

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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EASTERN ALEUTIAN DISTRICT TANNER CRAB FISHERY GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVEL ANNOUNCED

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has completed analysis of trawl survey results for the Eastern Aleutian District (EAD) Tanner crab stock. The 2014 trawl survey estimates of mature male Tanner crab abundance were compared to established regulatory thresholds for the Unalaska/Kalekta Bay, Makushin/Skan Bay, and Akutan Sections. For a fishery opening, survey estimated mature male abundance must be greater than threshold level of mature male abundance and have a guideline harvest level (GHL) of at least 35,000 pounds.

Akutan Section: The 2014 survey abundance estimate of mature male Tanner crab in the Akutan Section was above threshold; however, all legal males and 98% of mature-sized males were caught in only one survey station. Given uncertainty in stock condition, the Akutan Section will be closed during the 2015 season.

Makushin/Skan Bay Section: The 2014 survey abundance estimate of mature male Tanner crab was above threshold and the calculated GHL for 2015, as prescribed by the regulatory harvest strategy, was above the minimum 35,000 pound GHL. Due to uncertainty in stock condition and because the section was closed for the 2013 and 2014 seasons, the GHL is set at the minimum 35,000 pounds.

Unalaska/Kalekta Bay Section: The 2014 survey abundance estimate of mature males was above threshold. The calculated GHL for 2015, as prescribed by the regulatory harvest strategy, was below the minimum 35,000 pound GHL; therefore, the Unalaska/Kalekta Bay Section will be closed during the 2015 season.

Preseason registration forms must be received by ADF&G in Dutch Harbor by 5:00 p.m. December 24, 2014. Preseason registration forms are available at the Dutch Harbor office and online at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/cfregion4/dynamic/shellfish/management/vesreg/index>. A

2014 or 2015 T09O Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit card listing the vessel's ADF&G number is required at the time of preseason registration.

The number of vessels that preseason register will be used to establish the pot limit for the 2015 season. Information regarding pot limits, buoy tag sales, tank inspections and inseason catch reporting will be announced via news release after the preseason registration deadline.

The EAD commercial Tanner crab fishery will open at 12:00 noon on January 15, 2015. ADF&G will monitor the fishery inseason, and closure prior to achieving the GHF could result if preseason expectations of fishery performance are not met. Section boundaries are provided in 5 AAC 35.505 (c). Fishermen are reminded that in the EAD, vessels fishing for Tanner crab are limited to 58 feet or less in overall length.

For further information, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Dutch Harbor at (907) 581-1239.