COMMERCIAL GOLDEN KING CRAB ANNOUNCEMENT
EAST CENTRAL AREA CLOSURE DATE

Juneau . . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today that the commercial golden king crab fishery in the East Central Area will close at 12:00 noon, Tuesday, April 16, 2019. This area is being closed in response to poor fishery performance, recruitment, and concern for the long-term reproductive potential of golden king crab. Stock status continues to remain at historically low levels similar to the time period in the 1990s when stocks were collapsed where the department in response took conservative measures by routinely closing fishing areas before harvests reached preseason guideline harvest levels (GHL). The data, specifically catch per unit effort (CPUE), is similar to past seasons when inseason closures were implemented.

The established preseason GHL for golden king crab in East Central was 15,000 pounds. Through April 5, 2019, approximately 4,267 pounds have been harvested by 6 vessels. Catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) has averaged 3.4 crab per pot in East Central during the period 2000-2016. The average CPUE this season of 0.7 crab per pot is only 21% of the average for the past 19 seasons. The amount of golden king crab landed per boat/per day thus far in the current season is approximately 14 pounds per boat/per day which is well below the 2000-2017 average of 529 pounds per boat/per day.

The Mid-Chatham Strait and Lower Chatham Strait Areas will remain open until further notice. The department will continue to monitor fishery performance in these remaining areas. Additional management actions may be taken as necessary and the department will provide as much advance notice as possible for future specific area closures. A vessel may leave gear in a stored condition for five days after the closure of a portion of Registration Area A [5 AAC 34.127(2)]. All gear must be removed from the East Central Area no later than 12:00 noon, April 21, 2019.

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C1319.