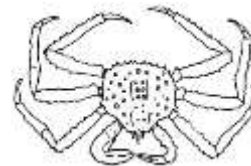

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Time: 4:15 p.m.

JUNEAU AREA PERSONAL USE RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Juneau. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced today that the personal use red and blue king crab fishing season in Section 11-A (Juneau area) will **not open in 2015**.

The department surveys the red king crab population in Section 11-A in late June and generates biomass estimates of abundance for sexually mature and legal-sized crab. The 2015 legal-sized and sexually mature crab biomass estimates of abundance increased by approximately 18% from the 2014 survey, however, both remain below their respective long-term averages. A male red king crab becomes sexually mature at about 8 years of age and recruits into the legal population at 9-10 years of age. Overall, stock health for the Juneau area remains below the long-term average, as it was in 2014.

Although the 2015 biomass levels are slightly above those from the last time a personal use fishery occurred, in 2011 there was an abundance of large post-recruit crab to harvest compared to the current year. Low recruitment over the last decade has resulted in slow to no recovery after each harvest, even when harvests were at or near all-time lows. Mature and legal crab biomass estimates are still below their long-term averages and executing a fishery may prohibit further recovery. In recent years, openings at similar biomass levels have been followed by closures. A further year of closure should allow the sexually mature and legal-sized crab biomass levels to continue to recover, providing a more robust population base that may provide a sustainable harvestable surplus in future seasons.

As previously announced on June 24, 2015, the waters of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C not listed as closed below are currently open to personal use fishing for red and blue king crab with a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab [5 AAC 77.664(b)]. Those waters outside of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C not listed as closed below, are also currently open to personal use fishing for red and blue king crab with a daily bag and possession limit of one red or blue king crab [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)].

As previously announced, the following areas will remain closed to fishing for red and blue king crab until further notice due to poor stock health:

Port Frederick, Peril Strait, Seymour Canal, Gambier Bay, Pybus Bay, Holkham Bay, Lynn Sisters/St. James Bay, and Excursion Inlet.

The Emergency Order corresponding to this announcement is EO 1C1415.

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

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