



Advisory Announcement

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Prince William Sound Area Tanner Crab Commissioner's Permit Fishery Eastern and Western Districts Only Emergency Order # 2-SF-E-01-21

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announces the Commissioner's Permit Tanner crab fishery in the Eastern and Western Districts (Figure 1) of the Prince William Sound Area (PWS; 5 AAC 35.311) will open in 2021. PWS is a superexclusive registration area for Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.306 (a)) and in order to participate a valid 2021 CFEC interim-use permit card for PWS Tanner crab (T09E or T91E) is required.

There is a registration deadline of February 18 at 5:00 p.m. Permits will not be issued after this date.

The season will open 12:01 a.m. March 1 and close 11:59 p.m. March 31, unless closed earlier by emergency order (EO). In addition, for safety and a fair start, if the National Weather Service (NWS) issues a 48-hour marine weather forecast for Prince William Sound (PKZ125) at 4:00 a.m. February 28 that contains a gale warning, the PWS Commissioner's Permit Tanner crab fishery opening will be delayed for 24 hours; if delayed, the 4:00 a.m. NWS marine weather forecast for PWS will be checked each subsequent day until no gale warning is issued for the upcoming 48-hour period, or until 12:01 a.m. March 4, when the season will open regardless of the forecast.

During the fishery, a maximum of 25 Tanner crab pots may be operated by each vessel with required identification (pot) tags. Log sheets must be completed for each pot set. Permit holders must check in with ADF&G Homer staff prior to each fishing trip and accommodate an ADF&G onboard observer upon request.

Statistical Area 486005 will be closed this season to commercial fishing. Between the 2018 and 2020 seasons, the harvest decreased from ~30,000 lb in 2018 to ~7,000 lb in 2020 (76% decrease) with the CPUE decreasing 56%, from nearly 14 crab per pot in 2018 to approximately 6 crab per pot in 2020. This relatively small area will be closed to conserve crab populations.

Depending on fishery performance, statistical area closures may occur by EO prior to the season closure; area closures may be announced with a minimum of 24 hours notice. The fishery will be monitored closely with mandatory daily call-in reports, as specified on the Commissioner's Permit. If fishermen do not adhere to daily call-in requirements, management will be conservative and enforcement action will be taken.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are encouraging the public to ask questions by phone (Jan Rumble at 907-321-1569, Elisa Russ at 907-399-1721, or the Homer office at 907-235-8191) and complete Commissioner's Permits by fax or e-mail. If necessary, Commissioner's Permits may also be completed in person at offices in Homer, Anchorage, and Cordova.

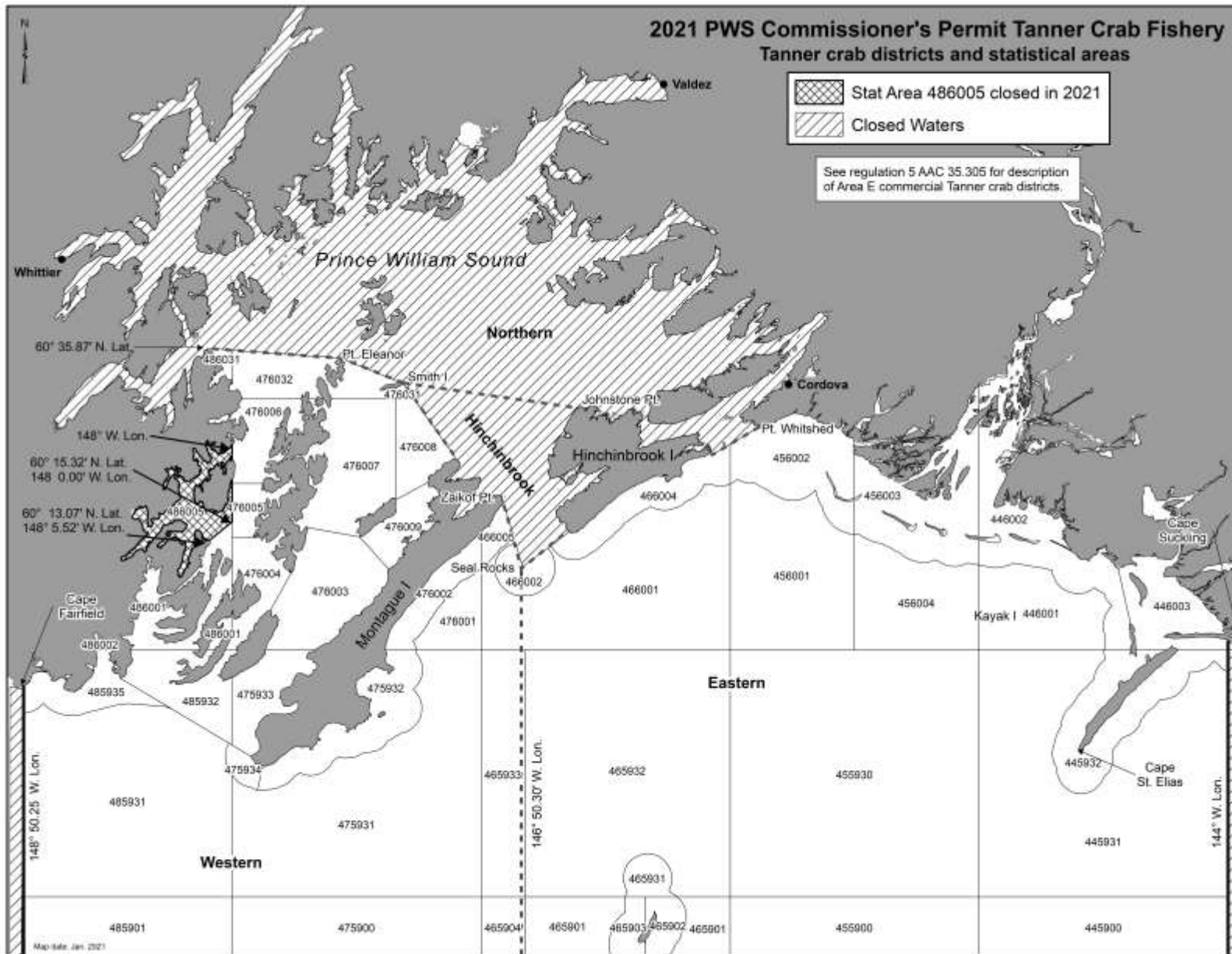


Figure 1.—Prince William Sound Area commercial Tanner crab districts; Commissioner’s Permit fishery open in Eastern and Western districts.