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Advisory Announcement

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2024 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL TANNER CRAB FISHERY

The 2024 commercial Tanner crab fishery in Southeast Alaska will open concurrently with the commercial golden king crab fishery at **12:00 noon on Saturday, February 17, 2024.**

The registration deadline for the 2024 season is Thursday, January 18, 2024. Registration packets and buoy tags will be available at area offices starting **Friday, December 22, 2023.** Buoy tags are mandatory for all commercial Tanner crab gear and are available by appointment from 9:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. at Alaska Department of Fish and Game area offices in Southeast Alaska for \$1.25 each. All commercial fishermen registering in the 2024 Tanner crab fishery after the registration deadline will be required to pay a \$45 late fee [Sec. 16.05.065]. Simultaneous registrations are allowed for Tanner crab and golden king crab. Commercial shrimp or Dungeness crab pot registrations may also be obtained and fished simultaneously with Tanner crab, if simultaneous seasons are open [5 AAC 35.128(b)]. Processors are reminded that registration for tenders is required.

Logbooks are mandatory for all fishing vessels participating in the Tanner crab fishery using pot gear. Logbook packets and buoy tags are now available at area offices. Logbook packets include instructions for filling out the logbooks, envelopes for their delivery, statistical area maps, and all advisory announcements available at the time the packet is obtained.

Buoy tag placement is addressed in 5 AAC 35.126(a). Buoy tags are mandatory for all commercial Tanner crab gear and are available at area offices in Southeast Alaska for \$1.25 each. Replacement tags are available at area offices upon receipt of a completed tag replacement affidavit. All missing tag numbers must be provided on the affidavit form before replacements can be issued. The completed affidavit form must be signed by the permit holder and a crewmember. All purchased buoy tags are nonrefundable.

For more information on Tanner crab registration and unregistration please contact shellfish regional staff in the Douglas or Petersburg area offices at the following phone numbers:

<u>Petersburg:</u>	Main Office:	(907) 772-3801	
	Joe Stratman:	(907) 772-5238	joseph.stratman@alaska.gov
	Tessa Bergmann:	(907) 772-5236	tessa.bergmann@alaska.gov
<u>Douglas:</u>	Main Office:	(907) 465-4250	
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Season

Season length of the Tanner crab fishery will be determined by guidelines set forth in the Registration Area A Tanner crab harvest strategy [5 AAC 35.113]. The initial period of the commercial Tanner crab fishing season in the core areas, non-core areas, inside exploratory areas, and outside exploratory areas will be a minimum of five days. Additional fishing time may be allowed based on the estimated biomass of mature male crab and the number of registered pots at the start of the fishery [5 AAC 35.113(b)(1)]. **An advisory announcement will be issued on February 17, 2024, announcing the total number of pots registered in the fishery for the 2024 season and whether the initial fishing period will be extended.**

At the 2022 Board of Fisheries meeting, the board passed an amended proposal that changed the season length as outlined in 5 AAC 35.113(b)(2) as follows; at the end of the initial period, the core areas will close to fishing and the non-core areas, inside exploratory areas, and outside exploratory areas will remain open for an additional five days. After the non-core areas close to fishing, the inside exploratory areas and outside exploratory areas will remain open for an additional fourteen days. After the inside exploratory areas close to fishing, the outside exploratory areas will remain open through Sunday, March 31, 2024.

Descriptions of core areas, non-core areas, inside exploratory areas, and outside exploratory areas can be found in 5 AAC 35.113 (c) and are defined as follow:

The core areas include the following waters in Registration Area A:

- (A) Icy Strait: waters west of a line from Point Sophia to 58°14.00' N lat, 135°16.00' W long, including the waters of Port Frederick and Excursion Inlet, and waters east of Section 14-A, including the waters of Glacier Bay not closed by the National Park Service;
- (B) St. James Bay: waters west of a line from Point Whidbey to 58°33.00' N lat, 135°09.60' W long;
- (C) District 15: waters east of a line from the north tip of Little Island to Point St. Mary, including Berners Bay;
- (D) Section 11-A: waters of Section 11-A in Stephens Passage;
- (E) Section 11-B: waters north of line from Point Arden to Circle Point and east of a line from Point Arden to Point Bishop, including all waters of Taku Inlet;
- (F) Seymour Canal: waters north of 57°37.00' N lat;
- (G) Port Snettisham: waters east and north of a line from Point Styleman to Point Anmer;
- (H) Endicott Arm and Tracy Arm: waters east of a line from Point Coke to Point Astley;
- (I) Gambier Bay: waters west of a line from Point Gambier to 57°24.90' N lat, 133°53.00' W long;
- (J) Pybus Bay: waters north and west of a line from Point Pybus to the easternmost tip of San Juan Island to a point at 57°14.60' N lat, 134°07.30' W long;
- (K) Section 13-C: excluding Sitkoh Bay;
- (L) Keku Strait, Port Camden, and associated bays: waters southeast of a line from Cornwallis Point at 56°55.91' N lat, 134°16.42' W long to Point McCartney at 57°01.49' N lat, 134°03.51' W long and west of a line from Point Camden at 56°48.66' N lat, 133°52.79' W long to Salt Point Light at 56°50.68' N lat, 133°52.02' W long;
- (M) Frederick Sound: waters east of a line from Bay Point to Boulder Point including Farragut Bay, Thomas Bay, Section 8-A, Section 8-B, and north and east of a line from Mitchell Point to Point St. John, including Kah Sheets Bay, Duncan Canal, and Wrangell Narrows.

The non-core areas include all waters of Alaska in those portions of districts in Registration Area A that are not described 5 AAC 35.113(c) (above) as core areas or as inside exploratory areas: the waters of Registration area A within Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4, as described in 5 AAC 33.200. The outside exploratory areas include all waters of Registration Area A in the exclusive economic zone (3–200 nm).

Stock Status

Catch-survey modeling of commercial fishery harvest, 2023 fall crab survey data, and 2023 summer crab survey data produced a regional biomass estimate of 5.12 million pounds of mature male Tanner crab, a 10% increase from the mature male Tanner crab biomass estimate of 4.65 million lb in 2022, the previous year. Tanner crab stock status by area was presented at the King and Tanner Task Force Meeting on November 27 and is available on the ADF&G webpage: https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.shellfish_meetings.

District 16

District 16 will be open and managed as a non-core area for the 2024 season.

Closed Area Descriptions

The department reminds fishermen that a National Park Service Lifetime Access Permit is required to fish for Tanner crab in waters of Glacier Bay north of a line from Point Carolus to Point Gustavus. Within this area, some waters are closed: the Beardslee Islands, the Hugh Miller/Charpentier Inlet complex, the upper Dundas Bay wilderness areas, the nonwilderness areas of Geikie Inlet, the West Arm of Glacier Bay proper north of 58°50.00' N lat, and the East Arm of Glacier Bay proper north of a line drawn from Point Caroline through the southern end of Garforth Island to the east side of Muir Inlet. These areas are shown on the attached map. For more information on fishing in Glacier Bay proper, including detailed latitudes

and longitudes of closure areas, and permits required for fishermen and buyers, contact the National Park Service at (907) 697-2230.

Simultaneous Registration Regulations

Regulations regarding permit holders with simultaneous registration in golden king crab and Tanner crab fisheries [5 AAC 34.109; 5 AAC 35.106] state that before fishing for golden king crab in a portion of Registration Area A that is closed to Tanner crab fishing, a vessel has to remove all Tanner crab from the vessel, must unregister to fish for Tanner crab by signature of the vessel owner, agent, or permit holder and a department representative. Once a permit has been unregistered for Tanner crab, Tanner crab may not be retained or sold. **Until a permit holder simultaneously registered for the golden king crab and Tanner crab fisheries unloads all Tanner crab, and unregisters to fish for Tanner crab, he or she may not have gear in fishing condition in a portion of Registration Area A that is closed to Tanner crab fishing.** Likewise, vessels registered only for golden king crab that want to fish for Tanner crab during the non-core or exploratory periods must remove all gear from the closed Tanner crab area before registering for Tanner crab.

Permit holders with simultaneous registrations in golden king crab and Tanner crab fisheries are required to keep separate logbooks for each species and must abide by the golden king crab fishery inseason reporting requirements, **even if the permit holder begins by targeting Tanner crab.**

Golden king crab harvested in Tanner crab pots as described in 5 AAC 35.125(f) may be retained if the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit holder fishing for Tanner crab is also registered to fish for golden king crab and both crab fisheries are open at the same time [5 AAC 34.125(a)].

Qualifying permit holders with current registrations for golden king crab and Tanner crab fisheries **will not be allowed to retain blue king crab in the 2024 golden king crab and Tanner crab fisheries** [5 AAC 34.110(e)] from areas described as blue king crab fishing areas [5 AAC 34.108]. Based on survey results from the red and blue king crab stock assessment survey, along with previous commercial catch information, stocks are believed to be in poor health and will be closed by emergency order this season

Landing Requirements

Tanner crab fishermen holding Tanner crab taken in core areas are not required to request extended holding when fishing exploratory areas or non-core areas after core areas have closed [5 AAC 35.031(d)]. However, by regulation [5 AAC 35.031(c)(2)], all Tanner crab must be landed within the 24 hours following the season closure for the Registration Area A unless a representative of the department has authorized extended holding. **Contact with the department representative must be made within the 24-hour period following the season closure for the registration area.** The registration area closure date will be announced in an advisory announcement to be issued February 17, 2024. Requests for extended holding may be made by contacting shellfish regional staff in the Douglas and Petersburg area offices.

Selected Regulations

Fishermen are reminded that weather delay criteria for Tanner and king crab fisheries are in regulation. Any delay to the start of the 2024 Tanner and golden king crab fisheries due to weather will be announced 24 hours before the start of the fisheries [5 AAC 35.110(b) and 34.110(f)].

Gear limits are set by regulation at a maximum of 80 pots or 20 ring nets for Tanner crab [5 AAC 35.125(b)(1)&(2)]. Pots and ring nets may not be fished simultaneously from the same vessel [5 AAC 35.106(b)].

In-water gear storage is allowed for five days following the season closure for Tanner crab in any portion of Registration Area A [5 AAC 35.127(a)(2)]. Following the regionwide season closure for Tanner crab in Registration Area A, in-water gear storage is allowed for seven days [5 AAC 35.127(a)(1)].

A person or vessel that operates pots or ring nets for commercial, subsistence, personal use, or sport purposes during the 30 days immediately before the scheduled opening date of the commercial fishery may not participate in that commercial Tanner crab fishery [5 AAC 35.128(a)]. This prohibition does not apply to the operation of commercial shrimp or Dungeness crab pots [5 AAC 35.128(a)&(b)]. Fishermen are reminded to review gear storage requirements [5 AAC 35.127] and other pertinent regulations in the 2023–2024 Statewide King and Tanner Crab Commercial Fishing Regulations booklet available at all area offices. Regulations can also be viewed online at:

https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/cf_king_tanner_crab_2023_2024.pdf.

Reporting of lost pots and ring nets or pots and ring nets left in a closed area in fishing condition should be directed to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) offices in Juneau (465-4000) or Ketchikan (225-5118).

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C0124.

Advisory announcement web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADF&G</i>	<i>225-5195</i>	<i>772-3801</i>		<i>747-6688</i>	<i>465-4250</i>	<i>766-2830</i>	<i>784-3255</i>
<i>AWT</i>	<i>225-5111</i>	<i>772-3983</i>	<i>874-3215</i>	<i>747-3254</i>	<i>465-4000</i>	<i>766-2533</i>	<i>784-3255</i>

Commercial Tanner Crab Management Core, Noncore, Inside Exploratory, Outside Exploratory, and Closed Areas of Registration Area A

Refer to 5 AAC 35.113 for Legal Descriptions

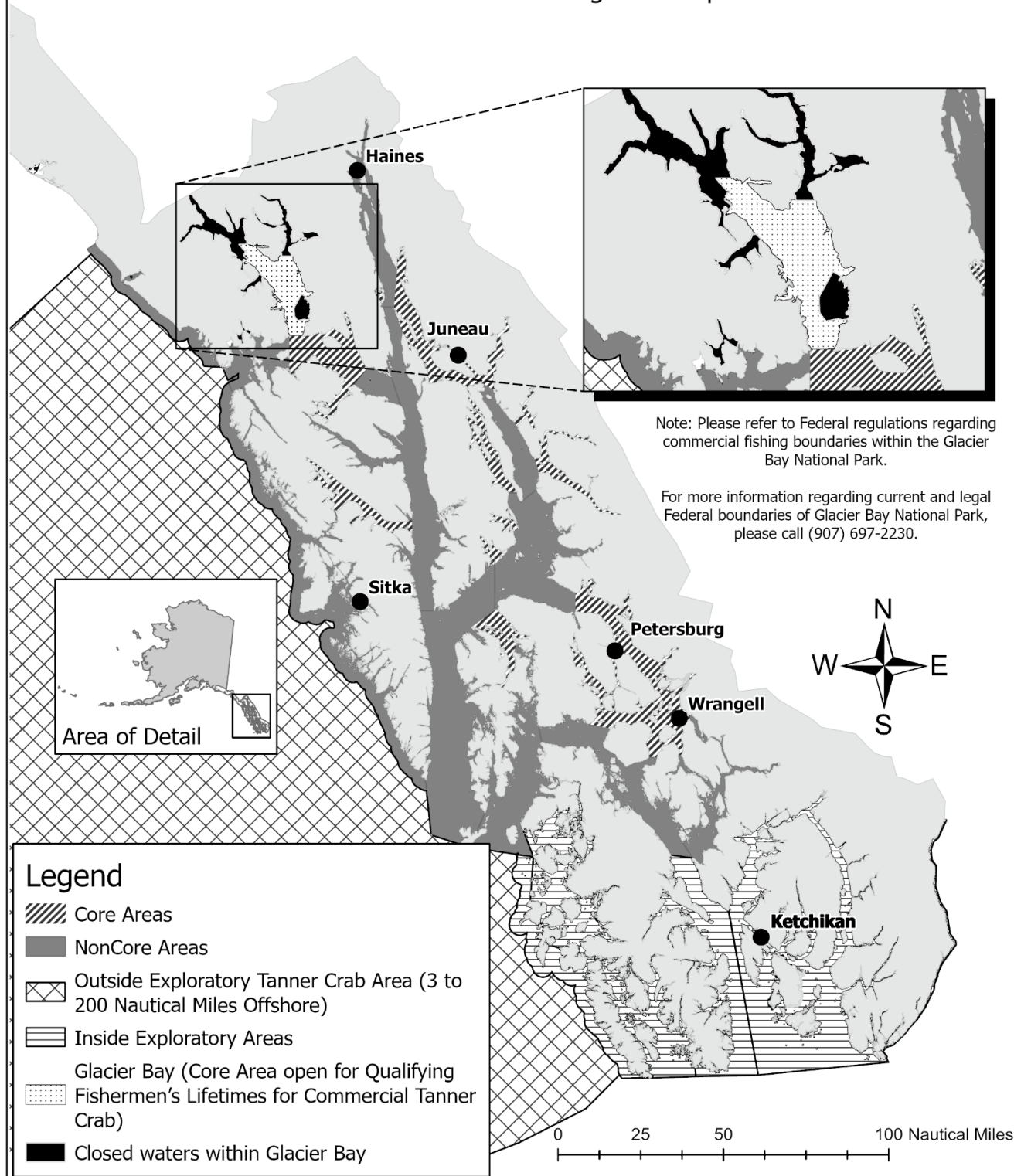


Figure 1: Management areas for the 2024 commercial Tanner crab season in Southeast Alaska, Registration Area A. This map is intended for general reference only. Please refer to regulatory text for legal descriptions of management area boundaries.