

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **2015 Tanner Crab Seasons in the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula Districts**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has completed analysis of 2014 Tanner crab survey results from the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula districts. Commercial Tanner crab fisheries in these districts may occur when the estimated abundance of mature male Tanner crab meets or exceeds stock size and management thresholds established in regulation (5 AAC 35.507; *Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula Districts C. bairdi Tanner crab harvest strategies*).

**Kodiak District:** Mature male abundance thresholds are established for six sections in the Kodiak District (5 AAC 35.507 (b)(1)(A-F)). A minimum of two sections must meet or exceed established stock size thresholds before a commercial fishery may open. In sections that meet or exceed the molting mature stock size thresholds, abundance must be sufficient to provide for a GHL of at least 100,000 pounds per section and at least 400,000 pounds total for all open sections in the district. Based on 2014 Kodiak District trawl survey results only the Southeast Section exceeded the mature male stock size abundance threshold. Abundance estimates in other five sections were not sufficient to meet minimum section GHL thresholds. Therefore, the Kodiak District will remain closed for the 2015 commercial Tanner crab season.

**Chignik District:** A single molting mature male abundance threshold is established for the Chignik District (5 AAC 35.507 (b)(2)). Mature male abundance must be sufficient to provide for a minimum GHL of 200,000 pounds of Tanner crab before a commercial Tanner crab fishery may occur in the district. The 2014 survey abundance estimate of mature male Tanner crab was above the regulatory stock size threshold but below the 200,000 pound GHL requirement. Therefore, the Chignik District will remain closed for the 2015 commercial Tanner crab season.

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**South Peninsula District:** Mature male abundance thresholds are established for two sections (Eastern and Western) in the South Peninsula District (5 AAC 35.507 (b)(3)(A and B)). Molting mature male abundance in each section must be sufficient to provide for a minimum GHL of 200,000 pounds of Tanner crab before either section may open to commercial fishing.

The estimated 2014 mature male abundance in the Eastern Section was below the stock size threshold necessary for a 2015 commercial Tanner crab fishery. Mature male abundance in the Western Section met minimum threshold requirements for a fishery; however, the season will remain closed during 2015 based on several factors: 1) a record low number of legal-sized male crab recruited into the population during 2014; 2) approximately 90% of all legal-sized crab observed during the 2014 Western Section survey were found in a highly localized area in Morzhovoi Bay; 3) legal-sized male crab abundance outside of Morzhovoi Bay was low; and 4) abundance of juvenile male and adult and juvenile female crab in Morzhovoi Bay was high relative to legal male crab making them susceptible to bycatch mortality if a fishery were to occur. To protect the legal-sized stock as well as noncommercial Tanner crab, the Western Section will remain closed for the 2015 season.

For additional information on Tanner crab harvest strategies or survey results, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Kodiak at (907) 486-1840.

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