



Advisory Announcement

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CONTACT: Adam Messmer

Region I Lead King/Tanner Crab Biologist

adam.messmer@alaska.gov

(907) 465-4853

2024/2025 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY CLOSURE

The Southeast Alaska (Registration Area A) commercial red king crab (RKC) and blue king crab fishery will be closed for the 2024/2025 season. The 2024 stock assessment survey estimated 117,103 lb of legal male RKC available for harvest, less than the minimum threshold of 200,000 lb required to open the commercial fishery [5 AAC 34.113]. The *Southeast Alaska Red King Crab Management Plan* [5 AAC 34.113] directs the department to manage the RKC fishery in accordance with the Alaska Board of Fisheries' "Policy on King and Tanner Crab Resource Management".

The Southeast RKC regional biomass estimates for the 2024/2025 season are 1.63 million lb of legal male crab and 2.47 million lb of mature male crab with four (Juneau, Lynn Sisters, Gambier Bay, and Seymour Canal) of the seven survey areas having increases in either legal or mature biomass. The regional legal male biomass increased by 18% and mature male biomass increased by 24% from the previous year. Regional biomass is estimated from the seven surveyed areas and extrapolated to the entire region.

Survey and Analysis

Surveyed areas include Pybus Bay, Gambier Bay, Seymour Canal, Juneau, Lynn Sisters, Peril Strait and Excursion Inlet. The estimated biomass was determined through a catch-survey analysis (CSA) for all surveyed areas. The CSA incorporates data from the department's annual stock assessment pot survey (1979–2024), commercial harvest (1979–2017), and biological data collected during port sampling of commercial landings. Harvest data from 1974–1984 indicate that an average of 52.8% has been taken from surveyed areas and 47.2% from non-surveyed areas. This surveyed/non-surveyed area ratio is used to calculate legal and mature biomass estimates for the non-surveyed areas.

Equilibrium harvest rates (the point where harvest will not cause a decline in population) were calculated for each surveyed area based on the relationship between historical harvest rates and their associated change in mature male biomass. The stock health status and biomass level, when compared to baseline biomass values for each area, were used to modify proposed harvest rates or determine area closures. Appropriate harvest rates were then applied to area-specific stock biomass estimates to calculate the amount available for harvest. Stock health ratings are based on catch per unit effort (CPUE) of all size and sex classes compared to long-term (15-year) and short-term (4-year) averages.

Five of the seven survey areas had stock health ratings of poor or below average. Recruitment (prerecruit CPUE) is significantly below long-term average levels for three of the seven survey areas (Pybus Bay, Peril Strait, and Excursion Inlet). The other survey areas (Gambier Bay, Seymour Canal, Lynn Sisters, and Juneau) are at the long-term average for prerecruit CPUE suggesting that regionwide improvements to mature and legal male biomass are still underway.

Additional information may be found in regulation 5 AAC 34.113. *Southeast Alaska Red King Crab Management Plan* on page 17 of the 2023–2024 Statewide King and Tanner Crab Commercial Fishing Regulations booklet available in area offices, or online at:

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

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C3024.

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

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