



## Advisory Announcement

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## 2026 SOUTHEAST ALASKA GOLDEN KING CRAB COMMERCIAL FISHERY

The 2026 commercial golden king crab (GKC) fishery in Southeast Alaska (Registration Area A) will open concurrently with the commercial Tanner crab fishery at **10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.**

### Guideline Harvest Levels

The Registration Area A guideline harvest level (GHL) for this season is 330,000 lb. Management area specific GHLs set within the guideline harvest ranges (GHRs) are as follows:

Management Area	GHR (lb)	2026 GHL (lb)
Upper Northern	0–81,000	16,800
Lower Northern	0–64,000	13,200
Icy Strait	0–55,000	22,500
North Stephens Passage	0–25,000	<b>Closed</b>
East Central	0–225,000	202,500
Mid-Chatham Strait	0–150,000	44,500
Lower Chatham Strait	0–50,000	7,500
Southern	0–25,000	23,000
<b>Registration Area A Total</b>	<b>0–675,000</b>	<b>330,000</b>

Each management area will be managed inseason and closed by emergency order once the individual management area GHLs are estimated to be achieved. The department will evaluate fishery performance inseason according to the decision rules outlined in the harvest strategy. Fishery performance will be assessed biweekly and/or with a minimum requirement of 500 pot lifts before taking management action. In management areas where fishery performance indicates a stock health concern, the department may close an area prior to reaching the GHL. The first inseason analysis of harvest tickets, logbooks, and port sampling data will be reviewed in early March. Any subsequent management area closures will be announced in March, and although the department will provide as much advance warning as possible, closures may occur on short notice. Board of Fisheries (BOF) changes in 2025 increased the areas of the Southern and Lower Chatham Strait management areas while also splitting the Northern management area into two separate management areas (Figure 1).

Maps showing GKC management area boundaries are included for reference only (Figures 1 and 2). Please refer to 5 AAC 34.107 for descriptions of the GKC fishing areas in Registration Area A, online at: <https://www.akleg.gov/basis/aac.asp#5.34.001>.

### Closed Waters

The eight GKC management areas do not encompass all waters of Registration Area A. Please refer to 5 AAC 34.107 for descriptions of the GKC management areas in Registration Area A and 5 AAC 34.150(b) for descriptions of closed waters within Registration Area A. Although waters of District 14 in Glacier Bay north of the latitude of Point Gustavus are listed in 5 AAC 34.107(b) as part of the Icy Strait GKC area, federal regulation prohibits commercial fishing for king crab in this

area. For specific information on commercial fishing in the waters of Glacier Bay National Park contact the National Park Service at (907) 697-2230.

### **Nonretention of Blue King Crab**

Qualifying permit holders with current registrations for GKC and Tanner crab fisheries **will not be allowed to retain blue king crab in the 2026 GKC and Tanner crab fisheries** [5 AAC 34.110(e)] from areas described as blue king crab fishing areas [5 AAC 34.108]. Results from the red and blue king crab stock assessment surveys and previous commercial catch information indicate blue king crab are in poor health and will be closed by emergency order this season.

### **Registration and Buoy Tags**

**The registration deadline for the 2026 commercial GKC fishery is Tuesday, January 20, 2026.** All commercial permit holders registering for the 2026 commercial GKC fishery after January 20, 2026, are required to pay a \$45.00 late fee [A.S. 16.05.065]. Simultaneous, though separate, registrations are allowed for golden king and Tanner crab (see Simultaneous Registration Regulations section in this advisory announcement). Processors are reminded that registration for tenders is required.

Commercial permit holders may register and obtain logbook packets, buoy tags, and other fishery information in the Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Petersburg, and Haines area offices. Buoy tags are mandatory for all commercial GKC gear and are available in most Southeast area offices for \$1.25 each. All purchased buoy tags are nonrefundable. Buoy tag placement requirements are in regulation [5 AAC 34.051(b)]. 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 [5 AAC 34.126(a)]. The completed affidavit form must be signed by the permit holder and a crewmember.

The king crab vessel registration year [5 AAC 34.020(b)] begins June 28, 2025, and goes through June 27, 2026. Permit holders planning to fish in open GKC management areas after June 27, 2026, will need to reregister with the department.

### **Simultaneous Registration Regulations**

Regulations regarding permit holders with simultaneous registration in GKC and Tanner crab fisheries [5 AAC 34.109; 5 AAC 35.106] state that before fishing for GKC in a portion of Registration Area A that is closed to Tanner crab fishing, a vessel must have all Tanner crab removed from the vessel and 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 from that vessel. **Until a permit holder simultaneously registered for the GKC and Tanner crab fisheries unloads all Tanner crab, and unregisters to fish for Tanner crab, they 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 GKC that want to fish for Tanner crab during the non-core, inside exploratory, or outside exploratory area periods must remove all gear from the closed Tanner crab area before registering for Tanner crab.

If GKC are harvested in Tanner crab pots as described in 5 AAC 35.125(f) they may be retained if the CFEC permit holder fishing for Tanner crab is also registered to fish for GKC and both crab fisheries are open at the same time [5 AAC 34.125(a)]. Permit holders with simultaneous registration in GKC and Tanner fisheries are required to comply with GKC fishery inseason reporting requirements, **even if the permit holder begins by targeting Tanner crab.**

### **Logbooks and Reporting Requirements**

Logbooks and inseason reporting are mandatory in the GKC fishery [5 AAC 34.130 & 5 AAC 34.143]. Logbook packets include: instructions for filling out the logbooks, logbook sheets, envelopes for their delivery, ADF&G statistical area maps, and all pertinent advisory announcements available at the time the packet is obtained. Logbooks should be sealed in one of the envelopes provided in the registration packets and are required to be attached to the fish ticket and submitted to the processor upon delivery. The number of crabs, number of pot lifts, and average soak time (hrs) by statistical area must be recorded on logbooks and fish tickets (with the exception of average soak time (hrs)). **Each king crab fisher shall indicate on the fish ticket at the time of landing any king crab harvested that are not purchased by the processor, or that have been discarded at sea [5 AAC 34.075(a)] or retained for personal use. Each buyer of king crab shall indicate on the fish ticket any king crab that was not purchased from a landing [5 AAC 34.075(b)].** If golden king and Tanner crab are landed on the same trip, separate logbooks must be completed for each species.

Inseason reporting is mandatory for the commercial GKC fishery [5 AAC 34.143]. For all GKC management areas, inseason reporting will be required daily. **Prior to the season start, the first mandatory call-in for the 2026 season is Monday, February 16, 2026**, and permit holders will be required to disclose what management area they plan to fish in first. **If there is no harvest to report on February 17, 2026, report the statistical area in which gear has been set or will be set.** This reporting requirement applies to all GKC registrants, even if the permit holder begins by targeting Tanner crab. Reporting requirements may be relaxed inseason by emergency order. **A dedicated phone line, (907) 772-5200**, has been established for the reporting of GKC logbook data. Permit holders are also requested to phone in when they change management areas or when discontinuing fishing for the season.

For permit holders who wish to text or e-mail their logbook data, please use the contact information listed below to set up a reporting plan:

- Adam Messmer ([adam.messmer@alaska.gov](mailto:adam.messmer@alaska.gov))
  - (907) 465-4853
- Zane Chapman ([zane.chapman@alaska.gov](mailto:zane.chapman@alaska.gov))
  - (907) 465-4274
- Tessa Bergmann ([tessa.bergmann@alaska.gov](mailto:tessa.bergmann@alaska.gov))
  - (907) 772-5236

### **Retention of Parasitized Golden King Crab**

GKC that are infected with the barnacle parasite, *Briarosaccus callosus*, may be retained regardless of size or sex [5 AAC 34.112]. Either a scar or the externa of the parasite located under the abdominal flap indicates the presence of this parasite. The scar is a dark brown or black spot about ¼ inch in diameter on the soft tissue of the abdominal flap. The externa varies in size, is shaped like a hot dog, and is usually attached to the soft tissue of the abdominal flap. It is possible to have more than one scar or externa on the same crab. The parasite's externa must be removed before the crab is placed into the vessel holding tank.

### **Golden King Crab Fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**

A commissioner's permit is required to fish GKC from 3–200 miles in the EEZ. The required commissioner's permit may specify season dates, pot limits, and areas of fishing operations. The commissioner's permit will require a detailed logbook for fishing operations and may require observer coverage and other conditions deemed necessary for conservation and management purposes [5 AAC 34.116]. For more information on fishing in the EEZ contact shellfish regional staff in the Douglas or Petersburg area offices.

### **Lost Pots**

Reporting of lost pots or pots left in a closed area in fishing condition should be directed to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) offices in Juneau (907-465-4000), Petersburg (907-772-3983), or Ketchikan (907-225-5118).

### **Selected Regulations**

Permit holders with gear in more than one management area are asked to make every effort to separate crab in their hold so crab can be sampled by department port sampling staff to get area specific information. Zip ties, used to mark crab, are available to permit holders to assist in dockside sampling efforts. For more information on obtaining zip ties and separating crab by fishery area please contact shellfish regional staff in the Douglas or Petersburg area offices.

Weather delay criteria for Tanner and king crab fisheries were updated at the 2025 Board of Fisheries meeting to include freezing spray. Any delay to the start of the 2025 Tanner and GKC fisheries due to weather will be announced 24 hours before the start of the fisheries [5 AAC 35.110(b) and 5 AAC 34.110(f)].

A person or vessel that operates commercial, subsistence, personal use, or sport pots or ring nets during the 30 days immediately before the scheduled opening of the commercial fishery may not participate in that king crab fishery [5 AAC 34.128(a)]. This prohibition does not apply to the operation of commercial shrimp or Dungeness crab pots [5 AAC 34.128(b)]. Permit holders are reminded to review gear storage requirements and other pertinent regulations in the 2025–

2026 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\\_2025\\_2026.pdf](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/cf_king_tanner_crab_2025_2026.pdf).

Permit holders are reminded to account for any groundfish taken for bait prior to or during the GKC fishery. Groundfish harvested for bait should be marked as disposition code 92 (bait) on the crab fish ticket for the trip on which the bait was taken. Sablefish, halibut, lingcod, thornyhead, shortraker, roughey, and yelloweye rockfish may not be taken or used for bait, except that the head, tail, fins, closely trimmed skeleton, and viscera of delivered or processed commercial sablefish, lingcod, thornyhead, shortraker, roughey, and yelloweye rockfish may be used for bait [5 AAC 28.190].

The Emergency Orders corresponding with this announcement are EO 1C0426, EO 1C0526, and EO 1C0626.

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&amp;G</i>	225-5195	772-3801		747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

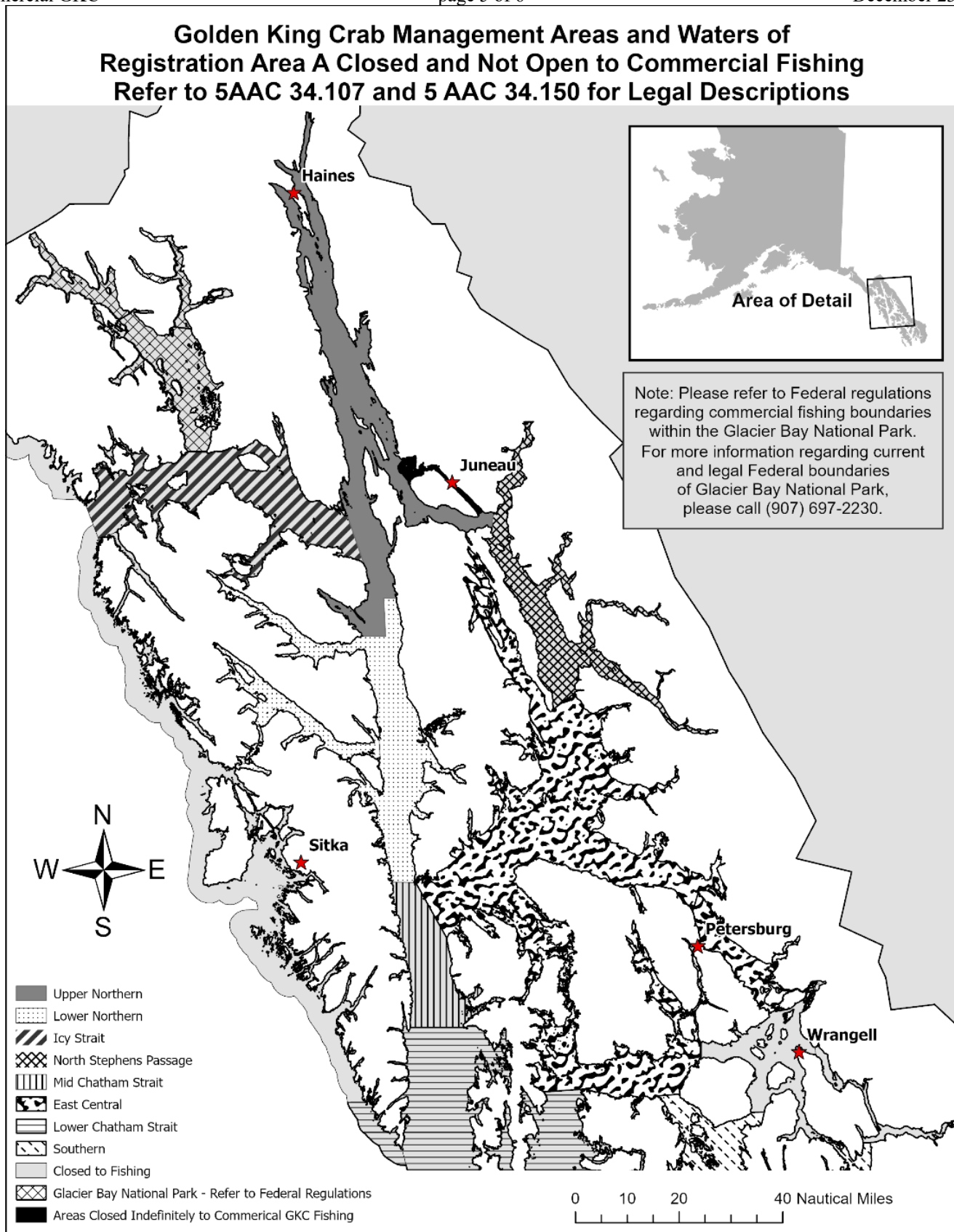


Figure 1.—Commercial golden king crab management areas in northern Southeast Alaska. The management area boundaries shown are for general information purposes only and are not intended as legal descriptions. See [Closed Waters](#) section in this advisory announcement for more information on Glacier Bay. For specific area boundaries, please refer to written legal descriptions in 5 AAC 34.107.



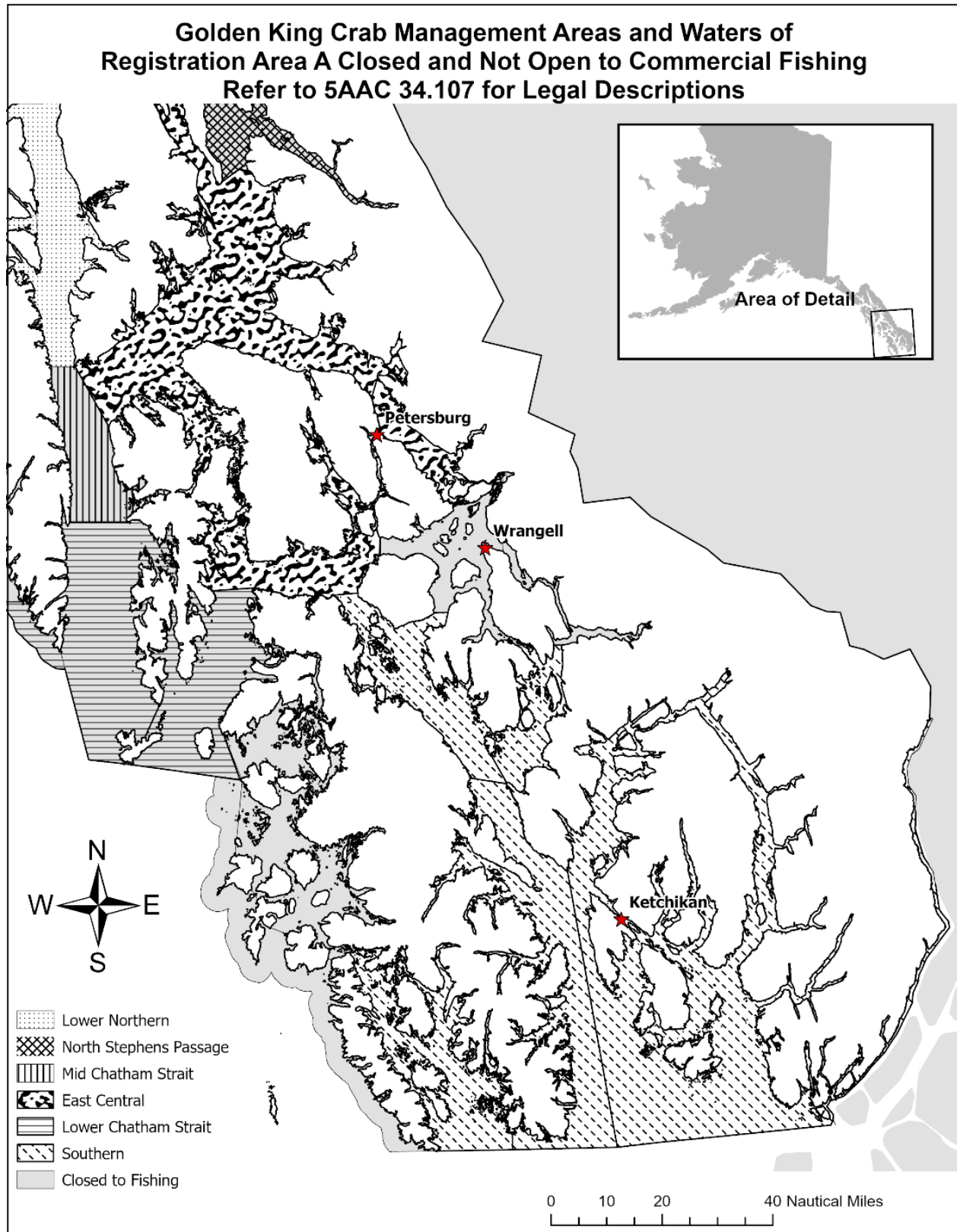


Figure 2.—Commercial golden king crab management areas in southern Southeast Alaska. The management area boundaries shown are for general information purposes only and are not intended as legal descriptions. For specific area boundaries, please refer to written legal descriptions in 5 AAC 34.107.