
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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SOUTHEAST ALASKA PERSONAL USE RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Petersburg...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced the following updated information regarding the 2014/2015 Southeast Alaska personal use red king crab fishery outside of Section 11-A:

- **Seymour Canal, Port Frederick, Gambier Bay, Pybus Bay, Holkham Bay, Peril Strait, Excursion Inlet, and Lynn Sisters will remain closed to personal use fishing.**
- **All areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing outside of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C will continue to have a reduced daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab as prescribed in regulation when the regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is below 200,000 lbs [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)].**
- **All areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing in Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C will continue to have a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab as prescribed in regulation when the regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is below 200,000 lbs [5 AAC 77.664(b)].**

2014 Survey and Fishery Information

All red and blue king crab fisheries are closed in Southeast Alaska by regulation from April 1 through June 30 annually. From July 1 through March 31, open fishing periods for the personal use fisheries may be established by emergency order. The department conducts annual red king crab surveys in nine areas throughout Southeast Alaska. Those areas include: the Juneau Area in Section 11-A, Lynn Sisters, Excursion Inlet, Port Frederick, Holkham Bay, Pybus Bay, Gambier Bay, Seymour Canal, and Peril Strait. The surveys generally begin in late June and conclude in early August and data from the most recent surveys are used to manage commercial and personal use red king crab fisheries. Because the department has detailed information for each of the surveyed areas it is possible to manage those areas as distinct fishery units. The remaining waters of Southeast Alaska outside the areas surveyed are referred to as "non-surveyed" areas. In general, management decisions in the non-surveyed areas are made based on trends observed in the surveyed areas.

The 2014 red king crab stock assessment survey was still underway on July 1, 2014, therefore decisions regarding the July 1, 2014 opening of the personal use red and blue king crab fisheries outside of Section 11-A were based on 2013 red king crab stock assessment survey results. Currently all nine surveyed areas are closed to personal use fishing. All areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing, outside of

Sections 11-A, 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C currently have a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab. All areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing in Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C currently also have a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab. Now that the 2014 survey and accompanying data analysis are complete, new information is available to manage the fishery.

Based on 2014 survey results:

- Regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is well below 200,000 lbs.
- Regionally, the biomass estimate did increase from last season, but is still at historically low levels.
- The amount of legal crab is virtually the same as 2013, but there has been a 52% increase regionwide in mature male biomass.
- Stock health in Gambier Bay, Lynn Sisters, Port Frederick, and Holkham Bay remains poor in 2014 and these four areas will be kept closed.
- Stock health in Pybus Bay has declined to poor and will be kept closed.
- Stock health in Seymour Canal, Peril Strait, and Excursion Inlet has improved from the previous season, but the biomass increases in each have been largely fueled by increases in non-legal sized, pre-recruit male crabs so these areas will be kept closed.
- Non-surveyed areas can likely continue to withstand a low level of harvest in the near term, so will be kept open with a minimal bag and possession limit.

Closed Area Descriptions

- Seymour Canal: Section 11-D, Seymour Canal (waters of Seymour Canal north of 57°37.00' N. latitude).
- Peril Strait: Section 13-C, Peril Strait (all waters of Peril Strait including Hoonah Sound, Ushk Bay, Rodman Bay, Saook Bay, Hanus Bay, Sitkoh Bay, and contiguous waters west of a line from Point Hayes to Point Thatcher, and north of a line from Pogibshi Point due west to the Chichagof shoreline).
- Port Frederick: Port Frederick (all waters of Port Frederick south and west of a line between the light at Cannery Point to the northernmost tip of Halibut Island and from there to a point at 58°09.60' N. latitude, 135°30.00' W. longitude).
- Lynn Sisters: Waters north of a line from a point at 58°27.00' N. latitude, 135°06.50' W. longitude, due east to a point at 58°27.00' N. latitude, 135°03.00' W. longitude, and west of a line from a point at 58°27.00' N. latitude, 135°03.00' W. longitude to Point Whidbey including St. James Bay.
- Excursion Inlet: Waters east of a line from a point at 58°22.57' N. latitude, 135°30.08' W. longitude, south to a point at 58°19.28' N. latitude, 135°30.06' W. longitude, and north of a line from a point at 58°19.28' N. latitude, 135°30.06' W. longitude to a point at 58°16.13' N. latitude, 135°20.61' W. longitude including Excursion Inlet.
- Gambier Bay: Gambier Bay waters north and west of a line between Point Gambier and 57°24.90' N. latitude, 133°53.00' W. longitude.
- Pybus Bay: Pybus Bay waters north and west of a line from Point Pybus to the easternmost tip of San Juan Island and from there to a point at 57°14.60' N. latitude, 134°07.30' W. longitude.
- Holkham Bay: Holkham Bay waters, including Endicott Arm and Tracy Arm, east of a line between Point Coke and Point Astley.

Closed area descriptions above for Lynn Sisters and Excursion Inlet were new last year, having been augmented to more accurately encompass the area surveyed. Refer to Figure 1 for a map showing open and closed waters for personal use red and blue king crab fishing.

Juneau Area: Section 11-A

The Section 11-A (Juneau area) personal use red and blue king crab fishery will not open for the 2014/2015 season. Details of the red and blue king crab personal use fishery closure within Section 11-A were previously released in a separate news release dated July 8, 2014. For more information on the status of the red and blue king crab personal use fishery within Section 11-A, please contact Dave Harris at 465-4250.

Other information

Fishermen are reminded only male red king crab seven inches or greater in width of shell may be retained. For blue king crab, only males six and one-half inches or greater in width of shell may be retained. Male king crab less than the minimum legal size and female king crab must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

No more than 4 pots or 10 ring nets per vessel may be used in the personal use king crab fishery [5 AAC 77.664(f)]. A pot used to take king crab must have at least two escape rings on opposing vertical or sloping sides of the pot that are not less than six and one-quarter inches inside diameter. Each fisherman shall plainly and legibly inscribe the fisherman's first initial, last name, and home address on a keg or buoy attached to a pot. A keg or buoy attached to the pot must also be inscribed with the vessel name or the division of motor vehicles registration number (AK number) of the vessel used to operate the pot [5 ACC 77.010 and 5 AAC 77.664(f)].

Please refer to 5 AAC 77.664 in the 2014-2015 Subsistence and Personal Use Statewide Fisheries Regulations booklet for additional regulations regarding personal use red and blue king crab fishing, or view the regulations online at:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static-f/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/2014-2015subsistence_PU.pdf

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C2014.

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

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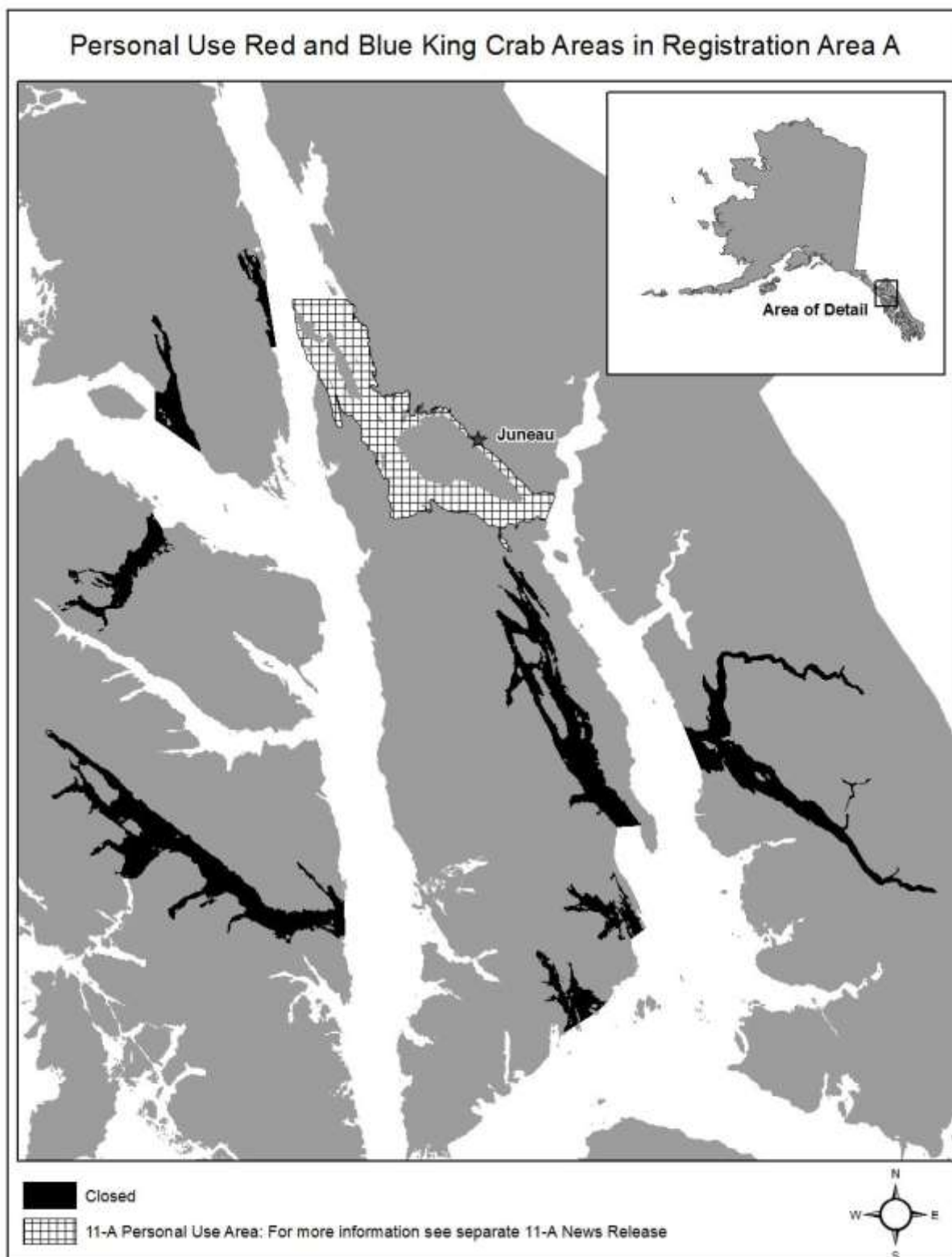


Figure 1. This map shows closed areas for the 2014/2015 red and blue king crab personal use fishery and is for reference purposes only. Please refer to text in this news release for legal descriptions of management area boundaries and other details.