new funding and staff would have to be appropriated. There is already opportunity to harvest non-spot shrimp species during the regular pot shrimp season, and outside of districts 11, 15, and 16 the harvest of non-spot shrimp is very small, ranging from 1 to 2% of the total catch over the past 10 years; over 93% of these are coonstripe shrimp.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

BEAM TRAWL SHRIMP FISHERY (5)

PROPOSAL 102 –5 AAC 31.161. Shrimp trawl fishing seasons and logbook requirements for Registration Area D; 5 AAC 31.166. Shrimp trawl guideline harvest range for Registration Area D; and 5 AAC 31.170. Lawful gear for Registration Area D.

PROPOSED BY: Paul D. Prevatt and Jess Sims

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would repeal area closures, and impose gear restrictions in the Area D trawl shrimp fishery. All areas outside of Icy Bay would be open to shrimp trawl fishing utilizing a beam trawl only, rather than either beam or otter trawl as is currently allowed only in Icy Bay.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Regulations stipulate that shrimp may be taken by trawl only in Icy Bay June 21 to February 14. Logbooks are required to participate in this fishery (5 AAC 31.161). The GHR for Icy Bay is 50,000–350,000 pounds (5 AAC 31.166). Both beam trawls and otter trawls are legal gear types (5 AAC 31.170).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would reopen a beam trawl fishery in Area D outside of Icy Bay. This would substantially increase the area open to a beam trawl fishery on shrimp populations the department has very little information on. If a GHL is set too high, the shrimp population in that area could be subject to harvest that is unsustainable.

BACKGROUND: The first recorded shrimp otter trawl landing from the Yakutat Area occurred in 1976. The highest harvest on record was in the 1980/1981 season with a harvest exceeding 1,900,000 pounds; most of this volume was harvested in Yakutat Bay during the fall. Since that time there have only been two seasons when harvests exceeded 100,000 pounds (1982/1983, 1983/1984); two non-confidential seasons; eight confidential seasons; and twenty one seasons with no harvest. Harvest has occurred one year in the past two decades (Table 102-1).

Regulations restricting harvest were first enacted for Area D in 1981 and 1982. These regulations instituted seasons, small closed areas in Yakutat Bay, and a Yakutat Bay GHR of 30,000 pounds per month of the open season. These regulations evolved over time to the current shrimp trawl fishery prosecuted only in Icy Bay.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. There is no biological data for this shrimp population and its status is unknown. There is also insufficient fishery data from the few years the fishery was prosecuted to assist in setting harvest levels because the largest harvest in the past 27 years was only 12% of the current GHR (17% of the GHR midpoint) (Table 102-1). The department opposes opening significant new areas to trawling with high harvest levels on a population for which the status is unknown, and suggests that if this proposal is adopted that a smaller exploratory GHR should be implemented. Since there are no regulations for Area D that restrict trawl type or size, additional restrictions on trawl size, number of trawls that can be used, and mesh size would need to be created (as in Southeast

5 AAC 31.125). In addition limits would need to be implemented on shrimp size (as in Southeast 5 AAC 31.120) as well as the establishment of bycatch limits to protect the collapsed and rebuilding Tanner and Dungeness crab fisheries, and appropriate seasons for the new fishery to protect critical life history stages.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 102-1.–Registration Area D (Yakutat) shrimp trawl harvest, number of vessels, number of landings, pounds per vessel, and pounds per landing, 1976/1977 to present.

Season	Harvest in pounds	Number of permits	Landings	Pounds per permit	Pounds per landing
1976/77	*	*	*	*	*
1977/78	0	0	0	0	0
1978/79	0	0	0	0	0
1979/80	*	*	*	*	*
1980/81[a]	1,906,68	16	23	119,168	82,899
1981/82	*	*	*	*	*
1982/83	141,714	3	7	47,238	20,245
1983/84	426,649	5	10	85,330	42,665
1984/85	*	*	*	*	*
1985/86	*	*	*	*	*
1986/87	*	*	*	*	*
1987/88	40,448	3	6	13,483	6,741
1988/89	0	0	0	0	0
1989/90	0	0	0	0	0
1990/91	*	*	*	*	*
1991/92	*	*	*	*	*
1992/93	34,875	3	3	11,625	11,625
1993/94	*	*	*	*	*
	No Harvest in seasons 1994/1995 through 2003/2004				
2004/05	*	*	*	*	*
	No Harvest in seasons 2005/2006 through 2013/2014				

[a] 1980/1981 season includes 450,000 pounds caught by otter trawl out of Yakutat Bay during the fishery (August 1980), but not reported on fish tickets.

* Fewer than 3 permits were fished; information is confidential.

PROPOSAL 103 – 5 AAC 31.125. Lawful shrimp trawl gear for Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Fisk.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would impose a maximum vessel length of 65 feet on new vessels participating in the trawl shrimp fishery in Registration Area A. Current participants with three or more years of fishing since 2000 would be exempted.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There is currently no maximum vessel length to participate in the trawl shrimp fishery in Registration area A.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? By limiting the length to 65 feet for new participants, the effectiveness of vessels entering the fishery, and those returning to the fishery, would be limited by horsepower and processing capacity, since larger vessels are typically more capable of towing beam trawls at higher rates of speed and have more decks and hold space. Two out of the five commercial beam trawl vessels that operated in Southeast Alaska in the 2013/2014 season were over 65 feet in length. There would be no effect on those vessels if this proposal were adopted, nor would there be any effect on the department's ability to manage the fishery.

BACKGROUND: There has never been a size limit on vessels participating in any of the trawl shrimp fisheries in Alaska. In the past it has been the practice of the department to limit harvest and effort by implementing gear restrictions in these fisheries.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. The degrading effect of large and heavy trawl gear towed at fast speeds on bottom habitat is certainly of great concern to the sustainable management of trawl shrimp populations. The potential habitat destruction as well as the potential increased catch efficiency on a species that is poorly understood in Alaska waters is undesirable, and potentially unsustainable. However, limiting vessel length is not the only management measure that could effectively address this issue. Continued use of gear limitation is another effective tool to control the degrading effects of trawling. By limiting gear size and weight the same result may be obtained without limiting new entrants in the fishery based on the size of their vessel.

The Alaska Department of Law has considered the part of the proposal that would provide for an exemption for certain vessels greater than the proposed length limit and recommends against adopting such an exemption.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal may result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery if they must either purchase or hire a smaller vessel to meet new vessel size limits.

PROPOSAL 104 – 5 AAC 31.125. Lawful shrimp trawl gear for Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Fisk.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would establish a maximum beam length of 60 feet for the Southeast beam trawl fishery. It would further allow the beam to be split into multiple trawls. Finally it would institute a maximum weight for beam trawl gear.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations for lawful shrimp trawl gear only impose a minimum net mesh size (5 AAC 31.125 (b)), and restrict the number of nets to two on board, only one of which may be in the water at any time (5 AAC 31.125 (c)).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Placing these beam trawl gear restrictions on the commercial fishery would limit the effectiveness of the gear which would have no effect on the department's ability to manage the fishery. These restrictions would also act to limit bottom habitat destruction since lighter gear has less effect on the bottom.

BACKGROUND: There has never been a regulation limiting the length or weight of a beam trawl in the Southeast shrimp trawl fishery. The requirement that only one trawl be in the water at any time is the only regulation that limits the amount of gear that can be fished. The proposal is correct in that Southeast beam trawl fishery participants have been effectively limited to beams of about 60 feet in length because beams above this size become too ponderous to handle safely or efficiently for the existing fleet.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. The proposed changes would not affect the department's ability to manage the fishery or create a conservation concern for shrimp. The intrinsically destructive nature of mobile bottom contact fishing gear requires close attention and management. This proposal would assist in doing so by setting reasonable maximum trawl width and weight. Since the aggregate length of all beams fished would be limited to approximately what is currently used there would likely be minimal change in catch rates, and thus the manageability of the fishery, while allowing participants flexibility in their fishing practices. Limiting gear weight effectively limits towing speed, since faster speeds would lift the trawl off the bottom. Slower towing speed decreases bottom habitat destruction and decreases bycatch rates. A collective cap of 3,000 pounds for all trawls fished would likely keep towing speeds within the range currently practiced. The department supports the increased margin of safety that may come with allowing multiple small trawls compared to a single large one.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 105 – 5 AAC 31.143. Reporting requirements for commercial shrimp vessels in Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would change the telephone reporting requirement for beam trawl shrimp catcher processors. All such calls are currently required to be made to the Petersburg area office; this proposal would change that to the office specified by the department.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The regulation currently requires beam trawl shrimp catcher processors to contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Petersburg area office for their weekly call (5 AAC 31.143 (b) (2)), and when changing districts (5 AAC 31.143 (c) (2)).

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The proposed language would allow the department to designate a single contact point preseason. This would result in greater clarity and efficiency for the public when contacting the department. Since the fishery is no longer managed out of the Petersburg area office, maintaining a requirement for communications to be with this office causes unneeded confusion.

BACKGROUND: The Southeast Alaska beam trawl fishery was managed out of the Petersburg area office until 2012, when the responsibility was transferred to the Douglas regional office.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 106 – 5 AAC 31.XXX. New regulation or new task force charge statement.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Fisk.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would create a Shrimp Beam Trawl Task Force to work with the department on crafting potential regulation changes.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The Board of Fisheries (board) has not established a Shrimp Beam Trawl Task Force.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The effects of this proposal would depend upon what the objectives of the task force were and how frequently the group met.

BACKGROUND: The shrimp beam trawl fishery in Southeast Alaska has historically targeted northern shrimp *Pandalus borealis* and secondarily, larger sidestripe shrimp *Pandalopsis dispar*. Other species incidentally-captured and landed in smaller quantities are coonstripe shrimp (*Pandalus hypsinotus*), humpy shrimp (*P. goniurus*), and spot shrimp (*P. platyceros*).

Management is based on a closed season designed to prevent fishing on major stocks during the egg-hatch period from March 1 through April 30; guideline harvest levels determined by historical, area-specific harvests; and three fishing periods in the three major fishing areas, plus a fourth fishing period in the Stikine Flats area only. Within the fishing season, fishing period length and timing are based upon industry input designed to spatially and temporally spread harvest and to meet processing requirements.

Shrimp harvest with beam trawl gear peaked in the 1986/1987 through 1997/1998 seasons. Since the 1997/1998 season, total harvest and number of permits fished have steadily declined. Declines in total harvest and effort were due to low prices for northern shrimp, a lack of processor interest in northern shrimp, and fewer active participants in the fishery.

Regionwide harvests declined further in the 2006/2007 season after the main buyer of northern shrimp in Petersburg stopped buying after an 80-year history in the fishery. Since the 2006/2007 season, harvests have largely been largely comprised of sidestripe shrimp, marketed to smaller buyers and through dockside sales

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department does not have a position on this proposal because it is not seeking a regulatory change.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional direct cost for a private person to participate.

CLOSED WATERS (1)

PROPOSAL 107 – 5AAC 31.136. Closed waters in Registration Area A.

PROPOSED BY: Steve Burrell.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal will close waters in a portion of Frederick Sound in District 8 and in a portion of Wrangell Narrows in District 6 to the commercial harvest of shrimp by beam trawl and pot gear.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There are no closed waters to the commercial harvest of shrimp in districts 6 and 8.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The commercial harvest of shrimp in the beam trawl and pot gear fishery in districts 6 and 8 would likely decrease while subsistence, sport, and personal use shrimp harvest could increase.

BACKGROUND: The area covered by this proposal encompasses portions of statistical areas 106–44 in District 6 and 108–60 in District 8 (Figure 107-1). Commercial pot shrimp fishermen have harvested spot shrimp from statistical area 108–60 in nine of the past 15 seasons with effort ranging from 1 to 10 boats and harvest averaging 1,929 pounds, or 10% of the District 8 harvest. The harvest in 106–44 is minimal and effort has been fewer than three permits. The amount harvested from the proposed closed area is unknown since the harvest is reported from the entire statistical area and not the specific location fished.

Commercial beam trawlers have harvested shrimp from Statistical Area 108–60 in all of the past 15 seasons and five of the past 15 seasons in Statistical Area 106–44. During the past 15 seasons, effort in 108–60 has ranged from 1 to 4 permits fished and the shrimp harvest of all species has averaged 24,396 pounds, or 8% of the total District 8 harvest. Over the prior 15 seasons, effort in 106–44 has ranged from 1 to 11 permits fished and the shrimp harvest of all species has averaged 32,513 pounds, or 11% of the total District 6 harvest. The amount harvested by beam trawlers from the proposed closed area is unknown since the harvest is reported from the entire statistical area, not the specific location fished.

Commercial pot shrimp fishing opens October 1 of each year. Since the fisheries are managed by guideline harvest limits, the season length varies from year to year. The districts 6 and 8 pot shrimp season length has averaged approximately 60 days over the last 15 years. The commercial beam trawl fishery in those portions of districts 6 and 8 covered by this proposal is open for 304 days by regulation and has not been closed early for the last 15 years. Subsistence, personal use, or sport fisheries for shrimp have been observed to occur in the proposed closed waters area. There is no bag limit in the personal use or subsistence fisheries. Sport anglers are limited to three pounds or three quarts of shrimp daily and in possession. There is no closed

season for the subsistence, sport, and personal use fisheries. Subsistence, sport and personal use harvest data are not available for this specific area.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. The department does not have any conservation concerns for shrimp in this area.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

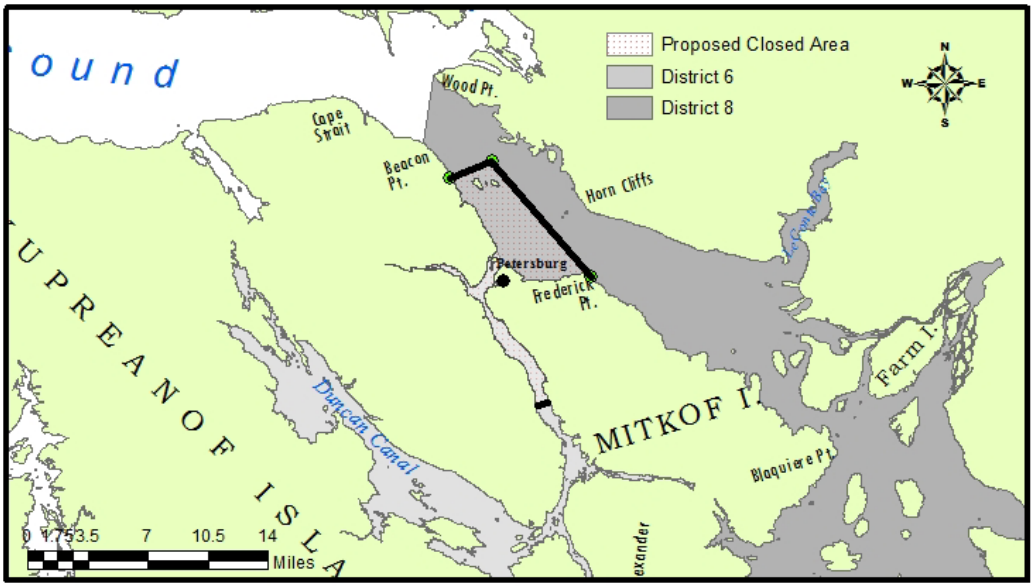

Figure 107-1.–Proposed closed waters to commercial shrimping in districts 6 and 8.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – GROUP 4: MISCELLANEOUS SHELLFISH / SPORT / SUBSISTENCE / PERSONAL USE

11 PROPOSALS

MISCELLANEOUS SHELLFISH (5 PROPOSALS)

SEA CUCUMBERS (3)

PROPOSAL 108 – 5AAC 38.140. Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would define an open fishing period in the sea cucumber fishery and clarify that the 2,000 pound trip limit applies to one open fishing period. This proposal also removes unnecessary language concerning daylight hours.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations limit the sea cucumber fishery to 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday and from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Tuesday of each week. Permit holders may not land more than 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during a weekly open fishing period.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would have no effect on current fishing practices but would clarify regulations.

BACKGROUND: The commercial sea cucumber fishery expanded rapidly in the 1980s, causing the fishery to grow beyond the permit system initially used for management. In response to the rapidly expanding fishery, the *Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan* was instituted in 1990. Initially, commercial harvest of sea cucumbers was prosecuted during two 48-hour open periods per week. In 1993, to control harvest and extend the season, the start date of the season was pushed back to November with an open period of seven daylight hours on Mondays, and four additional hours on Tuesdays from December through March. In 1994, the board adopted regulations limiting harvest to 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers per permit holder per week. The management plan was amended for the 1997–98 season to open on October 1, with weekly fishing periods comprised of seven daylight hours on Mondays, and an additional four daylight hours on Tuesdays. During the January 2000 board meeting, the weekly fishing period was amended to extend fishing time on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and on Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon throughout the season, with the ability to extend the open time beginning in November.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. The 2,000 pound trip limit is intended to apply to the weekly open period that occurs on Monday and Tuesday of each week. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers expressed concern over the enforceability of divers landing 2,000 pounds on Monday and then landing more cucumbers on Tuesday. This proposal clarifies that the 2,000 pound trip limit applies to the weekly open period.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 109 – 5AAC 38.140. Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Phil Doherty.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would reduce the weekly open fishing period for sea cucumbers in October from 1½ days to 1 day.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations open the sea cucumber fishery from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday and from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Tuesday of each week, beginning on the first Monday in October.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would slow the fishery and prolong the season.

BACKGROUND: The commercial sea cucumber fishery expanded rapidly in the 1980s, causing the fishery to grow beyond the permit system initially used for management. In response to the rapidly expanding fishery, the *Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan* was instituted in 1990. Initially, commercial harvest of sea cucumbers was prosecuted during two 48-hour open periods per week. In 1993, to control harvest and extend the season, the start date of the season was pushed back to November with an open period of seven daylight hours on Mondays, with four additional hours on Tuesdays from December through March. In 1994, the board adopted regulations limiting harvest to 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers per permit holder per week. The management plan was amended for the 1997/1998 season to open on October 1, with weekly fishing periods comprised of seven daylight hours on Mondays, and an additional four daylight hours on Tuesdays. During the January 2000 board meeting, the weekly fishing period was amended to extend fishing time on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and on Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon throughout the season, with the ability to extend the open time beginning in November.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. Changing the open times to one day in October will not adversely affect management of the sea cucumber fishery. The department can effectively manage the sea cucumber fishery with the present 1½-day opening or the proposed 1-day opening. The department currently has the ability to reduce fishing time to one day, or less than one day, to match the guideline harvest level with the anticipated effort.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 110 – 5AAC 38.140. Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Phil Doherty.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal seeks to allow a Southeast Alaska sea cucumber permit holder to acquire a second limited entry permit. If the permit holder acquires a second transferable permit then that diver would be allowed to harvest and possess an additional 1,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during an open period established by the department.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The harvest of sea cucumbers is limited to no more than 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during a weekly open fishing period. Under statute, a person may hold only one Southeast Alaska sea cucumber permit.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would allow a diver with two CFEC permits to harvest and possess 3,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during an open period established by the department. The immediate effect would be to increase the pace of the fishery and potentially shorten the season as divers acquire inactive permits. The long term effect is unknown and would depend on how many divers obtain a second transferable permit, and how many of those permits are active or inactive.

BACKGROUND: The commercial sea cucumber fishery expanded rapidly in the 1980s, causing the fishery to grow beyond the permit system initially used for management. In response to the rapidly expanding fishery, the *Southeastern Alaska Sea Cucumber Management Plan* was instituted in 1990. When the fishery became limited entry, the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) issued 389 limited entry permits. Of these 234 were non-transferable and 155 were transferable. In 1994, the board adopted regulations limiting harvest to 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers per permit holder per week.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. By statute a person may hold only one Southeast Alaska sea cucumber permit.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

GEODUCKS (2)

PROPOSALS 111 AND 112 – 5AAC 38.142. Southeastern Alaska Geoduck Fishery Management Plan. Allow the department to set trip limits on geoduck harvest based on market conditions (Proposal 111) or establish a weekly trip limit of 1,000 pounds of geoduck clams for each CFEC permit holder.(Proposal 112).

PROPOSED BY: Phil Doherty (Proposal 111) and Cornelis Bakker (Proposal 112).

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSALS DO? Proposal 111 would give the department authority to establish a weekly harvest limit based on market information. It is assumed that the primary source of this information would come from the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fishery Association (SARDFA). Proposal 112 would establish a weekly harvest limit of 1,000 pounds per diver with a limit of two permitted divers per vessel.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Current regulations allow the department to set a harvest limit for conservation, law enforcement, and waste reduction, or to assist in the development of the fishery. There is no limit on the number of divers permitted on a geoduck vessel.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSALS WERE ADOPTED? The adoption of trip limits would slow the pace of the geoduck fishery. Since most vessels have two or fewer divers on board due to the space required for harvesting geoduck clams, limiting vessels to two divers will have little or no effect on the fishery.

BACKGROUND: The geoduck fishery management plan was adopted into regulation in 2000. Since that time the department and SARDFA have worked closely together on geoduck management. The department currently uses harvest limits to remain within guideline harvest levels (GHLs) and has used harvest limits in the past for what SARDFA has described as market conditions in response to a unanimous vote by the SARDFA Geoduck Committee. However, it became immediately clear that implementing a harvest limit based solely on SARDFA recommendations was allocative and not supported by all of the SARDFA membership which includes all permit holders in Southeast Alaska dive fisheries. In 2013, the department informed SARDFA that without clear direction from the board, harvest limits would only be used for conservation purposes.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on these allocative proposals. Harvest limits are allocative in nature because fishermen who prefer a competitive environment may sacrifice harvest. The department is concerned about who will determine that market concerns warrant a harvest limit. The department has no ability to generate this information and

would rely solely on a recommendation from the SARDFA Geoduck Committee which may not reflect the opinion of all members. If the board determines that harvest limits are needed, the department recommends harvest limits are established in regulation with clear direction on how they would be implemented by the department.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of these proposals is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

SPORT, PERSONAL USE, AND SUBSISTENCE (6 PROPOSALS)

MARINE RESERVE (1)

PROPOSAL 113 –5 AAC 02.15X. Closed waters in Southeastern Alaska–Yakutat Area. 5 AAC 28.150. Closed waters in Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area. 5 AAC 31.136. Closed waters in Registration Area A. 5 AAC 32.150. Closed waters in Registration Area A. 5 AAC 34.15X. Closed waters in Registration Area A. 5 AAC 35.15X. Closed waters in Registration Area A. 5 AAC 38.1XX. Closed waters in Registration Area A. 5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeastern Alaska Area. 5 AAC 77.6XX. Closed waters in the Southeastern Alaska Area.

PROPOSED BY: Naha Conservation.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would establish a Marine Conservation Zone and prohibit commercial, sport, and personal use bottomfish, crab and shrimp fisheries within 300 feet of Cache Island (Figure 113-1).

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Under AS 16.05.251, the board may adopt regulations it considers advisable for setting apart fish reserve areas, subject to approval of the legislature.

Current regulations provide for a variety of bottomfish, crab and shrimp fisheries near Cache Island. These include directed commercial fisheries for sablefish and Pacific cod; also, groundfish may be taken as bycatch in the salmon troll fishery. Directed commercial fishing for demersal shelf rockfish is prohibited by regulation. Commercial shrimp and Dungeness crab fisheries are also closed in this area. The area around Cache Island is open to commercial harvest of sea cucumbers.

The proposed closed area is within the Ketchikan Nonsubsistence Use Area. Current regulations provide for sport and personal use fisheries that harvest bottomfish, crab and shrimp in the area near Cache Island. Sport and personal use fisheries in this area are generally provided for under regional regulations, with several local exceptions. Local regulations specify reduced rockfish harvest limits for both fisheries. They also specify reduced harvest limits for lingcod in the sport fishery, and close the sport fishery for shrimp.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would eliminate harvest opportunity and possibly decrease harvest in commercial, personal use and sport fisheries by some unknown, but likely small, amount. By creating new exceptions to commercial, personal use, and sport regulations it would also add regulatory complexity to each of these fisheries.

BACKGROUND: Cache Island is located about 25 miles northeast of Ketchikan in Naha Bay. The proposed Marine Conservation Zone around Cache Island is small, representing approximately 0.04 square miles (Figure 113-1). This area lies within larger commercial, sport

and personal use fishery statistical reporting areas ranging in size from approximately 100 to 345 square miles.

Cache Island is located in the SSEI subdistrict and falls within groundfish Statistical Area 315531. Groundfish fisheries in this area are managed by the State of Alaska. Groundfish harvest reported as bycatch from the commercial halibut fishery in groundfish Statistical Area 315531 for the most recent 5-year period included: seven species of rockfish (1,095 round pounds); Pacific cod (78 pounds); and lingcod (64 pounds). The total exvessel value of these landings was $251. Groundfish harvest reported in the commercial troll fishery from salmon Statistical Area 101–90 was limited to rockfish (53 pounds) and lingcod (8 pounds). It is not possible to determine if any of these harvests occurred within the proposed closure area around Cache Island. Logbook data from the directed sablefish and Pacific cod fisheries indicate that there was not any directed effort from these fisheries in the proposed closure area during the past five years.

The department collects sport and personal use effort and harvest information on lingcod, rockfish, and Dungeness crab via the SWHS. Cache Island lies within a larger sport fishery reporting area, East and West Behm canals, which encompass approximately 345 square miles. The department also collects sport effort and harvest information on lingcod and rockfish via saltwater charter logbooks within a logbook reporting area encompassing approximately 100 square miles. It is not possible to determine what proportion of harvest from these reporting areas occurs within 300 feet of Cache Island, which includes 0.04 square miles.

In general, sport fishing effort has remained stable in East and West Behm canals over the last 10 years. SWHS estimates for rockfish indicate that harvest has remained stable over the last 10 years, while the most recent 5-year average is 2,900 fish. Saltwater charter logbook information shows that harvest of lingcod and rockfish in 101–900 has remained stable over the last ten years averaging 10 lingcod and 160 rockfish.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **OPPOSED** to this proposal. There are no known conservation or biological concerns for bottomfish or shellfish populations in the area around Cache Island or the larger statistical areas. This proposal would also add unnecessary regulatory complexity.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

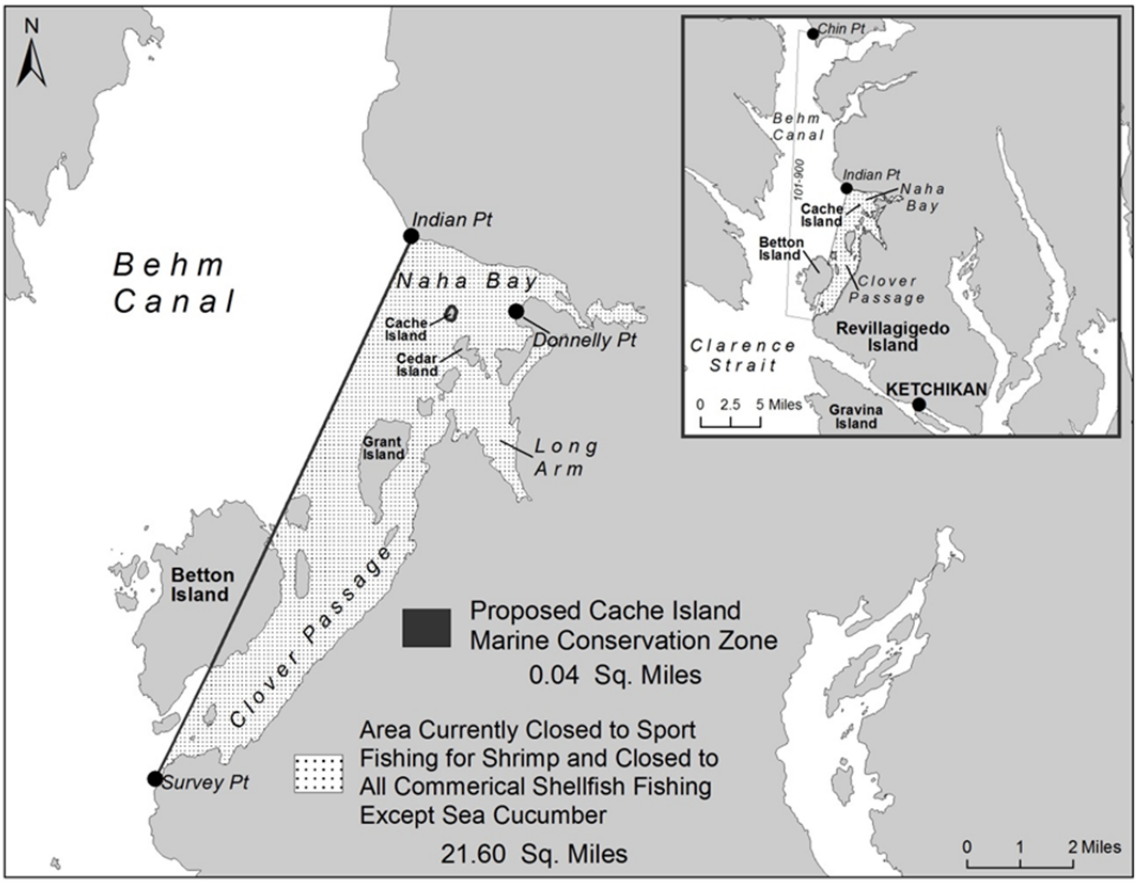

Figure 113-1.–Location of Naha Bay and the proposed Cache Island marine conservation zone.

SUBSISTENCE REGULATION REVIEW:

1. Is this stock in a nonsubsistence area? Yes: it is within the Joint Board of Fisheries and Game Ketchikan Nonsubsistence Area as described at 5 AAC 99.015 (a)(1).
2. Is this stock customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence? Not applicable.
3. Can a portion of the stock be harvested consistent with sustained yield? Yes.
4. What amount is reasonably necessary for subsistence uses? Not applicable.
5. Do the regulations provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses? Not applicable.
6. Is it necessary to reduce or eliminate other uses to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses? Not applicable.

SPORT, PERSONAL USE, AND SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES (5)

PROPOSAL 80 – 5AAC 47.090 George Inlet superexclusive guided sport ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Experience Alaska Tours.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal has four components. The first would modify the pot limit from two pots per vessel to six pots per registered sport fishing operator. The second would change buoy marking requirements to reflect the name and address of the registered sport fishing operator instead of the name and address of the responsible fishing guide, and reflect either the name or DMV number of the vessel as opposed to both the vessel name and DMV number. The third would transfer responsibility for violations from the guide whose name is listed on the pot to the sport fishing guide in command of the sport fishing operator's vessel. The fourth would change the trigger for reducing, by emergency order, the number of pots and pot lifts in the fishery from more than three registered vessels to more than one registered sport fishing operator.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? 5 AAC 47.090 designates George Inlet as a superexclusive guided sport ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery, and includes area and season designations; business, guide and vessel registration requirements; super exclusivity provisions; methods and means specifications; catch and harvest limits; reporting requirements; and management guidelines for the fishery. Under this section, a vessel may fish up to two pots and each pot may be lifted no more than three times daily. Pots must be removed from the water on the third lift. The vessel's name and the sport fishing guide's name and address is required to be inscribed on the pot buoy. The guide whose name is listed on the pot, and the person pulling or setting the pot, are responsible for any violations. The department may, by emergency order, reduce the number of pots and/or pot lifts if more than three vessels register for the fishery.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The elements of this proposal that modify pot limits may lead to an increase in the number of pots used by the current sole operator in this fishery. However, the long term effect on the number of pots is likely negligible because current regulations do not limit the number of operators or number of vessels participating in the fishery. Since pots would no longer specifically be assigned to a guide and a vessel, tracking of pot lifts and when pots should be removed from the water, and the assignment of violations would become more difficult.

BACKGROUND: The George Inlet Dungeness crab ecotourism fishery was permitted from 2003–2007 under the Commissioner's authority to issue special use permits for scientific and educational purposes. In March 2008, the board determined that this operation did not fit current requirements for scientific and educational permits, and enacted regulations (5 AAC 75.085 and 5 AAC 47.090) for the 2008 tour season. In 2009 the board removed provisions requiring the Commissioner to reduce the number of allowable pots, lifts or both if more than three vessels register for this fishery.

In order to monitor effort and utilization of the Dungeness resource, a logbook is required to be completed, and information is collected for each lift. To date only one business has participated in this fishery. From 2008 to 2011, Experience Alaska Tours registered three vessels annually, though no trips were ever made using the third vessel. In 2012, the business reduced their fleet size from three vessels to two vessels by replacing two smaller vessels with one larger vessel thus reducing their maximum operating potential to a total of four pots and 12 lifts per day.

From 2008 to 2014, Experience Alaska Tours conducted an average of 522 trips per season, 3.5 trips per day and an annual harvest of 9,117 Dungeness crab. In 2014, Experience Alaska Tours conducted 598 trips, averaged 4.0 trips per day and harvested 7,026 Dungeness crab (Table 80-1).

There is a commercial Dungeness fishery from October 1 to February 28 in District 1, including George Inlet. Little commercial effort occurs in George Inlet because other District 1 areas are more productive for Dungeness crab.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on the allocative aspects of this proposal that modify pot limits. The department is **OPPOSED** to changing the buoy marking requirement because enforcement would not be able to assign responsibility for violations while pots were passively fishing if the responsible party was the guide in command of the operator's vessel.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

Table 80-1.–Number of vessels registered, trips conducted, pots lifted, and Dungeness crab caught annually by Experience Alaska Tours while participating in the George Inlet superexclusive guided sport ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery, 2008–2014.

Year	Vessels	Trips	Trips averaged per day	Pot lifts	Dungeness crab catch	Average Dungeness crab catch per pot
2008	3	597	4.0	1,136	5,799	5
2009	3	671	4.5	838	7,046	8
2010	3	474	3.2	859	9,140	11
2011	3	411	2.7	808	12,032	15
2012	2	391	2.6	775	11,579	15
2013	2	514	3.4	1,000	11,197	11
2014	2	598	4.0	714	7,026	10
2008–2014 Average	3	522	3.5	876	9,117	11

PROPOSAL 81 – 5AAC 47.090 George Inlet superexclusive guided sport ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Experience Alaska Tours.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would allow sport fishing guides registered for this superexclusive fishery to rescind their registration and participate in other Dungeness crab and guided sport fisheries.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? During the calendar year of registration, a sport fishing operator, sport fishing guide, or vessel registered for the George Inlet superexclusive guided sport ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery may not participate in any other Dungeness crab fishery, or any other guided sport fishery.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposed action would increase the number of guides eligible to participate in the George Inlet superexclusive guided sport ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery.

BACKGROUND: From the implementation of this superexclusive fishery in 2008 to 2012, one business operated two vessels and employed two to six guides annually in this fishery. In 2013 and 2014, the same business operated two vessels and employed three guides. Prior to 2012, operators, guides and vessels were required to register from December 1 through January 2 prior to the season. During the 2011/2012 board cycle, the guide registration deadline was removed from regulation, allowing guides to register at any time for this fishery.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 82 – **5AAC 77.666. PERSONAL USE TANNER CRAB FISHERY.**

PROPOSED BY: Peter Roddy.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would increase the pot limit from 4 per vessel to 10 per vessel and establish a limit of 4 pots per person in the personal use Tanner crab fishery.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? No more than four pots or 10 ring nets per vessel may be used in the Southeast Alaska personal use Tanner crab fishery other than in Section 11–A (Juneau area) where, reduced pot and ring net limits are the same as authorized under 5 AAC 77.664(c)(3)(C) for red and blue king crab. No more than four pots or 10 ring nets per vessel may be used in the Southeast Alaska sport Tanner crab fishery. No more than 5 pots per person or 10 pots per vessel may be used in the Southeast Alaska subsistence Tanner crab fishery. The subsistence fishery ring net limits are 10 rings per person or 20 maximum per vessel.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? It is likely that this would increase the harvest of Tanner crab in the personal use fishery. Increasing pot limits for the personal use Tanner crab fishery may allow more pots to be used for prospecting prior to the commercial Tanner crab fishery. Enforcement of pot limits may be complicated by adoption of this proposal because the sport, personal use, and subsistence Tanner crab fisheries and personal use and subsistence king crab fishery use essentially the same gear type, but under this proposal would have differing pot limits. Personal use RKC fishery closures are common in the Juneau area and in the other surveyed areas. During these closures, the amount of personal use Tanner crab fishing gear in these areas closed to personal use RKC fishing could increase significantly.

BACKGROUND: The pot and ring net limits for the sport and personal use Tanner crab fisheries were standardized with personal use king crab fisheries since both fisheries use the same gear type. This facilitates enforcing pot limit regulations in these fisheries.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal. However, the department recommends pot limits remain consistent between sport and personal use fisheries to keep regulations simple, maintain compliance, and aid in enforcement of those fisheries.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 83 – **5AAC 77.666. PERSONAL USE TANNER CRAB FISHERY.** Repeal closure of Tanner crab sport and personal use fishery two weeks prior to July 1 in the Southeastern Alaska Area.

PROPOSED BY: Peter Roddy.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal would repeal the two-week closure for the Tanner crab sport and personal use fisheries from June 16 to 30.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Tanner crab may be taken only from July 1 through June 15 in the Southeast Alaska personal use and sport fisheries. The personal use RKC fishery has a three month closure (April 1–June 30). Sport fishing for king crab in Southeast Alaska is closed. Subsistence Tanner crab fishing is open year-round, while subsistence king crab fishing is open April 1–June 30.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would make the sport and personal use Tanner crab seasons year round. Tanner crab harvest would likely increase.

BACKGROUND: The two-week closure from June 16 to 30 is the only seasonal closure for sport and personal use Tanner crab fisheries in Southeast Alaska. There is no way to differentiate between pots used for red king and Tanner crab noncommercial harvest, which effectively allows for potential prospecting and stockpiling of RKC prior to the RKC season opening, under the guise of noncommercial Tanner crab fishing, in a scenario where the noncommercial Tanner crab fishery is open prior to the RKC season. The two-week closure from June 16 to 30 was adopted into regulation at the 2009 Board meeting to provide a "fair start" for the very popular RKC personal use fishery beginning July 1.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **OPPOSES** this proposal. The proposal would potentially allow prospecting, and stockpiling of RKC prior to the RKC personal use season, particularly in Section 11–A (Juneau area). The current closures provide a single start date for personal use RKC and Tanner fisheries, making the start date for the RKC fishery much easier to enforce.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

PROPOSAL 93 – 5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of Southeast Alaska Area; and 5 AAC 77.660. Personal use shrimp fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would require personal use and sport fishers to obtain a shrimp permit/harvest recording form at the Juneau/Douglas office prior to participating in the Section 11–A shrimp fishery. Participants would be responsible for recording their shrimp harvest and returning their completed harvest form to the department.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? In Southeast Alaska, personal use shellfish permits are required and issued only for the Section 11–A king crab and Southeast Alaska trawl shrimp fisheries. There are no permit or harvest reporting requirements for sport fisheries in Southeast Alaska.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would impose some burden on participants to comply with the permitting and harvest reporting requirements. However, it would improve effort and harvest estimates for the Section 11–A personal use and sport fisheries for shrimp when these fisheries are re-opened. Permits and harvest reports would provide estimates of effort and harvest that are expected to be more accurate, more specific to area and time, and available sooner than estimates produced by the SWHS. Resulting estimates would be available for use by the department and the board as a basis for future management and regulatory decisions.

BACKGROUND: Section 11–A is within the Juneau Nonsubsistence Area (Figure 93-1). Commercial, personal use and sport fishing for shrimp generally take place in Section 11–A. Since 2013, the commercial shrimp fishery in Section 11–A has not been opened, and Section 11–A sport and personal use shrimp fisheries have been closed by emergency order. These closures were implemented after declining CPUE was observed in the commercial fishery, indicating a decline in abundance, to allow rebuilding of the shrimp stock.

Sport and personal use effort and harvest data for shrimp in the Juneau area are limited. Creel census data was collected for Section 11–A shellfish fisheries from 2003 to 2007. A comparison of estimates produced by the creel census program with commercial fish ticket data indicated that the sport and personal use/sport shrimp harvests were similar in magnitude to commercial harvests during this period.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. When the Section 11–A shrimp fisheries are reopened, it will be important to understand effort and harvest by all user groups. The department is prepared to revise the current shellfish personal use permitting and harvest accounting program in Southeast Alaska to accommodate the Section 11–A personal use and sport shrimp fishery.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in an additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery.

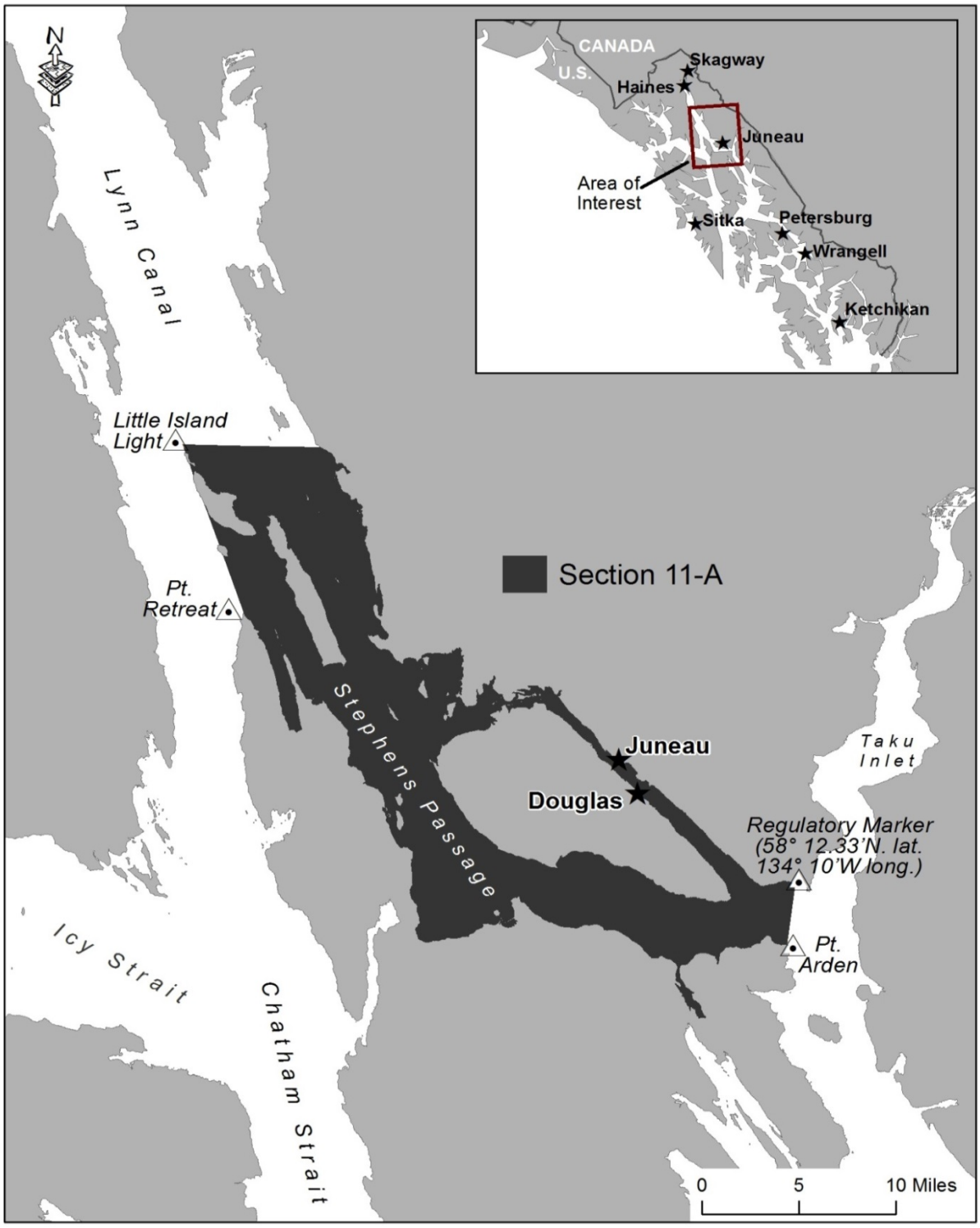

Figure 93-1.–Section 11–A.